



MEETING
DATES
2006

REVIEW

January
2006

Review of Chamber Meeting + News Update

13 February

HARROGATE DISTRICT NEWS

- Government Inspector rejects partial development of the Bus/Rail Station Site
- Harrogate Council launches draft Economic Development Unit Business Plan
- North Yorkshire County Council Officials meet Chamber Management Group

13 March

SCAM WARNINGS

- Do not be tricked by any e-mail requests for your personal bank details
- Ignore faxes that request a fax-back to stop further faxes – it is another scam
- Satellite navigation units are the latest target for car thieves say the Police

10 April

8 May
Business
Market
& AGM

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

- District-wide shared mailing scheduled for March to over 3,500 businesses
- 2nd Harrogate Business Market planned for Monday 8th May – book early!
- Membership Renewals due on 1st April. Please send POs and notify changes

12 June

10 July

Future Meetings

14 August

Monday 13th February – Hotel du Vin, Prospect Place, Harrogate
Promoting Harrogate – for business and leisure
with Stuart Quin, Director of Harrogate International Centre

11 September

- The impact on the local economy of business and holiday tourism.
- The role and performance of HIC in the UK and international business tourism market.
- The Council's policy towards tourism, with particular emphasis on business tourism.
- Where are we going with business tourism? What needs to be done in the community?

9 October

13 November

Monday 13th March – White Hart Hotel, Cold Bath Road, Harrogate
Business Networking Safari No 7 – members only

11 December

Monday 10th April – Cedar Court Hotel, Park Parade, Harrogate
Harrogate Integrated Traffic & Transport Study
Joint Presentation of issues and proposals by
North Yorkshire County Council and Atkins Consultants.

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce, PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8XB

Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025 E-mail: info@harrogatechamber.org Website: harrogatechamber.org

THE SECRETS OF PRICING FOR PROFIT

At our last Chamber meeting on 9th January 2006 **Simon Pease, Partner at Harrogate Accountants and Business Advisors DSC** made a thought provoking presentation covering the easiest ways to make more money in your business.

He revealed fourteen practical and proven ways that you can use to dramatically **increase your profits** without spending a penny – and are all legal, ethical and legitimate!. Simon presented some high impact low effort strategies for making more money. In other words, finding the easiest way to make more money:

The aim of the talk was to help businesses find a better way of **pricing their goods and services** so they get the optimum benefit for themselves and customers. Simon explained how decisions on pricing are amongst the most important decisions you will ever make in your business.

In Simon's presentation he looked at some of the principles to consider when setting your prices. There's a whole range of prices and you decide where you want to be in that **range of prices** and that decision will fundamentally determine the success of your business.

Simon was keen to stress that you should never compete on price alone. Instead you should start by making sure that what you are offering exactly meets the needs of your customers. Then you should sell it to them on the basis of "**best value**" rather than "lowest price".

The presentation was intended to provide a catalyst for action by helping business owners think about issues from new angles. Attendees were encouraged to go away and take some action towards improving their bottom line.

There's always a better way of doing things, or at least room for improvement, and DSC are committed to helping Harrogate businesses find better ways of running their businesses.

One of the many ways DSC help is through regular **Business Builder Forum Breakfast** events that are **FREE of charge**. These breakfast seminar's are basically a business club where there is a presentation on a business topic such as this one and business owners get the opportunity to share ideas.

The objective of the club is to help owner managers of businesses identify actions that they can take to improve their businesses.

The next event is titled "**Increasing your productivity and efficiency**" and will be held at the White Hart Hotel in Harrogate on the **25th January from 8.00am to 10.00am**. If you would like to come along or find out more about this and other ways DSC can help your business do things ring Simon Pease or Lianne Coates on 01423 560547 or see web site: www.dscca.com .

HARROGATE DISTRICT NEWS

Bus Station Site Appeal Rejected

The appeal by Coalhouse Properties (Harrogate) Ltd for partial development at the southern end of the Bus Station site has been dismissed by a Govt. Inspector.

Dismissal of the Planning Application is significant, because it was made by the owners of the small parcel of land that is currently used as a car park. Their proposed development would have blocked the preferred comprehensive re-development of the Bus Station and Railway Station site into an Integrated Transport Interchange, with public toilets etc.

If you wish to view the detailed Appeal Decision and the full Development Brief contact the Secretariat.

Draft Economic Development Unit Business Plan

Harrogate Borough Council has published the draft Economic Development Unit Business Plan for 2006/07 on the ED Forum website www.harrogate.gov.uk/edu for consultation by local business. (No password required)

Members are encouraged to visit the site and review the draft. Your views would be appreciated by the Chamber Secretariat so we can respond collectively.

Brian Haines emphasised the importance of feedback from as many member companies as possible so a concerted view can be relayed to the EDU on your behalf. This will ensure the current new impetus of the Economic Development Forum is continued so that members can see their input being brought to fruition.

Brian Dunsby said our close relationships with Council Leaders and regular attendance at the most relevant Committees ensure that **Harrogate Chamber is the number one voice for business**. We frequently remind members of these Committees that it is mainly businesses that put all the money into Government nationally, regionally and locally. We need to support and to stimulate business in Harrogate, in North Yorkshire and in the country in order to generate the funding for the many non-business projects proposed.

The role of the Local Strategic Partnership is to ensure that the monies are fairly distributed across the District.

NYCC Councillors meet the Chamber

Representatives from North Yorkshire County Council attended a Management Group Meeting last November. **County Councillor Clare Wood**, Environmental Services, **County Councillor Peter Sowray**, Executive Member for Environmental Services and **Mike Moore**, Director, Environmental Services joined the Management Group for off-the-record discussions on various issues including:

- Local Transport Plan
- New road-building prospects
- Recycling of business waste
- Effective lobbying of County & Region

Business Waste Recycling

North Yorkshire County Council is now consulting on Waste Management in the area and they need ideas to help reach their recycling targets, whilst also improving the environment. Would any Companies with a **significant amount of waste material**, or recyclable materials that they are unable to dispose of effectively, please contact the Secretariat?

SCAMS

Barclays Bank Phishing Scam

Several members sent in the e-mail scam they had received purporting to be from Barclays Bank and asking you to click on a link to update your account details. **No bank or building society would ask you to do this**, as they already have this information!

One of the giveaways of these 'phishing' scam e-mails is that the English is incorrect and the link they are asking you to click is different from the usual website URL. The offer of a prize in a lottery is also a scam.

Members are advised to delete any e-mails of this kind received - they generally claim to be from banks, building societies and online trading sites, such as eBay and PayPal, etc. Please ensure your staff are advised accordingly. **NEVER GIVE BANK DETAILS!**

North Yorkshire Trading Standards have supported this action and advised that they are inundated with them every day. They *are* being investigated, but as soon as one fraudster is caught another will set up in their place.

STOP PRESS: We have just been advised by North Yorkshire Trading Standards of a variation on this scam, this time by telephone. The caller claims to be from "**BT Wholesale**" and tries to encourage you to take up the offer of a 50% reduction in call charges - but first you have to give your bank account details. **DO NOT BE TEMPTED - THIS IS ALSO A SCAM!**

Fax back Scam

We have received several variations on the old "fax-back" scam where anonymous full page faxes arrive asking for a reply stating whether or not you wish to receive any more "special offers" etc. They give a fax back phone number beginning with 07005 - which is a **premium rate line** that will cost at least 48p a minute - and no doubt it will be charged for well over 1 minute!!

Such unsolicited faxes are now illegal in the UK but the senders are believed to be operating from Spain so legal action is not possible. **Please ensure that your staff receiving such faxes do not respond to them.**

Keep your 'Sat Nav' out of sight!

Harrogate Police warned about an increase in theft from cars in Harrogate, particularly those with the satellite navigation devices left on view. Make sure your valuables are locked in the boot out of sight, if you have to leave them in your vehicle.

Windows Critical Security Warning

A serious flaw in Microsoft Windows operating systems is leaving many Internet users vulnerable to programs that can take over your PC and infect it with computer viruses. They can also install spyware that can track your mouse clicks, text entries and website visits and intercept personal and financial information you enter at banking websites, for example.

Microsoft are working on the problem and until this has been solved you should **avoid visiting unfamiliar websites and clicking on links** that arrive in e-mails or Instant Messages.

It is recommended that you visit the Windows Update website and follow the instructions to install all available security updates.

Find out more at www.microsoft.com/protect

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

IMPORTANT ! Misuse of Membership Directory

It has been brought to our attention that the Harrogate Chamber Membership Directory has again been misused by a member sending bulk e-mails to all Chamber Members to offer their services.

This type of misuse has been brought to Members' attention on previous occasions because many of our members have objected to their personal membership details being used for unsolicited contact in this way.

Please ensure all your staff are advised that it is a serious **breach of membership** to abuse Members' privacy in this way, either by telephone, fax or e-mail. The Membership Directory is intended purely for one-to-one contact between businesses and enquirers.

If you wish to propose any amendments to this rule please send your comments in writing to secretariat@harrogatechamber.org

Business-to-Business Shared Mailing March 2006

Members are reminded that the next **Shared Business Mailing is due for despatch mid March**. This offers an ideal opportunity to promote your business very economically - with no labour cost - to over 3,500 businesses of all types on our validated database covering Harrogate and District, for **less than half the cost of the postage alone!**

The mailing will carry a brochure and invitation to **Harrogate's 2nd Business Market on 8th May** (see below) so it will be particularly opportune if you are intending to exhibit.

The number of inserts is limited, so **please return the faxback form enclosed by the end of January** to guarantee a place in this mailing.

2nd Business Market Monday, 8th May 2006

Preparations for the 2nd Business Market are going well. Following on from last year's resounding success, we expect to attract about 100 exhibitors and 500 visitors this year from across the whole Harrogate District.

The event will again be held courtesy of **Pavilions of Harrogate** at the Great Yorkshire Showground

Three sizes of exhibition spaces will be available to members at the discounted rates of £50, £100 or £150. Non-members will be permitted to exhibit if space is available subject to an additional 50% charge.

A copy of last year's brochure is enclosed for you to complete the form and return to the Secretariat to ensure you receive advance information as soon as it becomes available, so you can reserve a good space.

Membership Renewal & Fees 2006/07

As renewal time will shortly be upon us, may we remind those members who require a Purchase Order number for invoices, to send your **Purchase Order to the Chamber Secretariat by the end of February.**

The Management Group have agreed to a small increase in subscriptions from 1st April 2006 as follows:

1-10 employees	£78	(from £75)
11-50 employees	£115	(from £110)
50+ employees	£150	(from £145)

This increase is in the range 3.5% to 4.5% over two years and the new rates will be held for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 membership years.

To help keep our records up-to-date please complete and return the enclosed 'Updated details for Membership Renewal' form if necessary. Check your entry on the website at www.harrogatechamber.org to ensure your company description is current and includes the relevant key words for searches.

Chamber Nominations

Nominations are required for the forthcoming AGM on 8th May. Brian Haines' term of office as President will come to an end and the Management Group will have three vacancies to be filled by established members.

If you would like to become involved or would like to nominate another member for the Management Group please pass on your suggestions to Chamber Secretariat as soon as possible.

Digital Marketing Made Easy September Meeting

The proposed topic for the Chamber Meeting on Monday, 11th September, will be '**Digital Marketing Made Easy**', which will be a series of short presentations by several member companies in this sector on the latest website design, e-marketing, SMS & MMS campaigns, each company covering a different aspect. **Please contact the Secretariat if you would like to make a joint presentation at this meeting,**

MEMBERS' FORUM

Old Swan Hotel

We would like to extend our thanks to the Old Swan Hotel for again hosting and providing a complimentary room for the January Chamber Meeting.

The Old Swan is currently undergoing a **£5 million refurbishment** to be completed by February 2006. The traditional splendour of the hotel is being retained in its 136 bedrooms, 7 function rooms and refurbished Library Restaurant, which will offer a unique dining experience.

See www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/oldswan
Tel: 01423 500055 Fax: 01423 501154

PGK Ltd

"Yorkshire's Fastest Growing Agency"

Member, **PGK Ltd**, was officially recognised as the fastest growing PR and advertising company in Yorkshire at the end of 2005, according to the annual survey compiled by Yorkshire Post and Leeds Metropolitan University in association with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. PGK was ranked 10th overall, a leap from its previous 27th ranking in 2004.

"Being named in this prestigious list is an honour which I attribute to the outstanding PGK employees whose dedication to our clients is driving our growth," commented PGK's Managing Director, Karl Rahmani.

PGK say that as a result of the company's capabilities and marketplace growth, they now claim among their client base several of the UK's top automotive companies, online gaming companies, councils, Business Link North, West and South Yorkshire as well as many local companies which know PGK offers value for money and local insight.

For more information visit:

www.pgkadvertising.co.uk or call 01423 523000.

Colour It In - Special Offer

Inserted this month's REVIEW is a Special Offer from **Colour It In** who are re-launching their digital printing services following major investment in new machinery. Order 500 full colour double-sided prints and receive an extra 125 free! See enclosed leaflet for full details or see www.colouritin.co.uk or Tel: 0800 542 0852

New Offices for easy rental

New Chamber Members **Evans Easyspace Ltd** have opened a new Business Centre on Hartwith Way, just off the Ripon Road, near Jennyfield. They offer a range of fully serviced offices to let from a 2-person office to an 8-person office, with a conference room and extra business services available when needed. See www.evans easyspace.com or Tel: 01423 534600

Chamber Members **BAO Accountancy** have recently moved from Plantation Avenue into this new office. Contact: Glynn Harby. Tel: 01423 50844 Fax: 508066

Larchfield Manor changes hands

Long-standing Chamber Member Larchfield Manor, has a new owner, Jacob Sorotzkin, but will continue to be managed by Kathryn Brook. Contact: larchfield-m Manor@caring.co.uk

Under Philip Morris's ownership, Larchfield Manor has been a member of the Chamber for around 15 years. Philip said, "I never took any interest until I sat next to Peter Armitage at an event about 7/8 years ago and he told me I should attend meetings - so I did!"

Philip was previously involved in Harrogate Junior Chamber when it started about 50 years ago. He added there was an excellent debating team including Charles Jesper, Bill Quin and himself!

In his farewell message to the Chamber Secretariat Philip added "May I thank you for all the kindness and help since you took over the organisation and I congratulate you on the way in which you have driven Harrogate Chamber forward - a quite remarkable transformation. With best wishes for the future."

Become a confident public speaker

The Trinity Foundation, headed by Stuart Pearson, is holding a one day workshop in Harrogate on 16th February on "**How to become a confident public speaker, presenter & communicator.**" Numbers are limited to 12 per workshop.

For further information telephone Stuart on 01423 566522 or e-mail stuart@thetrinityfoundation.co.uk

Leading2Change merge with The Blue Water Partnership

Leading2Change the leadership and management coaching organisation headed by Steve Phillip and based at Hammerain House has now formally merged with **The Blue Water Partnership** based at the same premises. The organisations are now strategically linked to provide clients with leadership development programmes for group situations as well as individual executive coaching.

For further information contact:

Steve Phillip, Director, The Blue Water Partnership
Tel: 01423 810146
E-mail: steve.phillip@thebluewater.com

Acas Training Programme 2006

Acas are running a full programme of low-cost seminars in Yorkshire throughout 2006 covering a multitude of employment-related topics including

- Recruitment and Retention;
- Fair Treatment;
- Avoiding Disputes;
- Employment Law;
- Cultural issues;
- Age Discrimination
- Handling Redundancies

Further Information at www.acas.org.uk or Tel 08457 474747. Contact James Ward, Marketing Manager.

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Business Link Y&NY - Free Fact sheets

Business Link York & North Yorkshire have produced of two useful FREE fact sheets entitled 'Retaining your Employees' and 'Training and Developing your Employees'. These are available FREE by ringing their Information Centre on 01904 686000 or fax 686020

Royal Hall Restoration Trust Starlit Ball

Included with this REVIEW is an invitation to the Royal Hall Restoration Trust's **Starlit Ball on Saturday, 18th February** in the Queen's Suite, Kings Road, Harrogate, commencing at 7pm with a Grand Reception followed by sumptuous Dinner. A Grand Draw and Auction will usher in the main part of the evening - listening and dancing to the world-famous Joe Loss Orchestra and Singers.

Professional dancers Andrew Cuerden and Hanna Haarala, from BBC series "**Strictly Come Dancing**", will give a demonstration of their dancing skills in a scintillating cabaret display of Ballroom and Latin-American dancing.

It promises to be an unforgettable occasion in aid of the restoration of Harrogate's famous Kursaal. Tickets are £55 - individual or in tables of 10/12. Please see enclosed leaflet. Tel: 01423 537230 or 01423 562820 for tickets.

Grand Opening for new Thai Restaurant

The President expressed appreciation for a recent invitation from the new **Thai Pavilion Restaurant**, which opened on 8th January and invited several local businesses along as their guests for a delicious two-course set menu. He highly recommended it for a visit for those who appreciate authentic Thai food.

Located in Baines House on Station Parade, the premises have been completely re-furnished in genuine Thai style with many fixtures and fittings imported directly from Thailand. (Tel: 01423 567000)

Cobweb Information Ltd

If you are thinking of changing your business you can find a wealth of information from Cobweb Information Ltd, including a comprehensive set of information sheets on all aspects of business, called '**Business Opportunity Profiles**' & "**Information Fact sheets**". Website: www.cobwebinfo.com Tel: 0191 461 8000

Municipal Year Book 2006

If your target market is local authorities you may find the following publication a useful tool. The Municipal Year Book has been published for the first time containing 22,000 updated records and more than 40,000 local government officers listed. Price £270.

See website: www.MunicipalYearBook.co.uk

FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

Four Focus Groups form the basis of Chamber policy:

Chamber Development
Promoting Harrogate
Town Centre Improvements
Traffic & Transport

The current remit for each group is summarised on our website www.harrogatechamber.org/focusgroups.html

The next meeting on 13th February at Hotel du Vin will focus on **Promoting Harrogate** (see front page).

Communication is either informally at our monthly meetings or by e-mail. If you wish to participate in one of the Focus Groups, please contact the Secretariat.

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT

The topic for the **10th April Meeting** will be the **HAKITS** Harrogate and Knaresborough Integrated Traffic & Transport Study with a Joint Presentation of Issues by senior representatives from North Yorkshire County Council and Atkins Consultants. They will talk about their proposals for improving transport and **relieving traffic congestion** across the whole district.

In addition, Drew Haley of **Northern Rail** will also attend to expand on the details of Northern Rail's proposed improvements, as outlined below.

Harrogate Line improvements

The operators of the Harrogate Line, Northern Rail, have successfully obtained additional improved rolling stock with a larger capacity, thanks to funding from Yorkshire Forward. By the end of 2006 the capacity on the Harrogate line should also be increased by using longer and better quality trains. Platforms at key stations will be lengthened to accept longer trains.

Consultants are at the final stages of a major in-depth study of the Harrogate Line, which Northern Rail say is their **Number One Line** in the whole of the North of England with the highest growth in usage. Maximum possible investment is being recommended for the line, which ultimately should mean extra stations and an increased frequency to both Leeds and York.

GNER East Coast Main Line

GNER have produced their ten year franchise plan called "Delivering the Future". The whole fleet of 302 coaches has been refurbished on schedule and many are now wi-fi enabled. The frequency of trains between Leeds and London is being **increased to a half-hourly service** during most of the day,

GNER plan to electrify the line east of Leeds, near Garforth and Selby, which will further improve journey times and frequency on the Leeds-London Services.

If you are going to travel by GNER at off-peak times look for the new Advance Standard and Advance First single tickets, which offer the **cheapest fares** for each leg of your journey. First Class is now affordable!

Website: www.gner.co.uk or Tel: 08457 225225

Leeds Bradford International Airport

LBIA's MasterPlan for 2005-2016 shows a projected growth of **double current passenger numbers** by 2011 and treble by 2016 to 7 million. Main aims are to:

- i) establish a flexible and sustainable planning framework within which the development of operational facilities, airport infrastructure and other services can take place;
- ii) enhance the visual setting of the airport to minimise the local impact of developments;
- iii) encourage the use of the quietest aircraft to minimise the effects of noise disturbance on the communities surrounding the airport;
- iv) develop commercial support facilities to maintain a satisfactory level of financial performance;
- v) renew and extend cargo handling facilities commensurate with identified needs; and
- vi) develop, implement and monitor an appropriate surface access strategy for the airport which maximises the potential for increasing journeys made to the airport by public transport, i.e. new rail and road links to the Airport. (*Hooray! Ed.*)

www.lbia.co.uk/masterplan.php Tel: 0113 391 3333

NEW MEMBERS

Asolo Italian Kitchens Ltd (*Interior Design*)

Barbara Jillings, Interior Designer
4a Regent Parade, Harrogate, HG1 5AN
Tel: 01423 564422 **Fax:** 01423 568844
E-mail: barbara@asoloitaliankitchens.co.uk
Web site: www.asoloitaliankitchens.co.uk

Businets Web Design Ltd (*Web design & hosting*)

Remo Biagioni, Managing Director
Florence House, Grayston Plain Lane, Felliscliffe,
Harrogate, HG3 2LY
Tel: 0845 345 7849 **Fax:** 0870 011 9435
E-mail: remo@businets.co.uk
Web site: www.businets.co.uk

Community Publications Ltd

(*Publishing local directories*)
Clive Arm-Riding, Sales Representative
98 Halifax Way, Pocklington Industrial Estate,
Pocklington, YO42 1NP
Tel: 01759 304668 **Fax:** 01759 307474
E-mail: clive@cpublications.co.uk
Web site: www.cpublications.co.uk

Peter Van Zelst (*Independent Business Adviser*)

Peter Van Zelst, Accredited Associate
The Nook, 49 Duchy Road, Harrogate, HG1 2HB
Tel: 05600 463994 **Fax:** 01423 538769
E-mail: peter.vanzelst@totalise.co.uk
Web site: no website

Struggytax (*Independent financial adviser*)

Graham Strugnell, Proprietor
12 Mallinson Oval, Harrogate, HG2 9HH
Tel: 07711 886894
E-mail: struggytax@hotmail.com
Web site: No website

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

AbilityNet urges website operators to 'See it Right'

'See it Right with UseAbility' is the name of a new web accessibility assessment to be launched in the coming weeks. The audit is a joint initiative by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and AbilityNet, and websites which are approved as accessible and useable will be entitled to display the 'See it Right: UseAbility' logo. AbilityNet believes providing independent assessments will satisfy a growing demand for website testing as part of accessibility audits designed to help organisations comply with the 1995 DDA.

Find out more at:

www.abilitynet.org.uk/content/oneoffs/seeitright.htm

Thousands of Government forms - one website

A free service has been launched which enables businesses to download more than 1,000 forms from different Government departments from a single website. The site holds a database of electronic versions of forms normally available only in hard copy, such as self-assessment tax return forms and VAT forms. Capsoft, which manages the website, has said it will develop the service to add more relevant forms for small firms, once feedback had been received.

The website is: www.capform.co.uk

Equality Regulations

With less than a year to go before the entry into force of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations in October 2006, a survey by insurers AXA has found that 40% of small business owners have no idea the regulations even exist. Of those that are aware of them, many have not taken any action to address their implications. The risk for those that do not take the changes into account, AXA believes, is the possibility of litigation on the grounds of age discrimination.

Read more about the survey at:

www.management-issues.com/display_page.asp?section=research&id=2808

Safety site on Workplace Temperature

The Health & Safety Executive have launched a new website dealing with the issue of temperature in the workplace. It offers tips for business owners on how to comply with the law in this area, how to carry out a 'thermal comfort' risk assessment and how to improve workplace temperatures in practical terms. The HSE is asking for feedback on the advice from businesses with a view to revising the site if necessary.

The website is:

www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/index.htm

Online catalogue of broadband ideas

Innovative ideas for small business use of broadband are featured on a Government website. Around 450 case studies look at broadband use in sectors as diverse as catering, virtual reality and tourism with the best submissions to be highlighted in a special section.

More information plus the case studies are at:

www.broadbandshowcase.org.uk

DDA amendments

Amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) were implemented in December 2005 and will affect property landlords, private clubs, transport operators and qualification bodies. The new measures will oblige landlords to consider requests for reasonable adjustments to premises, bring private members' clubs into the scope of the Act and extend the definition of disability.

Summary of the new obligations are at:

www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2005/apr/dda_royal_assent.asp

Tax crack down on new incorporations

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have said it intends to crack down on recently incorporated businesses that may have avoided paying their due tax. A number of sole traders incorporated to take advantage of a short-lived policy by the Chancellor to raise no tax on the first £10,000 of profits reported by businesses with a turnover of under £50,000. It is believed that some sold their businesses to their own newly-formed companies, but may have exaggerated the value of the goodwill and escaped paying the right tax as a result.

Read a summary of HMRC's guidance at:

www.shout99.com/contractors/showarticle.pl?id=34523

Free Guide to Intellectual Property

UK patent attorney firm Boulton Wade Tennant has published a free guide to help small businesses get to grips with the basics of intellectual property.

The 24-page guide, entitled "*Protecting Innovation: A Guide to Intellectual Property*" provides an explanation of patents, designs, trade marks and copyright, covering protection and registration procedures and how to enforce your rights.

A second free booklet dealing with trade marks in more detail, as well as explaining domain name registration, is also available.

Access the free guides at:

www.boulton.com/new/PressReleaseDetails.cfm?PRID=122

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Firms encouraged to 'detox'!

Small businesses are being urged to implement business versions of popular New Year 'detox' plans to help streamline and improve their performance for the coming year. To this end, Investors in People has developed a free online quiz to help firms identify areas for improvement.

IIP Chief Executive, Ruth Spellman, said, "Many managers begin the New Year with fresh ideas and enthusiasm, but it is important to identify specific areas for improvement within the context of their business plan before launching any action."

Five tips on preparing for a successful 2006, plus access to the online test are at:

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Web/In+the+Press/Press+Releases/New+Year+detox.htm

Cash for small businesses with recycling skills

Green businesses are in line for more than £90 million worth of funding from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DeFRA). The money will be channelled through numerous specialist agencies and awarded to organisations that can "help businesses cut waste, shift waste from landfill and improve their efficiency".

Details of the new scheme are available online at: www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=180879&NewsAreaID=2

Savings Calculator

Envirowise have launched an online savings calculator, which allows companies to discover the potential savings of cutting down on waste.

Their website also includes information on how to arrange a free, confidential visit from an Envirowise expert to identify low cost solutions and help get a waste minimisation programme started.

To use the calculator visit: www.maximiseprofit.org.uk

Directory of Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) explain the basic information that business owners and their staff need to know, do or understand in order to carry out a particular job. The Skills for Business network of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) has launched a new, free, online directory which combines all existing NOS together in one place for the first time. The hope is that this tool will enable businesses to improve their performance and develop their staff.

View NOS directory at: www.ukstandards.org

Sharper focus for Small Firms Loan Guarantee

Sweeping changes to the Small Firms Loan Guarantee came into effect from 1st December 2005.

The changes were made after the Government accepted in full the recommendations set out in the Graham Review, which benchmarked the UK scheme against several international loan guarantee programmes and set out 38 recommendations to ensure the continuing relevance of the Scheme to help small businesses.

Some of the main changes introduced are:

- Expansion of lending limits
- Raising turnover limit
- Removing limit on borrowing
- Reserving resources to incentivise new lenders
- Reserving resources to enable additional lending by banks

For further information on the SFLG and a listing of approved lenders visit: www.dti.gov.uk/sflg/

Health & Safety guidance - RSI

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is applauding the launch of a new database providing comprehensive information about court judgements made in repetitive strain injury (RSI) cases. The database should help businesses to reduce the occurrence of this affliction in their workplaces. The HSE also said that it would use the information in the database to assess the effectiveness of its regulations and guidance on musculoskeletal disorders.

More information about free 'Work related upper limb disorder' database at:

www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=177797&NewsAreaID=2

Ten Tips from the Taxman

HM Revenue & Customs has published 'Ten Top Tips' to help self-employed people complete their self-assessment tax returns before the deadline of 31st January. Taxpayers who miss the deadline face a £100 penalty, but HMRC says it "knows people find the process a chore".

The tips aim to highlight some of the most common mistakes, which include failure to sign the return - a mistake that results in its immediate return to the sender. HMRC figures show that 998,000 penalty fines were issued in the last tax year.

The tips are available at:

www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=183566&NewsAreaID=2

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