
From: Patrick Bourke [GRO]
Sent: Fri 24/05/2019 9:58:51 AM (UTC)
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Subject: Re: Brand, press coverage and solutions - Legally Privileged

Hi Mark

Thanks for sharing this.

How do you assess this ?

He notes that some of the measures he's contemplating would have consequences. I agree, and I think these are potentially really serious - eg on the GLO.

It may be the right thing to do, but I guess I worry a bit about where a reaction to the DM stuff might take us ?

Patrick

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 10:09 AM
To: Patrick Bourke
Subject: FW: Brand, press coverage and solutions - Legally Privileged

Just adding you to this

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: Alisdair Cameron
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 9:53:55 AM
To: Debbie.K Smith; Mark R Davies; Amanda Jones; Tracy Marshall; Emma Springham; Owen Woodley; Martine Munby; Ben Foat; Julie Thomas; Cathy Mayor; Jonathan Lewis; Mohinder Kang; Rob Houghton
Cc: Avene Regan
Subject: Brand, press coverage and solutions - Legally Privileged

Thanks both, and just widening the debate a little.

My feeling is that the brand is under attack from a number of fronts.

1. The GLO is causing brand damage with whoever hears about it. In the battle for “were we right or wrong to treat these postmasters as we did”, the Judge is clear that we were wrong – arrogant, overbearing and secretive. Corporate bullies. This is going to continue and get worse.
2. The CWU and effectively the Daily Mail are campaigning against franchising – this is the place where we intentionally close branches. At a minimum we need to reimagine the language around consultation – every MP nodded at SC when the consultation was described as a sham. Again, this plays to an agenda of being arrogant and not listening.
3. Postmaster pay. The NFSP campaign highlights a genuine issue and plays to the unfairness. This is backed up by stories of executive pay and Postmaster hardship. Postmaster complaints are also aimed at Royal Mail and the Government.

If our only objective was to minimise the brand noise, regardless of other consequences, we would

- Settle the GLO this Summer/Autumn almost at any price and create an independent process to manage all historical issues – PPI for Postmasters.
- Write to the Government and the Royal Mail to demand more for Postmasters in terms of Government revenue, guaranteed network subsidy and an end to round-the-sides competition. Share this campaign with the Daily Mail and let Postmasters see us fighting for them.
- Accelerate the Postmaster pay review so we can publish an answer quicker – before recess – and in the meantime make a guarantee “Postmasters will be paid at least £xm more next year”
- Intensely focus as we are on improving support and transparency for Postmasters – and talk about this openly in June, providing reassurance on Horizon
- Stop franchising DMBs while we review or do it permanently

Clearly, none of these steps would be wholly successful or guaranteed to succeed. And all have potential consequences: a more difficult relationship with our shareholder; asking RM for something that will cost us big in the negotiations; rushing to judgement on Postmaster pay and regretting it for years; leaving a heavy cost burden on DMBs which might precipitate capturing the value in other ways – new terms and conditions and the big, public fight that would go with it.

My gut feel at the moment is that we should definitely

- Write to the Minister now to set out what Government can and should do before her SC appearance. We do have to brace ourselves for the fact that if I was in her shoes I might ask for Postmaster pay, consultation reviews etc to be reviewed independently or report back to her.
- Finalise the scope of the pay review next week and see if we can get it done for July Board

Then the question is are we going to make things better or worse by engaging further now

- MPs. I would be tempted to publish a letter to the BEIS Select Committee with some careful explanation but putting flesh on the bones of the pay review and setting up a review of the franchising process? This could help them and others claim a victory and show we are open to argument.
- Daily Mail. Similarly, this might be enough to calm them especially if we give them credit.
- Government. My instinct is we have to do this in synch with Government as our shareholder and funder and supporter – but lets do the letter and continue talking about what we want very openly.
- CWU. We cant give them what they want, which is representation of Postmasters – not in our gift. The question is do we say so now or wait a few weeks and give them a open workshop?
- NFSP. I suspect Calum has been a bit shaken by all of this and would like to retreat a bit for now. We should engage them in our process changes and in the pay review.
- Postmasters. To date there is nothing to suggest that Postmasters are getting systemically agitated but clearly the DM coverage will generate customer questions and the danger is growing. I like Mark’s draft but I do worry that it is too vague to settle the worried (let alone the politicised) and could nonetheless make happy Postmasters worry more. We do need a very sharp tight narrative for verbals and we might turn it into a letter but to be helpful in settling people it might have to say (a) Postmaster pay will be higher this year than last (deposit increase, reverse simplification versus product changes and any residual NT fixed pay reductions (b) Postmaster pay will be higher next year than this and we will tell you the answer by XX date (c) you know H works because...(d) new processes for differences with more transparency € more operational support and MI (f) you will see branch hub,

one till etc etc as well as general points of newness and good intent.

Debbie, have your call and then lets have the debate.

Thanks Al



Al Cameron
Interim Chief Executive

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GRO

From: Debbie.K Smith [GRO]

Sent: 24 May 2019 09:09

To: Mark R Davies [GRO] Alisdair Cameron [GRO]

Subject: FW: Press coverage Debbie

FYI

From: Debbie.K Smith

Sent: 24 May 2019 09:03

To: Amanda Jones [GRO] Martine Munby [GRO]

Subject: RE: Press coverage

Hi Martine,

Totally agree with Amanda and was just reflecting on this myself.

There are a lot of Postmasters who are in a good to ok place, they can see and feel the changes that are happening and very supportive of what we are doing going forward .

There are a couple of group of PM's , one the GLO group who no matter what we say will not change their views and a second growing group who Julie referred to yesterday as the #MeToo's who are being lead and influenced by Mark Baker. Again whatever we do corporately will not appease this group. If we do a video we will just be inundated again with negative messages from the same people who don't want to listen anyway.

Our strategy has to be to use our new field team and the local relationships they have to influence locally, visiting all branches, listening events on evenings, conference calls locally

I support Amandas idea for her to to do a conference call today with Pam and Andy's DR's to involve and listen to them. You and I can join so we can help support whatever actions they think right.

Debbie

From: Amanda Jones [GRO]

Sent: 24 May 2019 08:50

To: Debbie.K Smith [GRO] ; Martine Munby [GRO]

Subject: Re: Press coverage

Hi, Just thinking about this the actions feel counter intuitive to the cultural change we re trying to drive. Debbie don't know what you think about video? What did we learn from the GLO one, what reaction did we get? For Comms to field team I'd prefer to do a conference call today with Pam & Andy Dr's & ask them how best to comm to rest of field team & Postmasters

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From: Martine Munby
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 8:20:19 AM
To: Debbie.K Smith; Amanda Jones
Subject: Press coverage

Hi both

You'll have seen the latest press coverage and I'll review current internal comms along side press rebuttals that Ruth is preparing.

There's some coverage around lack of support for postmasters and I think we need to counter this and really focus on the field team reorganisation etc.

Debbie I know Rina emailed you about doing a film, are you around to do this today? We've got a draft letter in plan but I'd like to do something today in addition to the a One article.

In terms of the retail team (especially Andy and Pam's teams) I feel we should do a note from one of you to put the press coverage in context and reassure them of the enormous value of what they're doing and how things are changing. I can work with Stef on this?

Let me know what you think.

M
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