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Case #152-2024: Administrative Closure – ibuumerang, Ltd

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Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council
Case #152-2024: Administrative Closure – ibuumerang, Ltd

Company Description

ibuumerang, Ltd (“ibuumerang” or the “Company”) is a direct selling company that offers discount travel for its members. The Company is headquartered in Houston, Texas and was founded in 2019.

Basis of Inquiry

The Direct Selling Self-Regulatory Council (“DSSRC”) is a national advertising self-regulation program administered by BBB National Programs. This inquiry was commenced by DSSRC pursuant to its ongoing independent monitoring of product and income claims in the direct selling industry.

This inquiry included the following nine representative earnings claims, which were communicated on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube:

Earnings Claims:

- “🌐 Are you ready to embark on a life-changing journey? Join the Ibuumerang family today and unlock incredible opportunities for travel, financial freedom, and personal growth! ✈️💰🌟 . . . Let Ibuumerang be your vehicle to financial independence and freedom. 🚀👉”
- “No experience needed...will train. Opportunity to work from home and earn an unlimited income.”
- “. . . revealing how to make money with Ibuumerang, and how complete beginners earning \$100-\$700 a day with no experience and without having to annoy their friends and family”
- “I get paid about \$5,000 per client for an hour.”
- [caption] “check out ibuumerang and what we have to offer. residual income” [19:51] “If you’re looking for, again, some extra money. Looking for, you know, replacing an income. You’re going to be excited.”
- “What does FREEDOM mean to you? / Does TIME Freedom mean anything to you? / Does FINANCIAL Freedom?”
- “Take 30-45 minutes out of your schedule today to see how you can Xcellerate your life into Financial Freedom!!!”
- “Through Ellev8, you can achieve financial freedom by learning how to trade ANYWHERE and ANYTIME! Whether it's in a mountainous getaway or the tropical rain forests, as long as you have an access to a phone or laptop, you could be earning your living! Travel to trade and trade to travel - where are YOU achieving financial freedom this year? “
- “What does financial freedom look like for you? / My financial freedom looks like: having enough to invest in projects I want to; the ability to pay ALL my bills, help whomever I want, afford a holistic life of abundance, and have enough to manage any unforeseen events.”

Company's Position

ibuumerang reported to DSSRC that it had been successful in removing three of the posts brought to its attention by DSSRC. With respect to the six posts that remain publicly accessible, the Company provided the following information:

Claim: *“No experience needed...will train. Opportunity to work from home and earn an unlimited income.”*

Company Response: The Company stated that the individual responsible for disseminating the post had no affiliation to ibuumerang and that despite its efforts, the Company could not locate the individual. ibuumerang confirmed to DSSRC that it has contacted Facebook to facilitate the removal of the post.

Claims:

- “. . . revealing how to make money with Ibuumerang, and how complete beginners earning \$100-\$700 a day with no experience and without having to annoy their friends and family”
- “What does FREEDOM mean to you? / Does TIME Freedom mean anything to you? / Does FINANCIAL Freedom?”

Company Response: The Company informed DSSRC that both of the posts were made by the same active salesforce member and although ibuumerang tried repeatedly to contact the individual, she did not respond. As a result, the Company terminated the salesforce member's account. ibuumerang also added remarks in the comment section of both posts indicating “No response to date from the member. The account will remain in suspension. Then terminated in 30 days.”

ibuumerang also confirmed that it has attempted to contact Facebook and YouTube to facilitate removal of the posts.¹

Claim: *“Take 30-45 minutes out of your schedule today to see how you can Xcellerate your life into Financial Freedom!!!”*

Company Response: According to ibuumerang, this post was made by an active salesforce member, and although Company tried repeatedly to contact the individual, she did not respond to the ibuumerang's correspondence. ibuumerang terminated the salesforce member's account and added a comment on the Facebook posts to communicate the termination of the account. The Company again confirmed that it was unsuccessful in having Facebook take any action on the posts.

Claim: *“What does financial freedom look like for you? / My financial freedom looks like: having enough to invest in projects I want to; the ability to pay ALL my bills, help whomever I want, afford a holistic life of abundance, and have enough to manage any unforeseen events.”*

Company Response: ibuumerang informed DSSRC that although it was able to contact the salesforce member, she did not take action to remove the post and, accordingly, her account was suspended. The Company also confirmed that it contacted Instagram to have the post removed and provided DSSRC with copies of the correspondence as well as a screen shot of the Company's comments that were added to

the post (i.e., “THIS MEMBER IS SUSPENDED IN THE BACK OFFICE SHE HAS RESPONDED BUT THE VIOLATION IS STILL VISIBLE.”)

Claim: “🌐 Are you ready to embark on a life-changing journey? Join the Ibumerang family today and unlock incredible opportunities for travel, financial freedom, and personal growth! ✈️💰🌟 . . . Let Ibumerang be your vehicle to financial independence and freedom. 🚀👉”

Company Response: Although ibumerang communicated with the salesforce member responsible for the post and she had promised to take the necessary action to remove or modify the post, the post remains publicly accessible. The Company confirmed that the salesforce member’s account was suspended and that she is no longer an active member with the Company.

Administrative Closure

DSSRC appreciated the efforts of ibumerang to address its concerns that resulted in the removal of three of the nine posts brought to its attention in this inquiry. While DSSRC remains concerned that six of the posts remain publicly accessible, it recognized that the Company used its best, good-faith efforts to facilitate the removal of the posts including attempts to contact the individuals responsible for disseminating the posts; contacting the platforms where the post appeared and informing them that the post includes an unauthorized claim; and notifying the public in the comment section of the post that the claim was unauthorized and that the salesforce member’s account has been terminated or suspended.

As DSSRC has noted in previous inquiries, when a direct selling company is made aware of an improper claim that was made by an individual and the company recognizes the claim to be untrue and unsupported, DSSRC acknowledges that the direct selling company may not be able to require the individual to remove such claim if the individual is no longer active with the company. In that instance, if the social media platform where the subject post was made provides a mechanism for reporting trademark or copyright violations, DSSRC recommends that the direct selling company promptly utilize such mechanism and seek removal of the subject claims and posts. If efforts to utilize a mechanism for reporting trademark or copyright violations are unsuccessful or if the subject claim occurred on a website or platform without a reporting mechanism, DSSRC recommends that in addition to making a bona fide good faith effort to contact the individual as described above, the Company contact the website or platform in writing and request removal of the subject claim or post.

In addition, if the individual who was responsible for the social media post is an active salesforce member with the company and continues to be unresponsive to the company’s request to remove the post, the company should initiate enforcement measures pursuant to its Policy & Procedures and either suspend or terminate the account of the salesforce member.²

In this matter, DSSRC concluded that ibumerang demonstrated that it made a concerted effort to have the remaining posts at issue disabled and has committed to make a continued effort to remove the posts. Based upon the actions taken by the Company, DSSRC administratively closed its inquiry.

Conclusion

Based upon the good faith actions taken by ibumerang to address the concerns in the inquiry by removing three of nine posts that were the subject of inquiry, and its demonstration of a good faith effort to facilitate the removal of the six remaining posts, DSSRC administratively closed the inquiry.

(Case #152, closed on 03/13/2024)
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[1] ibumerang stated that the Facebook request-removal forms have been very unsuccessful in many cases. The Company has used the request-removal form, but Facebook does not assist in removal even if the Company shows ownership of its trademark. ibumerang informed DSSRC that it has engaged its compliance software and pays for an added service to assist with Facebook removals.

[2] See *Visi* at DSSRC Case#8-2022.