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Insight

DECEMBER 2017 | ISSUE TWELVE |

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

MEET THE SPONSORS

A peek at the sponsors behind the awards

**biz4Biz
Awards
return!**

THE COUNTY OF OPPORTUNITY

John Patsavellas
talks Altro and
aspiration



Quintin McKellar
on the University of
Hertfordshire and
the next generation



FEATURES

- Food for Thought
- Networking
- People in Business
- Transport



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A budget for business?



Find HMG Budgets in recent years deliver very little in terms of innovation and future proofing and are now events that merely increase the net cost to the nation and are designed to avoid any conflict that the media can relish. I wonder sometimes, why we bother. Is it just a tradition and do the ends really justify the means? One day there will be a stark realisation that certain business taxes just kill off any entrepreneurial spirit and the government will suddenly realise the error of their ways, but at a point far too late to do anything about it. Take for example the most unfair business tax of them all - Business Rates. Often an organisation with modest profitability is required to pay a property tax despite not owning their premises, and at a level of taxation that has no relevance to their ability to trade and create a profit. At the other end of the scale are the international traders that are able to create multi-billion pound turnovers in the U.K. and then not pay a penny in tax in the U.K. whatsoever. There is no level playing field for business any longer. Could the Chancellor also stop claiming that the government has raised the National Living Wage as if the government has had to pay anything towards this aspect? Let's keep criticising and taxing the business owner, and in the next breath recommend them to deliver the Industrial Strategy. Be careful that we do not kill off the goose that lays the golden egg.

We would like to thank all our readers for your support during 2017, and wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year - if the Chancellor allows it.



Adrian Hawkins

Co-Founder & Chairman biz4Biz

Chairman Weldability Sif established 1925, Director and Trustee of the Weldability Sif Foundation, Deputy Chair Herts LEP Main Board, Skills and Employment Board - Chair.



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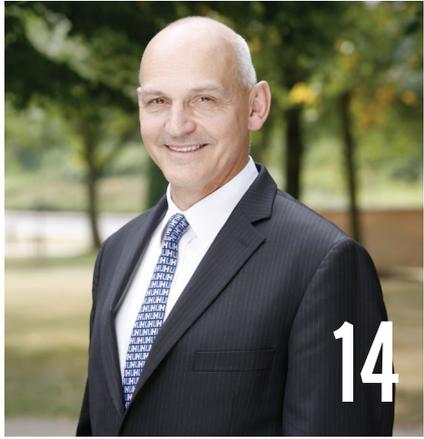
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NEWS

1,850 New Homes for Delamare Road in Cheshunt

Developers have proposed to erect approximately 1,850 new homes in place of a run down industrial estate on Delamare Road in Cheshunt following the relocation of Tesco Headquarters to Welwyn Garden City.

Aimed at first time buyers and commuters, the site will boast underground parking, studio to three-bedroom apartments and commercial space, together providing a more attractive centre for businesses. Amenities in the area will be updated to support the influx of people, with a new primary school proposed, along with road improvements, a bus service and longer railway platforms. Community spaces for existing and new residents have also been pledged, including areas for local groups to meet, landscaped spaces and even pocket parks.

The project will help to drive economic growth for the area, providing 1,000 new jobs on the completed site and another 250 in construction. The New Homes Bonus Funding will help local projects and a projected £28m in additional spend by new residents will help to support local businesses and services. In addition, existing residents will benefit from opportunities to set up businesses onsite and shop in the retail outlets, as well as having access to the new school and parkland while reaping the advantages of better public transport services.



The Letchworth Gateway is Go

The industrial site at 1 Avenue One will see a dramatic revamp, as plans for the so-called 'Letchworth Gateway' were approved in September.

Blueprints for the 4½-acre plot between the A505 Baldock Road and Sixth Avenue include proposals for an Aldi supermarket, a three-storey Travelodge hotel, with two drive-throughs courtesy of McDonald's and Costa Coffee.

Planning consent was granted by North Herts District Council's Planning Control Committee during a meeting at Letchworth's Spirella Ballroom, with developers Aberdeen Standard Investments behind the project.

With plans to open by summer 2018, the construction could provide 37 jobs during the build, with up to 30 more in the supply chain during redevelopment.

The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation made no objection to the plan, but requested that "careful consideration is given to the impact on the vibrancy and vitality of Letchworth town centre". District Council Planning Officer, Tom Allington, meanwhile reported to the committee that he did not expect the development to have a major impact on town-centre trading in either Letchworth or Baldock.

Brexit inspires apprenticeship opportunities for Greene King

After being voted one of The Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers 2016 (NAS), Greene King has launched 300 new apprenticeships this year as part of their pledge to deliver 10,000 over three years.

The apprenticeships being offered to over 16s will help to cover the significant portion of the workforce that the industry stands to lose post Brexit. European migrants make up approximately 15% of the hospitality industry, equivalent to 700,000 people, and tourism bodies have indicated that hiring members of the EU has already become more of a challenge.

Apprenticeships for chefs, bar and front of house staff will offer a great 'earn-while-you-learn' alternative to higher education. On-the-job-training is supported with classroom learning to provide a stepping stone to success for school leavers, and gives existing workers the opportunity to pass on their valuable skills and trade knowledge.

Greene King is looking for potential workers who are well-presented team players with strong communication skills. They are offering apprenticeships locally in Loch Fyne Restaurant in Hertford, Loch Fyne Restaurant and

The Speckled Hen in St Albans, The Highwayman in Graveley, Estcort Tavern in Watford, The Fox and Hounds in Croxley Green, The Cock in Hitchin and The Plume and Feathers in Tewin.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

For more information and to register online visit www.biz4biz.org/connexions.html

Thursday, 25th January 2018

Helen Thomson, Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley

Thursday, 22nd February 2018

David Hardstaff, Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley

Thursday, 22nd March 2018

Andrew Watkin, Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley

For more details of these events, visit www.biz4Biz.org or contact biz4Biz Secretariat on 01462 478031

biz4Biz
CONNEXIONS

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biz4Biz ConneXions

October 19th saw our regular breakfast event with yet another great speaker - Dr. Katherine Bean of DVANA



businesses through process automation and works with a wide range of companies including professional services organisations in accountancy, law, management consultancy and IT.

Katherine demonstrated how business owners can use a tool called GREAT™ to streamline internal systems, processes and procedures; and improve communication, collaboration and the use of technology to enable staff at every level to make better decisions and provide better customer service.

biz4Biz Connexions, our regular networking breakfast event for Herts, recently saw another great presentation at Needham House Hotel. Speaking for us was Dr Katherine Bean from DVANA. She specialises in making exceptional

Katherine has worked with a range of companies, from accountancy practices to distribution companies. She gave some great real-world examples of her methods at work.

CLICK HONEY

Hertford social media gurus Click Honey visited us in September, with founder Jacob McAtamney giving an insight into how you can create engaging content, where and how often you should post it, and how to target the right people for your content.

During his Connexions talk, Jacob also provided an overview of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and their use in the business world.

He also explained why social media is so important to your business, giving examples of well-executed social media campaigns as well as some that were poorly executed. This led into tips on crafting the perfect social media policy.



He also highlighted the common social media mistakes and pitfalls and how to avoid them, with a look at the future and how social media is evolving.

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BIZ4BIZ AWARDS LAUNCH NIGHT

The Awards were kicked off with a bang last month as Barclays opened its doors to sponsors, nominees and spectators alike. Branches in Stevenage and Hatfield hosted a gathering of biz4Biz Awards enthusiasts for an evening of networking, mingling and celebrating.

Drinks and an impressive spread of food were provided for Hertfordshire's best and brightest while they talked all things awards related. Of course, the highlight of the evening was an uplifting and inspiring speech by co-founder and chairman of biz4Biz, Adrian Hawkins, in which he congratulated nominees, thanked sponsors and wished everyone the best for the big event.

The awards will take place on Friday 2nd March 2018 and tickets are available to purchase from www.bizawards.info and everybody is welcome: nominees, finalists and those who just like a good party.

Diary dates in Hertfordshire

SANTA SPECTACULAR

Head with the kids to Willows Activity Farm for a chance for them to meet both Santa and Peter Rabbit!
 22nd Nov to 24th Dec 2017 - St Albans
 Info: <http://www.willowsactivityfarm.com/>



THE BIG SKATE AT THE PARADE

Food, drinks and ice await you well into the new year at Watford.
 25th Nov to 14th Jan 2018 - Watford
 Info: <http://www.watfordbigevents.co.uk/big-skate>



JACK & THE BEANSTALK

Pantomime action in the heart of Stevenage.
 1st Dec 2017 to 28th Jan 2018 - Stevenage
 Info: <https://www.gordon-craig.co.uk/jack-and-the-beanstalk-i1642>

U3A HEALTHY LIVING CONFERENCE

A day of exciting talks and physical activity sessions.
 15th Jan 2018 - Hatfield
 Info: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/u3a-healthy-living-conference-tickets-39829849151>

50TH ANNIVERSARY BRAMBLETON EXHIBITION

A fun event for families and model railway enthusiasts.
 20th Jan 10:30am until 5:30pm - Harpenden
 Info: <https://www.thebestof.co.uk/local/st-albans-and-harpenden/events/feature/the-2018-50th-anniversary-brambleton-exhibition/>

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD AND FRIENDS

A variety of fairytales that will keep the children captivated from start to finish.
 16th Feb 2-3pm - St Albans
 Info: <http://sandpittheatre.co.uk/SandpitTheatre.dll/WhatsOn?Film=296002>



Have you got a forthcoming event that you would like us to include in our next issue? Email: contact@biz4biz.org

CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL VET COLLEGE?

Animal Care Trust, Hatfield

Ever had a pet emergency and had to drive to the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in Hertfordshire at lightning speed? Luckily, we are not far away and have excellent animal hospitals.

Did you also know that we received a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award for outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for our students this year - the highest rating a university can receive! One of the top three veterinary



schools in the world, our Hertfordshire campus is a hive of activity in a beautiful rural location south of Hatfield. As the UK's largest and longest established independent veterinary school, we are home to students, clinicians, nurses and lots of animals in need of care and attention in our teaching hospitals. Our mission - striving to improve animal and human health.

Maybe you would like to support us and our students? We are always on the lookout for partners, sponsors and supporters to get involved with us. We have some great charity events, your staff can do challenges and volunteer with us and you can fulfil your Corporate Social Responsibility. Become a patron, support us regularly, or join us for a quick animal fix.

For more info contact Jenny Collins, Trusts and Corporate Fundraising Officer at the Animal Care Trust, on 01707 666045 or jcollins@rvc.ac.uk www.rvc.ac.uk/act

HOW TO INFLUENCE THE INFLUENCERS

Paul Maguire, Director, Magnite PR

The rise of social media has heralded a new breed of influencers with scores of followers who hang off their every word and whose opinion they trust. Whether it is beauty, fitness, travel or cars, they have become the 'go to' experts by creating original, engaging and authentic content that captures their audience's interest.

That is why brands are queuing up to work with them, especially those targeting younger audiences that are much harder to reach through traditional media channels. One example is beauty and lifestyle influencer Zoella who has more than 10 million followers on social media.

New Look, Yves Saint Laurent and the National Citizen Service have all collaborated with her.

Working with influencers can be an effective way to reach an established hard to reach audience. However, pushing your brand too much with constant sponsorship plugs can scream 'I'm being paid to say this.' Content should be relevant and authentic, long-term relationships developed with influencers. If they are treated merely as media properties, making excessive brand mentions, the association can come across as fake, jeopardising the credibility of both the brand and the influencer.



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Hertfordshire's
Local Transport Plan

- Driving Prosperity
- Enhancing Places
- Supporting People

Draft for public consultation

November 2017

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ltp

Consultation on a new Local Transport Plan

Hertfordshire County Council would like to hear your views on their new Transport Plan.

By 2031 there will be 175,000 more people living in Hertfordshire and using the transport system.

The transport plan will aim to manage congestion and support new housing growth, improve access to jobs and ensure Hertfordshire is an attractive place to live and invest in.

The full strategy and online survey where feedback can be given can be found by visiting

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ltp4

The consultation is open until 23rd January 2018

A NEW TRANSPORT PLAN FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

Hertfordshire County Council’s Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport
Derrick Ashley sets out his travel initiative for the county



for the car use this will generate; however, it is essential we also try and support a change in travel behaviour. Facilitating and encouraging more travel by walking, cycling, passenger transport and car sharing is a key feature of our new Local Transport Plan for the county. This can help to reduce future levels of traffic growth, congestion and the need for excessive road building.

ANALYSIS OF TRAVEL PATTERNS

suggests there is scope to increase mode share by



Transport is critical to the future economic success of Hertfordshire. Future transport improvements and services will have a key role to play in a number of areas that will influence future prosperity. These include:

- The ease with which people are able to access employment and services
- The ease with which goods can be transported around the county
- The quality of the local urban and rural environment
- Supporting people to live active and healthy lifestyles.

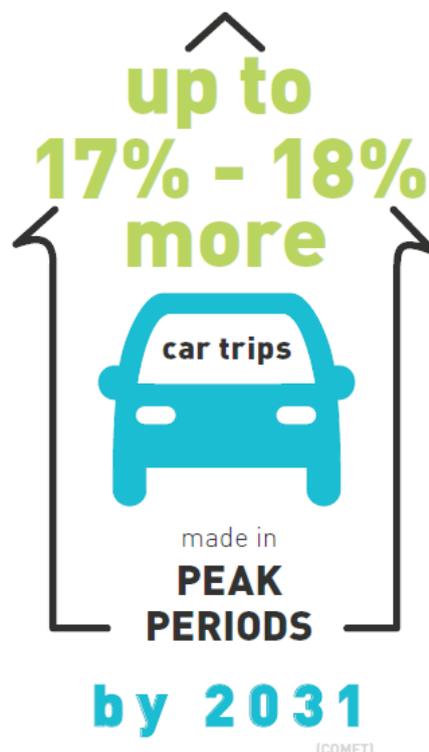
By 2031 there will be 175,000 more people living in the county. Further population growth is forecast beyond this and in neighbouring areas. This will put huge strain on the transport system, given the high levels of car ownership and use currently in the county.

Continued reliance on high levels of car use as travel demand increases will lead to worsening congestion and journey time reliability, which will harm economic growth.

Some new road building will be necessary to serve housing and employment development and cater

There is great potential to encourage more journeys by alternative modes to the car. 36% of commuters in the county travel less than 5 miles to their place of work, and 63% of all journeys in the county are estimated to be under 5 miles.

Revolutionary changes in transport are on the horizon. We are already seeing the roll out of electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicle technology is developing fast. In future years



there is likely to be a move away from widespread car ownership in favour of more shared transport services (such as car clubs, ride hailing/sharing services, cycle hire). Our New Local Transport Plan needs to start tackling existing and known future problems, but must also be alert to uncertain future transport scenarios.

I believe our new Local Transport Plan for the next fifteen years and beyond strikes the right balance in addressing the challenges the county faces, supporting a transition to a less car-dependent society, and being adaptable and resilient to future changes in transport and mobility. Crucially it does this without compromising the quality of the local environment and seeks to enhance our towns and facilitate growth.

All Hertfordshire residents, transport users and local businesses have a stake in our new Local Transport Plan, and I urge you all to read it and share your views with us.

The full strategy and online survey where feedback can be given can be found by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ltp4

The consultation is open until 23 January 2018

IMPELLUS BUSINESS PERFORMANCE TRAINING

Since 2008, when Managing Director, Jon Dean, established the company, Impellus has trained managers from over 5,500 organisations across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors to become one of the country's largest ILM-Approved Training Centres, operating at 25 UK venues.

Portfolio of Services

The open course format allows employers the flexibility to train managers to set standards, yet pick the courses that best suit the individuals, their roles and locations. The Impellus' portfolio accommodates the training of one manager or a whole team.

Currently, Impellus offers 11 open courses that can lead to the ILM Award Levels 2, 3 and 5 qualifications in Leadership and Management and four Commercial Skills training courses for managers and key team members looking to increase productivity and organisational performance.

Training Delivery Team

Quality is ensured by Impellus only ever using its own, fully employed Training Delivery team – consisting of four full-time trainers, all of whom held senior management roles prior to joining and who do not work for any other training company. This guarantees high standards of consistency wherever and whenever managers attend the training. Client satisfaction is taken very seriously at Impellus – all delegates are invited to complete a feedback form and the overall satisfaction rating averages over 99%.

Helping Hertfordshire Employers

Impellus is particularly proud to have been involved in the development of managers from the Hertfordshire based organisations of NGK Spark Plugs UK, Dacorum Borough Council, Majestic Trees, Ocado, Affinity Water and Yazaki Europe so far this year.

Proving the Return on Investment

All management development is designed to deliver real workplace improvements and clients consistently report high levels of change from managers after training including:

- Greater understanding of how their role affects overall organisational results
- Better awareness of how to use different communication styles
- Realisation that challenges are not necessarily unique to their business
- Increased confidence and motivation

Impellus provides pricing to suit the scale of any client's programme making budgeting and administration very easy. The St. Albans company is currently able to attract 50% funding on management training for Hertfordshire employers.

To reach Impellus:

Call: 0800 619 1230

Email: marketing@impellus.com

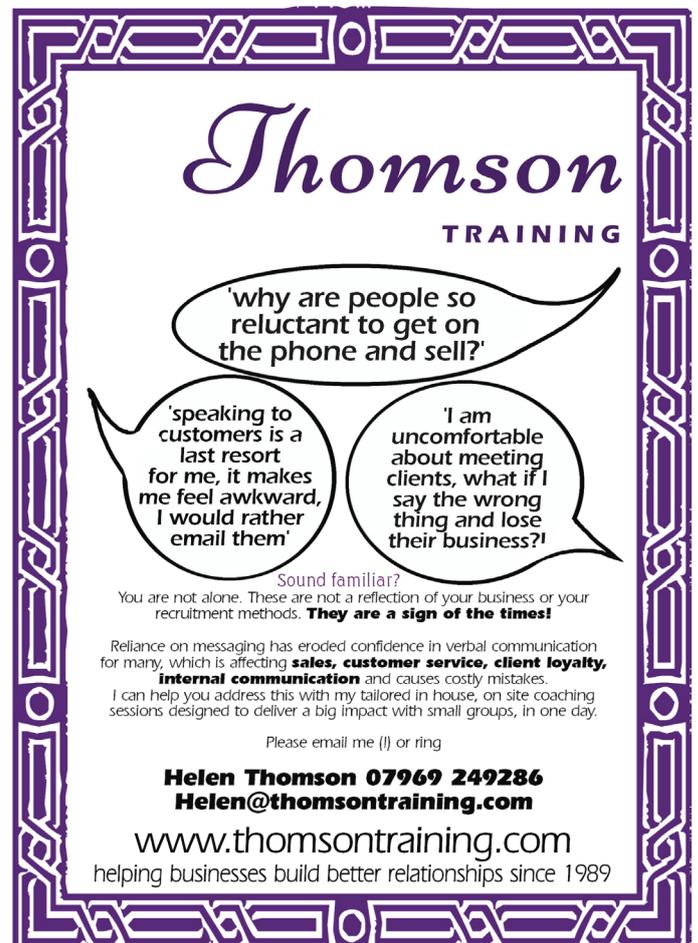


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50% Funding on Management Training for Hertfordshire Employers

Call **0800 619 1230** now to book your place

impellus BUSINESS PERFORMANCE TRAINING



Thomson

TRAINING

'why are people so reluctant to get on the phone and sell?'

'speaking to customers is a last resort for me, it makes me feel awkward, I would rather email them'

'I am uncomfortable about meeting clients, what if I say the wrong thing and lose their business?'

Sound familiar?
You are not alone. These are not a reflection of your business or your recruitment methods. **They are a sign of the times!**

Reliance on messaging has eroded confidence in verbal communication for many, which is affecting **sales, customer service, client loyalty, internal communication** and causes costly mistakes. I can help you address this with my tailored in house, on site coaching sessions designed to deliver a big impact with small groups, in one day.

Please email me (I) or ring

Helen Thomson 07969 249286
Helen@thomsontraining.com

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MANAGING MILLENNIALS - A TIME BOMB

Helen Thomson gives her thoughts on the business future of Generation Y

Hard skills get you hired, poor soft skills get you fired. Never has this saying been more true than in today's business climate, where it could be argued that excessive use of 'social media' has in fact had a negative impact on people's soft social skills. Whilst embracing the undoubted opportunities presented by the lightning speed of computerised transactions and Twitter dialogue with customers, the subsequent reliance on 'messaging' has left many lacking in what could be regarded as the basic building blocks of direct communication skills.

This deficit has not been helped by a resistance from educators to give students the soft skills which might mean they are readily employable and/or don't 'need' to go to university. We're now facing a growing soft skills gap, and when training employees in the workplace the art of 'on boarding' is now more essential than ever.

In a few years, all the so-called 'Millennials' born between 1984 and 2000 will make up half of the working population. Employers though are reporting that many of their younger employees are extremely reluctant to have phone or face to face dialogue with either colleagues or customers, which has a direct result on sales, customer loyalty and 'conflict and resolution.' What with Hertfordshire having such low unemployment, this is making recruitment even more of a challenging experience!

Is talking SO scary, you may wonder? Perhaps not for many of us who've probably 'got used to it' over the years, but millennials have relied



on messaging all their lives, hiding behind their 'perfect' public personas on social media. They're more used to crafting a carefully worded response and not getting 'caught out' by saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. In business they soon realise the stakes are high, and understandably it can all look pretty enticing to stay 'safe' and rely on indirect methods of communication.

It's easy then to see how such presenting behaviours can be easily misinterpreted as 'attitudinal issues', which if left to fester can cause further miscommunication and productivity issues. A culture clash is caused, you could say, with differing work ethics coming to the fore, often compounded when more experienced staff attach negative associations with the behaviour they witness, judgements such as 'indifferent,' 'disinterested,' 'entitled'.

You've probably anticipated the possible impact on a business; you may have even witnessed it in your organisation. But, with increased awareness, and the building blocks of effective communication built into traditional training topics such as Sales, Customer Service, Leadership, and Dealing with Difficult People,

you can prevent this time bomb from exploding in your own company!

The good news is that younger employees are often bright multi-taskers with a new, exciting and essential skill set, plus a desire to make an impact in the shortest amount of time. This means they will absorb and welcome any training or coaching you are able to put their way, as long as it is not intimidating, and does not make them defensive. Traditional lecture style training can be less engaging than a more conversational approach, especially when you've just left education.

The answer can be a respectful approach delivered in small groups in a familiar, relaxed and non-threatening environment. I have found that this makes it easier for your younger workers to quickly adopt new skills, with less financial outlay and more targeted results. All this will help increase productivity and profit, can be evaluated to ensure ROI, and, finally, will help you support the passionate workforce that you've worked hard to create.

Catch Helen's tips on how to ensure value for money on your training investment at biz4Biz Connexions on January 25th 2018

GO HERTS! A CHAT WITH VICE-CHANCELLOR QUINTIN MCKELLAR



The University of Hertfordshire's Quintin McKellar sits down with Insight's Giacomo Lee for a talk about education, inspirations, and his patio

Tell us about your current role and your other responsibilities around the Hertfordshire area.

My current role is as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Hertfordshire. I'm also chairman of the Hatfield Town Regeneration Project, and a Board Member of the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Outside Hertfordshire, I am Chair of the Trust of The Pirbright Institute

At the university, I ensure the day-to-day running of everything. Education is divided into activities, teaching, learning and research, but I primarily engage with financial business services where we commercialise any avenues, whilst also engaging quite energetically with the town of Hatfield itself.

Your background is in veterinary science, so do you like to keep

one toe in that area when not busy at the university?

Well, I wouldn't come to see me if your dog is ill, but I still keep myself involved through the Pirbright Institute, which is where I keep my basic 'passion.' It's a place where my background in veterinary medicine has been useful, that's for sure.

Which role excites you the most?

I think engaging at the university with its students is one of the most energising things that I do. Although they tend to be of a range of age groups, they are broadly younger and more energetic!

There are interactions outside of the university which are always challenging and interesting. Interactions with borough councillors and county councillors for example, people with civic responsibilities. I find all that exciting, too. My work at

The Pirbright Institute is fascinating, also, because it is such a premiere organisation, and the research they do is so cutting-edge.

What was the journey that led you to where you are today?

I hesitate to tell you how I got to where I got to! I graduated as a vet at the University of Glasgow, where I stayed on to do my PhD as I became very involved with the research that I did while I was at the university, and eventually when I finished I became a lecturer. From that, one thing led to another, in a sequence of universities where I turned from lecturer to a senior lecturer, eventually ending up heading a department. That led me to becoming the Principal at the Royal Veterinary College down in London, and of course it was only a very small step from jumping at the campus they have in Potters Bar to getting to Hatfield and joining the Uni.

During this journey, who has been your biggest influence or inspiration?

Interesting question. I can give you some examples of inspiring Scottish men and women who have served as my inspiration. Adam Smith, the great economist. John Muir, who was a Scotsman who lived in America, and who essentially started national parks there. I came across him when I was visiting Yosemite National Park, which is absolutely beautiful. This man managed to stand up for all these beautiful areas of North America. I'm also hugely inspired by Katherine Grainger, a Scottish woman who's won considerable silver medals and a gold medal for rowing. And finally, fabulous violinist Nicola Benedetti, who has a great personality as well.

What do you particularly enjoy about working in Hertfordshire?

I find the energy in Hertfordshire to be terrific. The people are very energetic, they're very dynamic, and that's very stimulating about the place. As a county, it is a very hardworking place and I enjoy that about it.

What has been your proudest achievement to date?

You might chuckle at this, but I introduced a 'philosophy' if you like at the university centred around collegiality. It's a rather Americanised approach, with faces of stags or harts as we call them, printed on badges and hoodies, and students wearing these with slogans saying 'Go Herts!' It's an approach you get in North American universities where students are very welded to their *alma mater* and so on. I'm trying to do that and it's been quite inspiring as the students have wholly embraced the idea. It's being developed so that students will get a 'Go Herts!' award when they graduate,

so that employers will know they simply haven't been focused on their studies but have also been involved in a whole range of things which aren't associated with their core curriculum. I'm really proud and pleased that that's taking off.

You mentioned national parks earlier, so for my last question I'm wondering if you have any favourite places in Hertfordshire?

I don't know about anywhere else, but my patio is definitely my favourite place in Hertfordshire! I live in a village called Little Berkhamsted, in a house that overlooks a field there, and sitting there on my patio watching the sun go down is

very enjoyable. Hertfordshire is such a beautiful county; it has fields, terrific woodland, and farmland which, from my perspective, is very important. I love seeing the annual changes on farmland here, such as harvest time. It's beautiful. But my patio is definitely my favourite place to be!



Top: Hertfordshire Students' Union model the Go Herts range.
Above: Quintin with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh opening the University of Hertfordshire's new science building in 2016

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW FOR THE BIZ4BIZ AWARDS 2018!



The deadline is over, the votes are in, and preparations are underway for The biz4Biz Awards 2018, sponsored by Barclays.

These awards are impartial, independent and open to anyone involved in a business in Hertfordshire. Insight readers were invited to nominate their favourite businesses last issue, and now you are invited to attend the evening with all the nominees and winners on the night. And who knows, maybe you're a nominee already?

The next glittering biz4Biz awards ceremony will be held on Friday 2nd March 2018, returning to Tewin Bury Farm Hotel in Welwyn, Hertfordshire, and biz4Biz are proud to announce Eamon Holmes will host the evening and present the awards. The event is open to all, so don't worry if you aren't nominated as this'll be a fabulous chance to network with local companies and celebrate your customers, clients and fellow businesses. Tickets can be bought now at <http://www.bizawards.info/events/booking-requests/>, giving you full access to our evening's festivities from the get-go, when

things kick off at 6.30pm for a sparkling drinks reception. Entertainment on the evening will then include a close-up magician, Roulette and Black Jack casino tables, all set to live music from a modern jazz band to which you can dance to until late (don't be shy!) There will also be a three-course meal with wine and hot drinks included, and a cash bar will be available throughout the evening.

We are proud to sponsor the Willow Foundation, our chosen Hertfordshire-based charity for the evening. The evening will be attended by Willow founders Bob Wilson, ex-Arsenal goalkeeper and TV presenter, along with Megs Wilson, who together will be talking about their mission to help seriously ill young adults fulfil Special Days.

In support of their charity, we'll be holding an amazing Silent Auction with some brilliant prizes up for grabs. Perhaps you'll need a place to stay? In that case, a limited number of bedrooms have been reserved at Tewin Bury Farm for a special 'Awards Evening' rate. Call the Hotel reception

team at 01438 717793 and quote 'biz4Biz Awards' for availability and to book. Event instructions will be issued by email nearer the time. For those who have already booked but not yet informed us of any specific dietary requirements, please do so immediately for yourself and any/all guests in your party by emailing entry@biz4biz.org

Remember – these awards support your local county. A great business environment in Hertfordshire leads to growing businesses, a growing economy and more job opportunities for us all! In that sharing spirit, fans and users of Twitter are encouraged to include us in your tweets about the Awards; leading up-to, following and throughout the evening itself! Use @biz4Biz_Awards plus hashtag #bizawards2018 and our marketing team will look to acknowledge and/or retweet at the earliest.

The biz4Biz Awards 2018 - a fun night where you could get the ultimate chance to showcase your business! For further info, please visit www.bizawards.info



BARCLAYS

MAIN SPONSOR AND BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



Ian Taylor, Director, Head of SME, Hertfordshire & North West London

The Regional Head of SME for Barclays across the Hertfordshire & North West London areas, Ian originally joined Barclays in 1980 and has worked with large corporate and investment

bank clients before moving over to head up the Hertfordshire Corporate team and then the enlarged Hertfordshire & NW London SME team. The team deals with a wide range of clients, working with four area managers and 55 relationship managers to deliver excellent service and solutions.



Micky Kosowycz is Area Business Manager covering Hertfordshire

Micky has spent a number of years working in a variety of leadership roles across corporate and business banking as well as working tirelessly to support local young people transition into working life through career opportunities and apprenticeships.

Leading her 13 business managers covering markets such as Stevenage, Hitchin, Welwyn and Hatfield amongst others, Micky and her team are passionate about delivering excellent customer service, helping clients to unlock their growth potential and truly making a difference in the communities in which we work.

Contact: Micky.kosowycz@barclays.com



Calum Yates, Business Relationship Manager, Hertfordshire

Calum Yates is the Business Relationship Manager for Hatfield and Potters Bar, looking after a portfolio of SME businesses. He has worked for Barclays since 2011, as part of both the personal and business banking

sector within Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

His primary responsibilities are to provide excellent customer service and to really understand what it is the client does and wants to achieve. Building a trust with his clients allows him to provide financial solutions to meet their requirements and be a key support to the growth of their business.

Contact: Calum.yates@barclays.com



Adam Rowe, Business Relationship Manager, Hertfordshire

Adam joined Barclays in 2012 and has worked in a variety of roles across the local markets in Hertfordshire. He deals with businesses in the local Stevenage area, providing excellent service and supporting businesses with

their growth ambitions and needs. In this fast moving digital environment, Adam is very well placed to support clients with their online strategy in a safe and secure manner.

Contact: Adam.rowe2@barclays.com



Andy Webb, Relationship Director, Hertfordshire & North West London

Covering responsibility for Stevenage, Welwyn and Hatfield, Andy started with the bank in 1984 and has 20 years' experience working within business banking across Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.

Andy has a portfolio of medium-sized corporate clients with a remit to deliver excellent service and solutions to our clients. He also has a strong local knowledge of the mid-Hertfordshire business economy.

Contact: Andy.webb@barclays.com



Ben Chapman, Business Relationship Manager, Hertfordshire

Ben joined the small business team in December 2009, spending five years supporting small businesses across the Hertford and Hoddesdon area. He is now part of the Hertfordshire team where he

holds a portfolio of local businesses covering a wide variety of industries and sectors ranging in size and complexity. Ben prides himself in putting his clients at the heart of every decision he makes whilst offering a relationship management approach tailored to the individual business & business owners.

Contact: Ben.chapman@barclays.com

ONE FACILITY

SPONSOR OF BEST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDER

We are experts in facilities' management, but first and foremost we are all about other people!

With a diverse client base across UK sectors including retail, commercial, defence, aerospace and property management organisations, One Facility's expert teams deliver complete solutions that provide seamless integration of all areas of facility management.

From the smallest periodic inspection task to complex system installations, our clients rely on us for high-quality, compliant and sustainable services that support and enhance their facilities, minimise disruption to their business and their operations and deliver efficiencies, cost savings and overall value.

With this strong heritage of facilities management, you might then expect One Facility to sponsor a more technical award category! For us, though, central to our success has always been our people. That's why we have chosen to sponsor the award for Best Employment Services Provider. A primary aim of our business is to be an employer of choice in our industry and in the regions where we operate. And it's why we are so proud of maintaining



our corporate commitments to our people: continual training, personal and professional development, competitive salary and compensations packages with highly-flexible family-friendly working arrangements, and committing to standards such as the London Living Wage.

This approach is embodied in our Investors in People certification and our core quality and environmental accreditations (ISO 9001 and 14001), plus Health & Safety accreditations to make sure we are keeping people safe while also focusing on their well-being.

Central to our approach is involving our staff in how our company develops and how our services evolve to support our

clients. The Values graphic shown here encapsulates how we work – and all the definitions were suggested and agreed by our staff.

One Facility is delighted to sponsor this award and to be supporting the Biz4Biz Awards 2018.



For further information on One Facility visit our website: www.onefacility.co.uk



RICHMOND HOUSE

SPONSOR OF BEST FAMILY BUSINESS

A few words from Paul Beasley,
Richmond House CEO



We all understand the role and importance of families. Everyone is shaped by those who brought us into the world, and who nurtured and looked after us. In business, families play a significant role too – probably more than most people realise.

According to the Institute for Family Business, “two thirds of UK businesses are family owned - 4.7 million in total, of which over 17,000 are medium and large businesses” (source: <http://www.ifb.org.uk/voice/uk-family-business/>) They also state that “family firms employ almost 12.2 million people in the UK – 47% of private sector employment.”

Clearly the importance of family businesses to the economy, local and national, is very significant. It's something I recognised early in my career.

At Richmond House, we have the privilege of working with, in some cases, four generations from the same family. Many of our clients established their own businesses and are involved in their family firms in a full or part-time role. Naturally therefore, we see at first hand the challenges facing those who own, manage and work in family businesses across Hertfordshire. Of course, all the businesses we work with, whether family-owned or not,

face the same issues; two key ones being recruiting and retaining staff, and succession planning. Equally, those business owners who we advise regarding their own finances have the same aspirations and goals regardless of the history of the business or its legal status.

However, when we visit a family business, we know that there are some special, additional factors that need to be considered. Succession planning takes on a different meaning when you'd like family members to take over the reins. This is done all the while considering how to ensure that those relatives who choose not to be involved in the family firm don't lose out. Managing a business when personal relationships are involved, can be tricky.

The issue of succession planning is highlighted by another statistic from the Institute for Family Business, stating ‘some 100,000 family businesses transfer ownership between generations each year; a crucial time in underpinning the future of the business.’

An additional headache for those owning or working in a family firm is that their personal finances are

generally inextricably linked with those of the business. Therefore, it's essential that any financial planning takes both areas into account.

With so much of our work revolving around advising those involved in family businesses, I was very keen that Richmond House should sponsor the ‘Best Family Business’ Award. Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the Hertfordshire economy and about two thirds of them are likely to be family owned. We wish you every success.

RHG to Richmond House

Our CEO, Paul Beasley, was a founder member of biz4Biz and you may well recognise him. However, you may not be familiar with the name Richmond House Wealth Management. We were known as RHG, but we've since rebranded. Our core services have not changed, though, and are provided by three specialist companies: financial planning for individuals (Richmond House Wealth Management), provision of employee benefits and advice to companies (Richmond House Corporate Services), and discretionary investment management (Richmond House Investment Management). Please visit www.richmondhousesec.co.uk or call us on 0333 241 3350.



ALTRO FLOORING

SPONSOR OF MADE IN HERTS



Alтро have been at the forefront of innovation for almost 100 years. Today, working closely with architects, end customers, engineers, designers and contractors around the world, our insight and expertise helps them transform everyday spaces into environments that can improve the wellbeing of everyone that uses them.

By consistently turning creative thinking into practical, real-world solutions – always maintaining the highest standards of safety and durability – Altro have become synonymous with quality.

As a family-founded business, we have a strong sense of what we value and a way of thinking inspired by

The Bauhaus – a balance of quality, form and design-led function – that puts people's needs at the heart of everything we do. It's a human-centred approach to designing for the demands of 21st century life.

It's a history that means we value the bold, the brave and the new. From focusing on how the different sectors we serve need their spaces to perform, to the call for more environmentally sustainable materials, Altro are constantly challenging what is possible and seeking new ways of inspiring our customers and answering their biggest challenges.

With offices across Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific and the Middle East, we remain committed to

developing solutions that stand the test of time.

We combine the best in contemporary style with the functionality required to improve the way we all live and work, wherever in the world that may be.

We are Altro.

"The biz4Biz initiative has always been one I have a lot of respect for," says Manufacturing and Technical Director John Patsavellas. "Sharing insight in business, supporting the local area; it's something we should all encourage and be a part of as it benefits everyone. It's something every part of the country should aspire to emulate."

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

SPONSOR OF BEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Our business leader Envoys work with the LEP by bringing their expertise to help identify and solve key issues for the county and act as external advocates for the LEP to Government, industry and inward investors.

OUR VISION

Accelerating growth

Our vision is to “accelerate business-led economic growth in Hertfordshire” and for Hertfordshire to become a world-leading economy; one of the top three in the country outside London. We bring together key partners from business, academia and local government to help create economic growth and jobs by investing in our people, places and businesses. We will strive to ensure that EU and public sector investments are harnessed effectively to deliver the best return for businesses and the wider community.

OUR ROLE IS TO BE A:

Strategic leader: the LEP Board sets the vision.

Partner: we create the networks for partnership working.

Investor: we secure significant investment.

Advocate: we bring the voice of Herts business to Westminster.

Governance: we have appropriate processes for decision-making and ensure this process is open and accountable.

OUR PRIORITIES

We are investing in science, research and innovation, developing skills, cultivating world-leading sectors and supporting businesses to start up and grow. Our Programme Boards help to shape these four priorities:

Strategic Infrastructure

We are seeking ways to overcome infrastructure issues that are holding back



Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

the economic development of our area by securing funding to relieve congestion on our roads, improving our railway networks and broadband provision and also identifying key regeneration, housing and job creation projects.

Skills and Employment

We are forging lasting links between schools and businesses to create skilled workforces that meet the needs of our local employers. We are working with schools, colleges and the University of Hertfordshire to support the development of the right academic and vocational skills plus facilities to develop our existing and future workforce capacity.

Enterprise and Innovation

We are accelerating business-led economic growth by encouraging research and development for commercial success, investing in our key sector industries, identifying innovative collaborations between businesses, academia and the public sector, and also promoting opportunities for international trade and access to finance.

Business Support

We are unlocking new growth and job creation by providing small businesses with the support they need to achieve their potential via Hertfordshire Growth Hub and creating the right conditions for our enterprises to flourish.

OUR PEOPLE

Our business-led Board is responsible for setting the overall strategic vision and priorities for economic development in the county. They are supported by the Executive Team which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

We are proud to support the Best International Trade award for biz4Biz, promoting best practice among Hertfordshire companies that ensure a consistent level of service is delivered worldwide, be it in skills, processes and relationships.

Find out more about your LEP today:
www.hertfordshirelep.co.uk

NEEDHAM HOUSE

SPONSOR OF BEST LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDER



Set in the heart of Little Wymondley, just outside of Hitchin, Needham House offers the perfect retreat for both leisure guests and business guests. Surrounded by beautiful countryside, our 4 star hotel offers 79 boutique bedrooms, exclusive 3-bedroom lodge, 17 event spaces, 2 rosette SG4 Brasserie, and ESPA Spa with modern gym.



Our range of bedrooms offer guests a fantastically equipped room, complete with extra comfy bed, modern decor, interactive television, walk-in shower and beautiful views of the Needham grounds. The Lodge offers the perfect place to entertain family and friends. Complete with 3 double bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, lounge and dining area in our tranquil gardens, we add the opportunity to really make the most of your stay with us.



The meeting rooms offer a perfect solution for your next event, whether it be a small board meeting, large conference or product launch. All meeting rooms come equipped with modern technology, natural daylight and comfortable seating for delegates. With 15 spaces to choose from, the options are endless!

Within the two acres of picturesque grounds lies the Garden Marquee which is the perfect space to stage a range of events for up to 250 guests. Completed to the highest specification, the Marquee comes equipped with its own bar, starlit cloth, dancefloor, fully equipped kitchen and decorative uplighters, also available on a dry hire basis for external catering.

Weddings at Needham House Hotel are staged in a manner that reflects the unique occasion of the happy couple's special day. Surrounded by exquisite views, attention to detail is paramount and we endeavour to make every wedding day "an experience you will treasure forever."

Spa & leisure is all part of the experience at Needham House Hotel, where facilities include a Turkish Hamman, Swedish sauna, and relaxation lounge. ESPA products are used and available to purchase to ensure ultimate relaxation. There is also a state of the art gym with cardio and strength machines if you fancy burning some calories.

Our 2 rosette SG4 Brasserie is designed for diners to enjoy great home cooked food in a relaxing setting. We are open for breakfast, lunch and dinner for guests to dine with small or large parties in our beautiful brasserie. Our bar specialises in the art of making exquisite cocktails, with

over 40 different gins to choose from you'll be certain to unwind in style.

You can also enjoy traditional Afternoon Tea in the welcoming and relaxing atmosphere of the Wymondley Lounge. Indulge in an array of sandwiches, traditional fruit and buttermilk scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam, and a selection of mouth-watering cakes including Needham Battenberg, Chocolate Fancies and Macaroons.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on: 01462 417240 sales@needhamhouse.co.uk www.needhamhouse.co.uk

GEORGE HAY ACCOUNTANTS

SPONSOR OF BEST EXECUTIVE VENUE OR LEISURE FACILITY



George Hay Chartered Accountants are a trusted firm of friendly and professional accountants, who have been supplying accountancy services for over 75 years. With offices based in Letchworth, Biggleswade and Huntingdon, our client base comprises both smaller local businesses and start-ups, as well as larger blue-chip companies, and our expertise as a whole spans a diverse range of industry sectors.

We deliver so you can develop

We pride ourselves on delivering a high-quality and personalised service to each one of our clients and take great pleasure in developing working relationships that are both successful and long-lasting.

Undoubtedly, one of the best things about what we do day-to-day is watching and helping businesses to develop and ultimately thrive. That is one of the reasons we pledge our support to events such as the biz4Biz Awards.

Celebrating success in the business community

This year, once again, George Hay are proud to be supporting the biz4Biz Awards 2018. We are sponsoring the Best Executive Venue or Leisure Facility award, open to pubs, hotels, spas, gyms, restaurants, golf clubs, health clubs, coffee shops and other general leisure facilities in Hertfordshire.



Keith Middleton presenting Best Executive Venue Award to TewinBury Farm at the biz4Biz Awards 2017

Keith Middleton from George Hay Chartered Accountants, who is also a Director on the board of biz4Biz, believes that "whether it's hosting a networking event, entertaining clients, conducting an important meeting or simply finding time to unwind, individuals and businesses rely on the services provided by executive venues and leisure facilities every day. The biz4Biz Awards are the perfect opportunity to recognise these businesses and especially those who excel in all areas of the customer experience."

"In an increasingly competitive business environment," he continues, "it is important for businesses to differentiate themselves wherever possible. The biz4Biz Awards have the potential to give winners, as well as those shortlisted, a welcome edge in the marketplace."

"We are looking forward to another special evening on March 2nd 2018, where we get to celebrate the success of so many businesses from across Hertfordshire."

Time to thrive

Whether your business is just beginning to flourish, or whether you already have a whole raft of achievements under your belt, we at George Hay can work with you to understand your requirements. We provide a wide range of audit, accountancy, taxation and business advisory services to help you streamline your accounting, as a result freeing up more of your time and enabling you to focus on growing your business.

So, if you'd like to find out more about how George Hay can help you, contact one of our team today on 01462 708810 or fill in an online enquiry form at www.georgehay.co.uk

BBW SOLICITORS

SPONSOR OF BEST PROPERTY SERVICES



Brignalls Balderston Warren (or BBW Solicitors for short) are founding members of biz4Biz and Bruce Lendrum is one of the original Directors. They are a leading law firm in North Herts and Central Beds, with offices in Biggleswade, Letchworth and Stevenage providing expert legal advice to businesses, families and individuals in relation to English law.

BBW consider biz4Biz Business Awards as extremely important for the Business Community and in recognising local businesses and people for their amazing achievements in building up successful businesses.

BBW Solicitors have developed strong ties with local organisations, charities and business groups, so whether you are a private individual, running your own business, working for a charity or representing a large corporation, BBW are ready to listen, consider and advise.

Our expertise is recognised in the Legal 500 directory. We are also Lexcel accredited. Lexcel is the Law Society's international practice management standard. The Lexcel practice management standard is only awarded to solicitors who meet the highest management and customer care standards.

We also have the Conveyancing Quality Award which recognises a high standard of residential conveyancing procedures and standards.

BBW is one of the longest established and largest law firms in Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and Central Bedfordshire. Our three offices are conveniently located in the heart of the local community, along the A1

corridor at Stevenage, Letchworth and Biggleswade. Our offices are easily accessible with parking nearby and we have facilities for disabled access at all our offices.

With BBW, you'll benefit from our extensive experience in all types of legal matters, affecting everyone from private individuals to international organisations. We possess a wealth of legal expertise covering all areas of English law.

Take a look at our website at www.bbwlaw.biz at your leisure which will provide you with information about our services, our people and how we can assist you.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on the following numbers and email:

01462 482248 (Letchworth office)
01438 359311 (Stevenage office)
01767 313813 (Biggleswade office)

enquiries@bbwlaw.biz

At BBW whether you're a private individual, running your own business, working for a charity or representing a large corporation, we're ready to listen, consider and advise.

bbw / Solicitors

Areas of Expertise:

Company & Commercial | Commercial Property | Commercial Litigation | Residential Conveyancing | Employment | Disputes | Family & Children | Wills, Tax & Financial Planning | Probate

Our three offices are conveniently located in the heart of the local community along the A1 corridor



Letchworth Office

Broadway Chambers
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire, SG6 3AD
01462 482248



Stevenage Office

Forum Chambers
The Forum, Stevenage
Hertfordshire, SG1 1EL
01438 359311



Biggleswade Office

2 London Road
Biggleswade
Bedfordshire, SG18 8EP
01767 313813



HART LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

SPONSOR OF BEST APPRENTICESHIP



Hart Learning & Development (Hart L&D) are proud to be sponsoring the Best Apprenticeship award at the 2018 biz4Biz awards, after supporting the 2017 biz4Biz awards.

At Hart L&D, we're passionate about apprenticeships – and we're also genuine experts in traineeships and other nationally recognised qualifications.

We launched in August 2015 to help businesses of all sizes to improve and grow through the way in which they invest in and engage with emerging talent. Our brand and client

proposition reflect our passion for the way in which talented young people and ambitious businesses can help each other realise their potential.

Our client proposition is summarised through an image of a bridge depicting three phases of business engagement with emerging talent. For more information on the proposition go to our website: <http://www.hartld.co.uk/proposition/>

We're realistic people. We know that you have a business to run, that every penny you invest, and every hour your people spend away from their day jobs is a cost to you. Hart L&D is here to

help you get the best possible return on your investment in emerging talent through apprenticeships and beyond.

For more information on how we have helped our national and local clients, and how we can help you, follow us on Twitter (@hart_ld) or email us at enquiries@hartld.co.uk.

We wish the entrants to this year's biz4Biz awards the very best of luck!



HART
LEARNING + DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

SPONSOR OF BEST MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL SERVICES PROVIDER



The University of Hertfordshire is the UK's leading business-facing university and an exemplar in the sector. It is innovative and enterprising and challenges individuals and organisations to excel. With more than 2,700 staff and 25,000 students the University is Hertfordshire's leading intellectual powerhouse and one of the largest employers in the region; every year the University of Hertfordshire makes a contribution of more than £1bn to the UK economy.

With more than 60 years' experience of working and supporting businesses, the University is committed to adding value to employers, enterprise,

regional and national economies. Through consultancy, market research and people development programmes the University delivers tailored support for business growth and offers solutions to businesses of all sizes and sectors. Additionally, the Hertfordshire Business School holds the Small Business Charter Award recognising its support for start-ups and small businesses.

Some facts and figures about us:

- The University of Hertfordshire

has secured over £11 million income through collaborative Knowledge Transfer projects, connecting with over 100 companies.

- The Hertfordshire Science Partnership is the University of Hertfordshire's innovative solution to growing research and innovation in Hertfordshire's life sciences industries.
- The University's Hertfordshire Growth Hub offers advice for small businesses.

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH HUB

SPONSOR OF BEST TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PROVIDER

Let's keep your business growing

The Hertfordshire Growth Hub helps established businesses unlock their potential and supports ambitious local businesses to thrive. We're here to help businesses in our county grow, innovate, create new jobs and strengthen the Hertfordshire economy. We have a dedicated team of highly experienced business advisers who are passionate about helping Hertfordshire SMEs. We are proud to be the central point of contact for business support in the county, we also work with other support organisations across Hertfordshire, connecting you to specific services and schemes we know will help your business.

Hertfordshire Growth Hub Events

The Growth Hub offers a whole range of events for Hertfordshire businesses. The calendar of events can be found on our website. www.hertsgrowthhub.com/events

Marketplace

Our Marketplace is a free local directory of Hertfordshire businesses offering high-quality advice, support and B2B services. It's a great way to advertise your services to SMEs in the county – or to find local businesses that can help you make things happen. Joining our Marketplace is a free, simple way to grow your customer base - www.hertsgrowthhub.com/marketplace.

Celebrating success in Hertfordshire

The Hertfordshire Growth Hub is proud to be sponsoring the 'Best Technology Services Provider' category at the Biz4Biz awards.

We strongly encourage you to enter these awards, it is a fantastic platform for your business to gain recognition for its achievements and exposure to local PR opportunities.

The support you need to take the next step

From construction to the creative industries, life sciences to advanced manufacturing and engineering, we work with businesses from every sector. Whether you'd like to access R&D funding, tap into technical expertise, develop your products, train your people or build your brand, our free, expert support can help you make it happen.

For more information on the support we offer or to find out more about our events programme call us on 01707 398168 or email enquiries@hertsgrowthhub.com



**Hertfordshire
Growth Hub**

Local support and advice for Hertfordshire businesses





BIG INTERVIEW

Altro's John Patsavellas discusses all things innovation and sustainability.



Tell us about your current role and all the hats that you wear around the Hertfordshire area.

I am the manufacturing and technical director for Altro based in Letchworth, on a site that has about 300 people in the UK. I also look after our base in Germany which has about 150 people.

I look after all the manufacturing, innovation, development, engineering as well as planning for Altro. I am also the President of the European Resilient Flooring

Manufacturers' Institute, based in Brussels. In addition I am one of the newly recruited members for the Hertfordshire LEP board. I think that's about it!

Is there a particular role that really excites you on a day to day basis?

I think what excites me the most is how I can play a role into encouraging people to be curious about what it is that we do, and how to do things better, whilst also having fun in doing so. It's a source of fun. I see people whose eyes light up about a concept and idea they have that they can pursue and explore - and it doesn't matter if it fails. That makes me happy because I feel like I've facilitated the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of progress. That's when I'm at my happiest. Of course, what also excites me the most is factoring in the cost of the triple bottom line of sustainability into everything we do. I feel we are just curators and caretakers of the planet, which we preserve for all the generations of people to come.

Was there a turning point where you decided to commit yourself to this ideal of sustainability?

I think like a lot of people, I find myself pondering on issues of the green movement and environmentalism; I also believe in free enterprise and business. I think those concepts until recently haven't been entirely compatible with each other, but I became more of an enthusiast when I realised that something that's sustainable also means that it gives people an ability to have a good life. It creates jobs, and doesn't destroy what it creates. This mindset has enabled other

companies to look at Altro and say, "We like your way of thinking and we want to do business with you." For example, since October this year, all our electricity is from renewable energy in Letchworth. It actually costs us the same, and the company that provides us, Squeaky Clean, wanted to do business with us because of what we stand for.

Who or what has been your biggest influence or inspiration?

As a student I read the biography of an American industrialist called Lee Iacocca, who transformed the fortunes of Chrysler. It was near bankruptcy, and that kind of inspired me to become an engineer who could work in business, and make a difference. That was quite formative early on, as it led me to believe in a technical education that can flourish in a business setting.

What has been your proudest achievement and toughest challenge to date?

The toughest challenge in my career has been the realisation that in the UK there has been a bias against people with a technical education getting into management. Engineers are not thought of as business leaders. Even today, if someone wants to create a start-up that makes things, it doesn't sound particularly sexy. They don't get a lot of attention.

I've never wanted to be typecast as a 'techie guy.' I've been a director, on the board of businesses for the last 13 years, and the biggest achievement has been being able to win an award for innovation against some of the giants of innovation in this country, back in 2014. It was a great booster



Top: Altro flooring in Hull Hospital. Right: Nestlé Walkway with Altro flooring

for me to think big and continue to find new ways of doing things, and working with people who think the same way.

Can you give an example of such innovation?

At Altro we have a team of young people who are excited enough to think they can change the world. We've encouraged them to come up with new projects, new ideas, and have the concept of human well-being, and 'planet well-being' in mind. To find new ways of keeping people safe, we recently invented a stair system that uses human energy to illuminate the next step. It's not connected to the grid, and uses kinetic energy from the person walking up the stairs, then converts that to electricity.

In a burning building where the power has gone, the prime objective is to see where you're going. After about 10-20 minutes, emergency lighting goes out. It would be nice to have a solution which enables people to evacuate safely. We're hoping a product like that will make a difference in people's lives. Our team of young, highly educated engineers believe in trying to achieve something like that.

What's the best advice you give to the younger generation? Something that perhaps you would have told yourself when you were younger.

Two things. Never let anyone tell you that you're not capable, and never stop being curious. If I could give my younger self some advice, I

would give that, which is basically reassurance to keep going. There will be failures, but there will be plenty of victories.

How did your career progress after your technical education? What was the path that led you to where you are today?

I always wanted to have a technical education, then have a business education. I did a Bachelors in Engineering up at the University of Huddersfield, in the depths of real industrial Yorkshire. The places where the Luddites smashed up textile machinery during the days of the Industrial Revolution! A real hardcore place to study engineering design.

My next priority was always going to be a business degree, but I

first wanted people to look at my engineering skills and see how this translates in the real world of making things. After that I became a graduate trainee, just by going to a careers fair. The next thing I know, I was asked to go into an interview, and then they offered me a job. I thought, before I go to do an MBA, I'll just go and see the real world of work. I worked in a big factory, and I found I thoroughly enjoyed the real-world interaction with people. I loved leading a team of people. I found the real niche I thought I'd be good at, leading teams of people in an industrial environment, driving for better results, creating value and meaning out of daily working life in a factory. That then became my career.

I did an MBA ten years after, which

was great, as I was able to put in context the disciplines of marketing and finance and operations, and keep them in perspective. I appreciated them more, the language of finance, and the understanding that marketing is some form of science. It's based on sound principles. That enabled me to get out of that world of 'techies remain techies' and enter the boardroom.

How about the future? Where do you see yourself in ten years' time?

The vision of Altro would be to become a worldwide company. I'd have played a pivotal role in making that happen. I think we will be manufacturing in many other places, I don't know exactly where right now! Our HQ though will always be

in Letchworth. We will be a much bigger global company, employing 1000s of people and having billions of pounds' worth of sales. It may be a 15-year vision, rather than 10, but I'd like to be able to look back with you and say I facilitated part of that.

What are your favourite places in Hertfordshire and around the world?

I love Baldock! I take clients out to lunch in Baldock so they can see the local area. But if I had to pick a place in all my travels away from here, I'd say north west Ireland, near the Atlantic coast. I recently went there and was blown away by the remarkable scenery of Donegal. The people who live there should feel very, very privileged in a place that feels like paradise!



RICHMOND HOUSE
CORPORATE SERVICES

JUST LAUNCHED
Richmond House
Employee Benefits

IS YOUR BUSINESS GOOD TO WORK FOR?

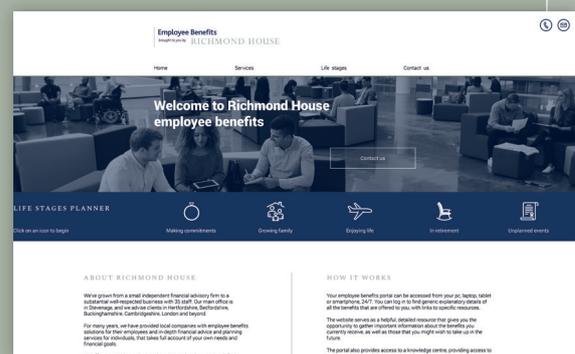
A strong, relevant and well-communicated employee benefits package not only helps you recruit the best and most able staff, it can also play a major role in retaining happy, engaged and productive workers

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ATTRACT, REWARD AND RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Our new employee benefits portal, offers a wide range of valuable benefits and services, many of which are discounted for your employees, including:

- Will-writing and legal services
- Mortgage services
- Foreign exchange
- Tax returns and accounting
- Financial planning
- Discounted gym membership
- Cycle to work
- Childcare costs

Plus, an invaluable financial knowledge centre



*If you need some advice on your current benefits package,
or you would like to discuss introducing one, call Ian Jenkins,
Director on 0333 241 3350 or email ijenkins@richmondhousecs.co.uk.
Or visit us at www.richmondhousecs.co.uk*



GOOD TO WORK FOR

Although salary is for many people the most important element of their remuneration package, it's increasingly just one factor. For the last 17 years, The Sunday Times has published lists of the best companies to work for. With categories now including the best company, best big company, best small company and best not-for-profit organisation. Being a good company to work for, clearly does matter.

Interestingly, and bearing in mind that there's an assumption that companies in the capital pay more, only one of 2017's top 20 best companies to work for is headquartered in London.

Being a good employer provides many benefits, attracting and retaining staff being just two. The organisation's culture, training and development, flexible working and other factors all play a part and contribute to staff well-being – which increasingly includes financial well-being.

With the introduction of auto-enrolment, all businesses are having to at least provide a pension to staff.

The day-to-day demands of running a business can be all-consuming, leaving little time to keep abreast of changes in benefit provision. Small and medium-sized businesses don't have the resources of multi-nationals.

Welcome to Richmond House Corporate Services. Originally part of the Richmond House Group (RHG), we – along with our sister company, Richmond House Wealth Management – have rebranded. The specialist team at Richmond House Corporate Services helps client firms to fill their knowledge gap, and they look to us to provide the right package of plans and policies to meet the needs of their workforce and management.

We provide sound financial planning, including important components like pension arrangements and wealth management strategies for directors and owners, and a comprehensive range of employee benefits that exceeds legal obligations, and helps attract and retain good-quality staff. Our offering includes a unique employee portal providing access to additional benefits, discounts on important services and a knowledge

centre full of useful financial information and guidance.

We work with businesses of all sizes and from all sectors of the economy, and clients often ask us to recommend employee benefit solutions that empower and reward staff. In many instances, our first engagement with a client is to undertake a review of their existing plans and benefits arrangements and to offer advice and guidance on how these could be strengthened, streamlined and updated. We proactively engage with our clients' workforce and ensure they understand the benefits available to them. Clients tell us they find this approach refreshingly different and innovative.

Operating as an integrated team with high and consistent standards of customer care, we put our clients' needs firmly at the centre of everything we do. In this way, we have developed long-lasting relationships with our clients and their employees.

Good to work with

We believe we're good to work for, and we're also very good to work with! If you're keen to work with an expert team that has a clear understanding of business issues we think you'll find the service we offer is just what you and your organisation needs.



If you need some advice or would just like to discuss your business's situation, our Corporate Services Director Ian Jenkins on

0333 241 3350 or email ijenkins@richmondhousecs.co.uk. Or visit us at www.richmondhousecs.co.uk



Stevenage 
Community Trust

Business supporting local people in need

Stevenage Community Trust awards grants to organisations and individuals across Stevenage and the surrounding villages to fund projects and equipment to ensure charities, voluntary groups and sports clubs can provide invaluable support to local residents from all walks of life.

“Thanks to local companies and individuals, we have given over £1m in grants since 1990.”



To find out more call 01438 525390
or visit www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

PROFILE

Name: Tom Hardy

Job title: Letchworth Garden City Manager

Company: Love Letchworth



all, great service, well presented great tasting food and a 4.5 star in TripAdvisor! The chef in this place is an asset to the town.

What is your favourite recipe from them?

The Turkish tapas is amazing!

Where is your favourite place to eat in Hertfordshire for a business date?

It would have to be Wildwood Restaurant on Eastcheap in Letchworth. With its modern airy restaurant, it's the perfect place to have a business date.

What is your favourite dish from there?

Although they have a great selection of pizzas, pasta and grills, I particularly enjoyed the wild mushroom risotto.

Where in Hertfordshire would you recommend for a family meal?

You can't beat L'artista on Eastcheap in Letchworth for a great family meal. The portions are generous, the prices are very reasonable and they will even get the pots and pans out to make a song and dance for a birthday celebration. The staff are always so friendly and make you and your family feel so welcome.

What is your idea of food heaven?

I would have to say the 'Perfect Pesto' sandwich from Lunch Mate on Station Place opposite the train station. Sliced chicken in parmesan and black pepper mayo with pesto spread and mixed leaves on their thick sliced guest bread. They have a huge range but this one is definitely my idea of food heaven!

What is the strangest thing you have ever eaten?

R and E butcher on Leys Avenue don't just do a great range of meat, they also stock some exotic meat such as crocodile, zebra and kangaroo burger! I love trying new things and would strongly recommend the Ostrich steaks which is probably up there with the strangest thing I have ever eaten.

Who is your favourite chef?

It would have to be the sous-chef at The Grapevine restaurant on Leys Avenue. This place has it

What dish would you order from there?

My regular dish is the calzone. It's a folded pizza with a choice of fillings. The best part is it's cooked in their woodfire oven which give it a crisp fresh taste.

What is your favourite recipe to cook at home?

I've recently been really interested in vegan and gluten free cake making. The Cupcake Company in the Wynd shopping centre in Letchworth has a great range of vegan and gluten free cakes. They can give you some great hints and tip on baking as well the opportunity to try and buy some fresh bakes!

Is there anything that you haven't tried but would like to?

There's a new vegan eatery opening soon in the Wynd which will sell a wide range of breakfast, lunch and dinners. I'm very excited to try some of their new foods.

What is your favourite tippie?

It would have to be something from the cocktail menu at Cultivo Lounge in Letchworth. They have a great range and some experienced mixologists.





TAKE HEED OF NEEDHAM HOUSE

Needham House Hotel celebrates the recent Rosette win of Brassiere SG4, with Insight's Giacomo Lee sampling their Pan-Asian and à la carte delights.

The big news at Needham House Hotel is its recent Rosette nod of approval, with the hotel singled out for two awards within only its second year of opening. This is due to the strengths of Head Chef Ivor Morgan and crew, who've kept a steady ship at Brassiere SG4, the premiere dining facility at Needham which serves customers, wedding guests and clientele alike all year long at the hotel.

How would the Insight team fare in the same premises, you wonder? Not too bad, actually. An open kitchen awaited, with a great view of the Needham grounds outside of the

many open views from inside the Brassiere. Below Edison lamps on a busy afternoon, we found it hard to choose a starter, the à la carte menu an interesting choice of forcemeats, seafood and the Pan-Asian.

I opted for one of the latter dishes, a wonton broth infused with shredded carrot and Korean kimchi. Having once lived in South Korea, I was transported back by the spicy bite of that country's staple side-dish. The rest of the broth was an easy eat in spite of the spiciness within, with the wonton going well with a mouthful of the mushroom portions they rubbed shoulders with. The fresh green of the

herb toppings vouched for the vitality of the whole bowl. A brilliant start. My companion's dish of smoked salmon meanwhile came with a garnishing of nicely picked onion and radish.

Mains were another experience. My companion had Moroccan lamb with Israeli cous cous. They must also like it spicy in Israel, judging by the fiery kick of the grains served. Plump and juicy raisins mixed well with the tender meat, a red wine jus guiding the flavour.

My roast duck breast was an equally soft-flavoured experience, coming with the superlative crunch of a



peanut topping. Portions were well laid out beneath a draping of bok choy, and immersed in a dark and smoky soya sauce.

Complimenting my dish was a sticky bun packed with more duck; Insight readers, I was more than well full by the time I finished that little treasure. A truly hearty filling of meat lay within, packed with taste and shreadings of an exquisitely fine texture.

How does a Two Rosette dessert taste, you may ask? I had the space for a sticky toffee pudding, its muffin top expertly hidden beneath glazed banana slices. The moist warmth of the body made an interesting companion to the banana ice cream on the side of my dish; this little confection was housed between a crispy biscuit with a gingery aftertaste. A little too cold, perhaps, for the warmth of the toffee dessert.



My companion tucked into a Queen of puddings, such was its name. Peaks of meringue concealed a raspberry ooze, and a hidden delight of custard upon a wispy biscuit base. It was just the perfect amount for my fellow diner; as I came to the end of my meal, I could only imagine what other delights lie within the SG4 menu.

Don't let day-trippers and the just married be the only ones to find out – get yourself down to Brassiere SG4 at Needham House today!



10% off at Needham

Why not enjoy the Brassiere at Needham House Hotel for yourself with an exclusive offer from Insight?

As it's the ideal place to bring a client or close one, we're offering a **10% discount** off any meal at Brassiere SG4.

Just quote the following discount code **INSIGHT-SG4** any time before 1st February 2018 to enjoy your deal.

For more information on Needham House Hotel visit www.needhamhouse.co.uk



George Hay provide audit, accountancy, taxation, VAT and business advisory services to a wide range of clients

George Hay have been leading the accountancy field for over 75 years. We offer a personalised, friendly service backed up by a wealth of professional expertise and we work with a range of industry sectors. Our services include:

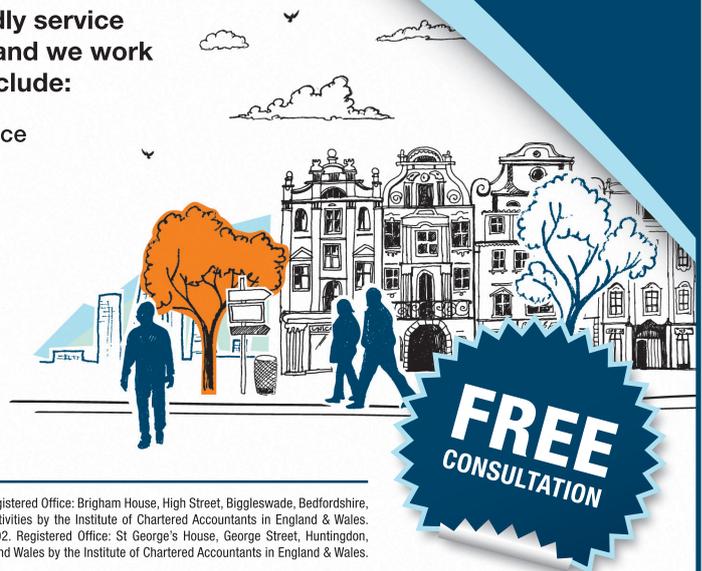
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We also have offices in Biggleswade and Huntingdon

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**FREE
CONSULTATION**

WALKING IN WATFORD FOR HEARTS EVERYWHERE

How Smart Cover Insurance got hearts beating in Herts this September

Smart Cover Insurance, one of the UK's most trusted insurance providing companies, joined hands with the British Heart Foundation (BHF) to organize a fundraising walk in Watford. The company's staff were seen in bright BHF t-shirts at the Watford Parade, raising funds and awareness about the day amongst the crowd on World Heart Day 2017, which took place on September 29th.

Speaking on the occasion Mr Niraz Buhari, Managing Director, Smart Cover Insurance, said, "We feel proud to be associated with an important cause like this. We are in the business of securing people and we strongly believe that securing health is most

important. In our office, we have breaks at regular intervals so that people can move from their desks and walk, share some healthy laughs. We try our best to create a happy atmosphere in our office.

The office staff were very enthusiastic about the fundraising event. Mr Chetan Mankar, Director of the company said, "It is a completely new and very satisfying experience. We are

raising funds for a noble cause and I feel proud to be associated with it and I am happy that I could also contribute something towards it."

The company supports other causes as well like dementia and has special policies for vulnerable customers.

The entire fund raised during the event will be donated to the British Heart Foundation by the company.



BUSINESSES NEED STABILITY IN THE FACE OF SETBACKS



MARTIN WILLIAMS

Partner, George Hay
Chartered Accountants

In our last article for Insight, we talked about how business rates, amongst other rising costs, were forcing many businesses to walk a vulnerable and uncertain path, intensified by a lack of action from those with the power to help.

The ‘cloud of uncertainty’, as it is often referred to, has proven hard to shake off for many businesses. Brexit negotiations have been a source of much discontent within the business community and, at time of writing, it is unclear whether a deal will be done.

Not only this, but with the UK’s key inflation rate reaching a five-year

high of 3% in September, The Bank of England raising interest rates from 0.25% to 0.5% and the most recent Retail Prices Index exceeding inflation at 3.9%, consumers and businesses alike are feeling the pinch.

Domestic uncertainty impacts directly upon businesses as spending slows and people reconsider their priorities. Once businesses begin to struggle, this then impacts upon the economy and so the cycle continues.

Increasing upfront costs, coupled with an over-complicated and largely unfair tax system, can make it difficult for business owners to run their operations efficiently and confidently. However, maintaining a strong position, even in the face of adversity, is not impossible.

Prepare and plan for possibilities

Competent cashflow management – during periods of uncertainty, when there could be any number of changes afoot, businesses can find managing cashflow a challenge. However, these unsettled spells are when managing your cashflow competently becomes even more important, not just for success but

for survival. Look for opportunities to reduce costs and negotiate with suppliers, as well as opportunities to up-sell to customers. Don’t put off taking control of credit collections and if you don’t already have one, consider putting a credit collection process in place. Adapting quickly is key to keeping your finances on track, which leads us nicely on to our next point...

Forecasting for the future – forecasting is imperative if you expect to maintain a smooth operation in an unpredictable environment. Be aware of what comes into your business and what goes out, notice trends in payments from customers and learn to reliably predict future cashflow. Regular and accurate forecasts can help you to plan ahead with at least some level of certainty.

Building the right relationships

If you’re a business owner currently faced with an uncertain future, seeking professional advice from trusted advisers, such as ourselves, may be the first step towards understanding exactly where you’re headed. We can work with you to put realistic plans in place, that will cultivate confidence within your business and ultimately facilitate growth.

George Hay – which has offices in Letchworth, Biggleswade and Huntingdon – provides accountancy and taxation services to a wide range of businesses and individuals. If you would like to find out how George Hay can help you, please visit our website at: www.georgehay.co.uk.





BUSINESSES FLY HIGHER WITH LAUNCHPAD

Last month saw the opening of Launchpad, a brand new co-working space in the centre of Bishop's Stortford. It offers freelancers, start-ups and small to medium sized businesses, a flexible and cost-effective place to work.

There are a range of services available at Launchpad: 50 hot desks, meeting rooms, high-speed broadband, lockable storage, kitchen facilities, registered business address and access to advisors such as accountants and lawyers. Over the next few months, new services -including mentoring sessions - will also be introduced.

Launchpad has been very well received by the local business community. It already has a number

of regular users, from start-ups to established companies, representing a range of business sectors. They are enjoying three months free hot desking with no tie-ins.

Max from Max Louis Creative said: "As a business starting out it can be tough and expensive to grow. Hosting meetings in your living room or local coffee shop just doesn't look very professional! That's why Launchpad is ideal. My guests are greeted in a proper reception area, I have a business address and can use one of the stylish meeting rooms to host my clients. It's made a huge difference to the way I work."

Sally Bromham from Winning Words Copywriting said: "Launchpad is a friendly co-working

space with excellent facilities in a bright, modern environment. It's a great alternative to working from home and the three months free hot-desking is a bonus. I love the buzz of being surrounded by creative, like-minded people and have already made some good contacts. Come and join us!"

In addition to hot desking space for smaller businesses, Charringtons House, where Launchpad is based, also has a number of larger serviced offices which will be available from early 2018.

For more information or to book a hot desk, meeting room or office, please visit www.launchpadstortford.co.uk or call 01279 502250

PEOPLE IN BUSINESS



FACT FILE

Name: Claire Brindle

Job Title:
Director at Smart10
Recruitment

Interests:
Sport, travelling and driving
our business forward!

What do you do in your current job?

Run a successful and expanding recruitment business based in Hertfordshire. We specialise in four sectors: operational support, sales & marketing, accounts & finance and information technology.

What is your favourite thing about working in the industry?

No day is the same! Each day offers a fresh challenge as our business is completely revolved around people – so whether we are meeting with new candidates or clients, attending networking events, awards do's or supporting the general community, there are always new things to learn, different stories to hear and amazing talented people to support in their career search around the Hertfordshire and London areas!

What has been your greatest achievement?

Starting Smart10 Recruitment in 2012 was a highly rewarding and proud achievement for me personally. Since

we established our business we have gone from strength to strength and now have an incredibly strong team of 12 talented recruiters. Smart10 has established itself as a successful Recruitment Partner within our Industry, and we have secured our business on a number of strong PSLs within our time. We retain 92% repeat business so we are confident that we are doing a great job! The company has also achieved a number of fantastic accolades within a short time, winning The Judges Award in 2012, Best New Business in 2013 plus I won Business Person of The Year in 2016 at The Hertfordshire Business Awards – this has been a great achievement for both myself and our team.

What is your ideal working environment?

Our working environment at Smart10 is quite unique. We enjoy a fun, up-beat and vibrant office-feel where there is a daily buzz of excitement. We celebrate success and have a strong belief that we are only as successful as our team. Many visitors often comment on how welcome they feel when they arrive to

our office and how the environment within our Welwyn Garden City HQ sets us above our local competitors.

What has impacted you most in your career and how?

Learning to listen. When I stopped talking I heard other people's voices - this has played an integral part of the success of Smart10 Recruitment!

List five words that describe your character.

Ambitious, motivated, driven, fun and lively.

What are you most proud of?

Raising two young boys whilst still maintaining a successful work/life balance. Watching my children develop and learn new skills as well as sharing my success stories with them at bed time! Hearing wonderful school reports on how bright, up-beat and popular my children are fills me with pride!

What advice would you give to the 18-year-old you?

Never take 'no' for an answer. If someone tells you that you can't do something show them how it's done!

What book are you currently reading?

The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins.

If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be and why?

Always the same answer, - on the beach in the sunshine with friends and family enjoying the fruits of our labour!

The logo for biz4Biz, featuring the text 'biz4Biz' in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Providing a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire

A group of business professionals in silhouette, walking in a modern office or hallway with large windows and glass partitions. The scene is backlit, creating a bright, airy atmosphere.

biz4Biz aim to influence and shape policymaking and encourage investment by engaging with local/central government, relevant public sector bodies and local organisations to promote the county as a great place to live and do business. biz4Biz has broadened its activities to represent the interests of businesses and people. Its networking, local government liaison and charitable involvement aims to benefit the residents, commuters, workers and business owners who contribute to life in Hertfordshire.

For more information contact **biz4Biz Secretariat**
01462 478031 • secretariat@biz4biz.org • www.biz4biz.org

Several white snowflake icons of varying sizes are scattered across the background of the advertisement, adding a festive winter theme.

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS GIFT BOAT CHARTERS ACROSS THE SOLENT

Boat Charter UK brings you luxury power boats straight from Chichester across the Solent, ideal for skippered charter, corporate events and incentive day experiences

A red circular badge with white text and a snowflake icon, containing the text 'NOW BOOKING FOR SUMMER 2018'.

NOW
BOOKING FOR
SUMMER
2018

A small icon of a white speedboat on the water.

BOAT CHARTER UK

LUXURY PERFORMANCE CHARTERING NOT TO BE MISSED!
For more details www.boat-charter.co.uk or bookings@boat-charter.co.uk

BRITAIN NEEDS A BOLDER STRATEGY

Further to the invitation of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, I had the honour of attending the launch of the government's new Industrial Strategy paper, as held in London's Francis Crick Institute. On the way there from Hertfordshire, I had the pleasure of riding on the national railway system, taking in the splendours of King's Cross and St Pancras stations as I disembarked for my short walk to the Institute. British construction marvels, one and all, built thanks to the expertise and knowledge as handed down from one generation to the next.

That notion of heritage passed through my mind as I took in the Industrial Strategy launch, finding myself once again surrounded by the fruits of construction labour in the reception area of the Institute. Being invested in education work through my various roles, I paid particular attention to the Strategy's emphasis on People. This section of the white paper quite rightly highlights a need to tackle our shortage of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills, with the projected creation of 15 new technical education routes or Institutes of Technology, £500m annual backing for T levels, plus a 50% increase of training hours for students on such level courses. All noble ideals, but ones that still fail to address the fact that we are leaving technical education far too late in the curriculum.

The training hours promise, as designated for 16-19 year olds, reminded me that our future workforce is still held back by the trappings of a 'locked-in' education system. Those students with the right technology-based mindset have to continue on into the sixth form stream, divesting their time between various subjects that may



not wholly align with their career goals, and only on finishing at either 16 or 19 do they get the vocational skills options that so sorely define the STEM sector.

For our future engineers, builders and technicians, the essential skillset offered by an apprenticeship or single-course stream is coming at too late a stage, or is merely being presented as more of an extra-curricular addendum to their education career, as opposed to being a vital part of it. This sort of thinking undervalues the promises offered by vocational education and the prospect of a degree apprenticeship in the future, and I believe it's a system which will ultimately damage our economy in the long-run.

The Industrial Strategy talks about the demands of an ageing population, but doesn't have the vision to maximise the out-turn of enough skilled workers starting their careers at the rate of people leaving them, to go into retirement. My age group is often pilloried for creating "generation rent", but we still remain the backstop for vocational skills this country is now in desperate need of, extending the retirement age for this group still further. Compound this with a 30% reduction in net migration post-Brexit, and the urgent need to get students into

the right track earlier, becomes ever more pressing. This is the only way to shorten the learning curve, as it were, now that we are blessed nationally with such high levels of employment. This disparity and education 'time lag' is something which the Industrial Strategy doesn't address. Before we talk of the relative attractions to AI and data revolutions, let's not forget the bricks and mortar thinking that gives us the homes and equipment and all the tools to make them with. Without them, where will the next calling point for the train we ride on as a country, come from? We don't want to be running out of track any time soon.



ADRIAN HAWKINS

Co-Founder & Chairman biz4Biz
Chairman, Weldability Sif, established
1925. Director and Trustee of the
Weldability Sif Foundation,
Deputy Chair Herts LEP Main Board,
Skills and Employment Board - Chair.



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