Wells Fargo Assignment

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Egoism

Wells Fargo and its executive management commit fraud and they should face the consequences for their actions. Although it seems that their actions were based on self-interest because they had no regard for their clients and the financial difficulty that they put them in, however their actions does not subscribe to the standard of egoism. This theory is based on self-interest and it assumes that everyone acts in its own self-interest. This is a normative theory and it describe how people should behave and not how people actually behaves. Wells Fargo were selfish, and selfishness does not form part of this theory. It's also an ethical theory, and fraud is not ethical. Ethical egoists make moral judgments. For example, most ethical egoists will judge fraud as wrong because it is rarely in one's long term self-interest to commit fraud. There is, after all, a chance you will get caught and end up in prison.

Utilitarianism

According to utilitarianism, an action is morally right if it results in the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people affected by the action. If a disadvantage cannot be avoided and the decision or action resulting in the smallest number of people suffering, the decision would be ethically correct.

If we apply this theory to the Wells Fargo case, it is clear that the opposite has happened. Meaning that only a few people (senior management) benefit from this fraud and the larger portion of people suffered as a result of the fraud. According to this theory an action is right if it tends to promote happiness and wrong if it tends to produce the reverse of happiness—not just the happiness of the performer of the action but also that of everyone affected by it. The happiness that this action brought to the senior management of the company was short-lived and in the end everybody was unhappy.

Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics is an overall term that refers normative theories interested in the character and virtues of the person performing actions. An action is good if it is what a virtuous person would do. Moral actions are not measured by reference to normative standards such as rules and motives or outcomes and consequences. Patience, courage, temperance and justice are all seen as virtuous and characteristics of a virtuous person.

None of these actions were displayed by the Wells Fargo's senior management and I think it would be fair to say none of them possess any of these character traits. A virtuous person would not have done any of the things that they did to their clients. It they had patience, they would wait to build their company slowly into a formidable force. Courage is neither cowardly nor foolhardy. They would treat their clients fair and be open transparent with them, that what justice means. They work with people's money and trust and honesty is i character trait that they should have possessed which clearly they lacked.

Ethics of duty

Deontological (duty-based) ethics are concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions. Under this form of ethics, you can't justify an action by showing that it produced good consequences, which is why it's sometimes called 'non-consequentialist'. Duty-based ethics are usually what people are talking about when they refer to 'the principle of the thing'.

Deontologists live in a universe of moral rules, such as:

- It is wrong to kill innocent people
- It is wrong to steal
- It is wrong to tell lies
- It is right to keep promises

The Wells Fargo senior management lacked credibility. They had no regard for their customers and fellow human beings. They steal, lied and failed to keep their promises towards their customers. Someone who follows duty-based ethics should do the right thing, even if that produces more harm (or less good) than doing the wrong thing. They have a duty to do the right thing, even if it produces a bad result. The Wells Fargo team what they were doing was wrong and yet they continued with it.