

Company director jailed for corruption

She submitted false quotations with high prices from fake firms to ensure her firm won tenders

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The director of a company which provided design services for the Singapore Aviation Academy (SAA) was jailed for eight weeks after admitting to 15 counts of corruption which the prosecution argued had brought a public body into disrepute.

Winnie Lee, 43, had submitted false quotations from fake companies with higher prices to ensure her company won each of the tenders with a lower offer price.

The offences occurred over nearly five years involving contracts

worth \$66,556 paid with public funds and the court was told SAA, the training wing of the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS), liked her work.

Lee was creative director of Achatas 360, which supplied design services to SAA for journals, periodicals and publicity items.

The SAA required three quotations for each tender and she took the “easy way out” by submitting two fake quotes for each tender.

Her lawyers Irving Choh and Melissa Kor argued she had acted at all times “in what she thought was the best interests of both parties, albeit wrongly”.

Urging that she be fined for the

charges, they pointed out that the net profits derived from the project were small, and that the company had even suffered losses between October 2009 and September 2010 while SAA did not suffer “any detriment”.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Sanjiv Vasvani, in seeking a jail term, argued that the case raised “public interest considerations, as persons like (her) are expected to act with absolute probity when dealing with government agencies”.

“The accused fell short of the standard of integrity demanded of vendors with the Government, and had in fact abused her position for personal gain,” he added.

District Judge Salina Ishak found there were aggravating factors, noting Lee had “clearly played an active role as she had deliberately manipulated the quotations in order to protect her own rice bowl”.

The judge added, in judgment grounds released this week, that this was not a “one-off offence”, pointing to the pattern of criminal activity and that she was charged with 67 similar charges.

The judge said Lee had gained personally, having a 40 per cent share in the company.

“CAAS is a public agency; funds used by the agency... are considered public funds which in itself was an aggravating factor.

“It is because of her involvement that SAA had not considered other genuine potential vendors.”

The judge sentenced Lee to four weeks’ jail on each of the 15 charges, with two of the sentences to run consecutively. Lee is appealing against the sentence.

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