

Contemporary issues in business essay



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Recommendations 7. References 1. Introduction This report will discuss the events that took place during the phone hacking scandal at News International and evaluate the behaviour of the Organisation and its Management.

It will review the issues in this case against several ethical and ideological theories as well as providing recommendations for how things could have been handled differently. It will examine the role of Management within an organisation and reflect on its social and ethical responsibilities. 2. What Happened? The events of the phone hacking scandal can be seen detailed in the table below- 2. 1. Table of Events- The Phone Hacking Scandal

Date	Event	Significance
2000	Rebekah Brooks appointed editor of News Of The World	
2003	Rebekah Brooks is appointed editor of The Sun. Andy Coulson is also appointed editor of The Sunday paper.	

Brooks also tells a parliamentary committee that her paper has paid police for information however News International say that this is not the policy of the company. | This is a first admittance that the paper was willing to pay for information and perhaps use underhand tactics to get stories. | 2005 (November)| The Royal Court complains after NOW prints a story reporting on a leg injury suffered by Prince William which they could not have known

about without intercepting private voicemail messages. A Police inquiry is launched to investigate. | This is the first time an accusation of phone hacking has been made against NOW. 2006 (August)| Clive Goodman (NOW's Royal Editor) and Glenn Mulcaire (Private Investigator) are arrested on suspicion of hacking into the private phone messages of members of the Royal family. | These are the first arrests which were made in connection with intercepting voicemail messages. At this point the investigation is focussed on these two individuals with no evidence to suggest that management at NOW had any knowledge or involvement. | 2007 (January)| Goodman is jailed for four months and Mulcaire for 6 months (They both admitted to conspiring to intercept communications.

Mulcaire also admitted to five other counts of voicemail intercepting). NOW editor at this time Andy Coulson resigns. Even though he denies knowledge of the phone hacking he says that he has ultimate responsibility for the actions of his staff. | The fact that Andy Coulson resigns at this point could be seen| 2007 (May)| Lawyers for News International investigate emails between Goodman and members of the NOW Management team but are unable to find any evidence to suggest that they were aware of any phone interception. All evidence still points to the fact that Goodman and Mulcaire were acting of their own accord. | 2008 (April)| James Murdoch pays out ? 700000 to Gordon Taylor after he makes claims about phone hacking. | This is the first in a long line of compensation pay outs made by NOW. This could possibly be to keep victims quiet and stop the extent of the scandal becoming apparent. | 2009 (June)| Rebekah Brooks is appointed as CEO of

News International | | 2009 (July)| In July of 2009 the scale of the phone hacking scandal started to become apparent.

It is revealed that NOW reporters have intercepted the phones of celebrities and politicians between 2003 and 2007 while Andy Coulson was editor and that this phone hacking occurred with the knowledge of Senior Managers. It also emerges that NOW has paid out over ? 1, 000, 000 to victims of the phone hacking who threatened to reveal its reporter's involvement. This prompts a new investigation from Scotland Yard and a review of the evidence uncovered in its initial investigation in 2006. On 9th July Andy Coulson, the former editor of NOW is appointed as communications chief in the conservative party by David Cameron. NOW is still trying to contain the fallout from the accusations of phone hacking and limit its own involvement by paying out more in compensation. However with more and more cases beginning to surface the Police are forced to step in and review earlier evidence. | 2009 (September)| Lee Hinton, the former executive chairman of Rupert Murdoch's newspapers in Britain says that there is no evidence to suggest that the phone hacking scandal goes beyond the one famous case which has already been uncovered. | 2009 (November)| The Press Complaints Commission issues a further statement to say that there is no evidence to suggest that any other employees of the new of the world (apart from Goodman and Mulcaire) were involved in any phone hacking or that the management was aware of what was happening. | | 2010 (February)| A report from The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sports Committee says that it is " inconceivable" that the management at The News Of The World did not know that the interception of voicemail messages was

occurring under their watch. | 2010 (September)| An article in The New York Times claims that when he was Editor of NOW Andy Coulson knew that phone hacking was happening and did nothing to stop it. Scotland Yard also began a new investigation into the scandal. | | 2010 (November)| Police interview Andy Coulson as part of their investigation. | | 2010 (December)| No further charges are brought against NOW as a result of witnesses refusing to cooperate. | | 2011 (January)| Sienna Miller, MP George Galloway and RMT union leader Bob Crowall make claims that their phones were hacked and as a result a new investigation is launched.

A senior editor Ian Edmondson at NOW is sacked after an internal inquiry. Andy Coulson resigns as Communications Chief for the Government. David Cameron had backed and supported him but it is not enough to keep Coulson in office. | | 2011 (February)| After identifying further potential victims of phone interception, Police begin to inform those involved. It is claimed that Glen Mulcaire passed information relating to a football agent to a newsdesk which may have been staffed by several NOW journalists. If this is the case it would mean that knowledge of phone hacking is wider spread than had been admitted.

It is ruled by a judge that Mulcaire must give information of who knew about the scandal at NOW. | | 2011 (March)| It is revealed by the BBC's Panorama that in 2006 emails of an ex- British Army Intelligence Officer were obtained by a NOW, Alex Marunchak. These emails were hacked by a private investigator. | This is the first indication that the scandal may go beyond phone hacking and there may be further invasions of privacy involved. |

2011 (April)| Three Senior Former News of the World employees are arrested on suspicion of conspiring to intercept mobile phone messages.

Those involved are editor Ian Edmondson, chief reporter Neville Thurlbeck and senior journalist James Weatherup. The three members of staff are released on bail but News of the World is forced to admit involvement in the scandal and issues apologies on the web and in its newspaper. The company also sets up a compensation scheme for potential victims of the scandal who have “justifiable claims”. | This is the first time that NOW admits involvement in the scandal. Previously blame had been placed on two individuals (Goodman and Mulcaire) with management denying all knowledge and responsibility. 2011 (June)| On 7th June Sienna Miller receives a formal apology from the owners of NOW for intercepting messages on her phone and pay her ? 100, 000 in damages and legal costs. Later in the same month Andy Gray, a football pundit receives a ? 20, 000 settlement because of phone hacking allegations. | | 2011 (July)| This was one of the most shocking months in terms of developments in this scandal. The first came on 4th July when The Guardian reported allegations that NOW had hacked into the voicemail of missing teenager Milly Dowler when Rebekah Brooks was editor.

The allegations claim that messages were deleted from the phone giving hope to the family that Milly Dowler was still alive. Brooks denies any knowledge of this and calls the claims ‘inconceivable’. On 7th July James Murdoch announces that NOW is to close after 168 years of business. The paper issues an apology in its final edition and admits to ‘losing its way’. On 10th July Andy Coulson and Clive Goodman are both arrested for making

illegal payments to police. Prime Minister David Cameron also orders that two new inquiries must take place into the goings on at NOW.

On this date the final ever edition of NOW was put on sale which featured an apology from the management. It was a medley of the news published by NOW over the years and contained no advertising at all. As the month continues evidence of other papers involvement (The Sunday Times) in phone hacking comes to light and Rupert Murdoch withdraws a bid to take over BskyB as it is thought to be 'too difficult to progress in this climate'. On 15th July Rebekah Brooks resigns from her role as CEO of News International admitting that she feels deeply responsible to the people hurt in the scandal.

Rupert Murdoch also issues a personal apology to family of Milly Dowler. On 19th July Rupert and James Murdoch are questioned by MP's into the extent of their knowledge about the voicemail hacking scandal. They claim to have known nothing of what was going on and that they were 'misled' by employees. Rebekah Brooks admits to MP's that the paper paid private detectives for information. She also states that this is common practice amongst many papers. On 20th July David Cameron admits that he should not have appointed Andy Coulson as his communications chief and names the panel who will lead the inquiry into the phone hacking scandal.

On 20th July David Cameron says that James Murdoch must face further questioning into his knowledge of the scandal after it is claimed that he had seen a 'key' email regarding goings on at NOW. On 28th July Police inform Sara Payne, mother of murdered schoolgirl Sarah Payne that she too may have been a victim of phone hacking. Finally in this month Glenn Mulcaire

says that his actions with regards to the phone hacking scandal were carried out ‘on the instructions of others’. Investigations carried out between 2005 and 2007 by Police and also The Press Complaints Commission showed that phone hacking at NOW had targeted Politicians and celebrities as well as members of the Royal family. It was not until 2011 that the full extent of the scandal was revealed with NOW being accused of intercepting the voicemail messages of the murdered school girl Milly Dowler as well as some of the victims of the 2007 London bombings. Reporters were also revealed to have hacked into the messages of relatives of deceased British soldiers.

As a result of these revelations, The Prime Minister, David Cameron ordered a full public Inquiry into the actions of the media and the phone hacking scandal. The Leveson inquiry aims to focus on the interception of private voicemail messages and the methods employed by NOW journalists. NOW have always maintained that senior management had no knowledge of the methods being employed by journalists. However with more and more cases of phone hacking being revealed, is it possible that managers knew what was happening and did nothing to stop it and if so how far up the management ladder does the blame go? | 2011 (August)| In this month, the Police arrest several NOW staff in connection with the phone hacking scandal. On 17th August, a letter is published written by the ex NOW reporter Clive Goodman which alleges cover ups at the paper with regards to phone hacking. It also makes fresh claims that James Murdoch and Andy Coulson knew more about what was going on than they had previously admitted. | 2011 (September)| On 6th September the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee hears further evidence from former NOW

employees to state that James Murdoch had more knowledge of the phone hacking scandal than he had previously admitted.

The committee hears that James Murdoch had seen the 'For Neville' email. This was a key email and if Murdoch had seen it would mean that he had known about the phone hacking all along. | | 2011 (October)| On 25th October shareholders at News Corp try to remove Rupert and James Murdoch from the board however they are unsuccessful as only a third vote against them being re-elected. | | 2011 (November)| On 4th November Jamie Pyatt, a Sun reporter in connection with inappropriate payments made to police.

On 9th November a dossier of evidence was uncovered by police which seemed to show that Neville Thurlbeck, the former chief reporter at NOW had warned the paper's editor two years ago that phone hacking was widespread. On 14th November The Leveson Inquiry was launched. This inquiry was commissioned by David Cameron and chaired by Lord Leveson. It was intended to investigate media ethics and the phone hacking scandal. It would call key witnesses and victims to give evidence in the hope of fully understanding the events that took place and find out who was aware of what was happening.

Ultimately it would aim to find out how far spread the scandal was and who should take responsibility. During this inquiry testimonies were heard from many sources including the family of Milly Dowler, Hugh Grant, Steve Coogan, the family of Madeline McCann, Sienna Millar, Max Moseley, and JK Rowling. On 23rd November James Murdoch resigned from the boards of The Sun and The Times newspapers. He does this as an attempt to disassociate

himself with phone hacking scandal and potentially allow for a sell off in the future. He retains his roles on the boards of News Corp and BskyB.

On 29th November The Leveson inquiry hears from Paul McMullan, the deputy features editor on the Sunday tabloid that the culture of phone hacking was imported to NOW with Andy Coulson when he transferred from working at The Sun. He also told the inquiry that both Coulson and Rebekah Brooks knew that these illegal activities were taking place in the company. | |

3. What is management? ' Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving' (John Cotter, 1996).

The statement above is one of many definitions of management. It details the daily activities that a manager must pursue to run their company and ultimately turn a profit. There are many different theories and ideologies which suggest how managers should carry out their role to give the most successful results.

3. 1. Management Ideologies An Ideology is a set of beliefs by which an individual can choose to live in order to achieve their preferred goals in life. In business it is important for the management to set out an ideology or ' direction' for the company to follow so that its objectives can be achieved successfully and efficiently.

. 2. Humanistic versus Economistic Ideologies Management can choose to act in either a humanistic or economistic manner. This means that they can choose to make decisions which take into account social and ethical reasoning or they can base their decisions solely on economic gain. One theorist who argued that the priority of any business was to maximise profits at the cost of all else was Milton

Friedman who said “ The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits” in The New York Times Magazine (13 September 1970).

The priority for the management of any corporation is to maximise profits for stakeholders. In this way management is generally duty bound to act in an economic manner. It could be argued that by accessing information through methods of phone hacking and therefore breaking stories first , NOW was simply acting in the best interest of its stakeholders in doing anything it could to sell papers and increase profits. However it could also be said that from a humanistic point of view, management at NOW had a responsibility to act in an ethically and morally responsible way. If they were aware of phone hacking taking place then it should have been dealt with immediately rather than covered up in order to save the reputation of the paper and maintain profits.

3.3 Scientific Management Theories Throughout the twentieth century, Scientific, Classical and Human relations schools of thought looked at ways of legitimising management and building up knowledge in order to run businesses in clearly defined ways. Business schools were even set up which were intended to teach the principles of management using rational thinking to plan work in a logical way in order to get tasks done efficiently (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009). Theorists such as Taylor (1911) and Fayol (1949) believed that by identifying universal scientific rules and principles in the workplace management could develop ‘ one best way’ of organising staff. (D. Wilson and R. Rosenfield, 1990). It is clear that the management at NOW were not working to any standardised rules or theories during the phone hacking scandal. It appears that journalists were able to use any means necessary to

do their jobs with no strictly enforced guidance to prevent illegal or immoral behaviour.

Management has subsequently developed from being a scientific theory with managers now being encouraged to focus not only on the ‘ means’ it employs but also at the ‘ ends’ (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009). In other words they should look at the consequences of their actions rather than focussing solely on how they will get tasks done. During the phone hacking scandal it seems that NOW was determined to get information by any means possible rather than thinking about the long term effects of their actions i. e. human suffering and ultimate closure of the newspaper.

3. 4. Critical Management Studies

Critical Management Studies (CMS) are an approach to management which have been developed and implemented since the 1980s. This relatively modern approach refers to the destabilisation of traditional management theories. It looks at how management can relate to things in a more rational, responsive and creative way. (Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, 1992) CMS encourage us to question what reality actually is in order to approach situations in a more rational manner (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009). The idea that reality is a construction of society focuses on the fact that over an amount of time, people in society will begin to mirror one another’s behaviour and so the concept of reality will become distorted (Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, 1966). It is possible that the Management at NOW became unable to see how unacceptable the phone hacking was as it was done so frequently throughout the company and became the norm. They may also have been able to relinquish their own personal responsibility and justify

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their actions by the fact that everybody in the company was acting in a similar way (Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, 1992).

CMS also states that there is political relevance in all of the decisions that managers make. This can be seen particularly by looking at the views and ideas put forward by the many newspapers which are owned by Rupert Murdoch. Rupert Murdoch is the Chairman and CEO of ‘ News Corporation’, the company which owned NOW as well as many other newspapers and media companies around the world. Rupert Murdoch has imparted his political stances through his newspapers and in this way has been able to have some influence over the views of the general public. CMS tells us that suspicion of traditional management theories is on the rise.

Management are encouraged to act as reflexive practitioners and question the familiar to gain new perspectives and react to situations in a more objective way (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009). A manager is appointed by the shareholders of a company to make decisions which will be most beneficial to its business. However managers are also individuals in their own right who must use an element of their own judgement to make decisions on behalf of their business (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009). In this way it is possible that they will be affected by emotion and perhaps prejudice.

It appears that the management of NOW did not act rationally when dealing with the phone hacking crisis. They did not use their personal judgement or own emotions in allowing the phone hacking to take place or in the way that they covered it up for so long once it had become apparent to the public. 3.

5 Managers as Actors Managers can also be seen as actors who have to

coordinate the performance of their company. They are responsible for making sure that their staff play their parts and follow the script as defined by the management (Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, 1992).

Within this there are two roles which the manager must undertake simultaneously in coordinating what happens ‘ front stage’ and ‘ backstage’. During the phone hacking scandal the management team at NOW had to present a united front to the public in order to protect the reputation of the company and continue to sell their newspaper. They showed public sympathy for the victims of the crisis and paid out compensation to those affected. However behind the scenes things could have been very different with management struggling to run the business under public scrutiny.

They continued to look for crisis control and cover up methods to prevent further details of the scandal being leaked to the Public. 3. 6 Managers as Discursive Subjectivities Managers also have a role as discursive subjectivities (A. L Cuncliffe, 2009) within an organisation. The way that they use language and communicate with their employees will affect the way the workforce performs and how tasks are carried out. If communication is not clear and concise then it can leave room for employees to make their own judgements on acceptable and non- acceptable behaviour.

It could be said that management at NOW may have been deliberately vague when describing acceptable behaviour to their employees with the hope that phone hacking would continue without management having to admit knowledge of it. 4. Ethical Theories Ethics can be described as a set of principles which tell us what is morally right and wrong. They guide us

towards making decisions which are ‘ good’ and in the best interest of people. It could be said that Business Ethics is a contradiction in terms (K. R Andrews, 1989).

A company may be operating legally but find themselves acting immorally to improve profit margins. When an act is legal but morally wrong it can present a ‘ grey area’ to the decision maker. Many ethical theories have been put forward to help us find answers to these decisions (Joseph L. Badaracco, 1995). Normative ethical theories can be separated into two main categories, Consequentialist and non- consequentialist. 4. 1.

Consequentialist Theories Consequentialist theories state that if our actions are good in themselves that the outcome will always be good.

Smith talks about a ‘ trickle down’ effect where the success of individuals will filter down to positively affect other people. However this theory does not take into account any harm done to others in order to pursue self- interests. It also fails to recognise the fact that an inequality of wealth distribution can mean that wealth does not filter down but stays with those who have created it (Stephen Copeland and Kathryn Sutherland, 1995). In the case of the phone hacking scandal at NOW it could be said that journalists employed egotistical ethical theories as they intercepted phones for their own success in the short term.

They gained the glory of breaking stories and selling newspapers but did not take into account the fact that they were breaching the privacy of other people and causing human suffering in the long term. A second consequentialist theory is utilitarianism. Put forward by such theorists as

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mills, it states that decisions should be made which will provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people (John Stuart Mill, 1863). A Utilitarian theory can be difficult to put in place as it is often hard to identify who exactly will be affected by the consequences of an action.

It is also hard to quantify things in terms of human pleasure and pain as it is a subjective area. Another main drawback of the Utilitarian view is that it will always rule in favour of the majority. The minority will always suffer when this is put into practice without taking into account any details of individual cases (John Stuart Mill, 1863). Journalists at NOW could argue that they believed they were doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people by intercepting phones and breaking stories to the public.

They could argue that the public had a right to know the information that they were reporting and that the minority of people who suffered as a result of this were insignificant. However the public outcry after the extent of the phone hacking scandal was revealed would disprove this theory. The general public were shocked and appalled by the lengths NOW journalists were willing to go to sell papers. The amount of pleasure readers may have gotten from reading the NOW articles was disproportionate to the suffering which was incurred for the majority as a result. . 2. Non Consequentialist Theories Non consequentialist theories on the other hand are interested solely in the motivation of actions regardless of the outcomes. One main non-consequentialist theory is put forward by Emmanuel Kant and is called The Ethics of Duties. In this theory Kant talks about The Categorical Imperative which gives three rules by which any action can be judged (H. J. Paton, 1971)

The first is the universal law which states that people should only treat others how they would want to be treated by others.

Kant would have asked Journalists at NOW how they would have felt if somebody had intercepted their phone messages and invaded their privacy in this way. The second says that people should be treated as an end in themselves rather than a means to an end. The victims of the phone hacking scandal were used as a means to get stories and sell papers. They were used as an entity for the financial gain of the newspaper. The third rule says that people should act only in a way which can be considered ‘universally lawgiving’. In other words people’s actions should be universally acceptable and should pass ‘The New York Times Test’ (2007).

This test says that if you would not like your actions written in the New York Times then it is obvious that you are doing something ethically wrong that you would not like others to know about. It is clear that the actions of NOW journalists would not pass this test. Many employees at NOW have resigned as a result of this scandal which proves that there is a sense of shame and guilt linked to their actions. 5. Conclusion In conclusion there are two options regarding the events which took place at NOW during the phone hacking scandal.

The first is that the management were unaware of what was happening at this time and that individual reporters were acting autonomously to obtain information by methods of interception. In this case we can summarise that the power and control of the NOW management was not at an appropriate level to monitor working techniques of journalists. If they had been aware of

what was happening then they may have stepped in to stop it before it got out of hand. The second is that management were aware of the methods of their employees but chose to 'turn a blind eye' to what was happening in order to continue to break stories and sell newspapers.

If this was the case then we can conclude that the management style at NOW was completely economically based with no regard given to any human suffering incurred as a result of these actions. It is clear that management at NOW had either lost control of their staff or lost focus on what was morally acceptable in pursuit of power and profits.

6. Recommendations

Recommendation| Explanation| NOW needed to find a balance between humanistic and economic management ideologies. | In order to Management Team at NOW needed to find a balance between maintaining profits and acting in a socially responsible way.

They ...should have aimed to print truthful stories without having to violate people's privacy to get them. Triple bottom line. | Management at NOW needed to have better control over how their staff were behaving and carrying out tasks. | It is Important to know what staff are doing as management are ultimately responsible for their actions and can be held legally accountable for any wrong doing. NOW needed to get a firm grip of its employees actions especially when dealing with private and sensitive issues. | Management at NOW needed to take responsibility for the mistakes made by journalists whether or not they knew about them. Once it was clear that public trust for NOW had gone completely, the newspaper had no choice but to shut. If the paper had admitted its mistakes in the early stages of the revelations becoming apparent then they may have been able to exercise an

amount of damage limitation and possibly remain open. NOW would have needed to expose all phone hacking from within the organisation and dismiss all staff related to it. Although apologies were made from some of the senior management and resignations were made, the public have never been fully convinced of the remorse. NOW management needed to ensure that staff were being | Managers at Now needed to make the work of journalists more transparent with individuals being more accountable for what they write. If staff had been completely open about the methods used to acquire stories both internally and externally then phone hacking would never have occurred in the first place. The media has been allowed to get away with printing whatever they want for so long which may have given them a feeling of being invincible and protected from the law. News Corporation needs to put measures in place to make sure that the bad name of NOW does not alienate its other publications and companies. | News Corporation still owns many other newspapers and companies which they will now need to protect from being tarred by the bad reputation of NOW. In order to do this the company would benefit from removing key figures such as Rupert Murdoch and his son James Murdoch from high profile roles. These are people who the public see as related to the phone hacking scandal. There is a lot of public anger towards these men.

News Corporation will also need to give its full co-operation to the Leveson Inquiry in order to show that it has nothing more to hide. If this is the case then the public may, over time begin to regain its trust and respect for the company. | 7. References A. L. CUNCLIFFE (2009) A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Management A. CUNCLIFFE

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