ETHICS:

Cynthia Schoeman
looks at the best
and worst of ethical
behaviour in business

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aid, fraud leads to
to higher premiums
for all members. When the
organization’s leaders are guilty of breaches of
ethics, because of their influence as role
models, this has the particularly destruc-
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denominator” behaviour.

Guilty individuals sometimes at-
tempt to use in their defence the claim
that the incident was a “mistake”. Mis-
takes and errors imply that the behav-
ioral incident was accidental in na-
ture – which, crucially, means that it
was not intentional. However, when the
misconduct has happened over a
period of time it cannot be considered
an error. Similarly, when the conduct
was in clear breach of the law and good
business governance practices, it cannot
be reframed as a mistake when un-
covered. On the contrary, it implies an
intention to delude or defraud.

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Citizens often pay additional fees to
companies operating in South Africa that are
entitled. In business, instead
of adding corresponding value.

The Bad

The cases of misconduct which fall
within “the bad” category are arguably
no less bad than those above – they
only tend to negatively impact fewer
people. This typically includes unethical
practices and conduct in the private
sector, and there are many examples
locally and internationally which illus-
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The repercussions are significant: job
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Cynthia Schoeman is managing
director of Ethics Monitoring &
Management Services which has
developed The Ethics Monitor,
a web-based survey that enables
leaders to measure, monitor and
proactively manage their organi-
zation’s ethical status