



Communications Days 2019 –

SMT Q&A

The Business

With the Lampiris and Direct Energie acquisitions, is there any people, system or knowledge sharing happening?

Lampiris don't have any systems we can share at the moment but they do have different processes and skillsets to us which we can learn from – we are working together on this.

We haven't found any similarities in France yet but we are working on this.

There was some talk of sharing roles, such as a European customer experience director, but this has been rejected for now in place of 'centres of excellence'.

What could Major Business and SME learn from each other?

Our biggest mistake would be to not learn from each other. The connection between the two is stronger than it has ever been.

Credit seems to have got stricter with more declines – why is this?

We haven't changed any policies so we still have the same approach. It is likely down to a number of different factors. Brexit and the nature of the current market place will play a part as there is a lot of nervousness around British finance. We used to get 80% assurance, this is now down to 70%.

We are seeking external assurance about our large contracts as we can't take unlimited risk.

Are we looking to move into the B2C market?

Yes, we have done work looking into this and the group would clearly like to grow in this area. We are looking but it must be the right opportunity – things have come along but so far haven't been the right fit.



Do we have plans to invest in green energy?

At the moment, sales aren't feeding back that this is what our customers want. It's not something we particularly need to invest in as the commercials are the same.

What are the expansion plans for SME Direct?

There is money for expansion set aside within the long-term plan. We obviously hadn't planned for the demise of Utility Wise, but we have now got the financial position of all our brokers to ensure we don't have the same level of exposure again. Business through TPIs is expensive but we do still want to do it, as long as the quality is right.

What impact do we expect Brexit will have on our business?

We don't expect any particular impact on our own business, but the real impact will be on our customers and how that in turn affects us. We could see things such as an increase in bad debt or less business available, but there isn't much we can do to plan for that.

What products do we need to be able to compete in future markets?

We are making tweaks to our products at the moment, but our focus has to be on getting the delivery right first. To compete, we need to do what we currently do, but better.

The Transformation Programme

Is there an update on the CRM project?

The first stage of the project was relatively simple as it was all new stuff. Progress did then slow down as it started to get more complicated as we now have to connect it to existing systems and processes. We underestimated how hard that would be.

We are also yet to plan some of the future journey paths, but we are working on that at the moment.

I admit we have been slow to communicate any updates on CRM, and will be more transparent as we progress.



Would we sacrifice profit in the short term for improved customer experience?

Yes – the transformation programme is costing £13m, plus the cost of taking the whole business out for four days to talk about customer experience.

WNS have as much interaction with our customers – are they getting the same CX messaging?

Yes, they get all the same messaging as we deliver here, including their own version of the Communications Days later in the year.

People

Does the new management structure still allow us to be as agile as we have been in the past?

Agility is our strength – our challenge is to keep being easy to do business with. The European connections do make things slightly harder, but they share our frustrations on bureaucracy.

We know we want more home-grown talent to progress through the ranks, and particularly recognise the gender imbalance we currently have.

What is going on with recruitment at the moment – we have had a lot of people not showing up for interviews or even to start work?

Without speaking on his behalf, Richard Greenhill, our resourcing advisor, is feeding back to agencies when this happens, and should have strict agreements in place. We want to limit the use of agencies as much as possible. The business also needs to be providing Richard with prompt feedback after interviews, as he often spends a lot of time chasing this.

Are we going to try more apprentice schemes?

We did this successfully before the recruitment freeze and have just started to look into it again. We hope to launch in September.

Do we have the right organisational structure to be customer centric?

The structure we have right now is what has made us successful. However, we do need to evolve and might need to bring bits of the organisation closer together, so it's possible that



structures will be different in future as we have more understanding of how we need to change.

Can you name any changes to the business that have come about as a result of what has been discussed at previous Communications Days?

Things like improvements to how we communicate and dramatically reducing the amount of temporary contracts we use has been as a direct result of feedback from staff. We will ensure follow up from what we have discussed at these events is communicated.

Why aren't salary bands published?

NP10+ aren't published as they are all very different disciplines, but when advertising jobs internally we can look to publish salary.

Can we bring dogs to work?

We would need to find out how much enthusiasm there is from people on this, and whether we could make it work logistically, but we can look into it.