REPUTATION & INFORMATION PROTECTION

The legal perspective
Their advice was business focussed and useful in a business context.

CHAMBERS, 2018

The overall level of service was exceptional, from beginning to end. The knowledge and professionalism was remarkable.

CHAMBERS, 2017

Addleshaw Goddard’s team attracts praise from its clients, which ‘trust the firm implicitly’.

LEGAL 500, 2016

RECOGNISED SPECIALIST EXPERTISE

Addleshaw Goddard is recognised as having one of the leading reputation and information protection teams in the UK. Our lawyers are consistently identified as leaders in the field by the two principal legal directories, Chambers and Legal 500.

Media enquiries, regulatory or police investigations, sensitive litigation, operational issues, pressure groups, aggrieved customers, disaffected employees and activist shareholders can all put at risk the reputation of a business, its brands and its directors.

The ease with which confidential or commercially (or personally) sensitive information can be unlawfully obtained and/or circulated is also a growing challenge for many businesses, which now face the threats of data breaches, cyberattacks, loss of confidential information, leaks to the media, data protection disputes and Freedom of Information Act requests.
We are experienced in advising organisations and individuals on how to deal with potentially damaging exposure in the media at the pre-publication/broadcast stage, as well as during and following publication when damage needs to be prevented or mitigated, and the media persuaded to set the record straight. Usually this means working with in-house communications teams and/or external PR agencies to manage the crisis.

Whatever the source of the reputational threat, we provide strategic board level advice and assist with reputational risk management, for example by conducting internal investigations and reviews.
A positive reputation requires that at least 20% of the stories in the leading media be positive, no more than 10% negative, and the rest neutral.
INFORMATION PROTECTION

The ease with which economically valuable or reputationally sensitive information can be stored and transmitted creates significant risk for any business.

Information security issues, such as data loss, cyberattacks, leaks to the media and misuse of confidential information can be reputationally and commercially damaging.

Mischevious and vexatious subject access and Freedom of Information Act requests can waste time (and money), as well as pose a reputational threat.

Even in the absence of such issues, ‘Big Data’ can create big litigation risk, as all sectors, but particularly retailers and financial services, seek to take advantage of the commercial opportunities created by technical advances.
Social media and the internet generally is now a major risk area for many businesses. Addleshaw Goddard has extensive experience (dating back to the UK’s first internet libel case in 1995) and expertise in the protection of rights and reputation online, whether there is a one-off problem to be resolved or a requirement for an ongoing reputation protection programme.

We are familiar with the way in which the internet operates, the many and varied sources of information available on it and the many and varied ruses employed by those who seek to infringe the rights or damage the reputation of others. The internet is an ever changing and fast moving medium. Speed is often of the essence.

Clearly this is often cross-border work, and we work with our international offices and with our preferred firms in other territories to harness local expertise and obtain local representation for our clients.
HOW AG CAN HELP

Our team of lawyers is available out of hours and at weekends, to provide urgent round-the-clock advice, to negotiate with the media or other interest group, and to make emergency injunction applications.

An organisation with a crisis team in place is able to respond swiftly and effectively. We help our clients put in place such arrangements and provide customised training workshops to ensure that our clients’ legal and communications teams are up to date with current law and practice.

Our aim is always to provide quick, practical and commercial advice, and to complement our clients’ protection of their valuable reputations.

Unlike the niche media law firms, as a large full service firm, we have specialist lawyers in all areas which may be relevant to a reputational threat, on whose expertise we can quickly draw.

Similarly, with our own overseas offices and our proven international Preferred Firms network, we are able to take quick and effective legal action, with the assistance of local experts, wherever in the world a problem surfaces.

We have successfully acted for many major organisations and companies in connection with reputational issues. We have also acted for numerous high profile individuals in business, public life, the arts, entertainment and sport.

In an economy where 70% to 80% of market value comes from hard-to-assess intangible assets such as brand equity, intellectual capital, and goodwill, organizations are especially vulnerable to anything that damages their reputations.

The team was superb, their strengths are numerous but their client service definitely stood out.

CHAMBERS, 2017

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW
EXAMPLES OF OUR EXPERIENCE

- Preventing publication in a Sunday newspaper of potentially highly damaging speculation about the solvency of a financial services business
- Preventing broadcast on BBC’s *Watchdog* of allegations about a motoring organisation
- Defending claim against bank for alleged misuse of a customer’s data under Data Protection Act
- Preventing and mitigating broadcast on *Panorama* and *Newsnight* of tax avoidance allegations against a FTSE100 company
- Defending Freedom of Information requests for an NHS Trust
- Obtaining public retraction in Court of false allegations made by disgruntled building society member
Preventing publication in a national newspaper of allegations about the private life of a professional sportsman.

Representing large retailer in connection with media coverage of high profile employment proceedings.

Acting for bank and real estate company in US$800m claim in libel, malicious falsehood and breach of confidence.

Bringing over 100 successful claims against *News of the World* and the *Daily Mirror* over phone hacking.

Advising major clothing retailer in relation to supply chain issues.

Advising a company and its directors in relation to reputational aspects of SFO investigation.

Obtaining removal of Google search results under ‘right to be forgotten’.

Preventing publication in a national newspaper of allegations about a convenience food outlet.

Advising a company and its directors in relation to reputational aspects of SFO investigation.
Their strength is that they have a defamation practice allied to a very strong commercial litigation practice, which sits within a top firm.

CHAMBERS, 2015

Despite heavy responsibilities for other clients, they are available at short notice. The quality of advice is high and knowledge of media organisations’ in-house legal practices extensive and useful.

CHAMBERS, 2016

They’ve been excellent in terms of their knowledge and in coming up with solutions.

CHAMBERS, 2018

Follow us on Twitter @AGRepProtect
**KEY CONTACTS**

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David is a partner in our Litigation Division, specialising in reputation and information law and leading our Reputation & Information Protection team. His practice has for many years been recognised by the Chambers and Legal 500 directories for its expertise in this field, and David is personally ranked for his defamation and reputation work.

He provides strategic board level advice on protecting businesses from threats to their reputation and on reputational risk mitigation, for example by conducting internal investigations and reviews.

David also advises on how to deal with potentially damaging exposure in the media or online, as well as during and following publication when damage needs to be prevented or mitigated, including, if necessary, taking legal action against the media, bloggers, websites and other sources of reputational threat.

His legal specialisms therefore include defamation, confidentiality, privacy, harassment and data protection.

He was appointed as Independent Solicitor to News International’s phone hacking arbitration scheme, in connection with which he represented more than 90 victims of phone hacking against the publisher of the News of the World.

He also adjudicates on domain name disputes as an Independent Expert for Nominet’s dispute resolution service, and has made over 60 such adjudications.

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**An accomplished reputation management and privacy specialist.**

**CHAMBERS, 2018**

**Extremely knowledgeable, calm, very strong on tactics and forceful when required.**

**CHAMBERS, 2017**

**Among the elite practitioners in media and privacy law.**

**LEGAL 500, 2016**
Abigail is a partner in our Litigation Division, specialising in reputation and information protection for companies and individuals.

She provides advice on media crisis management, defamation, harassment, privacy, breach of confidence, data protection disputes, Freedom of Information Act requests and information security issues.

Abigail has acted for numerous companies in relation to social media issues, such as the removal of online content on grounds of libel and/or harassment, and has advised on social media policies for businesses and terms of use for websites.

She also forms part of our multi-disciplinary Information Security task force, advising businesses on data breaches, hacking, and loss or theft of confidential information.

Abigail retains full Higher Court Rights of audience. She regularly speaks and writes on reputation and internet related topics and is a contributor to external publications including E-Commerce Law Reports.

**Responsive, reassuring, practical and a pleasure to deal with.**

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**Exceptionally intelligent and extremely skilled.**

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**No nonsense and easy to work with.**

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