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Parallel goods trader jailed for bribery over sale of iPad2s

14 November 2012

A parallel goods trader, charged by the ICAC, was today (Wednesday) sentenced to two months' imprisonment at Fanling Magistracy for offering illegal commissions to employees of an electrical appliances retail chain in return for iPad2s.

Lau Yuen-mau, 28, earlier pleaded guilty to two counts offering an advantage to an agent, contrary to Section 9(2)(a) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

In sentencing, Deputy Magistrate Ms Cherry Hui Shuk-ye said the defendant deserved a custodial sentence in view of the seriousness of the bribery offences.

The magistrate added that the starting point of three months in jail was reduced to two months, taking into account the defendant's guilty plea.

The court heard that at the material times, there was a great demand for iPad2s from the public when the products were launched for sale in Hong Kong.

Fortress, an electrical appliances retail chain under A.S. Watson Group (HK) Limited (Watson), required its employees to follow the guidelines in selling iPad2s. Under the guidelines, employees of Fortress were prohibited from reserving iPad2s for customers, and soliciting and accepting advantages in relation to its business affairs.

The court heard that since April 2011, the defendant had started purchasing iPad2s from the Fortress shop in Whampoa Garden as well as its customers for resale to seek profits.

On a day in May 2011, the defendant approached a senior sales advisor of the Fortress shop when the latter was on his way to toilet.

The defendant offered to pay commissions to the senior sales advisor as rewards for helping him buy iPad2s, so that he was not required to queue up for the products at the shop. The commissions were at \$100 to \$150 per set of iPad2, but the request was turned down.

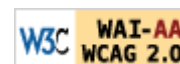
The court heard that on May 17, 2011, the defendant followed a supervisor of the Fortress shop in New Town Plaza and his colleagues when they were taking a train to Mongkok after work.

After alighting from the train in Mongkok, the supervisor was stopped by the defendant in the vicinity of Nelson Street.

The defendant requested the supervisor to give him a prior notification about the availability of iPad2s for sale, and asked how much money he would accept for doing so. But the defendant's request was refused, the court was told.

Watson had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during its investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by prosecuting counsel Diana Cheung, assisted by ICAC officer Edward Cheng.

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