

In Defence of Kingsway

Over the last few days concerns have been raised over the 'tone' of discussions here with regards to Kingsway, perhaps **the strongest concern being voiced by the pseudonymous Al:**

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this issue, it has all the feel of a quite vituperative crusade against Kingsway, which is out of all proportion to the alleged "deceit" which is apparently being perpetrated. I noticed in one of the discussions on this issue that the word "illegal" was used (and the reference to government guidelines rather gives the impression that some "crime" is being committed).

This post seeks to address those concerns: first of all, there is no 'crusade' against Kingsway, vituperative or otherwise, and I apologise if that has seemed the case; second, when a supplier engages in a business tactic that undermines its trade partners, when concerns about that matter are brought to the supplier's attention, when that supplier's Executive Director refuses to address the issue and treats the forum where those concerns are raised with open contempt, then I think the level of debate thus far is neither unreasonable nor unwarranted and its tone remarkably restrained; third, the question of the legality of Kingsway's price comparison practice can, I suggest, only be determined by the courts or perhaps ruled upon by the Office of Fair Trading, but we have not yet reached that point and I for one hope that we do not (for the specific context of my earlier use of the word 'illegal' please see **this comment**).

The Government guidelines exist for two main purposes: to help traders ensure that they comply with the law; and to provide protection for consumers against traders who do not. Kingsway, I suggest, need to:

1. Examine their price comparison practice with specific reference to those guidelines
2. Reflect upon the impact that their practice is having upon their trade partners
3. Decide how they wish to address the matter

Until they address the matter, the questions won't go away.

Back to the notion of a 'crusade against Kingsway', however: I reiterate what I have said before: Kingsway produce some excellent product — my customers love it and I want to supply it to them, but Kingsway themselves are enticing my customers

away. I say again: I do not wish to cease trading in Kingsway product.

And listen to **this heart cry from Michael Gibson**:

I am one of those who has voiced concern publicly more than most. I have done so out of frustration more than anything else. I honestly believe that Kingsway have misunderstood the motives behind many of the comments so let me make my position clear. I WANT TO TRADE WITH KINGSWAY! I just can't in the current circumstances. John you may not be contributing to this any more but if you're still reading it then get my remark...see my problem...see my heart and give me a reason to smile and buy from you. That's what I want to do and I believe that's what many of us want to do.

None of us here, to my knowledge, bear Kingsway any ill will. They are an important trading partner and represent some important artists who I am sure would be equally heartbroken if they knew of this ludicrous state of affairs.

So let there be no further misunderstanding: let this post stand in testimony to Kingsway's excellence; let those who wish to sing Kingsway's praises do so freely; and to John Paculabo I say, as I said at the end of our last email exchange:

*My thoughts and prayers are with you and all your colleagues at Kingsway;
May you find the grace to work your way though this difficult time;
May God's love surround you;
May you find peace.*

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