

Message

From: Nick Wallis [GRO]
on behalf of Nick Wallis [GRO]
Sent: 16/12/2014 17:43:31
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Subject: RE: Queries

Thanks Mark.

N

From: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Sent: 16 December 2014 17:24
To: Nick Wallis
Cc: Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker; Jane French; Clare Hoban
Subject: RE: Queries

Hi Nick

Thank you for your email.

You are now changing tack, again, despite your colleague asserting a few hours ago that you had completed your film. I remain perplexed as to why we could not have been allowed a chance to speak in your film: here we are 24 hours before broadcast and this has not been accommodated, yet you now have further questions.

We can't reasonably be expected to maintain a running Q&A with you as you explore different and varied lines of enquiry.

However, for the record:

No-one has ever said that SPMRs 'love' Horizon, so please don't put words in our mouths. I daresay that I could canvas a number of BBC journalists and get a good range of comments about your IT. You say you have only come into contact with some postmasters who have had problems. Many, many others have not. And it is a serious leap to go where your film appears to be, which is to make, without evidence shared with us, some very serious allegations about the Post Office and its network.

Post Office constantly receives feedback on Horizon through a variety of sources.

The primary sources are the Network Business Support Centre, Horizon Service Desk and a Branch User Forum. Feedback is also delivered through a variety of BAU processes, e.g. from contact with the Finance Service Centre, and through discussion in the field with Contract Advisors and Field Support Agents.

That feedback is then assessed and implemented as appropriate through regular system reviews and upgrades implemented by both Post Office and our suppliers, and in product development (e.g. to streamline a new product's transaction journey).

Like all organisations we continually seek to improve our systems and processes for our customers, and we will continue to do so, including in IT through phased improvements.

Today the Government announced a new seven year contract for the Post Office Card Account, delivered through our branches to millions of customers. The unfounded suggestions around Horizon, for which you have provided no evidence, could have the impact of causing needless concern for all those people who use the account.

Last month our customers raised more than £1m through our branches for the BBC's Children In Need Appeal. Those payments were made through the Horizon system.

We deliver products and services, through Horizon, for Royal Mail, Bank of Ireland, all the high street banks (95pc of banking services are available through Horizon), DWP, DVLA, the Passport Agency and First Rate, among others.

We also have major franchise partnerships with big retailers including WH Smith, Tesco, McColls and Asda. Horizon is used successfully in all these outlets.

Like all major businesses we do encounter problems from time to time. But we have a number of arrangements in place, as set out above, to capture information and improve where necessary, with advice, support and assistance provided to colleagues across the largest retail network in the UK. We also receive regular feedback from our colleagues through a number of other avenues, such as our internal channels (Subspace magazine, Subspace Online etc...) which reach everyone in the network.

And then, of course, where we have had these specific complaints we set up the Second Sight review and the Mediation Scheme.

To your point about whether SPMRs are satisfied with Horizon, we have proactively advertised - twice - for people to come forward with concerns. This was done with the JFSA. As you know around 150 people came forward. And the issues they have raised are being taken very seriously indeed.

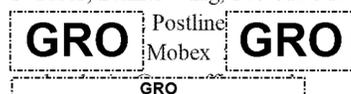
Finally, a number of SPMRs would I am sure be happy to speak to you about their experiences dealing with Horizon.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies I Communications and Corporate Affairs Director

1st Floor, Banner Wing, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ



From: Nick Wallis [GRO]
Sent: 16 December 2014 14:15
To: Mark R Davies
Cc: Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker; Jane French; Clare Hoban
Subject: RE: Queries

Hi Mark

As I said in my email this is for the chat on the One Show sofa after the film goes out. The film, as Jane indicated, is now completed.

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From: Mark R Davies; [REDACTED] GRO
Sent: 16 December 2014 14:13
To: Nick Wallis
Cc: Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker; Jane French; Clare Hoban
Subject: Re: Queries

Hi Nick

We will get back to you on this. Obviously these are new queries, despite Jane indicating that you had completed your film in an email an hour ago or so!

As you know we have around 78,000 people using Horizon every day. How many of them have you spoken to?

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [REDACTED] GRO

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Dec 2014, at 13:55, "Nick Wallis" [REDACTED] GRO > wrote:

Hi Mark

I wonder if you or your colleagues could help me with a few queries.

When was the last time the Post Office did any research into how satisfied or otherwise SPMRs are with the Horizon system? It would be very helpful to know the scope of that research and its results.

Is your statement about the vast majority of SPMRs not having any problems with Horizon based on customer feedback or purely on the volume of successful transactions?

I get the sense from speaking to a number of SPMRs that they don't like the system, they don't trust it and they live in fear of what the Post Office might do if they get something wrong with it. It may be because I only come into contact with SPMRs who are having problems that I keep hearing this, so it would be useful to know the other side of the coin.

If you have data which shows the vast majority of SPMRS love using Horizon and trust it implicitly, it would be useful to have that information.

Also is it true that you are in the process of commissioning a new system to replace Horizon? If so, why? And when do you expect it to be operational?

During my planned chat on the sofa with Matt and Alex tomorrow I will be reporting on the comments of MPs during the Westminster Hall debate. I'd also like to talk about my experiences of dealing with former and existing SPMRs and their attitude to Horizon, plus whether or not this system is due to be replaced any time soon.

Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks

Nick

From: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Sent: 15 December 2014 17:35
To: Jane French; Nick Wallis; Clare Hoban
Cc: Ingrid Kelly; Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker
Subject: Fwd: One Show

All

Just copying to Nick to ensure you all have the statement and answers to your questions.

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile [GRO]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Melanie Corfield [GRO]
Date: 15 December 2014 17:24:31 GMT
To: Jane French [GRO], "Clare.hoban" [GRO]
<[GRO]> [GRO] [GRO]
Cc: Mark R Davies [GRO] Ruth X Barker
[GRO] >
Subject: One Show

I attach the answers to the questions you have raised with us and also a short statement, for use in full please, in the film.
Please let me know if you need clarification about any of the information.

Thanks

Mel Corfield
Communications Team

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