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National Consumer Federation Back to Basics Paper
by Eva Lewis

Drawing on my experience from serving on The Consumer Panel since 1995 I am sharing the values that I was taught and the entire Consumer Policies that I feel have become diluted over the years. Taking what I learned from Lord Rooker, the late Dame Tessa Jowell, what they wrote and here are some of their words imprinted in my mind forever. And of course, John Gummer, now Lord Deban, who set up the Consumer Panel in 1989 which I served on for the full term of 5 years and extra through the transition of the Food Standards Agency. This is what they fought for and what we must be and who we are, and this is what we will bring back to life.

We will look at the consumer areas that have been diluted over the years.

We will look at ideas from members that got repressed or rejected because of anyone's values and re visit any worth there.

We will bring back the values and rules of protecting the consumers

We will go back to the beginning and start again – our way.

The starting roles and policies for The National Consumer Federation are:

The consumer industry needs changes again in the way it approaches all its issues, to make it more open and to ensure more constructive dialogue with all those concerned.

National Consumer Federation must from the start command the respect and confidence of all interested parties – from producers, through processors, distributors, retailers, product safety and the scientific community.

If we do not achieve this, we will have failed. If we get it right, we can set the standard for the rest of Europe and the world.

National Consumer Federation will be independent in its day-to-day operations and sit outside traditional consumer bodies.

National Consumer Federation will be free of commercial or other vested interests. I believe this is essential if we are to achieve our goal of restoring lasting confidence.

We will be open and have transparency. This means giving the public more and better information about the issues that are of concern to it.

We will always look to the future and be aware of new changes.

By Eva Lewis 15th July 2018

What kind of culture change and how will it be received?

National Consumer Federation will help the consumers make informed choices about all the areas we will choose to cover. This will entail giving the public the information they need and important, producing the confidence to rely on that information as a basis for making their own decisions and choices about their purchases.

We need to see the National Consumer Federation in a much wider context of developing partnerships and fostering the varied and complementary roles which many parties need to play in ensuring safety and standards.

We must think about the massive personal cost and suffering involved with misleading labels our society experiences.

This has an enormous cost in terms of lost production. It can cause burdens to consumers and legal costs. It often hits hardest at the young, very old and those who are poverty stricken.

We must draw on consensus among the best experts in each field.

National Consumer Federation will be independent of commercial interests and open to scrutiny.

Concentrate on what is practical and possible.

Be proportionate to risk and avoid unnecessary regulation.

Informed Choices

National Consumer Federation will provide information to help people make informed choices. To develop the trust of consumers and industry and become a reliable source of advice that is independent of commercial and other interests.

We must ensure:

It consults with representatives of those who would be affected by National Consumer Federation's advice or decisions.

That there is transparency and clarity about the process i.e. how it reaches its decisions.

Clarity about what the advice is – which may mean working with industry to improve information available to customers.

There is clarity about reasons for its advice.

How big is the risk?

How good is the evidence?

The balance between the benefits brought by measures to reduce or eliminate risk and 'costs' (not just financial but those such as added inconvenience or limits on choice

The science is often uncertain. Where this is the case the National Consumer Federation must be open about the basis of its judgements and decisions. Only by doing so will it build the confidence of the consumer.

National Consumer Federation's Remit

We must develop a remit together that is solid, and we must not go outside of it.

We must look at the extent of the National Consumer Federation's remit as been the source of differing views between businesses and consumer organisations and consumer bodies with each other.

We will say that we are a body with real authority, capable of influencing on all matters we cover and that have a bearing on the consumers choices.

I look forward to contributions and combining this with all of your previous work as this is our new beginning.

Arnold Pindar's Impact of Brexit on consumers

Brexit will have a significant impact on the lives of all UK consumers. Not only those who currently live, work or travel within the European Union (EU) but also those whose lives are governed by EU policy that gives UK consumers certain rights and protections. Areas that may be affected include:

- Cars and petrol prices
- Consumer rights
- Cross-border trade
- Digital services – privacy and security
- Dispute resolution
- E-commerce
- Education
- Employment
- Energy and lightbulbs
- Environment and sustainability
- Financial services – bank accounts, savings, insurance, pensions and investments
- Food – safety and labelling
- Health and social care
- Homes and mortgages
- Travel, passenger rights and roaming charges.

A yet the future is uncertain, and the details of our withdrawal have not been worked out this is the perfect time to develop an abroad vision of the United Kingdom post Brexit ant to think about what consumers want and need from Brexit.

Extras

If consumers are going to buy into us then they must be able to understand us.

If you look around everywhere you may find that language has changed. It probably annoys most of us older people but the young are changing. The BBC red button Text news has so many mistakes and different kinds of words now. “the government has had a row” instead of argument – that kind of thing. Hospital information and all sorts of areas are becoming more friendly and easy to read words to involve everyone and make us feel safe.

We have got to find another word for detrimental.

Eva’s vision

To help the consumers make informed choices. Giving them the confidence to trust that information as a basis for the decisions that they make. To be totally honest and trustworthy to consumers.

Our values – we care, we are responsible, we are honest

We must be independent of commercial interests and open to every kind of question and scrutiny.

We will ensure that there is absolute transparency and we will be clear about how everything works and how decisions are made.

Balances between risks and costs and financial and choice

We will translate the policies into consumer understanding and reality

Some of the areas to consider:

Our Terms of Reference

How to alert us

Our remit and areas we cover

Our mission

Our values

Our promise to you the consumer

How we deal with issues raised

How do you raise an issue?

Our associates and links

Our departments

Who looks after what and how

Our policies

Our experts and fields of expertise

Where we are

Why the consumer needs us

Our partners

Our team

Our team photographs and profiles on a new website

And more.....