

bionic brand credibility.

Let me take you back to the 1970's when a popular show starring the great pop culture icon Lee Majors was a hit. For those who remember, and probably saw the repeats on Australian TV in the 1980's, I'm referring to The Six Million Dollar Man.

The Six Million Dollar Man was an American TV series about a former astronaut with bionic implants working for the Office of Scientific Intelligence. The show was that popular, a spin-off of the show was produced, The Bionic Woman.

It seems as though PR advisors in Sydney wanted to create an amalgamated version of the 2 characters, namely, The Thirty Seven Million Dollar woman, starring Ms Kristy Fraser-Kirk (to be referred to as KFK from hereon...no, she's not a fried chicken).

So, it's the \$37 million dollar woman no more. Absolutely controversial? Yes! Will it assist sexual harassment claimants and victims in the Australian workplace in the future? Whether it's changed the landscape of the workplace culture, or it's made organisations get their office in order to be ready for such claims against it, does it help potential claimants or victims? That's not for me to judge. I'm neither a judge, a lawyer or part of the Human Rights Commission. Only time will tell.

Did you know the founder of David Jones, David Jones, was born in Wales, in a town a short drive away from where our first female Prime Minister was born? A touch of irony perhaps.

Largely, this case was a battle of credibility, and unfortunately for KFK, she just didn't have enough credibility ammunition to take on the credibility of

David Jones. A brand with 172 years of credibility (yes, that's not a typo, 172 years, it began in 1838), David Jones is claimed to be the oldest continuously operating department store in the world still trading under its original name. KFK was never really a long-term threat to DJ's. Unfortunately, KFK (or her advisors) wanted to play it out in the media, and it just didn't work for her. From a credibility stakes perspective, she was never going to win. KFK should have battled on another PR angle. Taking on the board of DJ's went to the heart of Australian retail and Australians, for that matter, the establishment that we all visited as kids to sit on Santa's lap.

The PR battle should have been played out against McInnes only. They should have played her credibility against his. Alleged dirty old man vs. alleged victim of sexual harassment in the workplace. Maybe her advisors will get it right when the next victim walks through the door. Chances are they wouldn't want to go through the same thing that KFK did. I think she was advised poorly. It's not good for the next victim.

The price tag of \$37 million in my opinion was set in this vicinity so that it would drag in the media and be at the forefront of organisations minds to make people realise it's a serious issue in the workplace. This is understandable. However, what it did was make KFK look like a money hungry individual. There's no doubt that this PR professional was out done by David Jones' PR machine, by her own undoing. It made her the aggressor, not the victim. And how have I come up with this perception? It's how she has been created in the media, and unfortunately, this is what people believe. It was an \$850 000 'go away'.

What made it worse was that she promised a donation to charity that never

came because she was never awarded punitive damages. I think sexual harassment also has a PR battle of itself following KFK. I hope for the next victim, any exposure to the media is measured, angled and thought through a little better for their sake and the sake of future claimants. Due to the PR battle, David Jones has been left better off now than their original settlement offer.

In 2007, the TV station NBC in the United States launched a re-imagined version of Bionic Woman which integrated elements of The Six Million Dollar Man by having Jaime Sommers equipped with an eye implant in addition to the ear, legs and arm implants as seen on the original Bionic. However, the show experienced poor ratings and was derailed by a writers' strike, and the show was canceled after eight episodes.

Let's hope this is not a sign of things to come for sexual harassment victims in Australia due to the media battle.

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a quick one on... credibility via media

- Public Relations is a powerful tool for small business if used in a positive way.
- Whatever your brand or business, make sure your attempt to deal with the media or create a PR story is a positive experience.
- Credibility is key in business and can create a domino effect in a fantastic way.
- Editors will always want what is most credible for them as news writers as well as what will sell their publication.
- Your credibility will always be put to the test if you create the opportunity for it.
- It's ok to admit fault...admit it and move on to a positive news story for people to get their teeth into.

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