



Post Office Counters Ltd

Mr. J. K. Beswick, Subpostmaster

GRO

10 March 2000
JMC/DPE/OldLeake

Dear Mr. Beswick,

Re : Unresolved Losses at Old Leake Post Office

In response to your letter of 5th March 2000 concerning the above and whilst I understand your concern, it is too soon to contemplate issuing any "Write-Off Authority" for the shortages.

I can only request that you hold over the shortages in your account for 8 weeks to allow for "error notices" to be issued. Please contact me again if the shortages have not been accounted for by Wednesday, 3rd May 2000. In the meantime, as you become more familiar and confident with the system I am sure these losses will cease.

Yours sincerely,

GRO

Jackie Cooper
Retail Network Manager (Area 25)

Post Office Counters Ltd
North Thames & East Anglia
Kings Lynn Retail Network Office
Baxters Plain
Kings Lynn PE30 1YB

Post Office Counters Ltd Registered in England
No: 2154540 Registered Office Gornale House
3-14 Buxton Row London EC1Y 8HQ

Old hoodie
Friday 10 March 2000

Dear Jackie,

For your attention as received.

One more thing arising out of Horizon, as if there aren't enough is interruption of service. There is the usual complexity we seem to have in Horizon to re-boot and restore service.

My judgement is that in our office a minimum of two people will be required, both Horizon certificated. One to man the counter, the other to follow the detailed procedure. This gives me a problem, I can't be away from the office on the off chance that an interruption will occur. This is obviously untenable over any length of time. My solution is to try to ensure we have a minimum of two Horizon certificated people available in the shop or on call during Post Office hours. Will this be acceptable to the Post Office as it's certain sure that the first time the system goes down I shan't be in the premises, no matter what hour I put in.
Regards. John

GRO

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john.beswick

From: "chris" [GRO]
To: <SPMRs@GRO>
Sent: 07 May 2000 20:37
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Horizon balancing

Andrew,

With regards to your correctional stock unit, if it contained stock last week and you transferred it to the main AA stock unit that will count as a transaction on the system. Simply declare your cash and stamps at nil values and then it should roll over. Next week you should be able to roll it over as an inactive stock unit ok. Then you can delete it, if required.

25/05/2000

On the problem with the monitor, contact the Horizon helpdesk and tell them the monitor is faulty, with poor resolution and that it is causing headaches and eyestrain to the users. They will hopefully respond to this and swap it out for a monitor with a better resolution, you could also mention the health and safety aspects of the job and perhaps wind up PONU with the closure of that position due to faulty equipment. I certainly would not work with a monitor that was not able to do the job correctly. As far as the trial balance is concerned, I've not come across this problem before though I have come across the situation where cash has been declared but the system refuses to acknowledge it and it has to be redeclared or edited before it will allow the system to roll over the stock unit.

Regards
Chris M

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25/05/2000

john.beswick

From: "Rodney Wohl" [mailto:GRO]
To: <SPMRs@GRO>
Sent: 09 May 2000 19:54
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Horizon meeting with Horns/RNMs

Essex was the testing ground for Horizon and I have heard some strange tales of losses and of gains ! we still have a surplus of over £500 from the first few weeks of going live. So its not all bad. If I was not sure that sooner or later I will get an error notice I would head for sunny spain , but I know that an error notice is lurking somewhere around the bend
Rod

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john beswick

From: "Richard Humphrey" [GRO]
To: <SPMRs [GRO]>
Sent: 10 May 2000 09:08
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Horizon meeting with Horns/RNMs

----- Original Message -----

From: salil chaudhari [GRO]
To: <SPMRs [GRO]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 09, 2000 4:05 PM
Subject: [SPMRs] Horizon meeting with Horns/RNMs

> Morning all,
> Attended an all day meeting yesterday as a Fed Rep. The stamps uprating
> chaos was put down mainly to spmrs not following instructions in Counter
> News. One spmr has still not been able to balance for week 5 into week 7
> because the system will not allow sock rollover.
> An RNM from the Colchester area then gave us the benefit of his
> experience as they were the first to go live. Figures just vanished from
> the system giving losses of £50-£60K. It was a nightmare initially he
> said but things have improved a great deal.
> I remember reading an email from our onelist member who lost about £1200
> on transition to the horizon system. If you read this email, has it come
> back as an error notice. It is rather worrying as you still have to make
> good the losses immediately.
> The other point of concern was that no help will be given beyond the 4th
> balance. This was challenged by the Fed as there was no agreement to that
> effect.
> regards salil
>

john beswick

From: "john beswick" [mailto:john.beswick@bt.com]
To: <SPMRs@bt.com>
Sent: 26 May 2000 11:40
Subject: [SPMRs] Losses

Morning All,
You wrote ' Hope they turn up soon ' Mark
Thats the point , evidence is scattered about that
with Horizon some percentage of the total doesn't.
We have a member of this list who is sitting on
£500 that has no identifiable home, this I presume
from September/ October last year.. I know of a
local office that has a four figure amount [credit]
from the same time as my own. Another local office
had over £2000 deficit on their ZZZ stock unit. They
knew what it was to do with but no-one could tell
them how to process and clear. He went on holiday
and found it gone when he came back. He of course
very quickly closed the stock unit down. My error
notices that came in originated with Camelot who
do know what they are doing and would have informed
Chesterfield. The evidence is accumulating that
random software glitches are popping up at intervals,
for instance A/P's not polled processed, processing
loops establishing that can't be overcome. When an
experienced operator like Richard Sage gets caught
out you know that consistency doesn't exist.
On top of this I have heard a whisper that there is
chaos in Chesterfield arising out of the roll out of
Horizon and the errors such as mine being generated
by subbies quite unprepared for what hits them.
I thought that this list that has provided some
anecdotal evidence may play a serious part in
accumulating detail ultimately for Shoreham but also
for users such as myself who get caught up with a
debit rather than a credit. Both equally demonstrate
that large errors are showing up and failing to generate
error notices.
Regards
Johnb.

[Non-text portions of this message have been removed]

AKTFAST

Post Office

GRO

Phone
Fax

GRO

30 May 2000

Jackie Cooper,
Retail Network Manager,
Post Office Group,
Kings Lynne.

UNRESOLVED LOSSES AT OLD LEAKE POST OFFICE

Dear Jackie,

Following your request regarding the amount held in Suspense A/c. since our migration to Horizon, I have spent a considerable amount of time revisiting weeks 48/49/50. I have reviewed all the material held and I have also researched the wider picture as to what happened, and is continuing to happen as Horizon spreads throughout the network. A sub-postmaster attending a Horns/RNM's meeting in the Essex area reported an RNM from the Colchester area, one of the first areas to go live, "Figures just vanished from the system giving losses of £50- £60K. It was a nightmare initially but things have now improved a great deal." A comment I'm sure that will strike a chord with you. I am aware of an Essex Office that is still carrying a gain of £500 from last year that has failed to generate an error notice, I am sure that you are aware of others. Locally we also have an office in credit, with like myself, no error notice/s' generated to date. A third local office had a four figure amount being carried, though he knew its origins he could not get the correct processing instructions to clear it from his system. Apparently he went on holiday and when he returned the amount was gone and no explanation. Needless to say he closed that stock unit down promptly. What is happening at Chesterfield? I understand that they are operating with great difficulty. Indirect evidence of this may be behind the rash of salary payment errors that have been reported in our last month ending payment. The figures used to compile this salary payment relate to the period we are dealing with, [weeks 49- 52 and weeks 1- 5].

As you are know from your very welcome visit at a time when you were under great pressure yourself, we had made a number of processing errors in our initial operation of the Horizon sytem. These errors

though greatly in excess of any we have ever had during the preceeding twenty odd years, were no greater and in many cases fewer and for lesser amounts than were being experienced at other offices in the same position. Some offices from that time are still carrying a gain rather than a loss, both equally demonstrate that large errors were being generated and failing to produce any relevent error notices. Now I have some experience of Horizon, it is apparent that Horizon transfers the end result of all processing including errors to the cash balance. If the cash balance is out it is most likely to be an error in processing not a cash shortage. A cash shortage only arises if you give or take from a customer an incorrect amount or the cash is appropriated. I am certain that my own and other large errors do not arise from either of these causes but are a reflection of processing errors.

As you are personally aware in no way were we prepared or competent to operate Horizon, nor was anyone else for that matter, RNM's or Helpline. Balancing, a critical procedure you will agree, received short shift forming only a part of the final mornings work. No training or demonstration was provided to assist lottery offices who have to operate a separate stock unit. The form we now use is one I devised my-self arising out of the trial and error of those first three weeks. Our Horizon support for our first balance left us with it at eight o'clock saying he didn't know anymore and wasn't here to do the balance. Neither was he familiar with the requirements of a lottery office. The subsequent advice from the helpline, though well intentioned only compounded the particular problem I was seeking to resolve. It was approaching midnight when I reached an OHH stock unit rollover position with a nil debit/credit showing. Something that had proved unobtainable with stock unit AA. Switching on early next morning to ensure some degree of readiness for our customers the unexpected came up, [I now realise that the unexpected is a common place with Horizon],with a request to redeclare Cash in Hand. The system was locked out until this was done. The figure I put in was overstated by £714 .This represented the lottery cash from Wednesday night. The same figure was also inputted into OHH stock unit when it was opened to transfer the £714 across to AA. Later in the week a counter clerk started work without realising she was still logged into OHH stock unit. This required a complex series of reversals and transfers to be processed.

Whilst I could demonstrate that OHH ultimately finished up in balance I could not demonstrate the same for stock unit AA .To ask me to explain the processing consequences of any particular entry on the Horizon system requires of me a level of understanding and comprehension that almost certainly doesn't exist in the Post Office and I suspect with very few people in ICL- Pathway. One thing I did find out at

that time was if you have finished the balance roll over and seek to redeclare the cash on Wednesday night
insread of Thursday morning the printout shows Tuesday as the Cash on Hand Day not Wednesday
or even Thursday .Which Tuesday it is referring to I know not.

In view of the truly exceptional circumstances surrounding the first weeks operation
of the Horizon system and the two out of character balances we experienced in common
with many others may I request that you use your discretionary powers in this instant.

Yours sincerely

J.K.Beswick Old Leake.

23.74 N 221010
 23.74 N 221015
 25.58 N 221020
 25.11 N 221100
 25.06 N 221110
 32.77 N 221150
 21.35 N 221218
 20.17 N 221400
 15.47 N 221410
 28.57 N 221430
 28.57 N 221440
 20 N 221470
 29.48 N 221480

00H No receipt
 00H Payment

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john beswick

From: [REDACTED]
 To: [REDACTED]
 Sent: 15 June 2000 20:05
 Subject: Re: [SPMRs] A/E

21.89 N 221482
 The Ambrose Effect.

Yesterday while balancing we discovered that the Horizon system listed a large cheque that we did not have to hand. So we searched the transaction log for said cheque date from date to amount and receipt, result no such item found. Phoned helpline who advised that we rem out cheques we did have and then cut off and when we balanced all would be well.

It wasn't.

The list of discrepancies showed a cheque missing, another search of the transaction log showed the cheque had been entered as a payment. So armed with the transaction number I attempted to remove it, but the system would not allow it. Next move was to take it out as a new reversal, which worked fine.

Another trial balance and low and behold we were down by £376.04 - the value of the cheque we had been struggling with.

Phoned helpline and over two hours failed to effect a cure for the problem. The helpline operator said that the problem was new to her and she could find no history of it happening before.

I'm now waiting for my RNM to come and I'm hoping to persuade him to write the amount off.

The problem was caused by a clerk paying out pensions and instead of hitting f1 to finish the transaction she hit f2 which had the effect of doubling the amount to be paid out, she then hit the f1 key and that was the root of all my problems.

The reason for telling this long tale of woe is that if the amount had not been large I would have just assumed that someone had hit chq instead of cash and gone into adjust stock and altered the cheques to suit, and would have been out by that amount in my balance.

A lot of postmasters with the Horizon System are carrying large discrepancies that they or POCL are unable to resolve, could this be one of the reasons?

I have name this problem the Ambrose Effect in recognition of the pioneer clerk whose selfless dedication to pressing every button on the keyboard in as many combinations as possible was responsible for this amazing discovery. Gentlemen I give you Mrs M Ambrose.

From: "npic" GRO
To: <SPMRs> GRO
Sent: 12 December 2000 16:11
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Building a Brighter Future

Hi all,

Who says the footfall will stay with the Post Office?? I think PONU have shot themselves in the foot , they are about to lose megga trade!

Cauldwell have invested 500 million in the 'top up ' machine systems and have so far got 21000 taking it up!! And they haven't started yet! The investment renders Cauldwell with the big boys and going faster than Horizon has a hope of doing!

They will have all the Utilities on the machine very soon and my footfall will go to the Newsageant and everyone else willing to have a machine. And if you apply for a machine its in store within 10 days.

Any PO that pays for my footfall wants their head examining. This clearly will not work. They may be able to brainwash some with their constant reports of £70000 seventy thousand pound refurbs but most of us would want very good return on that sort of money and POnu dont have a prayer of delivering in time. We are losing trade now to technology one way or another. Who will come out to pay bills when you do not have to. The young have very different attitudes to our pensioners. Ask a 23 year old how many mobile phones they've had. They keep changing to the latest type. (I've only just learnt how to use mine, and I've had it years!)

Royal Mail Union bods are all in London Today trying to sort out the mess they are in.

X Horizon. From high up..... A glitch in the system is: and supposedly only in a handful of offices, (one of ours has had it twice in two weeks) As you put your stock in Horizon is taking different figures. This Postmaster was watched as they inputted stock and a very different fig came out. Leaving her £750 short!!

She knew because she is still running her other system!
And she was told that Pon have not told us all as they dont want to alarm all Sub Postmasters as its only happening to a handful..... No one is saying how large this hand is!

JR

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Groups Alerts

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john beswick

From: <P.A.Ashton@GRO>
To: <SPMRs@GRO>
Sent: 02 December 2000 23:43
Subject: [SPMRs] Horizon failure

Dear List

Tuesday night we were upgraded (at last) and it went quite smoothly surprisingly, 5th counter had to be re booted 5 times but didn't cause problems re serving.

Now, picture this, Wed night we went into Adjust Stock and there was some £13,800, give or take a few pence, sitting there on the first line. It meant nothing and we couldn't get rid of it, obviously view discrepancies showed it was affecting the balance - horribly! Although I hated to do it the only course of action was to ring the dreaded helpline. I seemed to get a trainee who repeated everything I said to someone nearby, at 7.55 he said he was going home and would pass my problem on to level 2 who would contact me. I asked when and was told it could be tonight or tomorrow, thanks a bunch I thought. At around 9pm I got a call from this level 2 guy who told me that this was a known problem - at 10pm I suggested I get out of it myself by remming out but he didn't like that. He did clear it and at 10.15 we went home leaving roll over etc till next morning. Our balance was £295 short.

Friday evening doing up for the postman and a giro withdrawal had been entered twice, got the reference number from the transaction log and went for reversal. No go, it just would not let me remove it, after 4 tries and a postman tapping his fingers I let everything go without the giro. (No to mention the stress of customers also tapping their fingers while I am desperately trying to do all this, they think I'm playing video games instead of serving them I am sure). 5.30 I rang the helpline to be told "just sometimes it will give you the wrong session ID" "instead of 3-123456-4 try putting a 2 where the 4 is" sure enough it did the business straight away. This morning I tried to reverse a giro inpayment and again it would not let me do it so I tried 2 on the end and it worked. Will someone please tell me what is happening. I am working harder and longer and am so stressed, my customers are becoming 'the enemy'. I got home Friday night and leaned on the doorbell with my forehead - I hadn't got the strength to get out my doorkey.

Seriously though we have problems - if anyone wants to use this information they have my permission, please God just get me through Christmas without losing any more money.

Pat

[Non-text portions of this message have been removed]

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John Beswick

From: <Chikadella [redacted] GRO
To: <SPMRs [redacted] GRO
Sent: 14 February 2001 22:55
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Residual

Found out today that all my APS transactions for the last 2 weeks have not gone anywhere! Who cares! Not me, I'll probably be shut in the near future then I won't have to worry about the £1240 plus mis-balance I incurred today!!! "Victim" support line absolutely useless.

G'nite all.

Jon

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From: "David Hicks" [GRO]
To: <SPMRs [GRO]>
Sent: 14 February 2001 18:51
Subject: Re: [SPMRs] Residual

Hi John & Mark,

Couldn't agree with you more, John. We have had Horizon down since 1st Feb, with Pathway saying we had lost all communications with the main frame. Re-booted on countless occasions and still no joy. Eventually an 'engineer' came out to 'fix' our base units on Saturday 2nd Feb. Needless to say when he had finished terminal 2 was 'locked' up and we couldn't produce any reports at all. Eventually Pathway sent another box changer on Tuesday and of course the same thing happened. Nobody had thought of contacting BT to check the ISDN line. Eventually some wise person in the inner sanctums of Pathway authorized BT to check the line, which was done on Wednesday 7th Feb. Low & behold there was a fault and the BT guy fixed it. I phoned the Horizon help desk 3 times to let them know it had been fixed but all the calls were ignored or were lost in Pathways 'black hole'. It took them over two and a half hours to tell me how to carry over the cash account with no reports and how to get into the next CAP week, which incidentally if it happens to others is you simply do nothing and then do 2 balances at the end of the next week you have access. On Friday we had another box changer come and again they said the ISDN line was faulty - despite the fact the BT engineer was standing alongside him and proved the line was ok!!! Eventually on Monday this week - yes Monday - another box changer came again with a BT engineer who had checked the line out for the 4th time and it was ok and miraculously after a number of attempts to establish comms with the mainframe and talking to someone in Pathway we re-established comms. I think they had not re-set our port on the mainframe after the isdn line had been fixed.

However, during all this time we were accepting aps and all the work but of course it wasn't going anywhere!! I checked with ap in Chesterfield just to see if by some chance they had been able to poll us but was told their system was down and they hadn't received anything from us since the 28 January!!!!. Our local council then phoned us and enquired why we hadn't sent in any rents - they are very hot if someone is only a few days late - so advised them to contact POCL as it was out of my hands. We then had BT customers coming in complaining that BT was phoning them to find out why they hadn't paid. POCL in the meantime didn't seem to be at all worried, despite the fact we were doing the 'Wanted' promotion for bill payments!! The local council phoned again today and despite being up and running since Monday this week had still not received any money. We were going to do zip zaps but Chesterfield said all the machinery had been dismantled to do these! So my main worry is if Horizon is like this after just 4 months on line or 18 months in the case of a lot of the Southend offices what is it going to be like in 4 years when its getting old and falling over all the time. Pathways contract expires about then. Interesting thought! Hope nobody else has the same experience.

David.

----- Original Message -----

From: "john beswick" [redacted] GRO

To: <SPMRs [redacted] GRO

Sent: 14 February 2001 13:17

Subject: [SPMRs] Residual

Mark,

It appears that PONU have £6.5 million yes million, sitting in Suspense A/c's across the network as errors arising out of Horizon. R.N.M's have been instructed to get as much of this in as possible. Hence my letter of demand. No doubt the premise being that if only half of it is coughed up it will be £3 million real money in hand. Muggins Subpostmaster of course carries the can as usual.

The odd bits of info I'm getting would suggest that the £100 million set aside in the Post Office accounts also relates to Horizon.

It was presented in PONU A/c's as being related to a client contract and any other info was refused.

The Client contract I have heard is within the old Counters not Royal Mail or Parcelforce..

That amount of money is principle not penalty for late processing. Align that to the polling problems that are still ongoing and my guess is that they are not able to allocate monies to client customers accounts.

If an office isn't polled for four or five days that information should only be four or five days late reaching a individual customers account. The experience of our Branch President is that it doesn't reach the customers account at all.

She has had customers who have paid at her office and had the service cut off for non-payment in the extreme.

I imagine that the bills for all this are rapidly being passed back by clients to PONU. If this is the case what is it likely to do to our credibility.

Lets just hope I'm wrong

From: "wesley wooding" [redacted] GRO
To: <spmrs:[redacted] GRO>
Sent: 22 November 2000 21:03
Subject: [SPMRs] Horizon Upgrade

Hi All

Upgraded today after false start yesterday. System definately slower, Somethings marginal improvement, somethings extraordinarily worse. We have 3 positions, at balance we noticed that gateway terminal different figures on stock adjust to terminal 2. !!!

Rang ICL level one, not a clue but did agree to reboot on my suggestion. received reference number. In meantime we continued balance on gateway. After about one hour level 2 rang back and advised NOTE THIS, We are aware of a software problem post upgrade whereas perhaps 2 or more terminals are operating on balance. This can mean that the terminal requesting balance snapshot for example might be influenced by the other terminals being operated at the same time. Recommendation by ICL log off all terminals excepting gateway which should be the only terminal used for balancing.!!!

Footnote: Yes, we were £65 short today, what a surprise ! Talk about funding your own compensation !!

Regards Wes

From: "Postamps" [mailto:Postamps@GRO]
 To: "SPMRs" [mailto:SPMRs@GRO]
 Sent: 28 February 2001 17:34
 Subject: [SPMRs] Fw: EMERGENCY CASCADE

Copy of e-mail to RNM with potential balance shortage problem, hope it circulates in time to help.
 Stewart

----- Original Message -----

From: Postamps
 To: nigel allen
 Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2001 5:23 PM
 Subject: EMERGENCY CASCADE

Dear Nigel,

re telephone call today. We have identified ANOTHER software error on Horizon. Balancing today Wednesday 28th February, all stock checked, the trial balance showed discrepancies of £ 35 (7x £ 5 BT phonecards). We rechecked the balance snapshot, taken at 13.26 and this showed 7x £ 5 BT phonecards in stock.

We took another balance snapshot at 14.06 and the BT phonecards line showed NIL. (Within 40 minutes the Horizon system had wiped out this stock entry, which had already been physically checked.)

We tried to adjust stock of BT cards and re-enter correct quantities but the system message read "invalid item".

We telephoned the Horizon helpline to be told " We know all about this software problem. You will show a balance shortage, and should telephone Network Business Support for advice."

You will recall from previous e-mails that we notified Business support of the "invalid transaction" messages on BT cards and Littlewoods scratchcard prize payments on monday 26th feb, and were later instructed to put these transactions on the system as "bulk input", in the hope that the software error would be rectified before balancing. The telephone line to the helpline was still engaged 25 minutes later, when I telephoned you in desperation.

There are several important questions concerning this problem which need answers.

- 1) If ICL/Pathway were aware of a software error on balance day which results in a shortage on balancing, why were offices not informed ?
- 2) The original "invalid transaction" faults were reported by us 3 days previously, why were offices not informed.?
- 3) Why were these system errors not rectified ?
- 4) When will the software faults be rectified ?
- 5) When rectified, will all resulting error notices be intercepted or withdrawn ?
- 6) Will Subpostmasters be notified, by "URGENT MEMO" on the Horizon system that shortages resulting from this software fault need not be "made good" by financial contribution by the Subpostmasters ?
- 7) When rectified, how will stock "wiped off" the system be re-entered without creating another error notice ? (Stock not delivered on a corresponding remittance). ?
- 8) Is it realistic to expect all 18000 offices, (or those involved in transactions affected) to

28/02/01

john beswick

From: "Watchet, P.O." <[redacted]@GRO>
To: <SPMRs@GRO>
Sent: 24 February 2001 17:48
Subject: [SPMRs] More Horizon problems

Hi all!

I encountered two Horizon problems last Wednesday -
- a "missing" transaction on my Green Giro list, &
- a system failure during Horizon's attempt to go to the trial balance preview screen.

The Horizon helpdesk provided the following information -

1. "Missing" transactions (à la Giro deposits list) on P & A lists are currently being investigated. Reports of "missing" Green Giro transactions on lists are not yet common enough to warrant a similar investigation.
2. System failure while attempting to go to the trial balance preview screen are common since the Horizon upgrade. I was advised not to use the preview any more, but to do an unnecessary printout instead.

Does anyone on this list know why we are not informed about "common" problems IMMEDIATELY? And how many more are there to be discovered

Happy weekend -

Graham

john beswick

From: "Postamps" [mailto:GRO]
To: "SPMRs" [mailto:GRO]
Sent: 26 February 2001 23:07
Subject: [SPMRs] Fw: Invalid

Copy of e-mail re software problem today,
anyone else experience similar ?
Stewart

----- Original Message -----

From: Postamps
To: nigel allen
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2001 11:01 PM
Subject: Invalid

Pronounced inVALid,

early today (Monday a.m.) I entered a Littlewoods "prize" on the Horizon screen and the system would not accept the transaction, but the screen message was "Invalid transaction, not possible in Serve customer mode".

I telephoned the "Horizon" helpline to be told, "Oh yes ! it's a system fault, we are working on it. You will need to ring the Business support helpline for instructions." I telephoned Business support who told me I was the first to notify them, they would seek advice and ring me back. The customer (luckily) offered to come back later.

I proceeded with the next transactions, and 5 minutes later sold a BT Cellnet phonecard. The message on the Horizon screen informed me , "Invalid transaction, not possible in serve customer mode"

Oh yes it is ! I told the screen, but it refused to change it's mind !
Back to the Horizon helpline.

"We know all about it" I was informed, "the only phonecard accepted by Horizon during the software fault is the BT Global card "

WE DO NOT SELL BT GLOBAL CARDS.

Referring this again to business support, they told us to accept the sale manually, and await accounting instructions, but if the fault was not rectified by balance day, we would need to transfer the "transactions" into suspense.

Later we received a return call from the helpline instructing us to enter the transactions under "bulk input" or a "suspense" entry on balancing would generate 2 error notices ! Don't you dare send me 2 error notices.! Incidentally, the last 2 error notices were for "line errors" for rem's. The rem's were entered correctly and the Horizon system generated the line entry. It will not accept an incorrect line. Please send these "errors" back from whence they came.

By the way, when business support returned our second "software fault" call, they said that similar calls were then coming in thick and fast ! It seems we were first of many!

Now it may seem like Deja vu, but I seem to remember that when previous "software faults" were identified, we suggested that a "memo" or cascade should be sent to advise Subpostmasters of the fault, but keeping these things secret on a Monday morning is likely to cause problems at the sharp end.

At this rate Subpostmasters will be Invalids.

Look forward to receiving your comments, regards,

Stewart



Post Office Counters Ltd

Mr. J. K. Beswick, Subpostmaster

GRO

10 March 2000
JMC/DPE/OldLeake

Dear Mr. Beswick,

Re : Unresolved Losses at Old Leake Post Office

In response to your letter of 5th March 2000 concerning the above and whilst I understand your concern, it is too soon to contemplate issuing any "Write-Off Authority" for the shortages.

I can only request that you hold over the shortages in your account for 8 weeks to allow for "error notices" to be issued. Please contact me again if the shortages have not been accounted for by Wednesday, 3rd May 2000. In the meantime, as you become more familiar and confident with the system I am sure these losses will cease.

Yours sincerely,

GRO

Jackie Cooper
Retail Network Manager (Area 25)

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