An Ethical CommInsure?

When the CommInsure encountered yet another scandalous moment in their operations, people described the situation as, “CommInsure is at it again.” It was a statement that implied the fact that the company had faced a previous case of a scandal, and just began another, probably too soon before its customers, and the general members of the public forgot it. The Commonwealth Bank’s Insurance branch, at the time of the new scandal of using dubious means to dismiss payouts, had spent two years in rebuilding their lost reputation.

One cannot imagine paying insurance premiums for years, and fail to secure claims when they need them. CommInsure has been in the news across Australia and the world for pressing its doctors to alter medical reports, as a means of dismissing customer claims, and deny them their compensations regardless of the justifications they have for such claims (The Sydeney Morning Herald 2016). The medical officers at CommInsure have confessed to having faced intense pressure from the management to change the medical reports, or delete customers’ medical files if they would be used to justify the need for the company to payout such claims (Yeates 2016).

However, the Commonwealth Bank has remained adamant that it has learnt its lesson from the previous case involving financial advice to its customers. David Turner, the Chairman of Commonwealth Bank, has been in strong defense of the organization despite the major scandals derailing ethical image. In an interview with one of the mainstream media personalities, the Chairman says, "We will be the ethical bank, the Bank others look up to for honesty, transparency, decency, good management, openness” (Yeates, Commonwealth Bank to pay out A$80m in refunds to customers 2015). Even though it is not clear what the other members of the organization have to say about the unethical acts, the Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank has come out to defend the actions, stating that being ethical does not translate into being perfect (Longstaff 2016). The chairperson makes an appeal to ethics since they have manifested desperate attempts to redeem their ethical standards over the previous years.

Even though the chairperson tries to dissociate ethics from perfection, the two aspects of a business play a pivotal role in building the image of the organization. Furthermore, it would be unimaginable to imagine a company that defrauds and rejects its customers at a time when such customers need them most. Just as the Dr. Koh, the former Chief Medical Officer narrates, he did not understand how someone, in a clear state of their conscience, go to bed knowing that they participated in denying someone an opportunity to save themselves from a death moment when such a person needed them most. The former medical officer confesses that he got disappointed when the company insisted on making a profit at all cost, by stopping to care about the welfare of its claimants.

Even if it is the highest standard of ethics that Commonwealth have striven to achieve (Roddan 2016), it is clear they are far from achieving it. Denying dying patients their rights to compensation using dubious medical and legal frameworks is the epitome of unethical practice. Commonwealth Bank should be ready and willing to rise to the occasion, fulfil its obligation, just as the customers have fulfilled theirs in tandem with the terms of conditions of the insurance policy.

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