



REVIEW

September
2006

MEETING DATES

2006

9 October

13 November

11 December

2007

8 January

12 February

12 March

2 April

Business
Market 2007
30 April

Review of Chamber Meetings + News Update

DIGITAL MARKETING MADE EASY!

- How to plan and build a business web site that works wonders for business
- How to optimise search engine recognition and ranking – with content and links
- How search engines work – and which ones really matter the most
- How to use sponsored links, pay per click, directories and external links
- How to promote your web site and guide customers to it

HARROGATE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS

- Business Waste Action Plan compiled by Chamber - submitted to Councils
- New local Licensing policy under the Gambling Act out for consultation
- N. Yorks Fire Service proposes to ignore fire alarms from “low risk” premises!
- Royal Mail insist on closing the Claro Road Callers Office every afternoon
- How to save on postage costs and reduce “junk” mail to business and home

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- New e-mail service to members planned – but current members may opt out
- Meeting Topics 2007 – which subjects matter to you and by which speakers?
- New venue for next Business Safari – a chance to try the “new” Holiday Inn!
- Chamber Table at Pavilions’ Christmas party + FREE half bottle of wine each
- Harrogate District Business Market 2007 – Monday 30th April at Pavilions of H.

Future Meetings

Monday, 9th October - Coaching & Mentoring
- growing your business with the benefit of experience.

*A joint presentation by two Chamber Members:
The Blue Water Partnership and The Trinity Foundation
at Swallow St George Hotel, Ripon Road, Harrogate*

Monday, 13th November - Monetary Policy and the Regional Economy

*How are you finding business conditions in Yorkshire? An interactive debate
with Paul Fullerton, Bank of England Agent for the Northern Region*

at Cedar Court Hotel, Park Parade, York Place, Harrogate

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

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

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DIGITAL MARKETING MADE EASY

Many thanks to **Rob Burns of 9xb.com** and **Remo Biagioni of Businets Web Design Ltd** for their presentations which were well received by one of the biggest turnouts at a Chamber meeting! Over 50 members and guests were enlightened about the workings of the internet, 'pay per click' and how to get your website into the top ten! Along with answering a few conundrums like, why do you get George Bush's biography on the official White House website when you do a Google search for "miserable failure"?

Search Engines & Online Marketing

An expert in the field, **Rob Burns**, founder of **9xb.com** and Clearsite Marketing, its online marketing division, gave a presentation on the following key points:

The Growing Importance of the Internet

- The Internet is the most rapidly growing communication medium, taking second place to TV
- 62% of the UK population have internet access, equating to 37 million internet users in the UK alone
- 130,000 UK businesses sell online and UK internet retail sales are predicted to rise to £60 billion
- The main growth driver for the internet is the increasing accessibility of broadband
- This shift is something businesses can't afford to ignore

The Importance of Search Engines

- 85% of websites are found via search and 55% of online transactions originate from search
- 92% of searchers do not bother to look beyond the first page of listings
- Google is the leading Search Engine, with a 75% share of the UK market
- There are two approaches to getting to top of the Search Engine listing - Organic Search Engine Optimisation and Sponsored Links.

Organic Search Engine Optimisation

- Organic listings are free, and the order websites appear is based on how relevant and credible to particular search terms Google deems them to be
- Google continually reads websites looking for relevant, regularly updated text and good quality links into the site from credible sources
- It takes time to build up credibility with Google - between 3 to 6 or even up to 12 months

Sponsored Links

- Sponsored Links appear at the top of the first page and down right hand column of the listings
- These are paid for advertisements - companies pay a certain amount every time someone clicks on their link. Also known as Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising.
- PPC is a great way of achieving short term results or promoting special offers for a short period of time.
- You choose keywords you want to appear, set a 'bid' of the amount you are prepared to pay per day.

- Your ad is shown until your budget runs out and you only pay when someone clicks through to your site.
- The more you pay, the higher up the sponsored listings your site will appear and the cost is determined by how competitive your market place is
- It's flexible and your campaign can be switched on and off or altered instantaneously
- PPC offers a tangible return on investment and a short-term way of getting page one listings
- However, competition to reach the top can be tough and PPC is becoming increasingly expensive. Thus it's wise to run Search Engine Optimisation alongside any PPC campaign

Directories

- As well as appearing on the search engines, there are a number of online directories where you can have basic free listings or paid for enhanced listings
- These include Local Search such as Yell.com, City Visitor and Touch Local as well as Trade Specific directories such as UKWDA, Business Link and Applegate
- Directories tend to perform well with organic listings and this can be another way of getting a good Search Engine presence.

Link Building

- Another way of generating traffic to your site is through link building - other websites linking to your website
- Links should be relevant to your business, to get the right sort of traffic and impress the Search Engines
- Avoid link farms offering hundreds of links - only look for good quality, relevant and human edited sites to link to you
- Expect to pay for most links but good content will attract natural links.

Offline Activity

- All communications, including letterheads, business cards, advertising, PR, face-to-face contact, telephone calls etc should promote your website
- Consider tactical offline approaches to direct people to your website using traditional marketing activity but giving an incentive to visit your site
- For any offline activity you can attach unique promotional codes or build different website landing pages to track its success
- And finally, always ask a new customer "how did you hear about us?"

Monitoring, Reviewing, Refining

- Finally, monitor, review and refine your marketing mix on an on-going basis. Understanding where your traffic comes from and what leads to a conversion, can help shape your online marketing strategy to generate the best return on investment.

Further Information from: Emma Sharman, Marketing Manager at 9xb.com Tel: 01423 798484 or e-mail e.sharman@9xb.com or visit their website www.9xb.com

The Ten Most Important Things to consider when Building Your Website

In his presentation **Remo Biagioni**, Managing Director of **Businets Web Design** covered the ten most important things to consider when building your website to build your business. In summary these are:

Planning Your Web Site

1. Tell a Story

Everyone remembers stories. Ask a PR Guru what the most important thing to do when sending out a press release is and you'll be told to tell a story. Make your story relevant and interesting to your reader.

2. Sell Your Products/Services

Focus on the benefits of your products; what they mean to a potential customer; include testimonials and case studies. Talk directly to an individual potential customer: tell them what they need to know to either create desire or reduce their pain.

3. Draw a sitemap

Create a sitemap from your story and sales information by splitting the information logically and clearly. Pay particular attention to how a reader will move from one page to another. Two of the most important sections of your web site will be the testimonials section and about us. Studies have shown that most visitors who intend to buy from you will look at these sections.

4. Consider the image

The site image should be consistent with your brand image. It should be easy for someone to instantly recognise the site as yours. Be wary of over using large graphics or Flash animations. If you look at Adobe's – the people who produce Flash – own web site you'll find less than 20% of the screen is taken up by a Flash animation. Search engines – and people – like information and stories.

Building Your Web Site

5. Navigation

Simple text menus are the most usable and effective way of navigating a web site. Try to avoid using drop-down menus: although these are popular with a small minority of people every usability study has demonstrated that they make it harder to use a web site.

Avoid Flash-based menus. Flash menus can look spectacular but not everyone has Flash installed on their PC - all these people would only be able to see your home page.

Ideally every page on your site should be within three clicks of your homepage.

6. Content

Write clear concise content. Use as many words as you need to but no more. Many people say that people will not read much on a web site; results, however, from e-commerce sites clearly show that people will read as much as they need to either make a decision to buy or not to buy.

Some people need more information than others: by carefully planning the structure of your site you can provide all the information anyone would need without overwhelming your reader.

Use AIDA: every page should

- Grab your reader's attention
- Tell him something that appeals to his self-interest
- Arouse a strong desire to try, buy or download your product or ask for a sales call
- Urge your reader into taking the action you want

7. On page search engine optimisation

Several html tags are very important to the search engines. These are <title>, <h1> and . On the page the <title> tag is displayed at the top left of the browser's window, <h1> is the page's main heading and puts words in bold. These tags enable search engines – and people – to quickly identify what the page is about.

The web site in-life

8. Links

The main impact on search engine rankings and the number of visitors that will come to your site is which other sites link to yours. Getting other people to link to your web site is an ongoing activity: you can ask customers, suppliers, professional bodies, bloggers and so on. Aim to add two or three links a month to your web site and your visitor numbers will sky rocket.

9. Analytics

Web sites are measurable. Your hosting provider should give you access to a basic web analytics (or statistics) package for free. You will be able to identify the number of visitors, which are the most popular pages; the keywords people use to find you on the search engines and which other web sites link to you. You should review your statistics at least monthly.

10. Add Content

Adding content regularly to the web site will mean that it stays fresh and interesting. Search engines – and people – like sites that are updated often. Develop new content around key phrases that you would like to rank well for on the search engines.

Further Information

Slides from this presentation can be downloaded from www.businets.co.uk/harrogate_chamber/presentation.ppt

A collection of useful Internet statistics can be downloaded from www.businets.co.uk/harrogate_chamber/statistics.ppt

The above files are in Microsoft PowerPoint. A free PowerPoint viewer can be downloaded from www.businets.co.uk/harrogate_chamber/ppt.html

If you would like further advice from **Remo Biagioni** at **Businets Web Design Ltd**, his contact details are:

Tel: 0845 345 7849 Mobile: 07834 273808

E-mail: remo@businets.co.uk

Website: <http://www.businets.co.uk/>

HARROGATE DISTRICT NEWS

Business Waste Action Plan

In response to recurring County and District Council consultation papers focussing on domestic or household waste disposal, the Chamber's Chief Executive has compiled a comprehensive Business Waste Action Plan covering the following main topics:

1. What are the facts and figures for business waste?
2. What should businesses do about their waste?
3. What should Councils do about business waste?
4. What should Government do about business waste?

The Action Plan has been submitted to the relevant Cabinet Members of both Harrogate District and North Yorkshire County Councils and their respective officers.

Full copies may be requested from the Secretariat. Any further comments and suggestions will be welcome.

Harrogate Licensing Policy

HBC seek our views on their Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005. See their website: www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-4322 or Tel H. 556836. The consultation period ends on 6th October 2006.

Harrogate Car Parking Leaflet

HIC have published a very helpful leaflet showing all the public car parking locations in the Town Centre with their sizes and opening hours. A copy is enclosed herewith. Extra quantities from Lynne Hudson, HIC. Tel: H 537276 or e-mail: lynne.hudson@harrogate.gov.uk

Integrated Risk Management Plan

The latest proposals from North Yorkshire Fire Service management include the proposal that the Fire Station should no longer be obliged to attend fire alarm calls from what they consider "low risk" premises.

The Chamber will ask our Insurance Broker Member Smart & Cook how this would affect insurance policies.

Royal Mail Office Opening Hours

Despite the Chamber's strong complaints to the Royal Mail Chief Executive, supported by our MP and the Leader of our Council, the recent reduction in opening hours to mornings only at the Harrogate Sorting Office will remain unchanged. Royal Mail seems to see their customers as the people who pay for the postage, not those who receive the items!

To demonstrate dissatisfaction with Royal Mail's lack of customer care, Brian Dunsby recommended members to opt out of receiving unsolicited junk mail by registering with Mailing Preference Service for both business and home. Tel: 0845 703 4599 or see www.mpsonline.org.uk

You can now also opt out of receiving all unaddressed "door-to-door" junk mail by telephoning 08457 950 950 or e-mail: optout@royalmail.co.uk

With the new PiP Postage rates you can reduce costs by folding your mail from A4 to A5 – or ask Paperworks to do it for you! Tel: H. 816999 www.paperworks.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Members E-mail Opt Out

Following discussions at the recent Management Group, members were asked whether or not they would object to receiving e-mails from other members or whether restrictions should be imposed on the e-mailing list.

Members agreed this kind of networking would be useful so long as an unsubscribe option was offered which worked. Any member who wishes to opt out of receiving e-mails from other members should inform Secretariat.

2007 Meetings Topics

Brian Dunsby tabled a list of proposed topics for the 2007 Meetings ranked in order of preference following discussion at the Management Group Meeting. A copy of the list is enclosed for current members only

Members are asked to either offer themselves as expert speakers or nominate someone else for the "hot" topics.

Christmas Party Night Special Offer

Pavilions of Harrogate are offering Harrogate Chamber members a complimentary half bottle of wine per guest on bookings received by 30 October for their Christmas Party Nights on Thursday 14 and Friday 15 December.

A Chamber Table has been booked for the Friday evening, which all members are welcome to join, or you can book a table for your own company. Simply advise the Pavilions of Harrogate staff that you are a member of Harrogate Chamber when you book.

The evening begins at 19.30 with Champagne Fountain and Bucks Fizz Reception, followed by a 3-course dinner, coffee and Christmas Chocolates. The Bar is open until 01.00 with dancing until 01.30. (A quiet bar is also promised!) All this for just £29.50 per person!

For further details or to book contact Karen Sweeney at Pavilions of Harrogate. Tel: H. 544544 Fax: H. 551234 e-mail: enquiries@pavilionsofharrogate.com

New Venue for Christmas Safari

The venue for the popular Christmas Business Networking Safari and buffet on Monday, 11th December has changed from the Harrogate Club to new member **Holiday Inn** on Kings Road (by the Conference Centre).

Members will be offered a complimentary delicious Christmas Buffet before the Safari begins. Full details will be included in the November REVIEW, but members can book in advance by e-mailing the Secretariat now. ***This is always a popular event, so early booking is recommended! Limit 50 places- max 2 per member.***

Business Market 2007

The next Business Market will be **30th April 2007** at Pavilions of Harrogate. As space will be strictly limited, priority will be given to Harrogate Chamber members

The main objective for 2007 is to promote the event even more extensively in order to attract more business visitors from a wider area of North and West Yorkshire.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Harrogate Education Opportunities

Harrogate Ladies College is the top Yorkshire Girls School and 6th in the UK according to the latest league tables. Tel: H 537024 or see www.hlc.org.uk

Harrogate College on Hornbeam Park, part of Leeds Metropolitan University, now offers a wide range of business training courses under the title Harrogate Business Enterprises. Contact: Jacqui Cooling on Tel: H.878268, Fx 878240 e-mail: j.cooling@leedsmet.ac.uk

North Yorkshire County Council's Continuing Education Unit runs courses in English and Maths for adults, designed to brush up rusty skills and to equip people with the practical language and numeracy skills they need in the workplace. These courses are FREE to students and employers! Contact: Margaret Blythe on H.881558 or e-mail: margaret.blythe@northyorks.gov.uk

New Bus Fares for Harrogate & District

Fares on many Harrogate & District (H&D) buses are changing as the company looks to broaden its appeal amongst car drivers in Harrogate and Knaresborough.

H&D's Operations Director, Dave Alexander, explained that the annual fares review was due, *"This year, rather than simply putting up fares we are stepping back and looking at ways we can increase usage of local bus services, therefore reducing congestion in the town and growing revenue to cover our increased costs."*

On services to Bilton, Jennyfield and Pannal Ash, simple fare structures will be introduced, with virtually no fare increases and a number of fare reductions. Discounts for return tickets and 7-day tickets will also be improved to offer better value for frequent travellers.

Existing bus users and new users alike can find out more about the changes by picking up a copy of H&D's customer newsletter from Harrogate Bus Station, or Tel: H. 566061 or look at www.harrogateanddistrict.co.uk.

Age Discrimination Seminars

The new Age Discrimination Regulations come into force on 1st October 2006. See www.agepositive.gov.uk

ACAS Y&H is offering courses for local companies on how the new law will affect them. Tel: 0113 205 3800

Berwins Solicitors are offering free seminars on how the new legislation impacts day-to-day on businesses and gives practical guidance. Tel: H. 509000 Fax: H.504706.

SCAMS & SPAMS

Beware of the latest scams circulating in Harrogate:-

- Parcel Delivery Service postcard suggesting they were unable to deliver a parcel and asking you to call a 0906 telephone number – that costs £15 a call!
- London Olympics 2012 – telephone sales pushing advertising on the web site – but Trading Standards warn that the official website does not carry adverts!

- E-mails from Banks & Building Societies etc – these are invariably scams – “phishing” for your personal account details in order to steal your money!
- World Web Page Directory – be warned, they are now issuing new style A4 invoices, purple on white.
- Clothing Collection by Orellana Ltd – be warned this is a business NOT a charity. Support local charities.
- “Charity” Christmas Cards – we receive many glossy catalogues claiming to support charities – but only a low percentage goes to charity. Please support local charities that really benefit! See enclosed example.

FOCUS GROUPS

Town Centre Improvements

Harrogate International Centre is now working on some improved pedestrian signage in the Town Centre, following the detailed report compiled by Granville Simpson. If you know of any locations where the signposting should be improved, please let us know.

Traffic & Transport

The Harrogate Line will have longer trains with “new” carriages from December – and some longer Platforms.

The number of passengers on the Bus2Jet Airport Bus Service 767 has nearly doubled since last year. It has proved very reliable and so much cheaper than taxis or car parking - only £2.70 return. See www.bus2jet.com

NEW MEMBERS

18 Park Parade (Small boutique hotel)

Bob Thompson, Owner

18 Park Parade, Harrogate, HG1 5AF

Tel: 01423 563800

E-mail: hhy@globalnet.co.uk

Web site: www.parkparade.co.uk

loyaltyMATTERS Ltd (Loyalty marketing agency)

Carolyn Saddington, Managing Director

Swinsty Lodge, Fewston, Harrogate, HG3 1SX

Tel: 0845 838 2240 Fax: 0845 838 2260

E-mail: carolyn@loyaltymatters.co.uk

Web site: www.loyaltymatters.co.uk

StarStar Limited (Corporate Doctor 4Catalyst)

Nicholas Jeffery, CEO

Suite 7, Claremont House, Harrogate, HG1 5QQ

Tel: 07808 056963

E-mail: nicholas.jeffery@starstargroup.com

Web site: www.starstargroup.com

Viesage Limited (Personal care cosmetics)

Lynda Powell, P.A.

Evans Business Centre, Hartwith Way,

Harrogate, HG3 2XA

Tel: 01423 534644 Fax: 01423 546381

E-mail: secretary@viesage.com

Virtually Active (Fitness adviser)

James Wright,

11 Elmwood Street, Harrogate, HG1 5EU

Tel: 07931 774993

E-mail: james.wright900@ntlworld.com

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Small firms risk tribunal losses

Small businesses are being warned to improve their management procedures to avoid losing employment tribunal cases. According to research, small businesses lose the majority of their employment tribunal cases because they either lack or do not follow proper management procedures.

A study by Warwick Business School found one of the key influences on a company's success at employment tribunals is if it has procedures in place for handling staff-related issues - and following them. Small businesses were least likely to follow such procedures. The lack of adequate procedures means that problems are not resolved within the company. As a result, a tribunal claim may be an employee's only recourse.

Professor Paul Edwards, from Warwick Business School's industrial relations research unit, said: 'Small Businesses must put disciplinary procedures in place, giving employees first and second warnings and the right of appeal. They should also have documented evidence that they have done this. The key thing small businesses should do is seek the advice of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) and try to settle the case before it goes to tribunal.'

Visit Acas website www.acas.org or call 08457 47 47 47

Age discrimination questionnaire

DTI has published the questionnaire that employees will need to complete if they want to bring a claim of discrimination on grounds of age against a business. It includes a section that respondents to discrimination claims have to fill out. www.dti.gov.uk/files/file32724.pdf

Understanding risk

A set of key principles has been devised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to help businesses prioritise real risks and avoid wasting time on minor issues. The message from the HSE is that while it is important to ensure that employees are safeguarded from danger, risks and benefits should be balanced to avoid using up time on trivial matters, or using health and safety as an excuse for business decisions. See www.hse.gov.uk/risk

Rate relief reminder

Take-up of Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) has been slow, according to a business lobby group which is urging firms to take advantage of the benefit before the end of the month. The Forum of Private Business says many firms are either unaware of SBRR or do not know they qualify for it. Businesses with rateable values of below £5,000 are entitled to 50% rate relief; this decreases on a sliding scale of 1% for every £100 of rateable value over £5,000, up to £10,000. The deadline is 30 September. See: www.fpb.co.uk/YfrJLtg.html

Political information at a click

Politics.co.uk contains daily updates about what is happening in the world of politics, and includes a section on the economy. The 'debate' part of the website has an 'issue of the day', while the 'reference' part of the site gives information on all the major Bills currently passing through Parliament. See: www.politics.co.uk

On-line sales increase

E-commerce is booming, with more than half of British adults buying items online during 2005, according to new research. The study, by payment clearing service APACS, found that auction sites such as eBay had helped to fuel the rise in Internet spending. Buying online is now part of mainstream culture in the UK and is often one of the first ports of call for many consumers. Credit cards are used for almost half of all online payments, compared with just 6% on the high street. www.apacs.org.uk/media_centre/press/06_31_07.html

Free guide to e-commerce

Payment processing bureau PayPal has published a free business guide covering the key principles of running an e-commerce site. PayPal is warning UK businesses to establish a presence online or risk missing out on valuable profits, with figures suggesting that consumer spending online will reach £39 billion by 2010. The guide features practical screen shots and helpful hints for different business sectors. For the free guide visit: www.paypal.co.uk/ecommerceguide

Market research portal

The List is a website pulling together market research on a variety of topics. Users can search by subject or browse reports by subject heading. The site offers free executive summaries of reports and has the option to buy the full report if required. See: www.the-list.co.uk

Consultant finding tool

Skillfair is search tool to help businesses find consultants, including general services such as business advisers and web designers, as well as more specialist or niche experts in areas like technical translation. The service runs a quality checking service to ensure that the consultants listed are genuine operators with appropriate qualifications. See: www.skillfair.co.uk

Community Regeneration

BizFizz is a joint initiative between the Civic Trust and the New Economics Foundation, which aims to promote regeneration through enterprise in local communities. It is running in ten English locations, providing coaches and putting together a panel of experts to help local entrepreneurs. See www.bizfizz.org.uk

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