

biz4Biz

Insight

AUTUMN 2018 | ISSUE FIFTEEN |

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN HERTFORDSHIRE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sara Bowcutt
explains about her
work at Women for
Women International

HERTFORDSHIRE'S RISING STAR

How local designer
is helping artisans
in Africa

A CLOSE SHAVE
Claire Austin shaves her
head to raise funds for
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BUSINESS SECTOR BOOMING



We appear to be enjoying a record breaking time in the business sector currently. We have the highest level of employment in 40 years and the highest level of exports on record. Two shining examples that Brexit does not matter a jot and clearly not the gloom and doom “remainers” would have you believe. It was also enlightening to hear Wetherspoons, the owners of 880 licensed premises, state that they would be converting their European supplied beers, in to British supplied beers, as a result of what some might deduce will be a hard Brexit. More and more companies are thinking this way, now that imported products have increased significantly in cost and the threatened risk to delays at ports proposed by those “remainers” in Government the European Union and the Civil Service. It looks like a hard Brexit will manifest far more localism which will be a good thing for our balance of trade and inflation. Surely both our Government and the EU should realise that despite their best efforts, the pain of this level of success is very easy to endure!

Please send any contributions to magazine@biz4Biz.org

Adrian Hawkins

Co-Founder & Chairman biz4Biz

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For many Hertfordshire business owners, finding time to plan and to reflect on what's working and what isn't can be extremely difficult.

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When: Thursday 4 October 2018

Thursday 10 January, Thursday 11 April & Thursday 11 July 2019

Timings: 9am Registration & 4pm Finish

Investment: £275 + VAT per delegate, per Workshop: includes workbooks & planners plus lunch & refreshments

Venue: Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley, Hitchin, SG4 7JJ

Who should attend? Business decision makers from ALL sizes of business should attend this day. In fact the variety makes it more interesting, and great for extending your range of business contacts within the biz4Biz community. Many of our attendees find commonality and are soon helping one another!

So what are you waiting for? To reserve your place at our next Business Planning Workshop, register online at biz4biz.org/building-better-businesses

We look forward to seeing you there!

CONTENTS

6 NEWS

8 NETWORKING

biz4Biz ConneXions

9 BIZ4BIZ AWARDS 2019

The Awards are back for a third year. Find out how to enter

10 COLETTE COOPER

An exclusive chat with Cariad's Business Development Manager

14 MANUFACTURING GROWTH

WallJAM scores with Real Madrid deal

16 THE BIG INTERVIEW

Sara Bowcutt explains about her work at Women for Women International

22 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Keith Middleton celebrates his 50th Anniversary at George Hay

23 BOOSTING YOUR BUSINESS

Discover how you can boost the value of your business before selling

25 MAKING TAX DIGITAL

Moore Stephens explain how to prepare your business

27 A CLOSE SHAVE

Claire Austin shaves her head to raise funds for Stevenage Community Trust

28 YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Another promising year ahead

31 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Bamboo Turtle share their foodie thoughts

32 FOOD REVIEW

Insight enjoys Afternoon Tea at Hanbury Manor

34 RISING STARS

How designer Georgia Sheehan is making a difference in Togo

36 WHATEVER THE OCCASION

Hanbury Manor has the right space for you

37 PEOPLE IN BUSINESS

Alexa Hare from Wicked Mata tells us what inspires her

38 IS THERE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD ANYMORE?

Adrian Hawkins has the last word



NEWS



MP Bim Afolami given Department for Transport post

Hitchin and Harpenden MP Bim Afolami has been appointed as the Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department for Transport.

Returning to Westminster after the summer, Bim Afolami was delighted to be able to accept his new role and will be working with ministers headed by Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary.

“I will have the opportunity to work for people across Hitchin and Harpenden, giving a strong voice on local issues alongside the transport ministers.”

Afolami looks forward to using his new position to ensure the concerns of citizens in his constituency are heard more clearly.

A breath of fresh air for Baldock High Street

A brand new style of café has recently arrived in the Hertfordshire town of Baldock. Nestled in the middle of this historic high street, there is more to this slick and stylish venue than meets the eye. Stylus has two sides to its personality; a relaxed and welcoming café and the funky vinyl room that sells both new and second hand vinyl records.

Stylus is a far cry from your usual local coffee shop and welcomes customers with much more of a chilled vibe. Revel in this local social hangout where its eclectic mix of retro furniture and music helps create its character. The main café houses an original old juke-box where customers are encouraged to play their favourites 80's tunes and eat from old school graffiti desks. The dark and intimate vinyl room houses fair ground neon lights, cool car seat sofas and an old retro gaming station that sits happily next to the selection of new vinyl for sale.

What makes this place cool? Its ambience. This dog and child friendly venue is open seven days a week with a vibe that is funky yet relaxed and welcoming. Regulars enjoy locally brewed coffee, healthy lunch plates, fresh fruit smoothies, great cakes and homemade luxury ice cream. Stylus is a fully licenced bar for those wanting more than a hot beverage. The venue also regularly hosts live music events and is available for private hire.

For those in a hurry coffee and food is available to take away, but if you have time, then either relax with the papers in the back lounge, flick through all the albums to buy in the vinyl room or wander through to our gift shop at the front of the store. Customers will find hand chosen contemporary home accessories, cards, lighting and unusual gifts. Try it out next time you're passing!



University of Hertfordshire launches new route into law for aspiring solicitors



Starting in September 2018, the University of Hertfordshire's Law School will be creating two new training routes into the legal profession in the form of a six-year solicitor degree apprenticeship programme and a two-year accelerated option, for apprentices who are already law graduates.

The programmes have been designed to support professional development by offering a demonstrably high standard of education and training to apprentices whilst they practice their advocacy skills in the University's replica crown court and participate

in a range of co-curricula activities. Degree apprentices will be required to attend the University for at least one day a week across three semesters.

The programmes enable apprentices to develop a high level of skill, knowledge and understanding to the standard expected of a newly qualified solicitor whilst developing a positive professional persona. Apprentices are provided with the legal knowledge, practical skills and competencies for a career in the legal profession as solicitors, which is achieved by integrating the requirements of the IfA and the demands of the SRA

into course delivery and authentic assessments to mirror what solicitors are required to do in practice. Successful completion of the first four years of the six-year programme entitles the apprentice to be awarded the degree, LLB (Hons) Legal Practice. Entry to the six-year programme typically requires a minimum of 96 UCAS points (or equivalent) whilst the two-year accelerated version requires evidence that the apprentice has already graduated in law and will have sufficient opportunity to meet the assessed work-based portfolio requirements of the IfA Standard for solicitor.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

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

Friday, 21st September 2018

Employee engagement — maximise the value of employee benefits for your staff

Ian Jenkins, Richmond House Corporate Services Ltd
Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley

Thursday, 4th October 2018

Business Planning Workshop

Needham House Hotel, Little Wymondley - Book tickets for this exclusive event at www.biz4biz.org/building-better-businesses

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



biz4Biz ConneXions

On 12th July **Moore Stephens** came to explain about Making Tax Digital – Doing Business in a Digital World

Making Tax Digital is a key part of the government's plans to make it easier for businesses to get their tax right.

HMRC's ambition is to become one of the most digitally advanced tax administrations in the world, modernising the tax system to make it more effective, more efficient and easier for customers to comply.

A modern tax system, based on digital technology will make it easier for businesses to get their tax right. Reducing the amount of avoidable errors will also reduce the cost.

Moore Stephens explained the

additional compliance obligations placed on businesses in respect of Making Tax Digital.

In partnership with Quickbooks, Moore Stephens demonstrated a cloud accounting solution which will address the compliance issues around Making Tax Digital and confirmed other benefits which may be advantageous in the running of your business.

The event was aimed at directors of businesses that are VAT registered as they will be affected by the introduction of Making Tax Digital in April 2019. This seminar was ideal for bookkeepers and accountants.

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CONNEXIONS
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THE BIZ4BIZ AWARDS RETURN FOR THE THIRD YEAR RUNNING

Your chance to bring your business into the limelight at Hertfordshire's brightest awards for business

biz4Biz is proud to announce The biz4Biz Awards, sponsored by Barclays, returning for their third year in May 2019. These Awards are impartial, independent and open to anyone involved in a business in Hertfordshire. Insight readers are encouraged to get involved, and who knows, maybe you'll be one of the lucky nominees on the night!

The next glittering biz4Biz awards ceremony will be held on Friday 17th May 2019, returning once again to Tewin Bury Farm Hotel, Welwyn.

The night is sure to provide another stunning showcase for those attending and is a fantastic platform for all nominees, with the award winners having full on-going publicity, following the ceremony, and all nominees given the opportunity to publicise on the biz4Biz Awards website.

We have 12 categories to choose from, and to enter, a company must be nominated online at our website. The 2019 website will be launched at the end of September.

Once nominated, all entrants are listed on the website and are subject to a public vote. Online nomination and voting is open from the end of September until 15th February 2019. So get ready to start voting.

Companies can nominate themselves and all nominees will be required to confirm their application. Successful applicants, awarded with the most



“The biz4Biz Awards are a resounding success, with businesses from all over Hertfordshire coming together to celebrate”

votes in each category, will then be invited to attend a judging day at a Hertfordshire hotel during March 2019.

As regular Insight readers will know, the first two biz4Biz Awards were a resounding success, with businesses from all over Hertfordshire coming together to celebrate and recognise the deserving winners and finalists.

If you are proud of your business, then we encourage you to enter. Similarly, if you recognise excellence in others, please nominate them, as it's a great opportunity for any business.

The biz4Biz Awards provide exceptional marketing and profile raising opportunities for the finalists as well as providing a unique platform for business

networking right across Hertfordshire.

Such an enterprise is part and parcel of biz4Biz's aim to provide a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire. With outreach ventures like Insight, we aim to influence and shape policymaking and encourage investment in Hertfordshire by engaging with local and central government, relevant public sector bodies and local organisations to promote the county of Hertfordshire as a great place to live and work.

For further information about The biz4Biz Awards 2019, please contact secretariat@biz4biz.org. If you are interested in becoming a member of biz4Biz, or for more information, please visit www.biz4biz.org



Colette Cooper, Business Development Manager

“The week that we won the biz4Biz awards ...the buzz in the office was immense.”

Congratulations on winning at the biz4Biz Awards this year! Can you tell us a little about what you do at Cariad?

As the Business Development Manager at Cariad, I am lucky that I get to tap into all aspects of the company. My role ranges from networking, meeting prospects, brainstorming marketing campaigns to getting my head down and writing the proposals. Because we work with such a diverse bunch of clients I get to use my creativity, and in any one day I can be working on a vet's website and then a top finance company's social media strategy.

That's quite a variety! Is there a particular role/duty that really excites you on a day-to-day basis?

The diversity really excites me. But where I thrive is at the first scoping meeting, which is where the Cariad magic happens! This is where I get to find out what the client really needs, and we are able to discuss a top-line strategy to hit their objectives.

What path led you to Cariad?
I have always loved to talk. So,



Managing Director, Justine Perry accepting her trophy at the biz4Biz Awards

TALKING BUSINESS WITH CARIAD'S COLETTE

Cariad Marketing are quickly dominating the out-sourced marketing landscape. *Insight* managed to nab Business Development Manager Colette Cooper to get the full scoop.

starting out in a customer services role really got me to “cut my teeth” on how to engage with different personalities. Moving on, I carved out my business development skills travelling nationwide for 3 years in the motor industry, before settling into a marketing manager role for a medical company. The diversity of these roles over the past 20 years has given me the experience and expertise to be a creative marketer, and spot the opportunities needed to grow a business at the same time.

So what would you say has been your proudest achievement and toughest challenge to date?

We are very proud of all our awards, but it was the week that we won the biz4Biz Awards and the buzz in the office was immense. We have won many awards, but winning this category really set us apart from the others with recognition as experts in the industry. My toughest challenge was taking a local Hertfordshire festival from zero to hero in 8 weeks. The team at Cariad had to pull together to get a website designed,

write and execute an online and offline marketing strategy, manage the PR and the social media campaigns for the festival which was aimed at families, musicians and artists. It was very diverse, but this is the beauty of having an agency full of specialists. We can all step in where needed to get the job done. We were all very proud of #TeamCariad that weekend!

We're so pleased you had such a good time at the biz4Biz Awards, what were the best bits for you?

The night itself was a wonderful event. It was everything an awards ceremony should be. Glitter, sparkle and excitement. As a networking opportunity this was fantastic. I network a lot, so I know a good event when I see one!

And how do you feel that awards galas and business networks foster growth?

Winning awards is momentous for your business. Just entering the awards and going through the process is a great exercise even if you don't make it to the finals. But if you do, being

a finalist is excellent for promoting your business. Letting everyone know you have been selected and creating a buzz around your company gives you something to shout about. And winning the award? Well, for the photo opportunities alone this is fantastic – they seem to get everywhere!

How is Cariad different from other marketing companies?

Our in-house team can offer a complete solution for any marketing need. There is no job too big or small and we are able to draw on large team of creative marketers to give a completely fresh and results-driven approach to digital marketing.

Do you have any future plans for Cariad?

Growth is key. Not just for Cariad but also for our clients. They are all in highly competitive industries in their sectors and we ensure that when we work on their account, we have their KPI's and overall objectives in mind. 2018 has been a phenomenal year for Cariad Marketing and we aim to reach further than the stars for 2019. Look out for us!

THE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A PART-TIME FINANCE DIRECTOR

Your part-time FD must be a team player; someone who will fit in with your employees and your company culture. It is critical to have someone who can work with your business team to achieve your vision.

The part-time FD you choose must have the back-up of a team of experts. The problem with choosing a sole operator is that you only get access to the knowledge and experience of the individual concerned. By comparison, when you choose a part time FD from The FD Centre, that person provides you with access to 8,000 years of accumulated experience and knowledge. There is no limit to the skills and experience of our part-time FDs.

Furthermore, to give our clients the best service, at least two team members work directly with each client to provide even greater depth and breadth of experience.

Make sure you work with a part-time FD who can provide you with the kind of flexible service just described. It's vital that you receive a bespoke service, one tailored precisely to meet your needs.

You need someone who can deliver powerful introductions that will have a real impact in your business. For instance, through our global team of part-time FDs, we can help find the right funding source for your company. Your part-time FD must be committed to lifelong learning and career development to ensure they keep abreast of developments. Our part-time FDs, for example, attend at least 64 hours training a year at The FD Centre



(as well as keeping up with their own professional development).

The part-time FD must be able to provide you with the level of service you need. Similarly, your part-time FD must be willing to provide you with email and telephone support. That way, you'll get the help you need when you most want it.

Your part-time FD must be located close to your business premises so he or she can get to you quickly and easily.

Don't choose a part-time FD based solely on the fees he or she charges. Your part-time FD can directly impact

how quickly and even whether you reach your long term personal and business vision – this isn't about just managing day-to-day finance issues, this is life-changing. Getting the right partner on board for that journey can be transformational. And most importantly, your part-time FD must be able to demonstrate he or she cares passionately about your business and is committed to its long-term success, just like you.

The FD Centre

Telephone: 01793250657

Email: info@thefdcentre.co.uk

Website: www.thefdcentre.co.uk

DO YOU HAVE POPINO?



First up, I am guessing that it is hard to answer the question, if you don't know what POPINO means. So, let's start here. POPINO is an acronym standing for Process Or Procedure In Name Only. It is the name given to the large amounts of bogus processes and procedures that many companies and organizations have.

This is how it often goes, everyone knows that to be serious, you need to have processes and procedures. They also know that if you can get certified, say through the ISO standards, then that's even better. So, a series of high intensity activities are undertaken, processes are created, along with their procedures. They are then placed into a folder, marked with appropriate looking titles and the world is instantly better, or so the thinking goes.

However, generally this is all a big "make work project", because no sooner is the activity completed than it is forgotten. People know that the processes and procedures exist, they might even know where the folders are, but they are not followed, not used day in and day out. They are

in effect a Process Or Procedure In Name Only (POPINO).

Just so we are discussing the same thing, a process is the high-level plan for how something happens, and the procedure is the low-level step by step detail. In practice, the easy part is to create the initial folder of documents that outline the processes and the procedures. What is more difficult, is having them in a form that is useful day in and day out, to the people who benefit the most.

Everyone who is involved in process design, or re-design, will have their own favourite tools. For this editorial, we will discuss a quick and simple way of making the processes and procedures real and actionable. It is my belief, that a process and its procedures are there to eliminate mistakes and provide a quick way to pick up where you left off, or better still, where someone else left off.

The quickest and easiest way to get started is with a checklist. The process can be written out with pen and paper. This provides the high-

level map. Then each step, where appropriate, can be broken down into individual checklists. The result is many bits of paper, each with a single checklist, all numbered and referring to the original process. From here, it is easy to create Master Checklists, either in Office applications, which can be printed out, completed and placed into a folder for later auditing or process improvement. Alternatively, dedicated software can be used, there are many on the market, some specialized only for checklists and others for business process automation.

It should be noted, that the easiest way to get the process and its attendant procedure in shape, is to start by writing them down, codify them into a formal process and then later, when all the bugs and kinks are ironed out, they can be automated. This gives an incremental improvement in productivity and efficiency.

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WALLJAM SCORES WITH REAL MADRID DEAL

A Stevenage entrepreneur has entered the world of the Galacticos having sealed a deal for his new sports activation technology to be used by Real Madrid.

Tim Worboys has turned his childhood hobby of playing 'wally' into WallJAM, an innovative rebound wall that gives children and adults the chance to test their skills on a host of interactive games and sports.

Following design support from the Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP), the former chartered surveyor's invention will star in a 5-year global tour that will take the world famous team's brand to 15 cities across the world in a stunning pavilion that has been designed to replicate a mini Bernabeau Stadium.

Participants will be able to play at 'The World of Football Skills Arena' in a bank of one of five zones and the fully immersive experience will allow them to set their own personal best score, compete against other players and see how they compare against the first team stars.

"It has been a long six years developing the idea into the fantastic product that it is now and this latest deal with Real Madrid really announces us on the global stage," explained Tim.

"They are arguably the greatest brand in world football and have more than 600 million fans worldwide so for them to invest in our technology tells me we are doing something right. It comes on the back of a really busy period, with WallJAM also used at Wimbledon as a way of encouraging spectator engagement."

He continued: "The business model



has lots of different elements. You can buy one of the walls, you can lease one and we are now starting to look at franchise agreements so we can develop lots of local WallJAM centres.

"Turnover could treble over the next twelve months to over £500,000 and there's lot of exciting opportunities to introduce new sports and games."

Working with retail print production specialists, MGP were also able to design a modular fixed panel system that can be affixed to its existing structure using a frame and clasp system.

This ensures LED strip lights are fixed appropriately boosting 'look and feel' and, importantly, WallJAM can be transported to different venues easier.

Amanda Freeland, Manufacturing Growth Manager, commented: "Tim has come up with a concept that has got the world talking and combines gamification with staying active – a winning combination.

"As a small business it needed some expert advice on materials and structure and we were able to understand the challenges and bring in one of our experts to come up with a solution that makes WallJAM easier to transport. It doesn't sound much, but that breakthrough is huge!"

Tim concluded: "When you are trying to get new technology to market quickly there are a lot of things to consider and one of the main issues was around the construction of the wall panels.

"MGP came in and talked to us about our business and where we wanted to grow and immediately put us in touch with a specialist, who have been brilliant. The grant isn't massive, but it is easy to apply for and has made a significant difference to our ability to transport and sell WallJAM."

For further information, please visit www.walljam.com

More details on MGP, visit www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk



ARE YOU AN SME MANUFACTURER THAT WANTS TO GROW AND BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE?

The Manufacturing Growth Programme provides free advice and support with grant opportunities for you to make sustainable business improvements.

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- Customer Relationships
- Competitiveness
- People and Resource
- Environmental
- Continuous Improvement
- Finance

The programme is currently looking to work with SME Manufacturers in the West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber, parts of the East Midlands and East of England.

If you are a manufacturing SME, get in contact for a free, no-obligation Manufacturing Strategic Business Review. You will then be guided through the rest of the process by a dedicated Manufacturing Growth Manager

Sara BOWCUTT

Overcoming rejection, the joys of making a difference in the world and switching off after work: *Insight* sat down for an enlightening chat with Women for Women International's Associate Director of Corporate and Community Fundraising.

Can you explain a little about what you do?

As the Associate Director of Corporate and Community Fundraising at Women for Women International - a charity that supports women survivors of war to rebuild their lives - I oversee our fundraising activity from companies, individuals and grassroots donors. The corporate fundraising side of my role has an international remit meaning I lead the global organisation

(made up of an HQ in Washington DC, the UK organisation and our country offices) in developing and securing partnerships with businesses and brands.

We're very privileged to have a number of fantastic, high profile partnerships with companies like Net-A-Porter, LK Bennett, Elemis and Monica Vinader which not only raise vital funds for our work but also boost awareness for the charity. My role

is to develop strategic, long term plans for these partnerships, working closely with the brands to create joint marketing and promotional activity or finding ways that our work aligns with philanthropic or CSR agendas of businesses to raise as much money as possible to fund our work. I also oversee our outreach to individuals, creating plans and activity which engages individuals in our work as regular donors.



That's really incredible, what path lead you to this role?

I've worked in the charity sector for over 14 years now in various fundraising roles. I started as an admin assistant in the Fundraising Team at Help the Aged (now AGE UK) where I realised that you could do a role connected to marketing but it could be for something you cared about and that actually made a difference in the world. In 2003, I was given my first break into fundraising there within the Corporate team and never really looked back. I had amazing colleagues, managers and mentors who helped me use existing skills - from a previous marketing role - and convert these to fundraising. I also learnt how to use my personal skills to build relationships and create mutually beneficial partnerships.

Since then, I've specialised in working with businesses and brands to raise money and awareness for causes I'm passionate about. In 2008, I joined the charity War Child, which works with children affected by conflict. During my 5 years there, I learnt about the impact that conflict has on communities, particularly women, and just went looking for more and more information about what individuals and charities can and were doing about the situation.

This was when I first heard about Women for Women International. I was blown away by the practical 12 month programme which gives women the tools to empower themselves in conflict affected situations, providing them with the skills and knowledge to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. After War Child I worked at a couple of smaller charities who were focused on women's issues and causes which is definitely where my passion lies. It was a few years after I first heard of

the charity before my role came up at Women for Women International, but as soon as it did I knew it was meant to be mine!

It has been THE role I've talked to friends and family about wanting - even though it's challenging and my remit is wide, I absolutely love it. It's not just the fact that I'm working for a cause I feel so strongly about but I really enjoy my day to day work, where I get to come up with creative ways of partnering with businesses that makes sense for them and their customers and that raise the most money and awareness for the charity. I also work closely with my team on developing plans for marketing to individuals so every day is different, which I really appreciate.

That sounds so rewarding, what would you say are your best and worst days at work?

I love the days when a plan comes together and, after a lot of work on proposals or coming up with ideas to pitch to partners, we get that call or email that says yes! We recently worked on a fabulous project with a company called Selfish Mother and The FMLY Store. It was a collaboration with 4 of our ambassadors (Alice Temperley, Charlotte Olympia, Mary Katrantzou and Savannah Miller), each putting their own spin on a limited edition t-shirt, with the word WOMAN emblazoned across the front. It took a lot of work and creativity to pull together 6 different organisations on one project, but the outcome was incredible and has been so well received. I loved seeing the final products, that a couple of months before had only been sketches.

I have to say the absolute best days are when we hear about the impact that our programmes have on the women we serve. Seeing a film of



women graduating from our 12 month training course, or a photo of a woman who has just set up a business selling chickens after learning about how to rear them, make it all worthwhile and show the real outcome of what I do - that is the most important thing to me. The worst days are when you get the no's - particularly when you think we're totally the right fit for a partner or an opportunity and for some reason it just doesn't come together. I hate those calls - not only for me and the



PHOTO: MILLIE HARVEY

team but also for the poor person on the other side, who has to tell a charity that they're not going to fund them or they've gone with another partner. That has to be tough too. And you do get a lot of no's in this job – its part and parcel of it, but after 14 years I've built up my resilience!

What do you think your colleagues would say about you? I think they'd all say a variation on – energetic, talkative, laughs a

“It took a lot of work and creativity to pull together 6 different organisations on one project, but the outcome was incredible”

lot, is approachable. But I also hope they'd say team-player, supportive, encouraging and experienced.

You sound like a very lively person! So how do you relax after a long day?

I find it quite hard to turn off at the end of the day to be honest – I have a long commute and tend to use the time to finish off the day, send final emails and read anything the team needs input on so I'm usually still in



PHOTO: RYAN CARTER

work mode when I get off the train but dinner with my fiancé and talking through the day helps me unwind. In the last year and a half I've also started meditating which I'm finding so useful in quietening my mind down and helping me to relax. I also love to cook when I have time – bit of music, glass of wine and a few hours cooking up a comforting dinner is my idea of a relaxing Sunday.

What advice would you give to a young person embarking on a similar career?

Spend time thinking, reading and talking to people about the things you're interested in and passionate about. I don't think you can work in a charity, especially as a fundraiser, and not be passionate about the cause – it will show when you talk to people and pitch ideas to them. Think about the

things in the world you want to make a change in and then look for the charity or organisation making that change and stalk them! Find ways to network with them, learn about what they do, take part in their campaigns and just reach out to them. Let your passion drive you and you'll do well. Whenever I'm reading CVs or interviewing, if it's not super clear that they care about what we do then they probably won't get the job.



“Something I say to myself often is Pourquoi Pas?! Why not!?”



PHOTO: ALISON WRIGHT

Passion is infectious and, for me, vital if you want to work for a charity.

Do you have a motto?

I don't think I have just one but something I say to myself often is Pourquoi Pas?! Why not!? Why not ask that company for a donation, why not send that cold email, why not speak up about something you care about, why not have that piece of cake! It works for your professional and personal life.

Any 'why not' plans for the future?

For now I'm focused on doing the best I can for Women for Women International. I want to grow our supporter base of individuals who sponsor women through our programme – for £22 a month, you can make a real difference to a woman's life by sponsoring her through our 12-month training. This source of funding is a tangible way for individuals to support us in our goal to enrol more women globally.

I also want to increase the types of partnerships we have – expanding this to more businesses who care about women affected by conflict and want to give them the best opportunity to support themselves. I want to find new opportunities in new business sectors and ensure we can fund thousands

more women to go through our programme. I often think about joining the board of a charity so I can help other organisations develop their fundraising and marketing plans, and make an even bigger impact on the charity sector, but I think that might have to wait a little while - otherwise I will never find time to relax!



For £22 you can Sponsor a Sister through a year-long training programme that will give her the skills to support her family and transform her life.

More info:
www.womenforwomen.org.uk/sponsor

Or find other ways to support Women for Women International by going to their website:
www.womenforwomen.org.uk

KEITH MIDDLETON CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

at George Hay Chartered Accountants

Keith Middleton, of George Hay Chartered Accountants, reached a significant milestone in his career on 19 August, when he marked his 50th year with the firm.

Keith joined George Hay in August 1968 and was a partner in the firm from 1997 until 2017, when he stepped down to take on a consultancy role within the practice. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Letchworth office in 1982, where he is still based now and where he has built many longstanding client relationships over the years.

Keith is well-respected locally and has earned a great reputation, providing tailored advice to a wide variety of businesses, including many family owned companies and new start-ups. He also

specialises in advising businesses in the leisure industry, encompassing hotels and the licenced trade.

"I am delighted to be celebrating my 50th anniversary at George Hay. The past five decades have been extremely enjoyable, and I feel incredibly proud to have played such an active role in the firm's expansion" said Keith.

"I've had the pleasure of working with many individuals over the years who have become friends as well as clients, which is testament to the personal service we provide at George Hay."

"Advising businesses and supporting them with their growth and development has been very rewarding. In several cases, I've worked alongside more than one generation in a

family run business and I consider myself to have been very fortunate to be in that position of trust."

Nick Willis, Senior Partner at George Hay said, "In his 50 years with the firm, Keith has been instrumental in the development of the practice and our Letchworth office would not be what it is today without him."

"We would like to thank Keith for all his hard work over the years and congratulate him on such a fantastic achievement."

George Hay – which has offices in Biggleswade, Letchworth and Huntingdon – provides accountancy and taxation services to a wide range of businesses and individuals.

Find out more about George Hay by visiting www.georgehay.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:

- taxation
- VAT advice
- audit
- bookkeeping
- online accounting
- payroll
- new business start-up advice
- management accounts
- financial planning
- year end accounts
- probate
- business advice

Letchworth office: ☎ 01462 708810


We also have offices in Biggleswade and Huntingdon

www.georgehay.co.uk   

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**FREE
CONSULTATION**



BOOSTING THE VALUE OF YOUR BUSINESS BEFORE YOU SELL

All business owners, whether still in the early days of their venture or running an established organisation, will likely have considered a time when they may not be at the helm anymore.

In fact, selling your business, or at the very least passing it on to family, is an inevitability for most; whether motivated by retirement, an attractive offer, lack of access to funding or just the fact that you no longer see a future for the business.

Often, a priority for business owners is wanting to know how they can maximise the value of the business before they sell. Understandable, as this may well be one of, if not the, most valuable asset they own. Here's how you can boost your business's value:

Listen to sound, strategic advice

When it comes to selling your business, pursuing strategic advice can be key to achieving the best possible sale price.

Think of us as an independent, objective and professional 'sounding-board', helping you to make good business decisions, to refine your plans, to drive your business forward and to realise your goals, no matter what stage you're at.

To navigate the sales process successfully, you need to understand what it entails. Seeking advice sooner, rather than later, is vital if you are

to achieve the outcome you've been imagining. Even if it's only to confirm that you are doing everything right, you cannot put a price on peace of mind.

Plan for the future

Don't get so caught up in the day-to-day that you endanger your long-term aspirations. Having a well-thought-out plan in place can be beneficial for all parties involved in the sale process; sellers, buyers and advisers alike.

A plan not only gives you something to work towards, but it improves your business' credibility and shows any potential buyers that you know exactly where your business is headed.

Cash flow, company earnings and recurring revenue

To maximise the value of your business, you need it to appear attractive to those on the outside looking in. Company earnings, cash flow and recurring revenue all have an important role to play in achieving this:

- **Company earnings** – should be of a high quality. Your earnings should be attributable to your own efforts to either increase sales or reduce costs.
- **Cash flow** – should be consistent. Consistent cash flow shows potential buyers that your business is not only credible, but sustainable.
- **Recurring revenue** – is a big thumbs up. This in itself represents consistent cashflow and will do wonders for your buyer's confidence.

Due diligence

Due diligence is arguably the most important part of the process, when it comes to selling your business.

This is where the buyer (and their adviser) will delve deeper into your company's finances, reports and accounts, identify any issues or anomalies and assess the value of your business based on what they find.

Making sure everything is in order, up-to-date, filed correctly and easily accessible is imperative if you want the sale to proceed smoothly and to get the return you are expecting.

Don't take your eye off the ball

Irrespective of the sale, you still have a business to run in the interim. It is vital that you don't take your eye off the ball.

If you don't have the time to dedicate to the running of your operation whilst the sale goes through, nominate someone who does – your buyer needs to see the business looking its best at all times and you want to be able to step down from something you're proud of.

To find out more visit:
www.georgehay.co.uk, email us at letchworth@georgehay.co.uk or call us on 01462 708810.



MARTIN WILLIAMS
Partner,
George Hay
Chartered
Accountants

Skills are a complex problem, but after four years of being engrossed across different sectors into the subject, it appears to me we are in the middle of a perfect storm, so I hope these insights are thought-provoking and inspire you to help, as I believe we all need to do more for our young people.

There are several threads I would like to talk about, the first being the ageing working population, which is a problem not just here but all over the developed world. To put it into perspective the Utility sector in the UK employs 500,000 people, and in the next 10 years, 50% are retiring. If you then factor in the lowest birth rate in the last decade you can see we won't have the numbers to solve this, which is why immigration is significant, so let us hope the government gets the strategy right, as our economy depends on it.

The financial crash of 2007 has also contributed to the problem as analysis from the CIPD shows that a decade of under-investment in skills has added to the country lagging well behind its competitors on at least four key measures, including literacy and numeracy, learning and development and digital skills.

Next has been the Government's fixation with University with applications up year on year to the highest ever in 2018. What is also shocking is the dramatic increase in unconditional offers, which according to UCAS has risen to 23% of this year's cohort! Policy makers attribute the sharp rise to changes made by the government since 2012, especially the lifting of a cap on student numbers at individual institutions and the increase in tuition fees to up to £9,000 a year, giving universities an incentive to recruit as many students as is practical.

Poorly perceived technical education is the next problem, but the Government are introducing a new set of reforms which include the apprenticeship levy in 2017, new T-level qualifications



WHY DO WE HAVE A SKILLS CRISIS?

in 2020 along with the Institutes of Technology. These could provide the basis for a radically improved technical education system but for these reforms to work, it will be crucial that all parts of the skills system are working together and that employers and parents alike buy into them.

Uninspiring careers advice compounds the problem further, as does most of the supporting digital resources currently available. We believe employers are vital to solving these issues and a SEMTA report from a couple of years ago supports our conclusions "It's crucial that employers ensure their own websites are promoted well and offer an upbeat, interesting and exciting vision of what careers looks like"

The problem is employers' websites are currently not designed for young people, so only really useful if you are looking for a job now but what we need is to inspire the younger generations. So believe employers need to sell the future to young people, along with their purpose and provide a simple overview of why, what and how they do what they do, in a language young people will understand. An excellent example of this is a Formula 1 or Premiership Football team as most people know 700-1000 people

are employed but what do they all do? And where is that information? We believe the same applies to any business, so without a simple digital resource, all the school outreach isn't going to be as effective as they could be would you agree?

Technology and what Generation Z (those born between 2005-15) expect from it is the next issue, as the world is now mobile and video first to them. Great user experience is also essential, driven by the Unicorn companies like Apple, Spotify, Instagram, Snapchat etc. so any resource needs to reflect this shift which most don't right now.

Finally, the difficulty for schools in engaging with companies and vice versa needs solving, so that all stakeholders can connect locally with ease.

In summary, the perfect storm is here, and 21st century technology could really help, so we would welcome the chance to discuss further with any interested parties.

Philip Reynolds - Founder of ImpartIQ, a profit for purpose technology company on a mission to make a positive impact on the skills crisis a UK Plc.

Email Philip@impartiq.co.uk

What is 'Making Tax Digital' (MTD)?

MTD is the Government's vision for a "transformed tax system". The aim is to create a modern, digital service which will help businesses get their tax right. HMRC estimates that over £9 billion of tax is lost annually due to errors and mistakes and it hopes that digital record keeping will help "to prevent errors associated with manual processes".

Who will be affected and when?

From April 2019, VAT registered businesses with turnover above the VAT registration threshold (currently £85,000) will have to:

- Keep their records digitally (for VAT purposes only)
- Provide their VAT return information to HMRC through functional compatible software.

Can I still keep my records manually and file the VAT return through the HMRC VAT portal?

No. Businesses within the scope of MTD must keep digital records in functional compatible software, that records business transactions electronically and which can directly communicate with HMRC digitally via their API (application programming interface). You may need to purchase software to be compliant. The most well-known packages are Sage, Xero and QuickBooks but there are many more.

Can I be exempt from the scheme?

Exemptions are available due to age, disability, religion or remoteness of location (e.g. You don't have internet access).

What happens if I don't or can't comply?

A "soft landing" approach is expected between April 2019 and April 2020. HMRC plan to use a pointsbased system. Penalty points will accumulate for each failure to file on time. At a certain threshold, penalties will then be charged for late or non-submission. They have suggested that penalty points incurred will expire after a further period of 'good compliance'.



Will MTD be extended in future to cover other taxes?

The government wish to move towards a fully digitised tax system so it is likely that the MTD regime will include Income Tax and Corporation Tax in the future. This will not be before April 2020 at the earliest.

What are the benefits to businesses of MTD?

HMRC says "Software will help businesses to stay on top of their record keeping, allowing them to better understand how their business is performing". A digital system means:

- Always knowing where you stand regarding tax
- Having access to tax information online in one place
- Being able to work online, collaborating with your accountant
- Being able to plan and budget more effectively

Do Excel spreadsheets count as 'functional compatible software'?

Not in themselves, no. Records can be maintained on spreadsheets, but there must be some linking/bridging software that can communicate with HMRC's API in order to comply with MTD.

MOORE STEPHENS

NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES

The team at Moore Stephens Northern Home Counties Limited are offering a free no obligation meeting with you to discuss these matters further.

Contact Bridget Couverwell on 01438 741147 or

business.support@moorestephens.com

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Director on 0333 241 3350 or email ijenkins@richmondhousecs.co.uk.
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A CLOSE SHAVE FOR CLAIRE AUSTIN

Claire was born and bred in Stevenage and for the past 20 years has run a family funeral business which was established in Stevenage more than 300 years ago.

As a family company, they are very community focussed and are keen to support local charities and causes. Claire has taken part in a number of fundraising events including charity work in India and Vietnam and in

2014 ran the London Marathon in aid of the local hospice. This year Claire decided to shave her head to raise funds for the Stevenage Community Trust.

The Trust was established in 1990 and provides funding and support to charitable organisations and individuals in Stevenage and the surrounding villages.

The 'big shave' took place on Saturday 25th August at the Austin's Family Fun Day which is an event held every year for staff and their families.

Donations can still be made at www.love2donate.co.uk/claireaustin Alternatively, cheques can be made payable to The Stevenage Community Trust and sent to Claire at Austin's.



HERE'S TO ANOTHER PROMISING YEAR FOR YOUNG ENTERPRISE

Following an enterprising academic year in Hertfordshire for Young Enterprise, we are now planning ahead for the 2018/19 academic year.

Last year in Herts we ran programmes with over 4,500 young people in 60 schools and colleges, with the support of over 200 volunteers and businesses. Teams across the UK set up and ran their own student companies and in Hertfordshire took part in trade fairs in Hitchin, Ware, Welwyn Garden City, The Galleria, Intu Watford, Marlowe's Hemel Hempstead, Harpenden Christmas Market, Berkhamsted Festival of Lights, Rickmansworth Christmas night and Tesco Superstore in Watford.

The Company Programme teams competed against other schools in competitions at Herts County Hall and at the University of Hertfordshire. Business ideas ranged from scented stress balls, handmade kitchen accessories to street wear with a message. The winning team who represented Hertfordshire at The University of Buckinghamshire in June was CERTI from Watford Girls School

with their published children's book called *A Princess Like Me* about the diversity of being a princess, written and illustrated by the team.

Young Enterprise is a nonprofit educational charity whose aim is to help the future work generation recognise and develop key life and business skills to help them prepare for the world of work - be it a day programme or the year long Company Programme.

As a non-profit educational charity we benefit from the support of many sponsors- both National and locally and volunteers, who share their career paths and experience with students, supporting at day programmes and as Business

Advisors for the Company programme teams. Business supporters include MBDA, Johnson Matthey, Tesco, Waitrose, John Lewis, Renault UK, PWC, KPMG and VocaLink who sponsor programmes and events, volunteer, judge, offer venues and introductions to help us reach as many



students as possible. Students from many schools including Knights Templar in Baldock, Watford Boys, St Albans' High School for Girls, Barclays School in Stevenage, The Priory School in Hitchin and North Herts College Turnford benefited from various day programmes based around Employability Skills and Business challenges, raising awareness of skills needed in the work place, career paths, forming links between schools and businesses across the County.

For more information contact
North & East Herts area manager:
jo.oreilly@y-e.org.uk
South Herts area manager:
jill.oneill@y-e.org.uk
www.young-enterprise.org.uk

SURVIVING THE DEATH OF THE HIGH STREET



Memorandum opened in 1997 and, trading under the Kodak Express banner, it is one of the few independent retailers still surviving the unprecedented increased fixed costs such as business rates. Its convenient location - right on Market Place - provides heavy footfall right past the door seven days a week but between increased online shopping and hikes in business rates it can still be difficult to stay afloat.

So how is Memorandum doing it? Offering a comprehensive range of products and services for local businesses as well as the public certainly helps. This can guarantee a steady income even when consumer purchasing is down. While you can buy almost anything online, Memorandum are able to offer customers something unavailable elsewhere: unbeatable customer service and expert knowledge. They know, for example, about Passports and Visas and what is required in each and every individual case, from the age of 0 - 100. Their image reproduction offering is vast, either on their digital photo lab, photocopiers or large-scale printers. Whether on plain cartridge or high-quality gloss paper, they can produce in sizes ranging from passport right up to A1 and above. All services are discussed pragmatically and the ideal solution is always offered with the customer at the forefront of each decision.

While catering to any kind of photographer - from professionals to iPhone snap-happy mums (and providing them with a vast choice of printing services such as instant photos from the in-store kiosk, t-Shirts, mugs, canvases, cushion covers and even aprons) Memorandum has been able to tap into two very lucrative niches.

Hertfordshire is a county with a steadily aging population that can't always keep up with rapidly progressing technology. By earning a reputation for helpful staff who are willing to offer free advice or even teach their customers how to take, upload and print digital photos from any kind of device, this little shop has become a vital stop for many people on their shopping trips. However, Memorandum has another attraction for those who remember the use of slides, 35mm film and super8. Rather than leaving thousands of images and home movies hidden away in lofts and boxes to deteriorate, customers are given the option to scan 35mm film or slides and even convert old home cine film or VHS to DVD, saving them for future generations. They can also often have old but damaged precious

photographs repaired. Many patrons of Memorandum, whether they took these photos or inherited them, are keen to do this because these memories cannot be recovered once lost.

The second niche filled by Memorandum is based on the wonderful fact that local independent businesses in Hitchin like to support other local independent businesses in Hitchin. Offering a quick turn around and no minimum order, Memorandum is able to produce large-scale posters; leaflets and menus; photocopying and a whole lot more on demand. They'll even drop it round if you're nearby!

Even with the loss of a staggering 6000 shops in the UK in 2017, there are still a few small but well-run shops such as Memorandum performing an important role in society, providing a personal service in an increasingly impersonal world. When they are gone they will not come back and who will pay the business rates then?

Memorandum

25 Market Place, Hitchin SG5 1DT
01462 435200 • hitchin@memoimaging.com
www.memoimaging.com



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: Shani & Amanda

Job title: Owners

Company: Bamboo Turtle

What town in Hertfordshire are you based in? Letchworth



What is one thing that always must be in your fridge?

Coconut milk & Avocado

Who is your favourite chef?

Anyone willing to cook from scratch for me gets my vote, but we also love the fabulous chefs at Vutie Beets which luckily is a stones throw from the Arcade and situated in the Wynd

Where is your favourite place to eat in Hertfordshire for a business date, and what is your favourite dish from there?

Vutie Beets we love their lentil & spinach curry for an evening meal but you can also often see one of us sneaking our way out of the Arcade for a cheeky veggie sandwich and a smoothie!

Where in Hertfordshire would you recommend for a family meal, and what dish would you order from there?

Cultivo lounge are very family friendly – their falafel burgers are awesome, plus its literally round the corner from us!

What is your idea of food heaven?

Fresh, brightly coloured and spicy. We're lucky enough to be near a fruit and veg stall so can pick up fresh items whenever we need it and can get spices closer to home as we stock a large number of spices in store

What food can you not stand?

Processed and packaged is our worst. Thankfully we've got plenty of unpackaged options to choose from in store.

What is the strangest thing you have ever eaten?

Jack fruit, eaten at a local restaurant. We're fairly central to a couple of restaurants which offer vegan options and are situated near us in the Arcade.



What is your favourite recipe to cook at home?

Anything with chillies and coconut in.

Where is the best restaurant to let your hair down after a hard week's work?

Running a very busy waste free shop leaves us with so little time for letting our hair down! When we do get a few minutes to spare we always pick Vutie Beets though!

What is an ideal snack?

A handful of dairy free dark choc buttons & hazelnuts – obviously available from Bamboo Turtle!

What is your favourite tippie?

Pink Gin & Mediterranean fevertree tonic! You'll often find the empty bottles in our store cleaned and ready for a second life being filled with our shampoos/conditioners or household liquids!

Bamboo Turtle is a new waste-free shopping experience based in The Arcade, in Letchworth. Help reduce your impact on the environment by bringing re-usable containers and filling them with the exact amount of product you require!
bambooturtle.co.uk



IT'S TIME FOR TEA

Afternoon Tea at Hanbury Manor with all its elegance and charm ticks all the boxes, as Rachael Anderson discovers.



Nestled among the gentle slopes of the county's finest golf course, Hanbury Manor stands dramatic and regal as ever. Nearly as impressive as the size and grandeur of the once stately home is Hanbury Manor's rich history. The original house was built in the 18th century and since then has been rebuilt and lived a rich life as a convent, a school and finally a hotel.

We visited on the same day that Hanbury played host to a wonderful charity golf event in aid of The Willow Foundation, which meant the hotel and grounds were a-buzz with life. After receiving a wonderfully warm welcome at the front desk we were invited to make ourselves comfortable in the Oak Hall – a beautifully traditional reception room with dark wood panelling, glittering chandeliers and comfortable leather armchairs.

Despite the dark wood and lush green carpet the room is airy and light with a beautiful bay window from floor to ceiling.

We were lucky enough to sit beside the fireplace and directly opposite the window and were very quickly attended to by the friendly waiting staff. Afternoon tea is available with wine, champagne or any of the amazing variety of teas - but the lovely server was more than happy to substitute tea for coffee in my case. Editor, Jane, opted for Earl Grey. Both were provided in beautiful, dainty china.

After ordering we took some time to look around and take in our surroundings. While bright and comfortable, the overall ambience was one of class. This is something Hanbury Manor delivers through and

through. With the market saturated by tacky spins on High Tea – or anything else for that matter – Hanbury delivers the one thing missing, a traditional, classy and luxurious English afternoon tea. Keeping up with the modern age, they do, however, offer vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options if required.

After a very short wait the delicious spread was laid before us. Arranged delicately on three tiers of fine china were perfectly cut finger sandwiches, scones still warm from the oven and a range of decadent cakes and treats. Beginning with the sandwiches, which were served with an array of different breads, we eagerly tucked in. The coronation chicken was definitely a favourite of mine, served on soft white bread, it was light and refreshing with just a hint of curry flavour on the tongue. We were also delighted to discover very sweet and tender honey roasted ham that was paired perfectly with the crunch of walnuts baked into the moist bread. There was also marinated cucumber with cream cheese, beef and horseradish cream along with pickled carrots and hummus on focaccia and deliciously sweet and smoky; pain brioche with cream cheese and smoked salmon. Next we moved on to the fresh scones,

plain and with sweet juicy raisins. They were carefully parcelled in a white linen napkin on the second tier for insulation and as a result were still mouth-wateringly warm. Whether you put clotted cream on first or jam (I still don't know which is right!) both are in plentiful supply and the attentive staff are more than happy to bring more if required.

The top tier, filled with sweet treats, looked almost as good as it tasted. The colours were very striking with green pistachio and pink raspberry. We were also delighted to discover rhubarb and delicious creamy custard, passion

fruit macaroon, lemon and raspberry tart, chocolate and toffee and the pièce de résistance; a beautiful pastry swan cradling whipped cream and a fresh strawberry between its wings. The staff were wonderfully attentive and offered to bring us more of everything, more sandwiches, more scones, more cakes and re-filled our pots of tea and coffee for us. Though I am forever tempted by the offer of more, and everything was simply delicious, I have to admit the food provided was more than enough for us. We were thrilled to be able to have three of our deserts boxed and enjoyed them at work the following day.



HERTFORDSHIRE'S RISING STARS

Georgia Sheehan launched Ashaki @ashakiafrica after volunteering in West Africa for 4 months. She sells handcrafted clothes made from female artisans in Togo, and gives 10% of the profits to a textile school which teaches young disadvantaged girls batik and couture for free!

What was your inspiration for setting up Ashaki?

I volunteered with ICS in Togo, and spent 3 months working with young entrepreneurs. I had the opportunity to help teach English to tailors, and in return they introduced me to the textile industry in Togo. I absolutely feel in love with the concept and the West African fabrics! You can select any printed fabric you want from the big market (le Grand Marche) and take it to the tailor with an image of what you want and they make it! The whole process was so inspiring that I was so excited to share it with others.

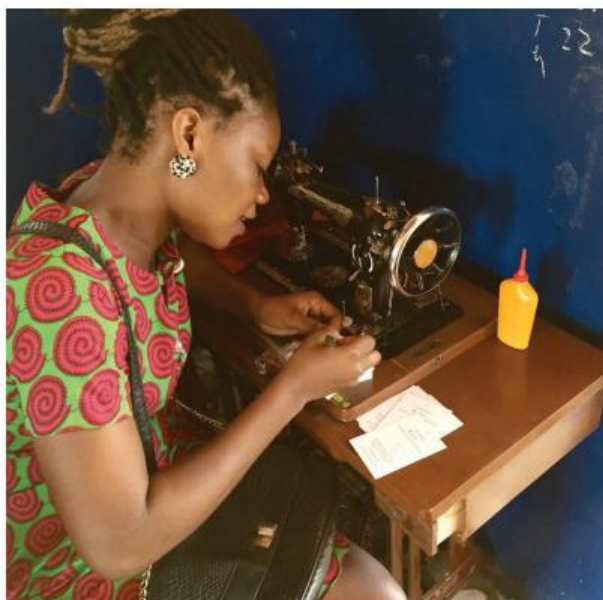
So, is it safe to say you have a passion for fashion?

Yes! As cliché as that phrase is, 100% yes. I think because the industry is so fast pace, it is always changing and you have to challenge yourself to always think one step ahead. Never a boring day in fashion!

Have you visited the textile school you're supporting/ what is it like?

I had the opportunity to visit it during my last visit to Togo and Chantal (the founder) kindly showed me around the school and even one of the batik classes that was taking place. It was an eye opening experience and I felt incredibly lucky that I got to meet the girls in person. A lot of businesses just donate to a website and that's the end of the journey, but I felt so privileged to see how my business is helping the lives of the girls! The school is located in Kpalimé, on the top of the mountains, which is so beautiful and picturesque! At the moment, Chantal is working to build accommodation in the school to ensure the girls are safe at all times. I'm so humble that I can be apart of such an amazing project.





What advice can you offer for other young women looking to set up ethical companies?

To just go for it! As obvious as that sounds. Don't hold yourself back and stop worrying about what others are doing! Find something you are passionate about and just run with it, the best ideas come from something you enjoy!

Do you design any of the garments yourself?

I design all the garments myself, taking a lot of inspiration from Western trends. I create a fusion between African prints mixed with Western styles, which some could say is Afropean - Celebrating the two cultures.

What designer do you most admire?

I'm not a huge follower of catwalk designers so I usually get my inspiration from small local businesses/designers. One of my main inspirations is a brand called Know The Origin, they are an ethical fashion brand who take you through their journey from seed to garment, they are so transparent with their whole garment process and they allow the customer to learn as well as shop. And I think that's pretty cool!

What are your business plans for the future?

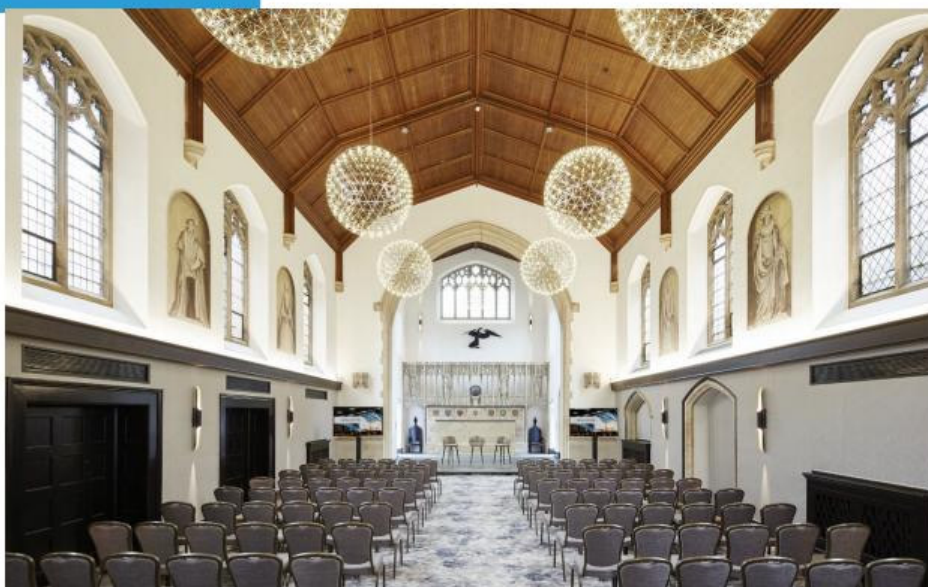
I think the next step is to partner with local business to spread the word! I've already been approached by a few local businesses in Hertfordshire so watch this space!

Where can we buy your clothing?

At the moment you can buy them from my Etsy shop:

www.etsy.com/uk/shop/ashakiafrica





WHATEVER THE OCCASION HANBURY MANOR HAS THE RIGHT SPACE FOR YOU!

Hanbury Manor Marriott Hotel & Country Club is the perfect choice for special occasions and celebrations this summer. Following a £1.7 million refurbishment of its events spaces which were unveiled in April 2018, the 17th century country retreat set in 200 acres of Hertfordshire parkland is glowing with its brand new look. Book any event, meeting or wedding before 30 December 2018 and 1 in 10 guests go free.

There are now 17 individual and beautifully designed events spaces to choose from which can host 8 – 200 guests for weddings, golf days, special occasions and corporate events. For those looking to make the most of the balmy weather, each of the meeting spaces have glorious views of the grounds and the Garden Court has its own private walled garden. The manicured lawns and stunning 19th century rose garden built for Robert Hanbury in 1865 are open to all guests and delegates.

Weddings

From small and intimate to grand and glamorous, Hanbury Manor is the perfect choice for couples looking for

the wow factor. A part of the original Jacobean manor house, the elegant refurbishment of Poles Hall is timeless with sparkling chandeliers, vaulted ceiling and minstrel's gallery. The charming Garden Court, Summer House & Conservatory have a gorgeous Grade II listed Walled Garden which is the perfect backdrop for photographs. It can accommodate 80 guests for the ceremony, 120 to dine and 160 for an evening reception.

Golf Days

The Jack Nicklaus II designed golf course is regarded as one of the best in the country and is complemented by world-class services and facilities including driving range, putting green, clubhouse and golf shop. Corporate or society golf days can be followed by a private banquet in one of the elegant venues. Hanbury Manor will individually design each golf event to include catering, registration, management of on course competitions, branded merchandise and equipment hire.

Birthday Parties, Wedding Anniversaries & Special Occasions
The new function rooms are perfect for glamorous receptions, delicious banquets

or intimate gatherings for close friends and family. Each booking will have their own dedicated event coordinator to assist with all arrangements from the menu to the drinks list and the entertainment. Corporate Events & Meetings – from small business meetings to award ceremonies and product launches, Hanbury Manor is able to accommodate all with style and elegance. Every meeting room has been updated with innovative technology such as Clevertouch Screens, Smart Write on Walls and ClickShare connectivity. The multi-functional spaces incorporate breakout areas for networking and relaxation.

General Manager Russell Prior comments: "We are delighted with the results of the £1.7 million refurbishment and are really pleased with the fantastic feedback we have received so far. Hanbury Manor is a beautiful country retreat and our improved facilities coupled with great customer service means we are able to deliver exceptional experience to guests in a relaxed environment. Our memorable location is within easy reach of London, London Stanstead and Luton Airports and has fantastic rail and road links to the rest of the country."

PEOPLE IN BUSINESS



FACT FILE

Name:
Alexa Hare

Job Title:
Retail & Creative Associate
Director for Wicked Mata

Interests:
Writing, fitness, watching
way too many Netflix
documentaries.

What do you do in your current job?

Officially, I'm the Retail and Creative Associate Director of Wicked Mata, a live edge and reclaimed table company in Letchworth. Day to day, that means that I help steer the movement of the business forward, and am responsible for guiding us towards generating more income, and making sure we're expressing ourselves both accurately, and creatively

What do you consider your best business decision or idea?

I quit my previous job as a Marketing Manager and found an admin role at Wicked to help me figure out what I wanted to do with my career. I didn't know it at the time, but it couldn't have been a better (if a little rash!) decision. I've learnt so much here, and Toby (the Director of Wicked)

has pushed me to really fulfil my potential. The business is completely different to when I started, which is really exciting.

What has been your toughest challenge to date?

On the 14th September 2018 we're opening our first showroom, after selling online for the past 8 years. That movement from the world wide web into physical bricks and mortar has been really tough – and the actual build of the showroom almost broke us! But it's absolutely worth it now, and the space is incredible.

What has been your greatest achievement?

See above! The showroom that Toby and I have created is stunning – and I can't wait to see where it goes from this point on.

If you hadn't worked in business, what would have liked to have done?

Anything that I wanted to do, I'm still able to do – so there's still time for me to make it as a professional showjumper... one day!



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

Chill out. Keep up with the French and Spanish that you were good at, because it's a lot harder to learn it all when you're an adult. Some things are worth making yourself; hummus isn't. It'll take longer than you think, but you are going to get there.

Wicked Mata's new showroom will be open from mid September, kicked off with two fabulous launch events. Pay them a visit between 12 - 8pm on Friday 14th and 9am - 4pm Saturday 15th September at their brand new showroom: Icknield Way, Letchworth SG6 1EX Telephone: 01462 512029 www.wickedmata.com

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD ANYMORE?



The announcement in June that Amazon has increased its turnover and global profitability, but reduced the tiny amount in tax previously paid to the UK's HMRC annually still further, comes as no surprise. This international behemoth does not believe in contributing to the local infrastructure used by their staff and their transport network. It takes a disproportionate level of income away from our High Street and delivers less in taxation terms.

It further appears from recent press reportage that the European Union has its own reservations over the voracity of the HMRC to collect the correct amount of VAT and the corresponding Import Duty due from the many Chinese manufacturers shipping goods to the UK via, amongst others, the Amazon sales network. The EU suggests that HMRC has failed to collect some £2 Billion in VAT, which infers that some £10 Billion in goods has been imported, the equivalent of the turnover from some 50,000 independent High Street shops, each

turning over £200,000 annually. It was particularly interesting to see Amazon Business, recently provide the opportunity to select VAT applicable pricing options for display, as though paying this tax was optional.

Add to this the little known anomaly known as the United Nations operated, Universal Postal Union that globally decides on postage rates, which means that both here in the UK and the USA, goods can be shipped by post in packets under 250g from China for as little as 1p and the perfect storm for international competition has been created. Compare this with the cost of a second class stamp for letters at a bare minimum of 56p and you must wonder why such an advantage exists?

Expedited demise of the High Street

It's no wonder that our High Street businesses are being filleted by these activities. Forced to pay Business Rates disproportionately, within the same High Street in many cases, independent retailers continue to struggle and collect VAT and eventually lose custom to the

mighty online retailers whom in turn boost the volume of road usage, road wear and commensurate air pollution with little regard for any attributable cost.

If we cannot tax profit fairly, then we need to modify the taxation methods we use. After all, if there is nothing more certain than death and taxes, let's at least have a level playing field where a fair game of cricket can be played.



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.

Providing a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire

The network for forward-thinking professionals

- CEO Policy Forums with an emphasis on creating a business friendly policy
- Strong links to the Hertfordshire LEP
- Regular lunch and breakfast meetings for networking and interaction with a topical guest speaker
- Educational/factual trips e.g. European Parliament, Houses of Parliament, Jaguar Tour, Gherkin
- Business Support and Mentoring Service with free 60 minute 1-2-1 consultation for new members
- biz4Biz magazine – Insight.
- New members entitled to a FREE profile in the magazine and reduced rate advertising
- biz4Biz Blog

JOIN US NOW

<http://www.biz4biz.org/join.html>



biz4Biz provides a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire. We 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 Hertfordshire life.

biz4Biz is a not-for-profit company that is run by a board of directors who are all experienced business people.

biz4Biz

For more information contact
biz4Biz Secretariat

01462 478031 • secretariat@biz4biz.org
www.biz4biz.org

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