

Ref: BArepdraft2  
23rd April 2008

**British Airways executives check-in reputations at Terminal 5 comments Averta Employment Lawyers**

*The senior British Airways executives leaving the company following the Terminal 5 fiasco would have benefited from better legal advice according to Alan Jones, partner at Averta Employment Lawyers. According to Jones, the departures emphasise the need for executives to manage the external message, if possible, when they leave their employment. Jones says:*

“A few days after the BA boss Willie Walsh remarked that the ‘bucks stops with me’, the departure of the two senior executives who managed the T5 fiasco and the lack of a comment by the BA Press Office leaves everyone to draw their own conclusions. And most people have concluded that BA thinks they were responsible. This leaves me to wonder how they will get a new job if the external message is that they have been incompetent.”

“Even though most dismissals do not reach the front pages of the daily papers, every industry has its “grapevine” and a departing executive would be well advised to remember this when negotiating his or her exit terms. It is not merely a question of having a positive reference or testimonial because, these days, prospective employers have other means of testing someone’s character and experience.”

“Sometimes the exit arrangements agreed with the company will include a confidentiality provision so, on the face of it, no one should be allowed to talk about the departure. That might have the right effect but sometimes, perhaps in the case of the British Airways executive, silence is not golden. It is probably better to agree an announcement which both the employer and employee will subscribe to, which explains the circumstances of the departure in such a way as to avoid any inference that it is for misconduct or incompetence, and might also deal with what the executive proposes to do in future.”

“Of course there will be situations where no amount of “spin” will make any difference. A football manager who loses his job after relegation will struggle to avoid criticism, and probably if the CEO of British Airways does leave, everyone will connect it with the trials and tribulations of the new Heathrow Terminal. For most people however a well thought out announcement will undoubtedly assist, and coupled with a reasonable severance package, they will be well set to find gainful employment in the short term.”

Averta Employment Lawyers, which as set up by two partners from DLA over three years ago, advises senior executives and professionals on employment matters. Market analysts report in Chamber’s UK guide to legal firms that Averta has: “cornered the region’s market when it comes to advising senior executives” and that client’s benefit from their “vast experience”.

**Ends**

**Words – 440**

For further information please contact:

Suzanne Orsler, SOPR – Tel 07813 131350, or email [suzanneorsler@my.intervivo.com](mailto:suzanneorsler@my.intervivo.com)  
suzanneorsler@aol.com

Alan Jones - Tel 07970 495733  
jonesa@averta.com

Averta Employment Lawyers  
Vienna House  
Starley Way  
Birmingham International Park  
Solihull  
B37 7GN

**Tel - 0870 421 1952**

[www.averta.com](http://www.averta.com)