

Bell Pottinger issues apology statement

NEWSWATCH: In a statement released by UK PR firm Bell Pottinger, chief executive James Henderson issues an unequivocal apology on behalf of the company and writes that Bell Pottinger has appointed an international law firm to review the work that they have done on the Gupta-owned company Oakbay Capital account.



6 July 2017

Oakbay Capital statement

Three months ago, Bell Pottinger announced that it had decided to cease work for Oakbay Capital. We had worked for them for a year, following a competitive bid process.

When we terminated our work with Oakbay, we said we were doing so because of increasingly strong social media attacks on our staff and our business from South Africa, and that we regarded the criticisms of what our team had done as unfair.

These attacks on, and criticisms of, our staff continued and were clearly the result of strong and sincere anger. Most seriously, it was said that we had supported or aided campaigns to stir up racial division in South Africa. Therefore, we called in the leading independent international law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills LLP, to review the account and the work done on it. That investigation is still continuing and will be completed in the next few weeks. We intend to publish the findings of that report and take appropriate action.

[Bell Pottinger's statement in relation to its previous work with Oakbay Capital](#)

"When we terminated our work with Oakbay, we said we were doing so because of increasingly strong social media attacks on our staff and our business from South Africa, and that we regarded the criticisms of what our team had done as unfair. These attacks on, and criticisms of, our staff continued and were clearly the result of strong and sincere anger. Most seriously, it was said that we had supported or aided campaigns to stir up racial division in South Africa," he writes.



Guptas' PR got R8m job from govt

13 Jun 2017



It is because of this that the company called in independent, international law firm, Herbert Smith Freehills LLP, to review the account and the work done on it. The investigation is still continuing and will be completed in the next few weeks but Bell Pottinger intends to publish the findings of the report and take appropriate action.

Henderson also states that although the inquiry is ongoing, they have dismissed the lead partner involved and suspended another partner and two employees so that they can determine their precise role in what took place. He claims that the company acted immediately as soon as they were made aware that they had been misled and that work was being done which goes against the very core of their ethical policies.



Bell Pottinger walks away from the Guptas

Natasha Marrian and Genevieve Quintal 18 Apr 2017



"We wish to issue a full, unequivocal and absolute apology to anyone impacted. These activities should never have been

undertaken. We are deeply sorry that this happened," Henderson concludes.

For more:

- Business Day: ['We were misled, we are deeply sorry' — read Bell Pottinger's full statement](#)
- News24: [For whom the Bell tolls: PR firm's apology too late, but what now?](#)
- EWN: [All the memes: Twitter burns Bell Pottinger over apology](#)

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