

CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT AND REPUTATION

MASTER CASES



GOD SAVE THE BRITISH MONARCHY'S BRAND

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Corporate Brand Management and Reputation: Master's Cases

The "Corporate Brand Management and Reputation: Master's cases" is a case series for applying the case method of teaching and learning in higher education. The cases are relevant to brand strategists in private and public sector organizations, as well as academics and students at universities, business schools, and executive education.

The cases are written by groups of master's students as a course project. The specially developed case format is defined as: *"A management decision case describes a real business situation leading up to a question(s) that requires assessment, analysis, and a decision reached by discussion in class. The alternative approaches and recommendations from the class discussion are followed by a description of the choices made by the case company. This description is then discussed by the class."*

The student groups select the topics of their case providing updated and relevant insights into the corporate brand management. The cases can be used as "written cases" (handed out and read in advance, later to be discussed in class) and/or as "live case" (presented by the teacher following a discussion in class). Each case includes teaching notes, visuals with speaker's notes, learning objectives, board plans, and references.

The mission of the series is *"to develop cases for discussion providing insights into the theory and practice of corporate brand management and reputation, with the intent of bridging the gap between academic teaching and managerial practice."*

The series is a result of co-creation between students and teachers at the elective course Corporate Brand Management (BUSN35 – five-credit course/eight-week half-time studies), part of the master's program International Marketing and Brand Management at Lund School of Economics and Management, Sweden. The cases represent the result of the intellectual work of students under the supervision of the head of course.

Although based on real events and despite references to actual companies, the cases are solely intended to be a basis for class discussion, not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. The cases are free to be used and are to be cited following international conventions.

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God Save The British Monarchy's Brand

WRITTEN CASE

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

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God Save The British Monarchy's Brand

On the 8th of January 2020 at 6:00pm GMT, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex dropped an unprecedented, bombshell announcement via Instagram (**Exhibit 1**). In the post's caption, they communicated plans to "step back" from the Royal Family, work to achieve financial independence, and find a means of splitting their time between North America and the United Kingdom. The media disseminated the story immediately, and shockwaves reverberated among the public – both throughout the United Kingdom and in countries around the world. Reports that close members of the British Royal Family did not expect the announcement heightened public interest even further. The media coverage thrust the British Monarchy – an institution known for its commitment to tradition and rigidity in the face of change – onto the global stage and in front of a public audience eagerly awaiting a resolution.

Background and History

Influence of the Monarchy and Queen Elizabeth II

The influence of the British Monarchy is storied, spanning centuries and continents. The current iteration of the Monarchy began with the death of George VI in February of 1952 and his daughter Elizabeth's subsequent ascension and coronation. Throughout her tenure as Monarch – which still continues today – Queen Elizabeth II espoused unwavering steadfastness and a continuous sense of duty and responsibility. Her reign came to signify immense thoughtfulness, adherence to tradition, and the utmost respect for the Crown's heritage, which aligns with the Monarchy's core values of durability, prestige, heritage and consistency. As the most prominent member of the Royal Family, she serves as the public face and human embodiment of the institution as a whole. Her image as Monarch is inextricably intertwined with the social and political fabric of the United Kingdom: her profile appears on the pound, she meets regularly with the prime minister, and the country's national anthem is "God Save The Queen."

Members of the Royal Family

Second to The Queen's visibility is that of her family members, who offer additional benchmarks dictating roles and acceptable behaviors for those adjacent to the Crown (**Exhibit 2** provides a detailed family tree for reference). Queen Elizabeth's son, Prince Charles, maintains a relatively low profile, likely both a factor of his advancing age and a consequence of the intense media scrutiny he faced over his relationships with ex-wife Diana, Princess of Wales, and current wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. Charles' and Diana's sons, Princes William and Harry, grew up in the public eye and came to represent monarchical renewal, captivating constituents with their status as a new generation of senior Royal Family members.

Precedents Set by William and Kate

With Prince William's lengthy relationship and eventual marriage to Catherine Middleton in April of 2011, the high-profile pair shaped and translated the concept of a royal couple for a modern age. Kate, a native of Berkshire, England, enjoyed an upper-middle-class upbringing with ties to British aristocracy on her father's side of the family. After nearly a decade of dating William, Kate seamlessly transitioned into her role as a senior Royal Family member. While allowing for some modernizations to protocol (for instance, pop star Ellie Goulding performed at the royal wedding reception at Buckingham Palace), the couple readily demonstrated their respect for convention and leaned heavily upon precedent to guide their behavior. Public events including the royal wedding, birth announcements and christenings, and charitable involvements were steeped in tradition. The press delighted in detailing the historical significance of everything from outfits to official outings as a nod to a prior Royal Family members' precedents. Thus, William and Kate inadvertently laid the foundation upon which modern royal relationships would be judged and critiqued.

Meghan's Introduction

Just over five years after Kate's marriage into the Royal Family, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle met in London and began dating. American-born Meghan, the daughter of a social worker and Hollywood lighting director, came from humble beginnings. She worked odd jobs—including a stint as a freelance calligrapher—to support her passion for acting before achieving celebrity status with her role as Rachel Zane on the popular legal drama *Suits*. As with William and Kate, intense media coverage underscored the budding relationship, though the press assumed a much more critical tone towards Meghan and frequently zeroed in on her biracial background, prior divorce, familial strife, and foreign, American citizenship. Prince Harry issued an official statement on 8 November 2016 (**Exhibit 3**), requesting that the press reign in its incessant coverage of Meghan with the aim of decreasing the "outright sexism and racism" directed at his partner. Notably, Harry's plea carried

added significance as the paparazzi is widely blamed for the tragic car accident that killed Harry's mother, Princess Diana.

Growing Discontent

In spite of ongoing critical press coverage, Prince Charles announced Harry's and Meghan's engagement in a statement on 27 November 2017 (**Exhibit 4**). The couple wed at St. George's Chapel on 19 May 2018 in a ceremony that challenged tradition. From Meghan's modern and untraditional wedding dress to the couples' atypical candid photograph for their official wedding portrait to the black bishop who delivered the sermon (a first at a royal wedding), Harry and Meghan clearly demonstrated their divergence from precedent. From there, the couple continued to embrace departures from tradition, from opting for a primary residence outside of London (as opposed to a royal apartment next to the Cambridges at Kensington Palace) to declining an "on the steps" photoshoot following their son Archie's birth and keeping details of his christening under wraps. It's critical to note that while Harry and Meghan instigated many departures from tradition, they still embraced their royal roles, even going so far as to file for a trademark for the "Sussex Royal" brand.

The racist tabloid commentary surrounding Meghan continued, augmented by criticism of the couple's extensive, taxpayer-funded renovations to their residence, Frogmore Cottage, and frequent personal travel on private jets. Amid the nonstop media coverage, reports of internal strife among the Sussexes and the rest of the Royal Family surfaced. On 20 June 2019, Harry and Meghan stepped down from a charity foundation they shared with William and Kate with plans to form their own separate foundation. In August of 2019, a Channel 5 documentary entitled *William and Harry: Princes at War?* hinted at a growing rift between the brothers. A month later, Harry and Meghan declined Queen Elizabeth's invitation to a hunting holiday at Balmoral Castle, citing Archie's inability to travel (though Archie had traveled to Ibiza with his parents just weeks before).

Breaking Point

October 2019 marked a breaking point for the Sussexes. On 1 October, Harry issued a statement disclosing Meghan's lawsuit against Associated Newspapers over their publication of a personal letter addressed to Meghan's father. In the statement, he denounced the British tabloids' "long and disturbing pattern of behavior" in their coverage of Meghan and vowed to no longer be a "silent witness" to his wife's harassment. Later that month, an ITV documentary—filmed over the course of the couple's royal tour in Africa—publicized an emotional confession from Meghan in which she revealed that "not many people have asked if I'm okay" and confirmed the toll royal life had taken on her mental health and wellbeing. The following month, the Sussexes embarked on a six-week hiatus from their royal duties and spent the

Christmas holiday in Canada, notably one of the few times Harry has spent the holidays away from the Royal Family.

The Incident

On the 8th of January 2020 at 6:00pm GMT, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex dropped an unprecedented, bombshell announcement via Instagram (Figure 1). In the post's caption, the couple communicated their plans to "step back" from their duties as senior members of the Royal Family and their intentions to achieve financial independence and split their time between Canada and the United Kingdom. The Sussexes cited their need for "space" to raise their son and focus on the launch of a new charitable foundation as a motivation for their decision. They reiterated their commitment to The Queen and thanked the public for its support in this "exciting next step." The Instagram announcement referred readers to a new website, sussexroyal.com, for additional information. Aside from blindsiding the British press, which is typically responsible for first-hand reporting on Crown-related matters, BBC News royal correspondent Jonny Dymond tweeted (**Exhibit 5**) that a palace source "confirmed that no members of the Royal Family were consulted" in the Sussexes' decision.

Conclusion

It is now 6:15pm GMT, and the news spreads like wildfire across the globe. In Buckingham Palace, courtiers are abuzz with shock and frantically weigh the Crown's options for addressing the Sussexes' statement. Senior members of the Royal Family and advisers to the Crown hastily arrange a meeting to discuss an immediate plan of action, with the goal of addressing the crisis as swiftly as possible. Assuming the role of The Queen's trusted private secretary and considering both monarchical precedents and the modern-day context, how would you advise Queen Elizabeth on the following question:

Should the crown leverage this crisis opportunity to publicly break with tradition and adapt (a market-oriented approach) or use it to strengthen their traditional, formal identity (a brand-oriented approach)?

Exhibit 1 The Duke and Duchess of Sussex publicly announce their intention to “step back” from their royal duties via their verified Instagram account.



Full text: “After many months of reflection and internal discussions, we have chosen to make a transition this year in starting to carve out a progressive new role within this institution. We intend to step back as ‘senior’ members of the Royal Family and work to become financially independent, while continuing to fully support Her Majesty The Queen. It is with your encouragement, particularly over the last few years, that we feel prepared to make this adjustment. We now plan to balance our time between the United Kingdom and North America, continuing to honour our duty to The Queen, the Commonwealth, and our patronages. This geographic balance will enable us to raise our son with an appreciation for the royal tradition into which he was born, while also providing our family with the space to focus on the next chapter, including the launch of our new charitable entity. We look forward to sharing the full details of this exciting next step in due course, as we continue to collaborate with Her Majesty The Queen, The Prince of Wales, The Duke of Cambridge and all relevant parties. Until then, please accept our deepest thanks for your continued support.” - The Duke and Duchess of Sussex | For more information, please visit sussexroyal.com

Exhibit 2 Family tree

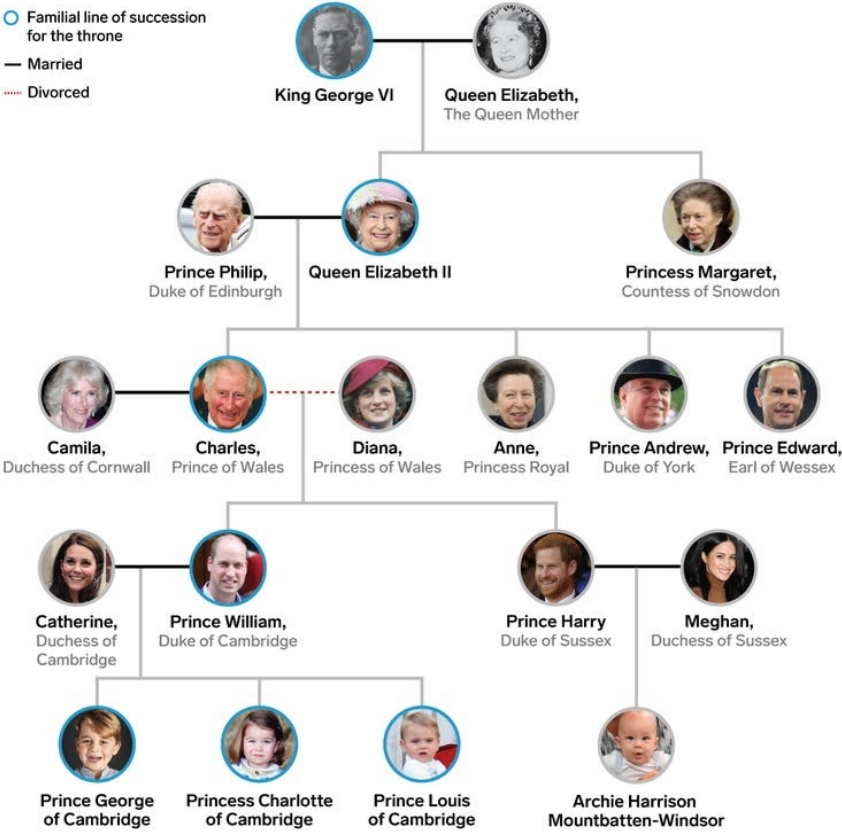


Exhibit 3 A Statement by the Communications Secretary to Prince Harry, 8 November 2016

Full text: “Since he was young, Prince Harry has been very aware of the warmth that has been extended to him by members of the public. He feels lucky to have so many people supporting him and knows what a fortunate and privileged life he leads.

He is also aware that there is significant curiosity about his private life. He has never been comfortable with this, but he has tried to develop a thick skin about the level of media interest that comes with it. He has rarely taken formal action on the very regular publication of fictional stories that are written about him and he has worked hard to develop a professional relationship with the media, focused on his work and the issues he cares about.

But the past week has seen a line crossed. His girlfriend, Meghan Markle, has been subject to a wave of abuse and harassment. Some of this has been very public - the smear on the front page of a national newspaper; the racial undertones of comment pieces; and the outright sexism and racism of social media trolls and web article comments. Some of it has been hidden from the public - the nightly legal battles to keep defamatory stories out of papers; her mother having to struggle past photographers in order to get to her front door;

the attempts of reporters and photographers to gain illegal entry to her home and the calls to police that followed; the substantial bribes offered by papers to her ex-boyfriend; the bombardment of nearly every friend, co-worker, and loved one in her life.

Prince Harry is worried about Ms. Markle's safety and is deeply disappointed that he has not been able to protect her. It is not right that a few months into a relationship with him that Ms. Markle should be subjected to such a storm. He knows commentators will say this is 'the price she has to pay' and that 'this is all part of the game'. He strongly disagrees. This is not a game - it is her life and his.

He has asked for this statement to be issued in the hopes that those in the press who have been driving this story can pause and reflect before any further damage is done. He knows that it is unusual to issue a statement like this, but hopes that fair-minded people will understand why he has felt it necessary to speak publicly."

Exhibit 4 Prince Harry and Ms. Meghan Markle are engaged to be married, 27 November 2017

Full text: “A statement from The Prince of Wales.

His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales and Ms. Meghan Markle are engaged to be married.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales is delighted to announce the engagement of Prince Harry to Ms. Meghan Markle.

The wedding will take place in Spring 2018. Further details about the wedding day will be announced in due course.

His Royal Highness and Ms. Markle became engaged in London earlier this month. Prince Harry has informed Her Majesty The Queen and other close members of his family. Prince Harry has also sought and received the blessing of Ms. Markle's parents.

The couple will live in Nottingham Cottage at Kensington Palace.”

Exhibit 5 Tweet from BBC News royal correspondent @JonnyDymond, 8 January 2020

