
From: Elliot Jacobs [GRO]
Sent: Thur 18/01/2024 11:58:02 PM (UTC)
To: Saf ismail [GRO]; Nick Read [GRO]
Cc: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Subject: Re: Project Pineapple - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Nick
I strongly echo Saf's view on this.

The release of the confidential briefing note to the very people we have highlighted in the document is a horrendous breach of trust.

My only desire on this board as a Postmaster NED has been to ensure this organisation does the right thing and my actions have always sought to protect the organisation from both internal and external risks.

Your description of these three men (JB, Foat and Roberts) as "untouchable" in our call earlier today was worrying enough (especially in the light of our grave concerns as to their ability and the power they wield without any real oversight) but is only made worse by them now being told of our view of them. Only 1 board meeting ago these people came to Board to request authority to recommend Police investigations into Postmasters without Board oversight or approval - and thought nothing of it! To be so staggeringly out of step with reality of the world Post Office occupies today is beyond belief.

This latest fiasco places me and my business in an increased position of risk from these senior leaders (and their teams). I have grave concerns that I will be accused of attacking them purely because I was investigated and that they will use their untouchable power to restrict my future growth and damage my reputation internally and external. As long as they are in the business, I do not feel safe or protected - having been investigated once already (and still waiting for a letter confirming the matter is closed) - my experience is in fact the proof that we need change urgently and more over than we still cause undue stress and worry for Postmasters with our approach which is built upon 20+ years of believing Postmasters are guilty until proven innocent and collectively on the take.

How I am supposed to have a working relationship with both Ben Foat and Martin Roberts and the teams which they will no doubt share the confidential note with is uncertain and very worrying. These are the very people who want to downgrade the Postmaster NED capability and capacity on the board from 2 experienced PMs to 1 - at the very time we need PMs at the heart of this culture change.

Were it not for the fact that resigning would risk giving these people even more power I would submit my resignation to our Chair today; but, after much consideration, I will again endeavour to be part of the solution. I am determined to leave this business free of the toxic culture that risks destroying our collective future.

I look forward to your response on Saf's points.

Nick, change must happen, and happen without any further delay - however hard or difficult it might seem.

Elliot

From: Saf ismail (GRO)

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 10:08 PM

To: Nick Read (GRO)

Cc: Elliot Jacobs (GRO) Henry Staunton (GRO)

Subject: FW: Project Pineapple - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Nick,

I am writing to address a deeply concerning and distressing matter that has recently come to my attention. As you are aware, there was a confidential meeting held between myself, Elliott, and the Chairman, where we discussed our observations and concerns regarding the operations of the Post Office and our ongoing cultural issues. Regrettably, it has come to my knowledge that the notes of this meeting, which were intended to be kept in strict confidence, have been circulated to the individuals who were the subject of our discussion.

The implications of this breach of confidentiality are far-reaching and have placed me in an extremely compromising position. It has not only damaged the relationships between myself and those individuals (head of legal and head of Postmasters) but will have eroded trust and will create an atmosphere of tension and hostility and I worry about serious repercussion for me as a Postmaster as both these individuals are "untouchable" as you have said.

I am deeply troubled by how this breach occurred and what measures were in place to prevent such a mishap from happening.

Please see below my concerns which outlines the gravity of the situation. I request that you thoroughly investigate how this breach of confidentiality occurred and address the following questions:

1. Was this breach a result of negligence or a lack of judgment of your part?
2. How can a mistake of this magnitude happen within the organisation, especially when dealing with sensitive matters and with all the current spotlight on us?
3. By exposing me to such a compromising and jeopardising position, how do you expect me to continue working effectively with the individuals involved?

Furthermore, I would like to inquire if incidents of mistakenly sending confidential information to the end user have occurred in the past? It is crucial to understand if this is a recurring issue within our organisation and what steps have been taken to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Additionally, I have become aware of the distribution of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to individuals within the Post Office in recent years. I find it perplexing that you are not aware of this during the Select Committee's discussion on NDAs. I would appreciate clarification on this matter and whether the legal department may have withheld this information from you.

I am deeply committed to my role as a non-executive director and Postmaster. I have always strived to contribute my best efforts, honesty, and factual opinions for the betterment of our organisation. However, this incident has left me feeling vulnerable and uncertain about my ability to fulfil my duties effectively.

Given the gravity of the situation, I strongly urge you to seek external legal advice to understand the potential legal ramifications of this breach of confidentiality.

In addition, it is crucial to address the concerns of the Head of Legal and Retail, as they will undoubtedly have their own thoughts and concerns regarding this matter.

The mishandling of this email and the breach of confidentiality not only constitute a breach of duty but have also caused significant damage to my professional relationships. Moving forward, it is essential to restore trust and rectify the harm that has been done and possible future implications for me from these "untouchable" individuals. How do you suggest we solve these issues?

I kindly request your prompt attention to this matter and a thorough investigation into the breach of confidentiality. I trust that you will take the necessary actions to suggest a way forward.

Thank you for your understanding and immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Regards

Saf Ismail
Non-Executive Director

100 Wood Street,
London, EC2V 7ER
postoffice.co.uk

From: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Sent: 18 January 2024 18:17
To: Amanda Burton [GRO]; Andrew Darfoor [GRO]; Saf ismail [GRO]; Elliot Jacobs [GRO]; Simon Jeffreys [GRO]
Cc: Benjamin Tidswell [GRO]; Brian Gaunt [GRO]
Subject: Project Pineapple - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear All ,

Nick confirmed he had sent the confidential note to the Independent NEDs entitled Project Pineapple to Ben and Martin amongst others . This note contained the private comments of our Post Master NED colleagues inter alia on Ben and Martin .

I have suggested he immediately apologised to Elliot and Saf as this was a very serious incident as far as they and other NEDs were concerned . Elliot and Saf were now exposed to further investigations from these two individuals particularly in view of the fact that Investigations were " untouchable " (to use Nick's words) . I suggested he apologised to all the NEDs at our private meeting before the Board which he is happy to do .

Nick said it was an accident resulting from the huge pressures on him . There is a lot on his mind including the Investigation on him . He understands it was a serious lapse and was very apologetic .

Best , Henry

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)