

Nil Point! Can Eurovision count?

Our writer is less than impressed by the latest manifestation of our popularity in Europe...

"Nil point!"

Are they having a laugh?

I'm not saying that we should have won the Eurovision Song Contest last weekend. But when you look at the utter rubbish other countries sent, to not at least come half-way up the rankings was clearly not reflective of our man's performance.

I believe that the Europeans absolutely hate the fact that we are steadily making a success of Brexit. And that currently colours their judgement about anything British.

The world has not ended for the UK. Far from it. Every world saving vaccine, every positive economic indicator in our bounce back economy and every world class warship launched by The Royal Navy has our European neighbours gagging on their croissants, choking on chorizo and barfing on their bruschettas. Envy is an ugly emotion!

Never mind having the Italian winners tested. It's the judges who must have been on drugs! "Nil point," indeed... That said, the German's, who seemed destined to replace the UK as the most disliked EU member, have seemed curiously chaotic this week too...

On Friday night Germany closed its borders to the Brits. That was rather unfortunate for the racing team we sponsor as the drivers had to get into Germany before midnight or miss the weekend's racing at Hockenheim, resulting in "nil point" for them. So, drivers were frantically despatched and just made it across the border before the stroke of midnight. It was a close (and expensive) call though.

Just as our Teutonic neighbours were closing their borders, the Spanish were throwing theirs wide open! No test required. I heard that even if you have a bit of a fever and a cough, they still want you to come to Spain to rest and recuperate – and spend your hard-earned Euros.

What the hell is going on!?!?

When you think of the way in which governments

globally have collaborated over this pandemic, to share data and make better decisions, then you would have thought that by now there would be one set of standards against which countries could at least manage to run their affairs with some semblance of consistency. Someone like the WHO should be providing a benchmark against which everyone else measures their progress and makes policy decisions. But no!

We have a situation where two advanced nations have managed to get a sprinkling of some of the world's finest epidemiological experts to study all of the available data and come to a sage, considered and accurate decision as to what the threat is. And having done all of that they have managed to come to totally opposite conclusions! Is it any wonder we nominate clearly the best song in Europe for the Eurovision and the judges come to the completely wrong conclusion!

Me old mum called me up the other day. "Listen pet," she said, "Your dad and I don't think you should risk coming to see us in Newcastle this week because the local news says the number of India covid cases has gone up here 100% in just 7 days."

"Mum!" I exclaimed, "What are you talking about! That means it has gone from one to two!" But of course, the news sensationalises all of this material to sell viewers or readers on taking the news from their coverage, and misery loves company. The news programmes don't say "One More Person Dies From India Covid" because that is not news "India Covid Death Rate Doubles" gets people's attention. But is it responsible reporting? I'm not sure it is...

The trouble is this sensationalism just makes people numb and unresponsive. John Hetherington wore a top hat in 1797. It was the first time it had been seen in public. Reportedly women screamed and fainted. In 1922 beige nylon stockings (suggestive of naked flesh) were seen in public for the first time. The new fashion items were worn by American vaudevillian stars, The Trix Sisters, at the Ritz in

London at lunch. Elderly ladies were shocked and complained that the country had taken "a step further towards the pit!" So, in 125 years reactions have moved from being unconscious to being contemptuous. That's progress!

These days there is so much hype, so many businesses overpromising in an attempt to get attention that inevitably we, as consumers, end up tuning out everything except messages given to us by trusted sources. Brands we know we can rely on.

And perhaps that is why WIS International, now the single largest stock take company in the world, is being given the opportunity to show more and more retailers just how its approach to modern stocktaking not only saves time and

resources, but actually helps retailers to compete and grow their sales at a time when competition is fierce.

We would not put our name to multi-count strategies, Data Dashboards or paperless counts unless we were completely confident in the voracity of the data and the significant advantages they bring to retail. And we won't put our name to any RFID solution because, in the real world, they don't work! If you would like to see the proof – much of it provided by retailers themselves – I will happily share it with you. Just get in touch.

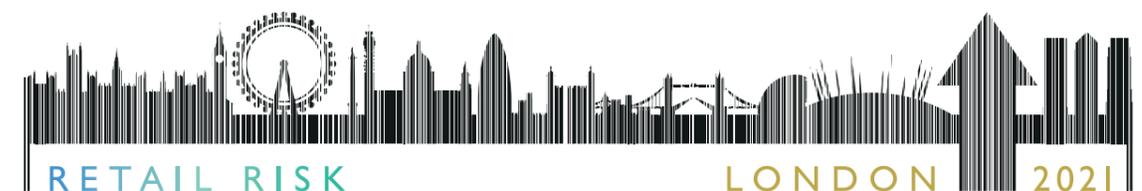
Of course, you can always carry on just doing stock the way you have always done it. But then one day that too could end in "nil point" for you...

Geoff Chaplin is Managing Director at WIS International
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