

Field Report

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Jno. Rendlehoffer
Senior Quality Assurance Fieldman
I-Li-Colots, Ltd.
London Branch Office, ste 31

Executive Decision Board
I-Li-Colots, Ltd.
Manchester H.Q., ste 100a

Dear Sirs,

In accordance with your request of the 12th inst., I, John Rendlehoffer, senior QA Fieldman, undertook a tour of our London markets. Of my other visits, reports have been filed through the usual channels and notification of continuing status will be delivered at the end of the month, per standing policies. My visit to Choc Full O' Nuts, our recent acquisition in Walworth, however, was anomalistic and, in my estimation, deserves the immediate attention of the executive board.

You will recall that Choc Full O' Nuts was a venture acquisition, an effort to break into the high-end market. Though their sales are sporadic, their profit margins are huge and less than 12% of their total sales last quarter were manufactured under the I-Li-Colot umbrella; nearly two thirds (63%) were imports. Their employee base at the end of the last fiscal year consisted of only three employees: two full-time and one part-time, including the manager, a Mr. Samuel Myers. We have not received word of their current employee base, nor have I any additional knowledge of their staff.

I arrived at Choc Full O' Nuts in the mid afternoon of the 21st last, after making two other inspection tours that morning. The store, at the time of my arrival, was occupied by only two people, both men in their early thirties, one in a suit and the other in khakis and an unmarked white polo shirt. Initially I did not pay much attention to their antics, but began an inspection of store layout, in accordance with your directives—a report of my findings in this survey has been filed and can be obtained through the usual channels.

Once my visual inspection was done, I approached the polo-shirted man (during the inspection the other had disappeared from my view) and, after ascertaining that he was employed at the store, began asking him regarding some of the items that appeared to be out of order, such as the absence of visible fire extinguishers, the failure to order the sweets in an easy-to-access fashion, etc.

While I was engaged in this, another man, this one perhaps fifty and dressed in worn slacks and a plaid flannel shirt, came up to the employee I was addressing and dragged him into the back room. I found this peculiar, but noticed the suited individual had reappeared so I turned to ask him some of my questions instead. However, he begged off on account of his being a regional overseer and thus ignorant of this particular store's layout.

Not having been informed of any regional overseership, I asked him if he were Mr. Myers. His response startled me: "No, I'm Mr. Rendlehoffer."

It appears that this man was in the store pretending to be myself. How he came to know I was going to pay a visit, I cannot guess unless he is perhaps an employee here and heard of my instructions. In any case, I noticed there was a policeman browsing the shelves nearby and, excusing myself from the fake, went to report him to the officer.

However, the attitude of the policeman was strongly hesitant; he seemed shaken by my news, but unwilling to arrest the miscreant. After some arguing he agreed to take the impostor aside for questioning. I watched as he led him toward the office, but no sooner had they reached it when the officer, instead of going into the back and questioning the impostor as promised, turned and hurried out of the store, leaving the scoundrel alone in the office.

Worried that this meant the thief was left alone to wreck havoc, I moved toward the telephone but, upon picking it up, found there was no dial tone. Glancing toward the wall, I could easily see where the thug had cut the line; a bold, clean cut scored into the wall paper on either side of the severed phone line. Worried this meant he was prepared for a full daylight robbery and seeing none of the employees around, I hurried around the corner to the nearest police office and explained my case to them. After I had done so they were most sympathetic, expressing surprise that the officer I had met in the store had not been more cooperative nor reported the incident to them, and sent me back to the store with four officers to apprehend the thief.

When we reached the store we looked in the window and saw no one. Entering, the polo-shirted man I had spoken with first rose from behind the counter where he was apparently splicing the phone line. A brief interview revealed that in my absence the impostor had left, but though we followed the directions we were given for some time, we found no sign of him.

I relate this account in hopes you, as the executives of the company, will be warned in advance of the danger of high-end markets. It is evident that some employee here at regional took it upon himself to effect a robbery of that one store, assuming that I would not make it there until later in the week, despite the fact that many of the other stores are easier to access and much easier to rob. If it were not for the fact my other inspections of the day had gone very quickly and the favorable coincidence of there being a policeman in the store, however hesitant to do his job, to scare the impostor away, I fear we may have lost many thousands of pounds. Although Choc Full O' nuts has very low volume sales, the existence of chocolates priced over a thousand pounds implies the need for a very large stash of change such as would have represented a sizable setback to our finances.

I also respectfully request permission to review the list of current employees to see if I am able to identify the thief whom I met that day. Although I am doubtful we have enough evidence to press charges at present, I assure you the miscreant will bear watching. Even if his failure was enough to scare him away from attempting daylight robbery in the future, his morals must be lax and his nerve strong to risk impersonating myself for a reward of a mere few thousand pounds.

Your humble servant,

(signed)

Mr. Jno. Rendlehoffer, S.Q.A.F.