

Finance company issues writ against union claiming damages over unfulfilled sponsorship deal

By Roger Baird and Clare Conley

Scottish Life Assurance is suing the Welsh Rugby Union, after accusing the sports body of tearing up its sponsorship deal in favour of a more lucrative offer from Lloyds TSB.

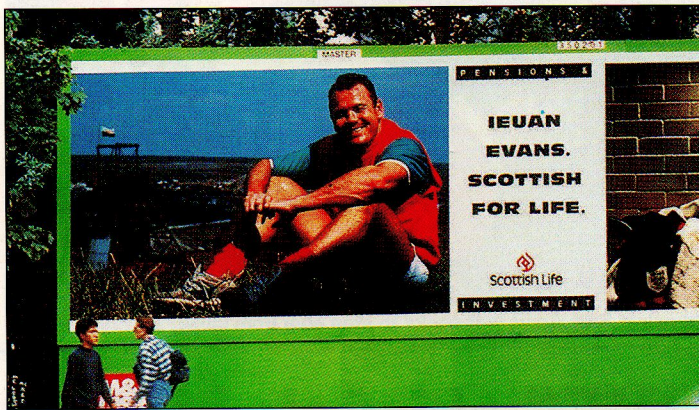
The Scottish financial services company claims the WRU cost it £250,000 in lost promotional opportunities and loss of reputation. In a nine-page writ lodged at the High Court, Scottish Life is suing for damages "in excess of £50,000", and for the enforcement of the remaining part of the sponsorship deal.

The company claims the WRU ditched the last two years of an existing four-year deal covering four international matches when Lloyds TSB became sponsors of the Five Nations Championship earlier this year.

In 1995 Scottish Life agreed to pay the WRU £310,000 to be the title sponsor for the Five Nations Welsh home matches against Scotland in 1996 and 1998, and against England in 1997 and 1999.

This year Lloyds bid £20m over three years to sponsor the whole Five

Welsh rugby hit by Scottish Life writ



Scottish Life: No agreement to give up title sponsorship of remaining games

Nations championship, as first revealed in *Marketing Week* (November 6 1997). This was the first time the matches had been sold as one package.

Scottish Life claims that despite discussions with the WRU, there was no agreement to give up the title sponsorship of its remaining games.

A statement issued by Scottish Life says: "We have taken substantial steps to give the WRU the opportunity to honour its obligations. We are disappointed that we have been forced into taking this action."

A spokeswoman for the WRU says: "We will strenuously contest the action brought by Scottish Life."

Owens quits BT as Evans joins

By Julia Day

BT business division head of marketing communications Dominic Owens is believed to have left the company.

The news comes in the wake of the appointment of Cellnet brand director Tim Evans as head of brand and corporate communications spanning both BT's consumer and business divisions.

Last month BT business division marketing director Afshin Mohebbi was promoted to managing director and promptly put Kate Notman in a position senior to Owens.

Owens, who created BT's "Change the way we work" advertising campaign, joined the telecoms giant as marketing communications manager in October 1996 from Mercury Communications.

Evans' role will create a central point for the marketing of the two divisions (*MW* June 11), which has been absent since the 75-strong Customer Communications Unit was disbanded a year ago.

He takes up his new position on September 1 and it is expected that a team of about six people will be appointed to his unit.

A BT spokesman says of Evans' role: "It will reinforce the BT brand and strengthen the impact of our communications with more commitment to the look and feel of both business and consumer marketing."

Before joining Cellnet, Evans was head of BT's brand and reputation unit, responsible for corporate promotion of the BT name.

At Cellnet Evans' remit was to establish a strong brand identity in the face of competition from rival mobile phone operators Vodafone, Orange and One-2-One.

He most recently launched Cellnet's "First" initiative – which attempted to eliminate confusion among mobile phone customers – and Easy Life, the company's pre-payment package.

A spokesman for Cellnet says a successor to Evans has not yet been appointed.



Which? Online: CD-Roms scrapped

Which? pulls offer after porn blunder

By Amanda Wilkinson

Which? Online has had to spend £40,000 replacing CD-Roms offering Internet access because they directed users to a hardcore porn site instead of the Alta Vista search engine.

The porn site offers "real hardcore sex" and "live sex chat, shower shows... and much, much more".

The charity also had to e-mail customers who had already received one of the CD-Roms to warn them about the problem.

Which? Online claims the domain name used to provide quick access to Alta Vista – alta-vista.com/ – changed hands after the CD-Rom software was written.

It blames the lack of regulations on the use and sale of domain names.

Alan Stevens, editor of Which? Online says: "After we built the software someone bought that name with the intention of referring people to their Website."

Don claims first round in Shell libel action

By Clare Conley

Don Marketing, the sales promotion agency, is claiming a victory against Shell UK in the first round of a libel case against the oil giant.

Shell UK was ordered to pay costs for a preliminary hearing at the High Court which took place earlier this week. The libel case will be heard before a jury and Don Marketing will have the power to subpoena top Shell UK management, including chairman Chris Say, to give evidence.

John Donovan, managing director of Don Marketing, says: "It will



Shell Smart: Don claims victory

become the 'McShell' case to follow in the footsteps of 'McLibel'."

The Shell UK libel case is an offshoot of a continuing legal battle

over the ownership of the original idea for the Shell Smart card scheme (*MW* April 16). Donovan instigated the libel action in response to a press statement issued by Shell in April, in which Shell UK said it had investigated Donovan's claim that he has rights in respect of several forecourt promotions and was "satisfied that it is entirely without substance".

Donovan claims the statement caused damage to his reputation and personal anxiety and distress because it implied that he was pursuing a "bogus" claim for compensation.