

The Story...

Case Study: Meryl Streep - The Devil Wears Prada



Meet Meryl Streep

Meet Meryl Streep, she is a wealthy businesswoman who owns a hugely successful national corporation and she is a well-known public figure.

The Dilemma

As a result of the Bubonic Plague (Version Two) hitting the country, Meryl had to urgently scale back operations and temporarily close many of her offices. This had a huge impact on her employees and many had to be made redundant. The financial fallout for both Meryl and her employees ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds. The emotional impact was immeasurable.

In the meantime, Meryl retained her favourite employees and gave whatever roles were left in her business to her best mates. However, the employees who were made redundant found out about this unfavourable and discriminatory treatment; and were very upset by the manner and the procedure involved in their redundancy. The disgruntled employees decided to join forces and legally challenge their employer's bad behaviour and poor decision-making in what was a challenging time for everyone.

What went wrong...



Meryl had never had to make so many staff redundant before; therefore she did not possess the strategy and 'know-how' for the legal procedure required for such large-scale redundancies. Furthermore, Meryl was being a 'cheapskate' and did not obtain executive training for her Human Resource Advisors to competently undertake the large-scale redundancy process.

As a result, both her HR and management team; as well as her 'cheap-as-chips' legal advisors, bungled the entire redundancy process, exposing her already struggling business to a multi-million pound lawsuit.



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What Meryl should have done...

From the outset, Meryl should have invested in getting super-competent legal advice and a redundancy strategy plan together.

What it would have cost

Definitely not millions of pounds!

What it did cost

Well over a Million pounds+ employer's liability insurance claims + time & energy & large compensation payout + potential damage to business reputation.

- Further, she should have paid for executive training for her core team of HR and management to conduct the redundancy process with the sensitivity and meticulousness that it required.
- The redundancy consultation process should not have been rushed.
- Meryl and her management team should have kept a superb paper trail and minutes of all the consultation meetings and one-to-ones.
- Finally, Meryl and her management team should have offered staff a decent severance package to avoid disgruntlement and legal claims for discrimination and unfair dismissal.

(Disclaimer - The above is only illustrative of some of the key things an employer should consider when engaging in a redundancy procedure, whether the process involves one employee or hundreds of employees. It is not an exhaustive list).