

## Business Diary

### South African group pops Branson's cherry

Everyone remembers the time they lost it; Sir Richard Branson, right, uniquely, has lost it twice. He has lost the right to the sole use of the word "Virgin" after a tiny South African company was cleared to use the phrase: "You can't be a virgin all your life, it's time". Ilya Kazi, partner at the lawyers Mathys & Squire, said it was the first time a business other than Branson's enterprises and olive oil companies has won a trademark including the word.

### ...but mum's the word as Dr Yes moves on

It is clear that Sir Richard will not



### Number of the day

# 33,000

The loss, in sterling, that merchandise group Altitude posted yesterday after originally reporting a £338,000 profit.

let the South African setback get to him. He said in an as yet unpublished interview that the best advice he ever got was from his Mum, who "always taught me never to look back in regret but to move on to the next thing ... I have fun running all the Virgin businesses, so a setback is never a bad experience, just a learning curve". He added that he would "never say never", adding it had earned the nickname "Dr Yes" from his staff.

### Tesco rides to rescue as swine flu looms large

In retail, timing counts for a lot. And judging by the surge in applications for Tesco's pharmacy graduate scheme, the supermarket giant may

### Los Angeles Times



have got it spot-on with swine flu rising ominously up the health agenda. The grocer has received more than 1,000 applications looking to join this year's scheme, which has delivered 50 newly qualified pharmacists on to the market. Ashley Hicks, the pharmacy director at Tesco, told the *Recruiter* magazine:

[businessdiary@independent.co.uk](mailto:businessdiary@independent.co.uk)

"It is crucial that Tesco, and other companies, address the shortage of pharmacists working in the UK before the issue escalates." The Diary couldn't agree more, but finds Tesco an unlikely saviour from the swine flu epidemic.

### Los Angeles Times loses its headlines

The newspaper industry in the US is struggling as it cuts costs and lays off staff. The *LA Times* proved it could do with some sub-editors as it displayed a PDF of yesterday's front page on its website, left. Unfortunately they had forgotten to put in any real headlines, to general amusement. Luckily blushes were saved by the time its readers had woken up.