

Legal Department

Brief History

This department started with the inception of the temple in the year 2004. As the temple was to be inaugurated, there were questions raised on whether the temple had the required permissions- this being the Department's first assignment. Apart from Legal, PR was also required as the media was involved. A lot of support was received in the initial days from HG Bimal Krishna Prabhu, General Secretary of Hindu Religious Council, London.

Overview of Workflow

- Whenever an issue arises, Media and Legal are the 2 aspects that are considered are Media and Legal. When legal issues are concerned, as much details as possible are collected to ascertain all reasons for the issue.
- All our documents are verified to check whether they are sufficient. If not, adequate steps are taken to fulfill the requirements.
- Advice is sought from the Management Committee, above which is the GBC. Legal advice, if necessary, is sought from professionals.
- During the initial tussles over adequate permission, help was sought from HG Bimal Krishna Prabhu, who contacted then Vishwa Hindu Parishad President Ashok Singhal. He then personally met the Chief Minister, after which the issue was clarified.
- Contacts with the higher governmental authorities and bureaucrats have to be maintained for work to run smoothly. Hence, PR department must ensure that cordial relations are maintained with politicians and government personnel.

Key Success Factors

- Dignitaries usually have a lot of ego and care must be taken not to hurt their ego and be humble with them. Inviting for festivals, giving them prasadam and gifts are some of the ways of maintaining cordial relations with them.
- As far as media is concerned, it is easy to manage as Ujjain is a small place and there is not much of media coverage.

Management Structure

International Public Relations are managed by HG Anuttama Prabhu. At the national level, it is managed by HG Vrajendranandan Prabhu with HG Bimal Krishna Prabhu as legal advisor.

Notable Points

- Ujjain is one of the 'Moksha Daini nagri' and hence thronged by pilgrims all-round the year.
- Initially many had a negative image about ISKCON being a cash rich organization with funding from the West. With effective communication, people are now aware of our philosophy and ideology.
- Our close media associates are given a true and clear picture about all temple activities. They are invited to the temple to have an idea of how it functions. This is done so that there are no negative reports and rumours about ISKCON.
- For mitigating legal issues, it is ensured that all activities follow the proper legal course. It is ensured that the title, of all lands purchased and received in donations, are clear. From the

beginning all documents are properly prepared and presented so that no confusion arises in future.

Lessons

- All legal documents should be properly prepared from the very beginning.
- Maintain cordial relations with other spiritual organizations and to not disrespect or hurt others' sentiments.