



MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT WINS FIVE-FIGURE PAYOUT FROM FORMER DUTCH STATE PUBLISHER IN COPYRIGHT ROW

One of Britain's leading management consultancies has won a substantial five-figure settlement from the former Dutch state publisher after accusing it of plagiarism.

Future Purchasing had sued for breach of copyright, claiming the publisher reproduced advice given to some of the firm's blue-chip clients without its permission.

The material turned up in a book printed by Hague-based SDU bv which became one of the Netherlands' best-selling management titles.

The book had been written by a Dutch former freelance consultant of the Guildford-based company.

Future Purchasing was advised by solicitors from the commercial department of Manchester law firm Lawson Coppock and Hart, led by partner Stephen Attree.

He said the copyright breach was only noticed when someone who had bought the book got in touch with Future Purchasing for further free advice.

"We maintained that the fact that the material was acquired improperly and then appeared in a very successful Dutch book added insult to the injury already caused to our client. We are lucky to have experience in handling foreign litigation but such a breach would have been illegal wherever it was committed and, therefore, it was something we were only too determined to pursue vigorously on behalf of our client.

"The central issue in this matter was not the money and business potentially lost but that Future Purchasing invested time and effort in creating materials of great use to its customers, only to have them taken and used for profit by individuals who were not entitled to have them in the first place."

Future Purchasing works alongside major names in the financial services, petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries, including the likes of ABN Amro, GlaxoSmithKline and NovoNordisk.

Its Executive Chairman, Jon Hughes, claimed the outcome of the case was important in maintaining control over how and where its expertise was used.

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“We’re delighted with the result. When a firm is responsible for producing a piece of work, it is essential that it is free to sell that to customers without worrying that a competitor at home or abroad will pass it off as their own in order to generate business.

“We discovered what had happened quite by chance and had lawyers able to protect our intellectual property effectively. Being able to do so is vital to our reputation, something which is fundamental to the work we do and the sort of customers we are proud to have.”

Under the terms of the settlement reached in the Netherlands with SDU bv, the now-privatised Dutch equivalent of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (HMSO), Future Purchasing received damages and had its legal costs met. Its material will also be removed from subsequent editions of the offending book.

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Notes to editors:

- Lawson Coppock and Hart is one of Manchester's longest-established firms (established around 1870), and offers advice to private individuals and businesses across a range of sectors.
- Future Purchasing was formed in 2002 and has its head office in Guildford, Surrey.
- It has more than 40 specialist consultants working in the UK, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, France and Germany.
- Members of its consulting team have been involved in 150+ projects, in 19 sectors and 25 countries over the last two decades.