

資料紹介

—会計倫理(2)—

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3. Geoge E.Smith: Let Ethics Guide Your Decisions ほか

本節では次の3つの記事のうち①を扱う。

- ① Geoge E. Smith: Let Ethics Guide Your Decisions⁽¹⁾
- ② Are Ethics Dangerous to Your Job? ⁽¹⁾
- ③ The Controller Who Said 'No' ⁽¹⁾

「Geoge E. Smith: Let Ethics Guide Your Decisions」(意思決定は倫理に照らして行おう)では、次のことを扱っている。「誠実、倫理、コミュニケーション技術—これらのことはすべてのManagement Accountantsの具備しなければならない必須の条件である、と主張する。Geoge E. SmithはJ.M. Tull Industriesの前の会長である。実業界の第一線を退いている現在、趣味として財務諸表を読み、近くの大学で講義し、実業界の実際およびそのなかでの秘訣について、学生に語ることをもって無上の喜びとしている。」

次の記事の「Are Ethics Dangerous to Your Job?」(倫理は仕事に危険を招くか)では、次のことを扱っている。「Management Accountantsが、日常、直面している倫理上の摩擦を解消するために、NAAが発表した新しい倫理行動基準は、Management Accountantsにとって、どの程度、妥当なものであるか。この倫理行動基準に対する批判と、NAAの倫理綱領の必要性および妥当性に関するCMAならびにコントローラーの調査結果は、驚くものになるかもしれない。」

さらに、次の記事の「The Controller Who Said 'No'」(「ノー」といったコントローラー)

では、次のことを扱っている。「もしあなたの所属している部の部長が、無謀にも、自分の費用勘定を水増しし、自分の妻に金銭を支払って着服し、市内のホテルで、終夜、ポーカーをしたつげを会社に回すといったようなことをしているとしたら、あなたはどうか。このコントローラーはこのことを暴露した。結果はこうである。」

(1) **George E. Smith: Let Ethics Guide Your Decisions**

Smith氏は会計士にとって最も重要な資質は倫理であると主張し、自分の仕事に専念し、誠実にことに当たらなければならないと考えた。そして解雇した例に触れている。

He insists that an accountant's most important asset is ethics. "Management accountants have to be dedicated to their job—going that second mile to get job done—but what I can't stress too much is integrity. They must have integrity and ethics—and let people know where they stand and try not to deviate from it. I had to fire man once for deliberately giving me false information. When a person is intellectually dishonest, you just can't go with him. I can go with a crook because I know where he stands. But one time I wanted a decision, and this person gave me all the fact...I thought. Maybe I was derelict or maybe I didn't get the rest of the facts—maybe I didn't do all my homework—but I relied on him for the information. And I made a decision, but it wasn't a good decision. The next time I saw him I said, 'You know, your information didn't work. You lied to me. You know something I didn't know, and you told me just enough to get the decision. If you do that again, I am going to fire you.' In about three years it happened again, and I had to fire him. I told him, 'You've done it again.' Maybe there might have been another way for me to get the information I needed, but CEOs have to depend on their financial people for correct information, especially if the CEOs aren't accounting oriented." Then he smiles: "But that is the good part about a CEO having been in finance and accounting—he knows how to get more information than somebody else would."

A Career in 'the Dead Overhead'

自分が会計系の職業に就いたとき、会計係は程度の高い職業とは見なされてはいなかったし、会計の仕事は、人にとって重要なものとは考えられていなかったかもしれないが、会社の成功に役に立ったと信じている、とスミス氏はいう。また、続いて、社長のTull氏は、今までに自分がお目にかかった人のなかでも屈指のセールスマンの一人であったのだが、その人は、会計については、役に立たない諸経費と呼んだものだ、ともいう。

スミス氏は、会計はますます重要性を加え、会社の発展に一層重要な役割を演じるようになると考え、財務領域だけでなく、企業全体にも関心をもつように心掛けた。また、このような中規模の会社では、一人何役もこなさなければならないと考えた。

He credits his company success to his accounting background although when he began his career, accountants there weren't regarded highly. "Accounting was just something you had to do." Mr. Smith chuckles, "Mr. Tull, who was one of the greatest salesmen I ever met, call it the dead overhead."

J.M. Tull was a metals processing, manufacturing, and distribution company that had started as an industrial supply house in 1914, and sales were paramount, not finance. A local organization, it didn't branch out of Atlanta until around 1955 when it purchased a company in Florida. When it continued to expand, it only went as far west as Louisiana and Texas and as far north as Virginia. Its products include carbon steel items such as wire, rods, bars, and tubes; stainless steel; brass; copper; aluminum; bronze; and nickel that are sold to the government and a wide range of industries. It also performs the unusual service of cutting the metals to size and shaping them to customers' specifications. Fortunately, Mr. Smith recognized that accounting would become more important and play a more vital role as the company grew, so he decided to take an interest in the whole business, not just the financial area. "I think if you are a good accountant, you have to be a student of the whole business. I made myself have contacts with our mills, which were very important to us, and to try to learn what their problems were as related to ours. I used to love to get out occasionally and travel with the salesmen and see the customers, which slowed the salesmen down because the customer always wanted to show us his plant, but he was proud of it and I think it helped with customer relations.

"In addition, in a company such as ours, which is medium-sized, you wear a lot of hats. You have to learn fast if you are really going to make a contribution. So I tried to be a little bit more than the bean counter or the numbers cruncher."

Becoming a Generalist

彼は大切な意思決定の基礎として、財務の素養を利用することによって、かなり早く出世した。社長をしていた間、金属の配給と加工処理の仕事は本当に実践向きの仕事であったので、契約の交渉や市場に関する決定をしなければならなかったときに、会計が役に立ったとしている。棚卸商品は3千万ドルにのぼり、あたかも百貨店のようであり、利益は低かったが、投資に対する利益を得るためには、回転によるほかなく、そのために、毎日、コンピューターを使って、販売状

況を追跡した、といている。

He succeeded fairly quickly, using his financial background as a basis for large decision making. “While I was president, accounting helped me when I had to negotiate big contracts or decide on markets because metals distribution and processing is really a hands on business. Inventory and accounts receivable are the two biggest things on that balance sheet you receive. Inventories can run \$30 million, and it is like a department store almost—very low profit, but you’ve got to turn it over to get your return on investment,” he explains.

He kept daily track of sales via computer. “We ran that computer 24 hours a day, and every morning when I got to work, I had a report on my desk of the sales by branches and sales by major products, and the gross profit, and we had finally worked out formulas so that every day, within 10%, I knew what our net profit was that month up to that day. If something looked bad, we could take some action after comparing it against our budgeted figures...I didn’t get into ware housing or manufacturing expect if it looked as though our backlog were builing and we weren’t giving any service. Service was the name of the game.

“It could have been too much hand-on,” he muses, “but I had to look at the big picture and not lose it. I tell you this because I think you acconntants need to learn the entire business. I tried to learn the business as I went along because sales and marketing were our lifeblood. I tried to be a generalist as much as I could.”

Although he refuses to take credit for any major contributions to J.M. Tull Industries, saying instead that the company just evolved naturally, he does admit that he influenced costing decisions, “I always felt that if a company got into trouble, it didn’t know what the cost was. So everybody was very cost conscious at Tull. Everything we did had to be cost justified. Every month people reported if they added on another piece of equipment or they were going to do this or that, and we said ‘Okay, what are you going to get out of it? Cost it out.’ We justified everything we did.”

That’s one reason the company set up a highly successful computer system tying all headquarters and branch activities together, even though Mr. Smith was’t sure initially about the outcome. “I though we would never be able to justify the system—to be on line, which we are now, with computers here and at every branch. Now I don’t see how we could have run without the system. For example, Miami can go into that computer and find out what is in stock in every branch in the system. If they don’t have an item, they can put an order through in Tampa. We run shuttle trucks so we can keep the inventory turning. We couldn’t possibly stock 30,000 or 40,000 items in inventory; dollars would run out the

roof. All controls are in Atlanta, but a branch can order via computer. It can find out the status of an account, the history of the account, how the company is paying, and other information.”

The computer also is the company's communications system. “We dropped all our teletype costs by using the computer for message—it just clears right through the lines when it wants to. We can send a message to Richmond through the computer in Atlanta.”

Mr. Smith says he was happy to be a part of the changeover from manual to computer operations, but, again, he declines credit except for “staying the right people until the system was functioning as it should.”

Looking Beyond the Ledgers

スミス氏は骨の折れる仕事を誠実に全企業の見地から見ることによって、着実に、自己のたずさわった職業のトップにまで昇格した。現在、彼は、他の management accountant たちが認められ、会社のリーダーになることを確保したいと考えている。しかしながら、彼らがもっと外交的になり、もっとよい伝達者になり、数字だけに興味をもつようなことがなくなるのでなければ、成功はむずかしいであろうと心配している。そこで、彼はあらゆる機会をとらえて、若い人たちに話をし、実業界の現実の運営について知らせようとしている。management accountant たちが、スミス氏が J.M. Tull 社の会長職を遂行するうえで役立ったと考えている素養といえるのだが、会計だけにとらわれずに、未来を描き、会社の運営を学ぶ必要性を強調する。

Through his hard work, conscientiousness, and total business outlook, George E. Smith quietly rose to the top of his profession. Now he wants to make sure that other management accountants are recognized and become leaders in their companies. He is concerned, however, that unless they become more extroverted, better communicators, and less interested in only the numbers, they won't succeed. Therefore, at every opportunity, he talks with young people and tries to describe the real-life operations of the business world.

He stresses the need for management accountants to look beyond the ledgers and learn company operation, a trait that he says probably helped him achieve the J.M. Tull chairmanship. “I guess I just showed more interest and worked harder than most of the people around there. I had learned the entire business and just moved along with it...”

After he became CEO, he applied his philosophy in dealing with employees he recognized as “comers”. On man in particular, he recalls, “worked in accounting and had so much drive and promise that I brought him over as my assistant for a while. He still needed some experience, so I sent him to New Orleans; they needed a manager down there. And it just

about killed him. He just couldn't believe I was going to throw him to the wolves. I said, 'well, if you are going to move in this company, you are going to have to learn more about it.' So I sent him there, and he responded to the challenge. Today he's the No.2 man at Tull," he smiles.

Because he has been involved in audit committees as a board director and has served as an officer in every organization to which he has belonged, he knows it's vital for accountants to be adept at communicating beyond figures. "I have seen in many companies and organizations and when I have attended various meetings with other financial people that many accountants, especially the younger ones, don't have anything to talk about other than numbers. If you ask them about their activities or their companies, they can't answer you. That's unfortunate because so many of them have much to offer, but they can't break out of their shells. Many of them would be disappointed, I think, if they didn't move up into other jobs, but they probably won't unless they develop their communication skills," he sighs.

They need to initiate improvements in company operations also, he says. "The people who offer a different point of view or suggestions on cutting costs or solving a problem are the ones a company or CEO looks to for the future. We've had a couple of people at Tull who were fine accountants. You would give them a problem and say 'let's work this out,' and you would always get the right answer, but they would never come to you and suggest 'why don't we look at this idea as a different solution.' Management promotes employees who approach first and offer suggestions in areas that maybe the CEO hasn't thought about because he was too busy. That's what helps people—and especially management accountants—get ahead."

"Management accountants can be so vital to their employers," he reiterates. "Many of the people whose companies got into trouble in the last two or three years—in the age of deflation—were not accountants, so they didn't know what was happening to them. They could do pretty well in inflation; they were buying inventory that was going up all the time. But the people who had never been through deflation didn't know how to manage. Yet some people who were running companies and accounting background saw pretty quickly what was happening. While they were suffering in the downturn, they came through in a lot better shape."

Learning to Communicate

Management accountantたちは、どのようにしたら最高経営者に特定の知識を伝達すること

を学ぶことができるか。スミス氏は、大学教育あるいは継続教育課程、一例として、特に、レポートの書き方、経営者に対するアイデアの示し方、口頭での示し方などを、会計に携わる人々に、ビジネス・スクールで行う課程を考えていると言っている。そして、専門職の協会への加入にも触れている。

How can management accountants learn to communicate their specialized knowledge to top management? Mr. Smith suggests college or continuing education courses, for one, especially courses offered in business school that specifically teach financial people how to write reports, present ideas to management, give oral presentations, and the like. In addition, management accountants should join professional associations, such as NAA, to interact with their peers and trade ideas. When he was treasurer at J.M. Tull, he joined the Atlanta Chapter, retaining his membership until he became company president and was forced to resign because of time and business meeting commitments.

He was reluctant to quit, but “I never liked to belong to any groups unless I could be active in them,” he explains. “While I was a member, NAA was helpful, especially the contacts. In your business if you run into something that wasn’t in the books, you could call or go see somebody. We all traded information, and that was quite helpful.” He also found the meeting topics and publications useful. To round his experiences, he joined and became active in trade associations related specifically to his line of business—the Steel Center Institute and Georgia Freight Bureau, Inc., for example.

‘I Never Learn How to Play’

スミス氏は自分は遊び方は身に付けなかったし、仕事の虫であったと思っている。趣味の一つが財務諸表を読むことであるとしている。学生たちに財務諸表を読むように話す、特に、脚注に注意するよう話している。会計の素養を身に付けたことによって、種々の働く機会が与えられたと思っている。

Mr. Smith retired from J.M. Tull in 1981 and became secretary-treasurer of the J.M. Tull Foundation, where he “looks after the records and the dealings with the banks and occasionally will see some body,” he smiles modestly. The Foundation had been established in the early 1960s by philanthropic company owner J.M. Tull who wanted to encourage young people to pursue their education. Mr. Tull’s wife had and he had no children so “we have tried to perpetuate his name to a certain extent,” says Mr. Smith.

“For instance, over at the University of Georgia, we’ve donated enough money to have a chair in the accounting school, and the University named the accounting school the J.M.

Tull Scholl of Accounting. Now it is one of the top 10 schools in the country,” he says proudly. Mr. Smith, who is an adjunct professor at the University of Georgia, thoroughly enjoys teaching. The Foundation also has donated money to other colleges and universities, mainly for buildings and scholarships.

Reminiscing about his career, he muses: “I guess I was a workaholic who never learned how to play, and it sounds strange, but one of my hobbies is reading financial statements—I love to read them. I tell my students to read those statements, but the place to go is the footnotes. That’s where you’re going to find out what the problems are and what the opportunities are, and there have been plenty in the last three or four years.” When he is not perusing annual reports, he spends his days with two foundations—J.M. Tull and another one—serves on several corporate boards of directors, and participates actively in numerous civic and trade organizations. Much of his time is taken up by the Trust Company of Georgia, where he is a director. He credits his accounting background with giving him the opportunity to serve in numerous financial capacities, especially on audit committees of various company boards. Take the bank, for example. “When I retired, the bank felt, well, old Smith doesn’t have anything to do, so it put me on every committee it has. The executive committee, for instance, looks at the big loans. Here again, I don’t think I could really serve as I should on that committee if I hadn’t had a background in accounting.”

Making Every Day Count

最後に、スミス氏は、Management accountants は常に会計および関連事項の教育を継続すべきであると信じ、それを実践している。成功したいと思ったら継続的な関心と研究が必要であるとして、毎日を大切にすることを強調している。

Management accountants always should continue their education in accounting and related matters, Mr. Smith believes, and he practices philosophy. An inveterate reader, he laughs: “My wife says if I bring any more books into the house, it’s going to sink.” At present he’s concentrating on the *Unraveling of America*, what happened to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, and various business books discussing economic trends and Management techniques. A few years ago, he even spent two weeks at the famed Aspen Institute, attending a lecture series.

Why all this emphasis on learning by a retired executive? “I had an old fellow tell me years ago, ‘Son, count that day lost you don’t learn something.’ That’s pretty good advice. I’ve just tried my best over the years and hope I will continue to be challenged until I’m

laid under. I never did want to get caught on an accounting situation or other topic with my peers or anyone else...a continuing interest and study are necessary if you really want to be successful.”

(注)

- (1) Kathy Williams, “George E. Smith: Let Ethics Guide Your Decisions”, Management Accounting, February 1985, pp.18-22.
- (2) Robert G. Morgan, Jalaeddin Soroosh, and Charles J. Woelfel, “Are Ethics Dangerous to Your Job?”, Management accounting, February 1985, pp.25-32.
- (3) Anne J. Rich, “The Controller Who Said ‘No’”, Management Accounting, February 1985, pp.34-36.

(Materials Introduction for Accounting Ethics.)