

# Case needs to be empowered



By KWAN JIN YAO

REFER to the report, "Customers stranded by salon's closure" (*my paper*, April 1).

The unexpected closure of Wax in the City sparked a backlash from customers who had signed up for packages costing up to thousands of dollars.

Indeed, the irresponsible actions of a beauty parlour can

have adverse effects on the industry. In the long run, the credibility of such salons could be eroded.

While a company aims to maximise profits, its corporate aspirations must be guided by integrity.

However, questions must also be asked of the role of the Consumers Association of Singapore (Case), which had received 201 complaints about the beauty salon since last year.

Could it have **kept tabs on** the salon's Orchard Central branch, the only one open, while its other two branches were purportedly closed for renovation?

It is true that customers should have been more cautious. However, if Case was aware

of the risks involved in signing up for packages with a salon that has received many complaints, it could have introduced some safeguards – such as limiting the cost of packages that can be sold, or even requesting the salon to set aside funds in the event it has to close down.

Case needs to play a more active role, beyond a purely **advisory** one. Not only does it need to be more involved in mediating resolutions in consumer complaints, but it also needs to be more aggressive in pursuing errant business owners.

The fact that unhappy customers have tried to get compensation through their own actions shows, to a certain extent, the absence of faith in Case.

If the Government plans to rely on Case to **resolve** consumer disputes, Case must be empowered, as it works closely with the Small Claims Tribunal.

◆ *The writer is a full-time national serviceman who blogs about current affairs.*

## HELPDESK 我的字典

**Closure:** 倒闭 dǎo bì

**Kept tabs on:**  
密切注意 mì qiè zhù yì

**Advisory:** 咨询的 zī xún de

**Resolve:** 解决 jiě jué

## Machines must work at 24-hour bank

I APPLAUD POSB's initiative in converting its Toa Payoh North branch into a 24-hour banking lobby.

I decided to deposit a cheque there last Monday at about 6am, but the cheque-deposit machine was out of service. It was still out of service the next morning.

While the machine has since been fixed, I hope POSB monitors its machines to alert its maintenance crew to problems promptly.

In this way, customers will not be inconvenienced and the bank can live up to its 24-hour-banking slogan.

MR CHIN KEE THOU

## Malaysia network takes over SingTel's

MY SON received four "Welcome to Malaysia" SMSes in Singapore last month.

A few days later, he received three such SMSes again.

I called SingTel to check and was surprised to hear that when its network is weak, the Malaysian network takes over.

It is worrying that Singapore-

ans might unknowingly incur expensive mobile-phone charges this way. I was informed by SingTel that an SMS costs more than S\$1.

Apparently, SingTel has been trying to rectify this situation since early this year.

Recently, I asked SingTel about cancelling a value-added

service and was told that I had to visit one of its Hello shops to make the cancellation.

This is time-consuming, in view of advances in technology, especially when it takes only a phone call to apply for such services.

MRS SHIRLEY LIM

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