Malicious allegations against Choppies

The Management of Choppies has learnt with shock and disappointment a string of highly defamatory allegations and malicious insinuations contained in the Mmegi Newspaper (15 Friday, 2013), that the company is somehow involved in a process of organised mislabelling and manipulation of expiry dates on goods sold in its stores.

Having gone at length to explain to the paper and also produce documentary evidence to answer the newspaper's questions, we think it is unfortunate, unprofessional and indeed unethical for Mmegi Newspaper to have made and chosen a decision to deliberately bend facts with a clear agenda to mislead the public and in the process drag the name of Choppies into dispute and damage its brand.

Given the amount of time we spent explaining ourselves to Mmegi Newspaper it is our considered view that Choppies name is being deliberately and maliciously dragged into the mud. At no point has Choppies been involved in manipulating goods expiry dates. Contrary to all the falsehoods contained in the Mmegi Newspaper article, Choppies could not have been built on manipulating expiry date labels.

We have never done it and we have no reason to do it. In this regard, Choppies reserves all its rights in respect of what has been a clearly defamatory article.

A false impression has been created by Mmegi articles that Choppies was involved and that we possibly made money from manipulating expiry date labels. This is very unfortunate. What happened, and this much was made sufficiently clear to Mmegi Newspaper by the manufacturer of the foam bath in question is that the mislabelling occurred at the manufacturer's factory. In our view this is purely a factory matter that had nothing to do with Choppies, who as we made it clear to Mmegi are not involved in the manufacturing of the said foam bath.

On another note, mislabelling we have to point out happens all the time at various levels of production. It is a genuine mistake that happens in any production line. What is important is that when it is discovered it is corrected ethically and truthfully without breaking trade rules.

This is exactly what happened in the foam bath consignment that Mmegi Newspaper refers to in their story. It must also be noted that in this case, the manufacturer, labeler and Choppies are totally separate legal entities which got nothing to do with each other. This much was made categorically clear to Mmegi, who for reasons known to themselves, in their so-called investigation decided to malign Choppies, with absolutely no regard as to who would be hurt by this very inflammatory, untruthful, malicious story that was not in the public interest.

As soon as it was found out that a mislabeling of expiry dates had occurred all rules of correction were followed including drawing the matter to the attention of Botswana Bureau of Standards. On our part as Choppies we did not change expiry dates. We had no reason to do it and we had nothing to gain from doing so.

It is unfortunate that Mmegi Newspaper in their dragnet strategy to make a mountain out of an anthill is now dragging Choppies name into a matter that has absolutely nothing to do with us. As Choppies we operate an ethical business premised on very high ethical standards with the interest of our customers foremost in our hands. And we expect and demand the same from our suppliers, who we want to point out are appointed on a very rigorous selection process.

We take our responsibility to our customers seriously. We have put in place best systems and procedures to avoid exactly what is now being wrongly and truthfully attributed to us.

As Choppies Management we wish to inform the public in general and our customers in particular that we have escalated the misleading and malicious contents of Mmegi Newspaper articles to our Board of Directors for advice on the course of action, including seeking legal redress as a way of protecting the name and reputation of the company.

For CHOPPIES ENTERPRISES LTD

Chief Executive Officer