

Personal and Organizational Ethics and Values

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Not-For-Profit Organization: Salvation Army

The role of the Salvation Army, whose main headquarter is located in London, revolves around feeding, clothing, comforting and caring for human life in a biblical form. William Booth who focused his preaching to the poor thereby attracting many lower social class followers such as thieves, gamblers, and drunkards (Taia & Stock, 2009) founded it. His group of followers grew day by day to more than 1000 followers and 42 evangelists by 1874. All, this time, they used the name 'The Christian Mission'.

Booth's report in 1878 pointed out that the 'The Christian Mission' is a volunteering army thereby the 'Salvation Army' that is used to date. The group has got a considerably large impact considering that the army has helped approximately 30 million people in various services including rehabilitation, veteran affairs, hunger, relief, homeless services, recreation and emergency disaster (Taylor, 2015). The Salvation Army has been exempted all federal taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code by the federal government.

Ethical Dilemma

The army was faced with an ethical dilemma on an issue relating to sexuality. It is common for the army to send various statements in response to matters relating to sexuality. The army provides that only heterosexuals will have officer positions in their organization. In spite of infinite public criticism, the army has continued to hold this belief and not at any point has it appointed a homosexual as an officer in their organization.

In its positional statements that act as a guide to moral and ethical issues, it is easy for one to note that the army does not tell anyone or the Salvationist on what to think but it has

guidelines for them over the homosexuality issue (Wilson, 2014). From the positional statements, the army has continuously attempted to convince the Salvationists and the world at large on the distinction between orientation and conduct or lifestyle relating to homosexuality. In its position relating to homosexuality, the Salvation Army adopts that the homosexual orientation is not blameworthy, but the homosexual behavior disqualifies anyone from soldering or from taking any leadership position in the army.

The position is substantiated by the belief that sexual relationships are only rightfully allowed for married heterosexuals. The army's beliefs do not allow any Salvationist outside marriage to involve themselves in sexual acts irrespective of whether they are heterosexuals or homosexuals (Hill, 2015). It is the Army's beliefs that a homosexual soldier or leader would remain celibate. This issue has, for a considerably long period, led to ethical, social and moral questioning and squabbles.

Response

In response to the unethical dilemma discussed in the previous section, the Salvation Army has taken several actions. Many campaigns and seminars have been conducted in an attempt to explain to the Salvationist as well as other people in the world the moral reasons behind non-homosexuality leadership (Cohen, 2013). The army always bases its explanation and arguments on two major aspects, the natural law, and the Bible.

The baseline of natural law is that God has put in place all structure that are in existence so that certainly can be met. People should, therefore, act to ensure that their actions are rightful enough to satisfy the purposes and achieve the ends. According to the tenets of natural law, people frustrate the purposes and the ends when they intentionally act in a manner that does not

help in the attainment of such ends. In matters of sexuality, the salvation army responds using this law by proving that God's purpose for sex was love and procreation. Where it is used for other reasons other than those above, then such individuals act contrary to the provisions of natural law. Homosexuality is, therefore, inherently disordered.

From the biblical aspect, the Salvation Army provides various responses. In one of the responses that assume the Bible literally and takes it God's instructions to be obeyed, the Army provides that the Bible plainly and directly prohibits homosexuality (Wilson, 2014). In such responses, the Bible is portrayed as a special place where God speaks to us through its instructions.

Outcome

The army's response has stimulated outcomes in almost all aspects including political, social and legal aspects. Most of the political leaders from almost all parts of the world, especially those in the influential nations such as the United States, have been speaking against religions that discriminate homosexuals and the larger Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group. Expectedly, the issue stimulates heated arguments and debates among the gay leaders and the anti-gay leaders (Hill, 2015). For instance, the LGBT/ anti-LGBT issues have formed a major part of the ongoing presidential debates in the United States.

Legally, the position by the salvation army has stimulated the development of various laws and organizational policies to ensure that the LGBT are not extremely discriminated. Some countries have legal provisions for LGBT while other are against LGBT. The Salvation Army normally has difficult times in countries where the law provides that the LGBT should not be discriminated for being LGBT.

One of the major social outcomes of the responses given by the Salvation Army includes the fact that most of the soldiers in the army tend to avoid their counterparts with whom they are of a common gender (Merritt, 2006). Differing opinions have as well erupted as a result of the position given by the army.

For-Profit Organization: Costco

Company Profile

United States and the second in the world. Costco's was founded by James Sinegal and Jeffrey Brotman by opening their first store in Seattle, Washington in 1983. Costco's headquarters are currently based in Issaquah, Washington, where they operate 674 warehouses in various locations around the world employing more than 198000 people. In 2014, Costco's reported \$115 billion in total revenue (Gerston, 2014).

The main competitors include Walmart, Amazon, and BJ's. Walmart and Amazon, in particular, pose stiff competition to Costco. Walmart, for instance, started 21 years before Costco, and it was the first to advance technologically. This provided an appropriate platform for the organization to cut down on production costs, increase productivity and provide its services in a more efficient and effective manner. Amazon, on the other hand, operates on an entirely online business model with showroom as the compliments. The greatest threat that Amazon creates for Costco and its competitors is the newly created app that enables customers to scan any barcode and find the item on Amazon. With the application, consumers can compare the price of a product from inside a Costco to Amazon.

One of the major business obstacles that have faced Costco is its sole dependency on North America for sales. To overcome this obstacle, Costco started online sales that attracted a

considerably large percentage (51%) of its consumers. This initiative has attracted especially those consumers of the ages between 16-34 (Fuller et al., 2007).

Ethical Dilemma

Costco was faced with an unethical dilemma when its chicken salad was linked an E Coli outbreak. The outbreak affected several individuals from seven states in America. The bacterial contamination cases relating to the Costco/ E Coli dilemma were prevalent in states like Montana, Washington, Colorado and Utah. The outbreak affected nineteen individuals and were confirmed to have consumed food from Costco that was contaminated with E. Coli. The most unfortunate thing is that five been were hospitalized, and they developed a type of kidney failure known as a hemolytic uremic syndrome (Pollock, 2012). Fortunately, no one died in spite of the fact that Costco did not ship in to provide support for their treatment.

It is doubtless that Costco's name was tarnished by this unethical saga especially in the western states where most people were infected and hospitalized. For instance, four of the nineteen individuals whose E. Coli contamination from Costco's foods was confirmed were from Colorado. With this in mind, it will be considerably difficult for customers to regain their total trust in Costco. In other states like Washington, there was only one person who was infected, and he was not even hospitalized. The saga position Costco in an unethically questionable position in the market.

Response

In response to this dilemma, the company apologized to members of the public above all other responses given. In addition, Costco removed nearly 40000 pounds of purportedly contaminated chicken from their stores and shelves (Stabo, 2015). Moreover, the organization

promised to conduct a test on all the currently held vegetables for E. Coli and salmonella before returning them to their shelves. It was confirmed that this was not just but a promise, but it happened. The organization invested heavily in ensuring that all material that were on the shelves or the store were tested for the bacteria above.

In its response also, using substantiated evidence, the company proved to members of the public and other interested parties that the outbreak was not caused by the chicken itself but the vegetables in the salad. In another test performed by the Food and Drug Administration and Montana health official, the contamination was easily traced to the onion and the celery rather than the chicken itself (Stabo, 2015). There is, however, no substantial evidence to support these claims. By associating E. Coli contamination with the vegetables, Costco implied to the consumers that it was not the one that caused the contamination, but the vegetable company known as Taylor Farms. The farms company made no comments whatsoever.

Outcome

Costco's response did not attract any political outcomes, but there were social as well as legal outcomes. Among the legal outcomes, include the fact that Costco had to review their internal legal systems to ensure that policies that are well aligned with the reactions are either put in place or advanced. For instance, after the organization's promise that a test shall have to be conducted on all vegetables for E. Coli and salmonella, a policy to authorize employees and other members of staff was developed and implemented (Garber, 2008). Moreover, to ensure that the same does not happen again, the organization devoted itself to developing policies that favor continuous and repeated tests and checks for contamination.

Looking at the outcomes of the organization's response from a social perspective, it is important to point out that Costco is one of the most trusted retailers in the United States. The apology and the promise that the management gave to members of the public played a considerably important role in ensuring that the waving trust was reinstated.

Part Three: Personal Reflections on Ethical Actions Taken

Not-for-profit Organization: Salvation Army

The Salvation Army responded in a morally responsible way. It adhered to all moral tenets and expectations of the society. In its response, the not-for-profit organization based the argument on moral grounds. It responded from a moral perspective by using the natural law and the Bible as the basis for its decisions and actions. Moreover, the response basis used were morally fit since they are the same basis that the society uses to guide its morals.

The ethical dilemma emanated from the not-for-profit organization after it declared its position regarding homosexuals taking leadership positions (Taylor, 2015). Its positions and its role in caring for human life in a biblical form seemed to contradict the prolonged ethical dilemma hence. Moreover, the dilemma was also viewed from a wider national perspective, and it was and continues to be one of the trending issues. Some countries are yet to settle on whether or not to legalize homosexuality.

In my opinion, the Salvation Army has done a considerable portion on what it was supposed to do as far as settling the ethical dilemma is concerned. However, being a key player in shaping societal moral values, the army is yet to exhaust what it should do. In spite of the fact that the issue has nationalized and taken over by other governmental and non-governmental organization, the Army still has a role to play.

To some extent, the Salvation Army can be said to be the cause of the problem since social concerns in the church grew after the organization's leadership declared its stand. Had it not declared its stand, no one would have been concerned. However, for the betterment of the church, achievement of its goals and the upholding of its values, the church had to declare its position on the matter (Wilson, 2014). There is no way the problem can or could have been solved without enlightening members and the people on the reason for the decision.

For Profit Organization: Costco

The Costco responded in a morally responsible way. All its responses (both active and passive) were within the tenets of societal expectations of moral responsibility. Moreover, any claim was substantiated with facts while realistic and actionable strategies supported any promise. At the climax of its response, Costco portrayed itself as a morally responsible organization by withdrawing more than 40000 pounds of chicken from its shelves and promised to conduct a test on the currently held vegetables (Stabo, 2015).

It is not clear whether the ethical dilemma emanated from Costco or the Taylor Farms. It is, however, clear that the dilemma was caused one of the two companies. Vegetables and food substances are handled at several points, it could, therefore, be possible that none of those above organizations caused the dilemma. It is also clear that the dilemma was not an outcome of unforeseen force.

Costco could have done more but more was not feasible. Considering that both the organizations involved with the saga have considerable customer trust, it is infeasible to continue investing more in strategies to regain customer trust because the few initiatives had already regained the trust. Costco took small but significant actions in its bid to regain customer trust and

be morally responsible (Hill, 2015). The company, therefore, took enough initiatives to reinstate or positively outdo its previous market position in the mind of the consumer.

Either Costco or the Taylor Farms was responsible for the E. Coli contamination. Costco, however, shifts the blame to Taylor Farms since the Montana health and Food and Drug Administration that the contamination was easily traced to the onion and the celery rather than the chicken itself confirmed it. It could have been prevented by conducting tests before placing the items on the shelves for sale.

Part Four: A Critique of the Company's Actions Based on Philosophical Theories

Not-for-profit Organization: Salvation Army

The Salvation Army seems to be abiding with the divine command theory that is a philosophy under the deontology theory. According to this philosophy, a particular action is regarded as right if God has declared that it is right. Conversely, an action is deemed wrong if God has declared that such an action is wrong. It is with the foundation of this theory that the organization was able to use the biblical aspect in providing a response to the ethical dilemma.

My opinion is that this was the best theory to be used by such an organization that has a religious background. It is important for the organization to consider all its actions from a biblical point of view since this is its mission. As it had been pointed out earlier, the organization conducts its functions in a biblical form.

Running an ethical business implies running a business that treats others the same way one would wish to be treated in a similar situation. Ethical businesses are expected to conduct all its operations honestly, openly, consistently, fairly and most importantly, in the best interest of

others (Merritt, 2006). The best way for the Salvation Army to maintain its competitive edge and contribute to overall good and happiness about its workers and customers is by ensuring that, as it does in its moral and social issues communication platform, all issues have clearly outlined guidelines. It is important to consider that the armies compete in its intentions to win more followers.

For Profit Organization: Costco

The Costco seems to be abiding with the utilitarianism theory that is based on the consequences of the actions. According to the theory, the consequences of the actions dictate whether or not certain actions are right or wrong. If the net pleasure derived from certain actions is negative, the actions are deemed wrong. In Costco's case, the net pleasure derived from consumption of the chicken they sold was negative since they were contaminated. For this reason, continuing to offer such chicken for sale was wrong, hence the withdrawal of more than 40000 pounds of chicken from the shelves (Stabo, 2015).

The utilitarianism was the best theory to be used for the consequences of certain actions were already evident. It was not a matter of predictions but real facts that existed. This made the theory most suitable and most applicable. From the lessons learned from the consequences, the organization rectified what was wrong and learned what is regarded as good for posterity.

It is important that Costco continues to use the theory to learn more about the needs of the consumers aiming to satisfy them in a better way and maintain a competitive edge.

Moreover, in a bid to contribute to the overall good or happiness of its customers, the organization should ensure that product quality is improved through the introduction of a testing department (Pollock, 2012). This department would be important in ensuring that contamination

tests are conducted throughout the production period as opposed to instantaneously when the undesirables occur. By doing this, customers would get the assurance that the unpredicted contamination would not occur again. Conversely, customer trust would be regained as the competitive edge is maintained.

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