

**biz4Biz**

# Insight

WINTER 2019 | ISSUE TWENTY |

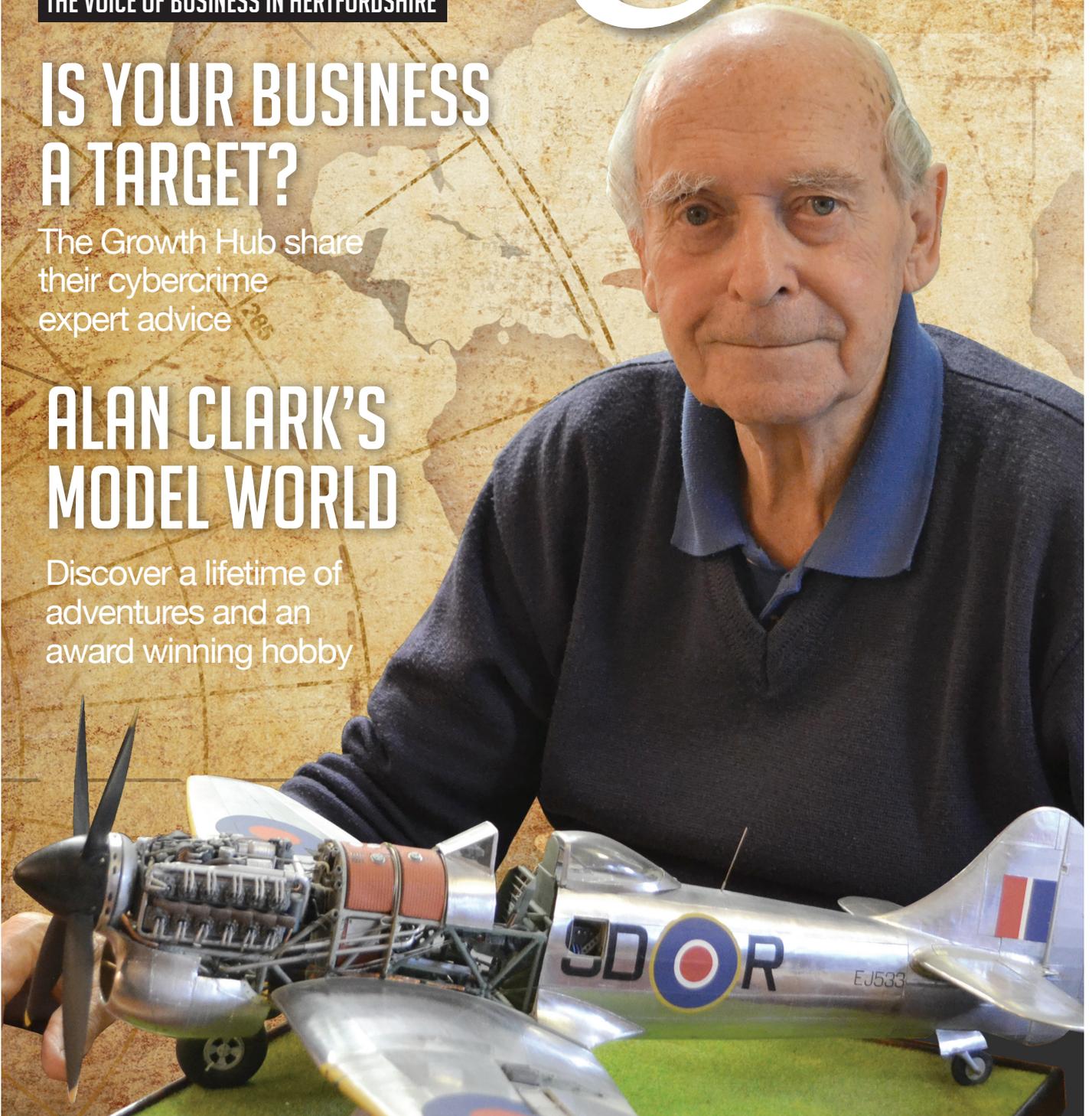
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biz4Biz Connexions is a new, exciting networking club for senior managers, directors and CEOs of Herts-based businesses. There are no annual fees to be a member of Connexions nor complex rules.

### Would you like to speak at one of our events?

If you are interested in speaking at one of our events call **Tim Baugh** on **01707 392552**

If you would like to be invited to our ConneXions meetings visit [biz4biz.org/connexions](http://biz4biz.org/connexions) and complete the form to be added to our mailing list.

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# biz4Biz

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# Happy New Year



It's a great time, one year has passed and a new one is about to begin. Free of all the political infighting and optimistic about the future, we look forward with relish and zeal to what 2020 might hold for us.

We have a number of real treats for our members and readers this year! Don't miss taking part in the biz4Biz Awards 2020. Now in its fourth year, biz4Biz Awards is fast becoming the Hertfordshire business award to win with online nominations, social voting and independent personal judging, it makes the fun evening of entertainment in May a great reason to dress up for. This year we are delighted to announce that Anton du Beke of *Strictly Come Dancing* fame will be on hand to announce the winners.

We are also very grateful to the North Herts College for helping us stage our biz4Biz Food and Speech Creating Dinner, bringing together the fabulous ingredients of food and presentation to cook up a fun evening in March.

Wishing you all a happy and successful 2020

## Adrian Hawkins

Co-Founder & Chairman biz4Biz.

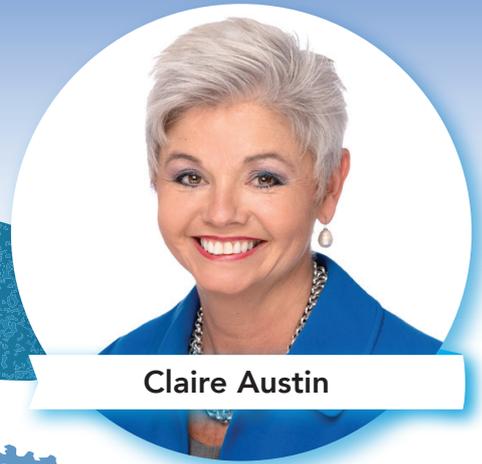
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# My Arctic Survival Challenge



Claire Austin

My Arctic Survival Challenge will start on 26th January 2020, when I will be heading off into the wilderness 150km south of the Arctic Circle. My challenge will involve adjusting to life in this extreme environment and I will learn how to get around, find food, light fires and build shelters. Later in the challenge I will embark on a three day survival phase where my training is put to the test. Along with my fellow adventurers, we will construct our own accommodation for each night which will include a Scandinavian tent, a shelter and a snow hole.

I will be venturing into this harsh environment to test my survival instinct and to learn all about life in this challenging environment. However, my purpose is also to raise funds to help those facing challenging times in my home county of Hertfordshire. I will be 'self-funding' the trip itself, therefore 100% of the donations I receive will go to charity.



## Hertfordshire

The charity I am supporting is Home-Start Hertfordshire. There are some brief details below about the amazing work they do.

### Home-Start helps families in difficulties.

We all know that a child's first few years can determine his or her future. Early help prevents later problems.

Home-Start identifies families in need and supports them in ways that are dramatically effective and low-cost.

### The problems

- Many Hertfordshire families struggle with disability, poverty and bad housing.
- Young parents living far from their kin may have no one to turn to for help and advice.
- Some toddlers don't learn the basic speaking and listening skills they will need before their first day at school.

*Home-Start prevents a problem turning into a crisis.*

### How do they do it?

Home-Start train volunteers to act as mentors. The volunteers are parents themselves and come from the local Hertfordshire community. A volunteer will spend 2-3 hours a week with the family over a period of six to nine months. Home-Start Hertfordshire are currently helping more than a hundred struggling families. Their informal approach is especially successful with parents who are scared or suspicious of government agencies.

Please support me and this worthy cause, if you can, by making a small donation.

Thank you

*Claire*

[uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ClaireAustinHope](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ClaireAustinHope)



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# NEWS

## Bamboo Turtle expand with new, bigger premises

Stars of issue 15, and local eco warriors, Amanda and Shani have moved their plastic free shop across the way to a new and bigger space!

Bamboo Turtle is a zero waste shop based in The Arcade, Letchworth, where customers bring their own re-usable containers to fill and pay for their items by weight, drastically reducing the amount of single use packaging used and discarded while filling your pantry.

The shop sells a range of flours, nuts, dried foods, spices, toiletries, washing and laundry products as well as gifts. The new shop, as well as providing space for a larger range, has also seen the introduction of an upstairs boutique style clothes shop called the Preloved Project. The Preloved Project sells beautiful secondhand clothes at affordable prices, shopping eco-friendly has never felt so chic.



## @BambuuBrush are using recyclable plastic to fund education in developing countries



@BambuuBrush are a Hitchin based, eco-friendly company with one simple product for One Simple Change, a bamboo toothbrush and they are using the power of social media with their #1millionby2020 campaign to educate and inspire 1 million people to swap away from plastic toothbrushes to an @BambuuBrush.

They have hit their target to sell 1 million toothbrushes before the turn of the decade and are now working hard to spread their message on plastic pollution and how we can all make simple changes away from plastic across the world. @BambuuBrush pride themselves on the positive work they are striving to achieve to giving back locally and globally.

Long term goals for the company are to set up simple recycling centres in developing countries, where plastic pollution is dangerously high and having devastating impacts on local people. #PlasticPays is @BambuuBrush's ultimate goal, which is explained like so, there is an estimated 6.3billion tonnes of plastic that is unaccounted for on our planet, recyclable plastic can be sold at ~£170 per tonne, a child's education in a developing country costs ~£7 per month. So whether we collect plastic on clean up in Western society for donation or a parent collects plastic in a developing country for direct funds, let's use plastic as a currency to educate those who are less privileged than us.

If you haven't already, please join @BambuuBrush global social media movement, on Instagram and Facebook, in empowering everyone that we can all educate and inspire others through the most powerful platform on the planet, social media.

## The Garden City goes even greener!

Transition Town Letchworth, a group of volunteers who are working to make the Garden City greener and more sustainable, have developed a new initiative at the Woolgrove Allotments, Jackmans Estate: Introducing The Educational Allotment.

The plan is to take the vacant lot and turn it into a thriving community space to grow and share produce. North Herts District Council have already thrown their support behind the project and Transition Town Letchworth has provided funding for a small shed, tools and raised beds, collecting things second hand and for free where possible, to keep their carbon footprint small.

The project will work towards helping families grow and eat healthy affordable produce, while spending time outdoors together and learning about nutrition.

Across town, Friends of Norton Common have been hard at work planting 150 trees to commemorate the town's tree planting traditions as well as to celebrate National Tree Planting Day. 30 dedicated residents showed up to plant the saplings, which were supplied by North Herts District Council's Green Team.



### Home of 2030, an Innovation Challenge run by BRE Group

Home of 2030 is a design and delivery competition created to drive innovation in the provision of affordable, efficient and healthy green homes for all. It is open to businesses with systems or products which will provide innovative solutions for domestic new-build property to address one or more of the four themes:

- Inclusive living
- Building performance (low environmental impact and/or low lifelong carbon impact)
- Smart and digital technologies
- Scalability.
- Eligible businesses applying to the call will be listed in a directory of innovation. Winning entries in each theme will be awarded a prize of up to £10,000.

Innovation vouchers of up to £5,000 will be awarded to applicants who provide the best entries matching the challenge criteria.

For further information and to access the application form please visit [www.homeof2030.com/get-involved/innovation-challenge](http://www.homeof2030.com/get-involved/innovation-challenge)

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

For more information and to register online visit [www.biz4biz.org/connexions.html](http://www.biz4biz.org/connexions.html)

### Thursday, 5th March 2020

*Food, education and entertainment evening, North Herts College, Hitchin*

### Friday, 15th May 2020

*The biz4Biz Awards Gala Dinner, Tewin Bury Farm Hotel, Welwyn AL6 0JB*

For more details of these events, visit [www.biz4biz.org](http://www.biz4biz.org) or contact biz4Biz Secretariat on 01462 478031



# biz4Biz ConneXions

On 21st November **Jon Kandiah, Cale Up Strategist Limited** shared his knowledge and advice about areas to focus on to make your business grow

## Success on purpose. Not by accident.

The majority of businesses fail. When you look at why they fail almost all of the reasons for failure are understood and avoidable. So, what do you need to do to ensure that your business grows? Then how do you take your business to the next level and iscale-up? What does that mean?

Jon will talk about where you need to focus to ensure that you grow your business. He will then talk about what it means to scale-up a business and why that matters, from both the perspective of both the government and you as the leader of a business. He will then talk about the five areas of your business that you need to focus on if you want to scale-up a business.



**biz4Biz**  
**CONNEXIONS**

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## About biz4Biz ConneXions

biz4Biz ConneXions is a business network for senior managers, directors and CEOs of Hertfordshire-based businesses. At each meeting you will be able to:

- Network and make new business contacts
- Discuss issues of interest with like-minded business people
- Listen to informative speakers on topics of interest to Hertfordshire based business leaders
- Get advice from a variety of experts to help you grow your business.

### About biz4Biz

biz4Biz provides a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire. 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 as a great place to live and do business. Visit our website: [www.biz4biz.org](http://www.biz4biz.org)





## biz4Biz Members

Send your updates to [magazine@biz4biz.org](mailto:magazine@biz4biz.org)...

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## biz4Biz Member?

Relocating? Welcoming new staff? Accepting new challenges? Celebrating a milestone? We want to hear from you! Send your quick news updates to: [magazine@biz4biz.org](mailto:magazine@biz4biz.org)  
Do you have bigger news, want to offer advice or promote your services? email us to arrange editorial!



### Rockworth Management Partners

We are delighted to announce that we have completed in excess of £100m worth of transactions this year, helping business owners sell, maximise value and raise equity capital.



### Needham House Hotel

At Needham House we are delighted to have retained our AA 4 star rating alongside two AA rosettes in our brasserie following a recent assessment. The double rosette award demonstrates that we offer an excellent restaurant with high standards and consistency as well as taking time to select quality ingredients.



### Assynt

Following a smooth sale process, the business of a pest controller was sold with substantially all the proceeds received upon completion with the seller moving onto a new career.



### Fusion Telecom

Performance Telecom has merged with Fusion Telecom! You can now contact the growing team at [info@fusiontelecom.co](mailto:info@fusiontelecom.co)



### biz4Biz Awards

biz4Biz Awards 2020 has been launched! Members of the public have already begun nominating and voting for companies across Hertfordshire!





# THE BIZ4BIZ AWARDS NOW YOU'RE SEEING 20/20

Returning for its fourth year running, the biz4Biz Awards, sponsored by Barclays, has now officially been launched! Following three extremely successful years celebrating business in Hertfordshire and building new friendships across the county's business world, the biz4Biz Awards will take place again next year. Individuals are encouraged to register on the website and begin nominating companies across Hertfordshire. The biz4Biz Awards are completely free to enter. Online nomination and voting has already begun and will be open until 14th February 2020.



The biz4Biz Awards are impartial, independent awards that can be won by anyone involved in business in Hertfordshire. The only awards to feature a live, face to face, judging round; participants will get the chance to impress the judges with their presentations at a Hertfordshire hotel in March 2020.

But wait! Only the top 20 nominees in each category, having confirmed their entries via email, will then be invited to attend the judging day! So, what do you need to do to ensure you make it through? First of all, you need to register at [www.bizawards.info](http://www.bizawards.info) and nominate your company in a relevant



category. Ensure you click on the link in your confirmation email to accept your nomination. Then, the important bit, get votes! Encourage all your friends, colleagues and customers to vote for you via the website. Share your unique voting link through email and social media to encourage as many votes as possible!

Boost your marketing impact! All nominees will have the opportunity to publicise on the biz4Biz Awards website with a logo, short bio and contact details, which can be arranged by emailing [entry@biz4biz.org](mailto:entry@biz4biz.org).

The glittering biz4Biz Awards ceremony is where you're aiming to get to. Taking place on Friday 15th May 2020, the doors are open to all - but only those who have impressed our judges and achieved 'finalist' status will be in for a chance to win! The night itself will feature a delicious three course meal,

wine, obviously, live entertainment, networking, wine and of course the winner announcements – followed by more wine! In previous years tickets have sold out well in advance of the event itself so it's important to book your tickets early to avoid disappointment and, as always, there will be a discount for biz4Biz members.

Now to the question on everybody's lips: Who will be the biz4Biz Awards host in 2020? It's been hard to keep stride with the last few hosts, Michael Portillo, Eamonn Holmes, Fiona Bruce... But I think you will agree that the host this year will not disappoint, because the host of the biz4Biz Awards 2020 will be none other than the "king of ballroom" himself, Anton du Beke!



# Why is creating an excellent meal like writing a great speech?

On Thursday 5th March at North Herts College Hitchin you can find out the answer

Cousins Wayne Pike and Bob Ferguson will provide you with food, education and entertainment as they work together to bring you an exciting night of discovery.

When you plan a great meal, it needs to start with an appetiser to excite the diners about what's to come. The main course has to satisfy them and give them a feeling of fulfilment and wanting some more and the dessert has to get them leaving fully satisfied and happy.

## **A GREAT SPEECH IS JUST THE SAME.**

Your opening should hook the audience and tease them with what's about to come. The body should build the feeling of complete understanding and desire to learn more. Finally your conclusion must send them home on a high.

Wayne and Bob will reveal their secrets so that you can take away a plan to deliver a great meal or speech – or both!

The night will be hosted by North Herts College Hitchin where the catering students will provide the cooking skills to a meal designed by Wayne and Stuart Dunlop, the Deputy Head of Catering at the college.



**Wayne is the Executive Divisional Chef for Young's Brewery.** He is constantly developing food for the company's chain of restaurants and bistros. Part of his role is to develop the trainee chefs for Youngs. He was the 2018 winner of the National Burger award for Young's Burger Shack.



**Bob is a 3 times UK & Ireland Speech Champion** who represented the UK at the World Public Speaking Championships in 2002. He is a professional speaker and speaker coach helping businesspeople use event speaking to promote their businesses.

Between the two of them you will have a fun night with great food and takeaway some tips for planning your perfect meal and your perfect speech.

**Full details of time, cost and booking will be published in the next issue of Insight magazine and on biz4Biz social media**



# *Alan Clark*

## An award winning life time passion

Always keen to celebrate local success, the Insight team were thrilled to enjoy a coffee with Alan Clark, admire his collection of trophies, marvel at his portfolio of impressive scale replica aircrafts and swap stories of Hitchin and beyond!

**A**lan Clark lives in Hitchin on a peaceful road not far from where he was born in Walsworth, 86 years ago. He has lived in Hertfordshire his whole life and can remember the VE day bonfire held not far from his childhood home the day the war ended – the day the skies cleared of their constant air traffic. Perhaps his passion for aircrafts can be traced back to the preceding years when he watched the planes fly overhead on their way to the front line. A world totally alien and unimaginable to a small boy

who had never left Hitchin. It was in those days that, self-taught and self-motivated, he began to carve planes from his mother's firewood, emulating the glamorous heroes overhead.

You would be wrong to assume, however, that Alan's life has been provincial. He studied electrical engineering for five years as an apprentice with Geo. W. King, in Stevenage, then continuing his love-affair with planes, completed his National Service with the RAF in Odiham, where he married his wife. During his employment at Geo. W. King and - following their collapse - as a self-employed technical writer, working with Pollard's of Baldock, Britannia Airways and De-Havilland, Alan began to travel.

Sitting in his cosy living-room on a dreary November day, Alan shared tales with us from across Europe and beyond, painting a picture of communist Moscow as well as Saudi Arabia in the 70s.

"I went to Moscow in the cold war era, they were under the communist regime, when I was with Kings, because we were doing a big automation factory. If you were carrying a BA bag and were travelling on their beautiful underground system, you'd see Russian's nudging each other and pointing because they didn't very often see foreigners!

"I spent a long time in Saudi Arabia doing all the write ups for the new airport in Jeddah. We were working a lot with Americans and Germans, so much so that the only Saudi Arabian we met was the top man in charge.

"I went all around Europe, mostly to automation factories in Germany, France, Spain, The Netherlands and Scandinavia. I think Sweden was my favourite."

Alan also visited Italy so frequently that he began to pick up some of the language, something he practises to this day with a local acquaintance originally from Italy but living and working here.



**ABOVE** Magazine covers featuring Alan's model planes.

**RIGHT** Alan meeting the Duke of Edinburgh

**OPPOSITE** 1944 Martin B26 Marauder

**BOTTOM RIGHT** A model of Alan's previous house



But his illustrious career and thoroughly stamped passport are not the reason that Alan's home glitters with awards.

The crowded display cabinet and ceiling-high shelf, skirting the entire diameter of the front room, boast a lifetime of trophies and medals for one specific hobby; model aircraft building.

"I've been doing it all my life, from when I was first old enough to hold a kitchen knife, I think, but I've never built [airfix] kits, they're all built from scratch. I used to carve up my mother's firewood."

The main attraction is a large glass cabinet, running nearly the length of the room, filled with perfect scale replica aircrafts. There are 30 in total, each the project of approximately two years of hard work. Most of the model aircrafts are around 1:24 the size of the real thing and as we huddled around to take a closer look at one in particular, the Albatross DVA, a German WW1 fighter from 1917, Alan brought our attention to the intricate work on the propeller, explaining to us how it was assembled in segments, rivets being real rather than painted on.



## Alan's Aircraft models

1940 Fairey Swordfish I  
 1933 Northrop Delta  
 1945 Vickers Viking I  
 1943 Supermarine Spitfire X  
 1933 Vickers Victoria III  
 1922 Navy-Wright NW1  
 1941 Westland Whirlwind  
 1917 Albatros DVA  
 1939 Napier Type 5  
 1934 Short Singapore III  
 1938 D.H. Flamingo  
 1947 Blackburn Firecrest  
 1922 Vickers Viking V  
 1941 Handley Page Halifax  
 1933 Westland Wessex  
 1944 Martin-Baker MB-5  
 1938 Curtiss Helldiver  
 1934 Bristol 133  
 1934 Vickers 253  
 1935 Handley Page Heyford  
 1944 Martin B26 Marauder  
 1944 Hawker Tempest V  
 1931 Stinson Model U  
 1934 Short Scylla  
 1941 Gloster-Whittle E28  
 1939 Boeing B17B  
 1926 D.H. Hercules  
 1932 Blackburn Ripon  
 1937 Gloster F5/34  
 1915 WRT NT3 Bloater  
 1938 Fiat CR42 Falco



It's safe to say that his eye for detail hasn't gone unnoticed. A quick Google search brings up model enthusiasts discussing his skill in detail and the framed covers of national and international model aircraft magazines featuring his name line his staircase, ascending proudly from a large wooden shield also bearing Alan's name.

"That shield I won at Hendon. They let me keep it because they're not holding them anymore, but they used to have model shows at RAF Hendon and I won it three times, so they let me keep it.

"I have always been interested in model making. The aircraft models in the showcase represent some 60 years of effort. Of the models exhibited at the London Model Engineer Exhibition, eleven have won gold medal as well as two having won the UK championship."

There are other models on display too. A beautiful 1:43 scale replica of a house in Hitchin that Alan informed me he lived in for 20 years, sparked my attention from the corner of the living-room. The painstakingly crafted little windows only hint at the detail within, perfectly carpeted scale floors and detailed rooms, sealed up forever. This turns the conversation towards another project Alan is working on. A model of the Biggin: A building in Hitchin that through its long history has been a Gilbertine Priory, a private estate and a women's almshouse.

Once completed, Alan hopes to display the Biggin locally for public viewing.

If you're interested in finding out when and where the model is likely to be displayed or viewing any of the 30 incredible model aircrafts listed below, contact biz4Biz for details.



# HERTFORDSHIRE SMES CAN 'GET ENTERPRISING' WITH THE LAUNCH OF A NEW FREE BUSINESS GROWTH SUPPORT PROGRAMME

**H**ertfordshire small businesses can now access a free business support programme 'Get Enterprising', which gives them fully-funded access to specialist support and opportunities to help them expand and grow.

Get Enterprising will be delivered by leading social enterprise, Wenta, and funded by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to enable early stage businesses across the county to access the support they need to develop their growth strategy and go on to access further support provision from Hertfordshire Growth Hub.

The programme offers early stage growth advice and support to SMEs and prepares them to access 'scale-up' support such as one-to-one specialist advice on key areas to help them grow their business such as finance, digital marketing and technology. Working in tandem, Wenta and Hertfordshire Growth Hub are now providing a cohesive service offering of tailored advice, training and mentoring to SMEs to help them to accelerate their business with the aid of first-class experts and facilities. Together, the aim is to help small businesses across Hertfordshire access the support they need at every stage of their development journey.

Get Enterprising is set to run up until 2022 and business owners are encouraged to use the programme to help unblock common barriers that SMEs face such as lack of finance, skills and technology.

Commenting on the launch, Get Enterprising Project Lead at Wenta, Karen Levett said: "We're really excited to be leading on the delivery of Get Enterprising. Through the 36 years of experience Wenta has in helping start-ups with growth ambitions, it's fantastic to be able to now offer even more support to Hertfordshire businesses who are at the heart of everything we do. The vast majority of enterprises in the region are small and their vital contribution to the local economy should be recognised and supported in their ambitions to grow and access wider support provision."

Hertfordshire LEP has identified in its Strategic Economic Plan, the blueprint for economic growth in the county, that there is a particular need to encourage innovative start-up and small businesses to scale-up and grow: The report states: 'Hertfordshire has long been recognised as an economy with substantial numbers of very small businesses, but relatively few

that grow to medium-size (and beyond), yet these are likely to be the principal wealth generators.' This investment is set to redress this.

Adrian Hawkins, Deputy Chair, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and Chair of the LEP's Skills and Employment Board, said: "We are delighted to be funding Get Enterprising which will help entrepreneurs to access the support they need to succeed and go on to connect with further business support services provided by Hertfordshire Growth Hub. We know that SMEs are the backbone of our economy. Together, we can ensure that they are supported at every stage of their growth journey."

Sian Ryan, Head of Service at Hertfordshire Growth Hub, said: "Our aim is to nurture a stronger, more vibrant local economy by helping SMEs to grow and reach their full potential. By working together with Wenta to provide further support for SMEs, at every stage of their development, we're one step closer to achieving this!"

To register and find out more about Get Enterprising, visit: [www.wenta.co.uk/get-enterprising](http://www.wenta.co.uk/get-enterprising)

University terms are now in full swing, so it should be plain sailing for the child and parents should be celebrating the space, and peace, that comes from a newly acquired empty nest.

Unfortunately, whether it's for first-timers or returning students, accommodation is a main concern, and high rental costs, shortages and sometimes poor-quality student digs all add to the headache.

One option being looked at by an increasing number of parents who can afford it is buying property - either outright, releasing capital, or by using property or income as collateral to back up a mortgage.

One of the key decisions to be made before embarking on this option is who the buyer will be. You could have the property in the parents' name; in the child name as a gift from the parents; purchased jointly or held in trust for the child. The choice made has an impact on asset protection, and potential tax implications for Income Tax, Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT), Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and potential Inheritance Tax (IHT).

For SDLT, where the purchase price is above a certain amount, SDLT is payable but this may be at different rates dependent on property ownership status. Where the property is bought in the name of the child, they are likely to benefit from first-time buyers relief, and may be able to claim rent-a-room relief against any rental income. Where it is bought in the name of the parent, and they already own property, a higher rate is usually payable.

For CGT, if the property is not occupied as the primary residence, any gain made when selling is likely to be subject to CGT. If purchased in the parent's name, the property would remain part of their asset base for CGT purposes with no principal private residence relief (PPRR) available on any subsequent sale. Any rent received by the parent would form part of their taxable income and there would be no occupier rent-a-room relief. If a mortgage were



## FEATHERING NEW NESTS FOR FLEDGLINGS

needed, the property may be treated on a buy-to-let basis with associated rental income criteria needing to be met.

And for IHT, this will be payable on the value of assets owned at the time of death, with gifts made in the previous seven years included in any calculation. There may be an advantage to buying the property in the child's name. Provided the parent survives the gift by seven years it would take this out of the equation for inheritance tax purposes.

Buying in the child's name means that the parent will have no legal control over what happens with the property and it may be vulnerable if any claim were made as a result of the child's debt, or their relationships.

Buying through a trust could bring greater asset protection for the parent's capital while also being set up in such a way as

to enable the purchase to benefit from SDLT and income tax reliefs. Trusts may be beneficial in IHT planning, but while there may be a long term benefit this approach may give rise to immediate and subsequent IHT charges, and these would need to be taken into account. Depending on how the trust has been set up, you can determine what flexibility there is for a future sale of the property and return of funds when studies are complete.

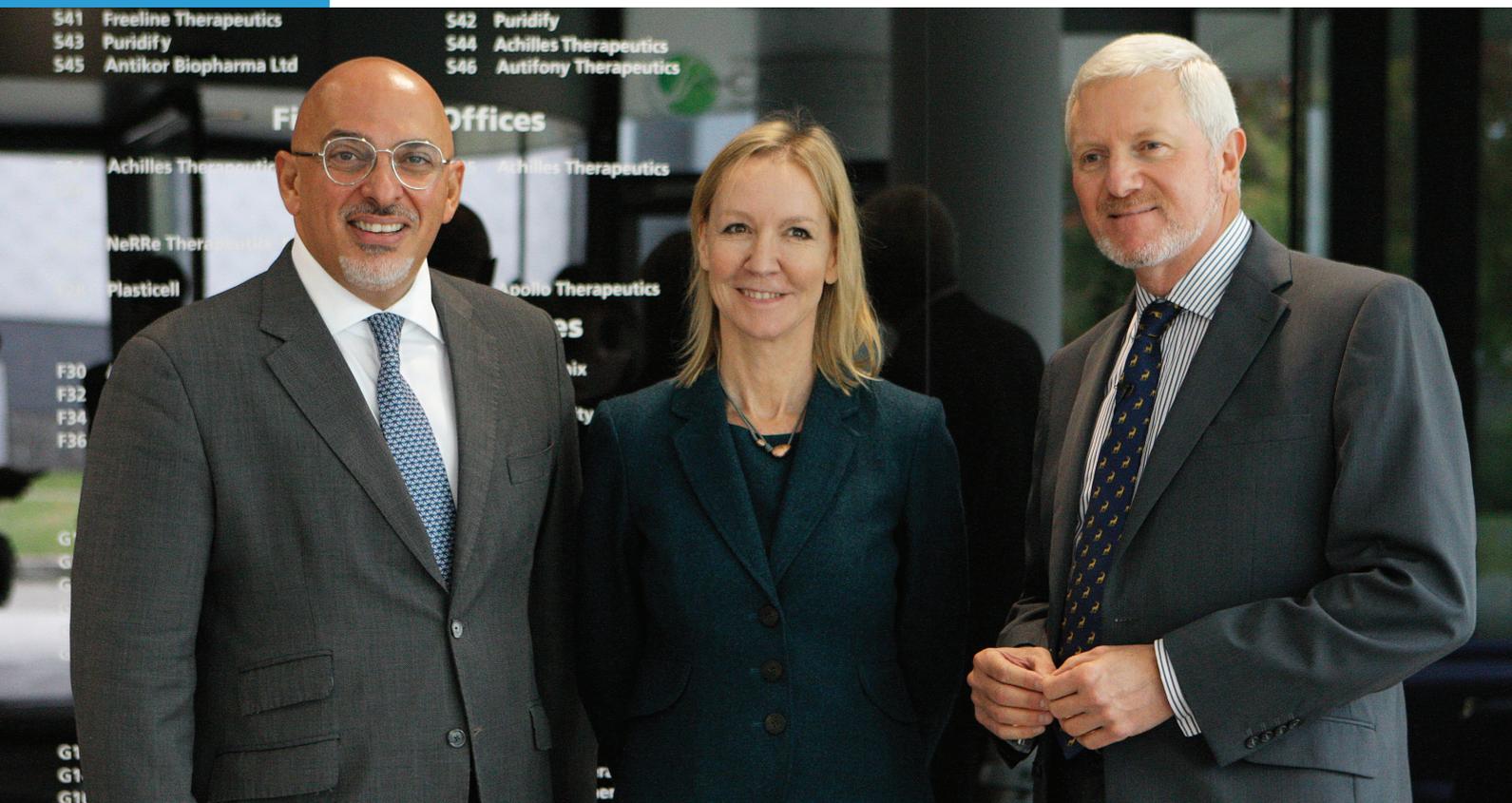
All options would need some serious thought and discussion. And you thought the degree would be the hard part!



**KAREN FLETCHER**

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*Please note the contents of this blog are given for information only and must not be relied upon. Legal advice should always be sought in relation to specific circumstances.*



Minister for Business and Industry Nadhim Zahawi with Sally Ann Forsyth, CEO, Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst and Mark Bretton, Chair, Hertfordshire LEP. Photo Karyn Haddon

# TARGETING INVESTMENT WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST

Mark Bretton, Chair of Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), reflects on 2019 and what more we can do together in the New Year to deliver sustained and inclusive growth.

Over the past year, the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships has been consolidated by Government with a mandate to develop Local Industrial Strategies that play to each area's strengths. Now more than ever we have a critical role to play in championing inclusive growth across the country so that no community is left behind.

Our key focus has been to produce a Local Industrial Strategy for Hertfordshire which takes our Strategic Economic Plan to the next steps and will help set the roadmap for a generation.

Through this, we have one of the greatest opportunities to build prosperous and productive places and connect local people and places to economic success. The emerging strategy is a core element of the wider Hertfordshire Growth plan and plays to our significant assets in advanced engineering, creative industries, information technology, life sciences and smart construction.

Stevenage is at the beating heart of a medical revolution thanks to the clustering of R&D excellence at the GSK campus to bring advanced therapies to market. The LEP's investment has

reinforced Hertfordshire's position as a world class hub for the development of cell and gene therapies and bolstered its position within the Oxford-London-Cambridge golden triangle.

This was ably demonstrated at our Annual Conference in October at GSK when Minister for Business and Industry Nadhim Zahawi MP announced that Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst (SBC) had been successful in its application to become a Life Science Opportunity Zone. Our visitor economy continues to thrive with the latest figures from Visit Herts showing the county hosted a record-

“Our unique strength lies in our partnership with local businesses, councils, universities and stakeholders, and in the detailed knowledge of our local economies.”

breaking 28m business travellers and visitors in 2017, bringing £2.2bn value into the economy and supporting 40,000 jobs.

Last spring, our Enterprise Zone, Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter, launched to market, leading the development of 3m sq. ft. of new commercial space with a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and innovation and is now home to six companies.

The availability of a skilled and motivated workforce which can adapt to meet current and future business needs will be a cornerstone of the Local Industrial Strategy and therefore fundamental to our ability to improve productivity and inclusivity across Hertfordshire. We were successful in our application for a Careers Hub to provide concentrated support for 26 schools in North Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield. This builds on the strength of our local Enterprise Adviser Network which provides valuable employer-led feedback on careers programmes in 105 schools in Hertfordshire.

Over the past six months we have been working hard to develop a new skills portal, called HOP, that will give students, employers and residents wishing to upskill the opportunity to *HOP* into all the resources they need to make informed career decisions and build a future talent pipeline.

Our SMEs are the backbone of our business community. We have consolidated online and face-to-face business support in the county with our

flagship service, Hertfordshire Growth Hub. Its new digital platform is set to lead the way nationally in transforming how businesses access support at the time of their choosing and provides everything they need to grow, create jobs and innovate.

Major regeneration programmes are underway in our towns from Waltham Cross to Watford. And at a time of unprecedented pressure for future growth, we have invested in the right infrastructure, such as the A120 bypass to remove major congestion and alleviate flooding in and around the village of Little Hadham and reduce journey times.

Across the county, there are tangible examples of the Local Industrial Strategy in action, where LEP investment has made a real difference to our people, places and businesses. We are managing over £309m UK public funds and overseeing the investment of EU funding.

Now with an expanded team operating from our new office at One Garden City, Letchworth, we are at a scale that enables us to be more responsive than ever to the needs of local communities by delivering strong, sustainable economic growth.

LEPs were created to be business led, constructive disruptors for growth. Hertfordshire LEP with its key partners continues to be the catalyst in the county and our Local Industrial Strategy will pave the way to create even more opportunities for future shared prosperity.

I look forward to continuing to play an active role in the future direction

of the LEP Network, helping to boost productivity and increase local growth in every region, as we exit the European Union. With the uncertainty for businesses around Brexit, Local Enterprise Partnerships have a key co-ordinating role in bringing together resources from a range of partners to help with future business planning. Hertfordshire LEP is working with London and South East LEPs to deliver collaborative advice and support across all areas via their Growth Hubs to make our economy as resilient as possible.

Our unique combined strength lies in our partnership with local businesses, councils, universities, and stakeholders, and in the detailed knowledge of local economies – LEPs already have Strategic Economic Plans in place and along with Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) we have market-ready ambitious plans to fuel economic growth and productivity across every region.

Learn more at [www.hertfordshirelep.com](http://www.hertfordshirelep.com) or follow @HertsLEP on Twitter.



MARK BRETTON  
Chair of Hertfordshire LEP

**Hertfordshire**  
Local Enterprise Partnership

PERFECTLY PLACED FOR BUSINESS



# YOUR BUSINESS IS A TARGET

**A**s with all forms of crime, the prevailing attitude is one of 'it won't happen to me'. In the offline world, businesses put considerable resource into security. The majority of operations will have a burglar alarm, and no business owner would dream of leaving the premises unlocked, or windows and doors open overnight. In fact, if a business closed for the evening and left the door closed but unlocked and forgot to switch the burglar alarm on, they would be very unlucky if on that particular night a potential burglar happened to walk past and try the door handle to find it unprotected.

When a computer is connected to the internet, the equivalent of a burglar is trying the door handle almost continuously. Billions of commands flood across the Internet every second and as they pass by your machine they have a conversation with it, which goes along the lines of: 'Hi, what type of computer are you? That's nice, what software system

are you running? Oh that's interesting. I notice you haven't updated your anti-virus software recently? Can I come in then? Yes? Oh that's very decent of you; don't mention it to your owner will you, there's a good machine.'

If you knew that a different burglar walked down the street twice a second, 24 hours a day, trying every door handle in the street, you would never forget to lock it.

The fact is that you are a target simply because you are connected. The intruder didn't set out to rob you specifically; they just walked down the street looking for an open window. If you haven't updated your software, your window is open and you become the target.

## **You must take the threat seriously.**

Many businesses don't believe that the information that they hold is of much use to anyone. What would be the big deal

if someone was able to access your diary for example? If your machine was part of a botnet mining cryptocurrency how would it even affect you? You don't store your banking passwords on your PC so all that information is safe; they can't get your money.

The truth is cybercriminals can do a tremendous amount of damage to your business without even stealing a penny. One of the most effective ways of defrauding a person or business is via identity theft. If a cybercriminal is silently monitoring your diary, when they email the accounts team and say they are in a meeting, your diary confirms it. When they pretend to be a supplier providing an urgent update for their change of bank account details, it makes sense because there is a reminder to settle the upcoming invoice.

This is a simple, real-world example of what happens all over the world, every day. Experienced IT professionals fall

### You must take action.

Whilst relatively few business owners have the skills to implement a full suite of cyber security and many perceive it to be too expensive to outsource, even fewer probably installed their own burglar alarms; instead paying for a professional to take care of it. Businesses must view cyber security to be as fundamental to the survival of their business as that of physical security. The risk/reward ratio for cyber criminals is one of very low risk (of being caught) with comparatively high rewards. For business owners the opposite is true, the risk of attack is very high and the potential consequences to the business are ruinous. We pay experts to provide us with services every day from fixing our cars to cutting our hair; these people have dedicated themselves to understanding how those jobs are done – why do we expect ourselves to be able to manage our own IT? Treat this like any other business decision and find an IT

victim to Phishing emails and no-one is immune. In a rush, under pressure and just trying to get the job done, all contribute to cause people to take less care than they might otherwise do and the consequences can be severe.

provider to manage your cyber-security for you. If you cut your own hair it will grow back; if your cyber-security fails, your business may not.



### IF YOU DO NOTHING ELSE, DO THIS:

1. Install effective anti-virus software
2. Install updates to the software that you are operating as soon as they become available
3. Back-up your data

# FREE Cyber Consultations for SMEs

For a limited time only, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, David Lloyd, is providing micro-businesses with the opportunity to secure a FREE Cyber Basics Review (CBR) with an accredited IT security provider in Hertfordshire.

If eligible, you will be walked through the CBR by an approved IT provider in a 1:1 consultation at your convenience. You will also receive a bespoke action plan to protect your business.

To see if you're eligible simply fill in the form at: [www.hertsgrowthhub.com/cyber-security](http://www.hertsgrowthhub.com/cyber-security)

David Lloyd  
Police and Crime  
Commissioner  
for Hertfordshire





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biz4Biz provides a coherent voice for businesses in Hertfordshire. 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 do business.



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### TalentHQ

The TalentHQ Recruitment team are pleased to announce that official figures show the amount of people in employment in the UK throughout May-July period, stood at a record 76.1% and unemployment was down 3.9% , which is healthier than this time last year! We have continued to talent-spot the best local talent in the market and have taken an influx of talented temporary and permanent candidates.



### HRJ Foreman Laws Solicitors

We have acquired Railton Law Solicitors. As a result of the merger, Railton Law clients will benefit from the collaboration between the two firms and also gain access to the full range of legal services we can provide. Corporate clients will also benefit from the growth of the Company and Commercial Team, with added expertise in company law, employment law and commercial litigation.



### The Smart10 Recruitment Team

After moving into our newly purchased office space in Welwyn Garden City, the smart10 Group have re-branded and we are delighted to launch our new website this month. If you are looking for a Career move, or indeed looking to expand the Talent within your business, please head to: [www.smart10ltd.co.uk](http://www.smart10ltd.co.uk)



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### Longmores

Both of the leading directories that rank the best law firms nationally have announced that they will once again recognise Longmores in the 2020 editions as leading lawyers in the fields of Employment, Private Client, Company Commercial, Dispute Resolution, Commercial Property and Family law.



**W**hat if to find new clients was as easy as a few keystrokes and a search on Twitter. “How can this be?” You might ask. It is very straightforward, if you understand your potential clients and know their wants, needs, pains and fears. In this case, we are going to focus on the pain with the Twitter search using sentiment analysis.

### Where to Find New Clients

Simply put, we are going to use Twitter to find the pain that the potential client is currently facing. The pain is going to be to the front and centre of their minds, that they are going to take to social media to express it to the entire world. Or at least those willing to listen!

### Scenario - Identify New Clients

Let's take an example, as it will make the explanation and plan easier to follow. Suppose you're an IT company and looking for new clients. You already offer fantastic service, you're there for your clients when they need you and, of course, you go the extra mile. It's what makes your service so fantastic. But not all businesses think like you do and offer the same level of support. They do not go that extra mile, and so their service is not top-notch. In fact, they might well be unhappy with their current suppliers. This becomes a perfect time to approach them and make them a new client of yours. What better time to be the knight in shining armour and come to their rescue?

We all have different likes, dislikes and mood changes when it comes to brands and suppliers. Sometimes they are fantastic, doing a wonderful job, other

times, it's simply fine and others we're not so happy with. Understanding this change in sentiment or mood is crucial and brands typically use sentiment analysis to understand the public's mood and opinion of the brand. We can use this general technique not to understand the mood about the brand, but to understand the exact pains of individual users of the brand.

### How to Find New Clients

In our example case, we want IT users who are currently suffering pain with their current supplier. Then we need to find people in the correct geographical area for our business. Let's say in London. Now we can find people who are in London, who are bemoaning their current IT supplier. Once identified, we can reach out to them with an offer of support. Or perhaps some solution to their problem. Choosing the correct option here to build trust and start that long-term relationship. Remember, our goal is to convert them from their current supplier to us as the new supplier.

The how to reach out, is beyond the scope of this guide and depends on the way you conduct business and what is right at the time for this individual. The key factor is that you have direct contact with someone who has a real IT pain right now. They want it solved and their current supplier is failing to provide that solution. In our context, they are not providing the pain relief that you can.

### Solution - Sentiment Analysis

Using sentiment analysis, find new clients right when they need you the most. They are in an active pain mitigation mode and

are looking for what you have to offer. While you might not gain a client right now, there are all kinds of factors, such as a tie-in contract that will prevent them switching, you have made the first steps to a long-term relationship. You helped them when they needed it and you have gained an 'in' when it comes to communication, and further interaction. After all, you are someone who can be relied upon and is trustworthy. They don't need to take your word for it, you have already proven it.

Sentiment analysis works in many other situations, not just the IT scenario outlined above. Whenever you want to find new clients, look for their motivation and solving their current problem, is exactly what they need. Use it across industries, from retail, to professional services. People use social media for all manner of wants and needs. They express their pains and fears. If you look, then you can connect with them and by doing so, gain new clients. Remember, they need to be the right kinds of clients, those whose wants, needs, pains and fears you already understand and for whom you have solutions, that is products and services.

### Summary - Find New Clients

In summary, when you understand your potential client, tailored social media targeting becomes possible. Use sentiment analysis or other similar techniques to target just the people you want and at a time they're ready. Start building that long-term relationship and create new clients.

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**George Hay**  
Chartered Accountants





# THE IMPORTANCE OF DUE DILIGENCE WHEN BUYING A BUSINESS

**B**uying a business is not a decision that should be taken lightly and the importance of conducting thorough due diligence, before any sort of formal purchase agreement is entered into, should not be underestimated.

Whether you are acquiring the shares in a company or the trading operations will determine exactly what approach you take to the process.

With the help of an accountant or adviser, the purpose of due diligence is to uncover any risks, anomalies or unforeseen liabilities that could potentially undermine negotiations and, ultimately, the viability of a purchase.

The following, amongst other aspects, should be key considerations for any buyer thinking of proceeding with a purchase and so should undoubtedly form part of the due diligence process;

- **General company insight** – before buying any business, you should consider how much you actually know about it; details about the history of the company, as well as a clear business plan detailing short-term and long-term objectives should be made available to you.

- **Finances** – it's important to have a clear understanding of the target company's financial profile, whether this is comparable with other businesses operating in the same market and, if necessary, to verify their profitability. If you are buying the shares of a business then you buy it 'warts and all', so understanding the targets balance sheet, profit and loss statements and other information can help you to do this.

You should also consider whether the business has any other off balance sheet debts owed to them or by them, what their forecasts are, what their tax liabilities look like, where their funds come from and how they utilise them.

You need to understand the targets order book together with ensuring you have the rights to its ongoing intellectual property.

- **The market** – evaluating the market that the target business operates in can give you an idea of the potential for growth and the competition that you may be up against. Long-term sales figures can indicate the relative stability of the market and help you to identify any noteworthy present or future trends.

- **Customers** – buying a business means you will likely also inherit a number of significant customers. Consequently, it is wise to review agreements that the business currently has in place with these customers.

- **Operations** – you should have a clear overview of the target business's operations; for example, the key processes and procedures that are in place, how the management team is structured and other relevant staffing information, details of suppliers and details of assets and equipment.

Acquiring a business is no mean feat and so ensuring that you use the right professional advisers is key.

We have a wealth of experience in assisting with acquisitions and disposals and we work not only with you, but also with your solicitors and bankers to ensure that any deal is completed in a timely, efficient and financially beneficial manner.

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**RICHARD DILLEY**  
Partner,  
George Hay  
Chartered  
Accountants

# THE DRAWBACKS OF PASSIVE INVESTING

Passive investing has been a successful investment strategy for the last few years as equity markets have risen relatively consistently. They have outperformed active managers and at a lower cost to boot. What is there not to like?

However, passive investing is a self-fulfilling prophecy: the better passive investing has done, the more investors have been attracted to it. At the same time, the passive fund stock holdings have got more expensive the more investors buy them. After a while, investors unwittingly end up buying a company because of its size rather than because of its investment merits. Passives have no fund manager to decide that a stock is too expensive. It therefore follows that the largest stocks get larger, so much so that, in America, the FAANG stocks of Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google dominate the market. If investors bought the S&P 500 index to spread their risk, they will now be dangerously exposed to any trading difficulties in these five companies.

Passive investing in the UK has also been fuelled by the FCA's pressure on fund management fees. Almost 60% of the FTSE 100 is invested in passive products. In the USA, the problem is even more entrenched with over 60% in passives and a further 20% in computer-driven/algorithmic trading strategies

that respond to verbal indicators as well as numerical data. It is therefore unsurprising that U.S. officials keep talking and tweeting about progress on a US-China trade deal. They can keep the stock market elevated by triggering these computer programmes and the passive funds have to follow suit. The market is not going up because companies are making greater profits; US corporate earnings have fallen over the last three quarters. Officials and politicians can now keep markets artificially high simply by saying the "right" thing.

## Active management

Fund managers are paid to grow their clients' capital over time. The best way to do this is to limit the falls in down markets so that less risk needs to be taken in rising markets. If your portfolio halves, then you need to double the value, a 100% rise, to get back to par. Whereas, if you lose 20%, you only need a rise of 25% to restore value. To do this, a fund manager will focus on valuations rather than chase hot, momentum stocks and popular trends that are expensive. Stocks that are closer to their intrinsic value should fall less than ones that have become detached from reality.

In strongly-rising markets, one can expect active managers as a group to underperform slightly as investors get over-excited by the latest fad. Therefore, good fund managers will not be overly concerned at under-performing their

benchmarks, within reason. They know they will likely out-perform on the down side which will produce the greater long-term returns.

## Reversion to the mean

Passive investing has its merits but investing patterns are cyclical and nothing goes on forever. Unless one has the time and knowledge to follow the markets it is likely that when the reversal comes passive investors will be disproportionately hit. Fund managers avoid this herd mentality and have less exposure to sharp corrections. Successful investing over the long term is all about small, nuanced differences to asset allocation. It is not about taking large positions or bets on any one sector.

One cannot predict the catalyst for passive investments to underperform active managers, or when it will occur. However, the longer the current trend continues, the closer we get to a change in sentiment and the greater the correction is likely to be.

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**TOM BROADHURST**  
Tom Broadhurst  
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**A**t least that's what the media would have you think.

Multi-national e-commerce companies don't take kindly to employees going sick or having toilet breaks. Sports retailers penalise workers by making them undergo security checks on their own time. Gig economy workers don't get paid minimum wage.

It's all too easy to sit back and make sweeping generalisations. All employers are rooted in a Dickensian workhouse ethic where staff are an expendable resource and the only reason for doing anything is profit.

If anything, the last few years have shone a light on the vast majority of UK employers which is completely at odds with what you read in the papers or online. I guess the old rule of "Only bad news sells" is as true now as it ever was.

My experience is that most employers are in it for many reasons, a lot of which are unquantifiable. Of course, profit is important. But there is also contributing to the local community, improving the living conditions of staff, bringing on new generations and myriad other reasons, many of which are unique to that employer.

And very few employers use declining profit as an immediate reason to cut jobs or wages. Indeed, most employers take a lot of pain themselves for prolonged periods before they even contemplate passing problems down the line.

This type of benevolent action manifests itself in many ways, but the one that we see often, not surprisingly, is the care taken by good employers when it comes to pension arrangements.

While many companies were dragged kicking and screaming into the area of providing pensions that Automatic Enrolment legislation enforced from 2012 onwards, many more had already established pension schemes for their staff long before.



## ALL EMPLOYERS ARE BAD

The problem most of these employers faced was the question of advice.

It is far too easy for a simple factual question from an employee such as "What are the contributions that I need to pay into the pension and what do you [the employer] pay?" to morph into "And is that what I should be paying?"

Or "How will my pension money be invested in the scheme?" to be followed up with "Is that suitable for me?"

As a consequence, pension schemes have been there but their promotion has been limited.

That is until last year when contribution rates increased to their planned highest level and employees suddenly became a lot more interested in their pensions.

Now employers get questions like "What will my fund be worth at retirement?" and "What options will I have when I get to 65?". Again, questions of advice that employers need to be very careful on (many simply take a "We're not allowed to advise you" approach) but ones that can be answered by a qualified adviser thereby increasing employee understanding and, if that adviser was introduced by the employer, one which adds to the overall benefits package. Employers understand the need for

advice. Many will, as a matter of course, have their own advisers.

And many employers are now seeing the benefit of engaging with advisers, such as Richmond House, to ensure employees are getting advice and information that is useful and appropriate to employee's circumstances.

For many, it's another one of those unquantifiable reasons for being in business. Having paid into an employee's pension for many years in conjunction with the employee, most employers will want to see that money used wisely and not be lost to scams or because the employee made bad decisions through ignorance.

And, finally, yes – there are bad employers. But 99% are not. They are committed, caring people who want their staff to share in the success of the business.

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**PETER MURPHY**  
DipPFS,  
Richmond House  
Corporate Services



**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](http://www.stevenagecommunitytrust.org)

# HOW TO HANDLE A GRIEVANCE

## IN 5 STEPS



**MIRANDA MULLIGAN**

Solicitor specialising in Employment law  
at Longmores Solicitors  
*longmores.law*  
01992 305212

### STEP 1 - APPOINT AN INVESTIGATOR

Once you have received the details of the employee's grievance and have acknowledged it, the next step is to appoint an independent investigator to look into the employee's complaints. The role of the investigator is to act fairly to establish the facts in an objective manner. The investigator should be someone with no prior knowledge of the complaint. Although this can often be tricky in small businesses, the solution is often to appoint an external party.

# 1

**G**rievances are a commonplace occurrence in many businesses. Whilst many issues can be resolved informally the grievance process provides a mechanism for the employee to formally bring their concerns to the attention of the employer. Grievances should not be seen as adversarial; they are often a chance to repair the relationship between the parties with the hope that a resolution can be found. By resolving issues in this way, this can also avoid costly and time consuming litigation in the employment tribunal, often arising from issues which could have been resolved before the relationship has broken down.

### STEP 2 – CARRY OUT THE INVESTIGATION

The investigator will carry out an investigation and should do so thoroughly and with a well thought out plan in mind. It is important at all times in the grievance process to keep records and notes of any meetings as this will help to alleviate the possibility of any dispute later on. The investigator should gather evidence from relevant witnesses including taking any witness statements and review any other relevant documents when preparing their initial findings. The investigator will prepare a report setting out the process and detailing their findings and this should be provided to the employee along with the supporting evidence prior to the grievance meeting. This will allow the employee a chance to consider all the evidence and give any feedback they may have.

# 2

### STEP 3 - HOLDING THE GRIEVANCE MEETING

Once the employee has had the opportunity to consider the investigator's report and any supporting evidence they should be asked to attend a meeting or grievance hearing. The employer should allow the employee to be accompanied to this meeting by a colleague or trade union representative. During this meeting the employee will be given an opportunity to provide their comments for the decision maker to take on board when making their decision. Often the decision maker and the investigator are the same individual, however it is good practice to appoint a separate decision-maker where possible to ensure there is impartiality in the decision making process. A sticking point is often what to do if, during a grievance meeting, additional information comes to light that warrants further investigation. The solution is to adjourn the grievance meeting and reconvene at a later time once further investigation has been carried out.

# 3

### STEP 5 - APPEAL

Where possible all appeals should be heard by someone who was not involved in the original grievance process. The employer should set out the outcome of the grievance appeal in writing. This decision will be final.

*The above steps are indicative, the employer should also ensure that they follow their own internal grievance procedure.*

# 5

### STEP 4 – THE OUTCOME OF THE GRIEVANCE

A fully reasoned and written outcome to the grievance should then be provided to the employee. The employee should be allowed the opportunity to appeal the outcome, which will usually occur if the grievance is not upheld in full or in part. It is good practice to allow 7 days for the employee to submit their appeal.

# 4

*Please note the contents of this blog are given for information only and must not be relied upon. Legal advice should always be sought in relation to specific circumstances.*



# TIME FOR TRUE REFLECTION

Watching the Brexit developments over the past three and a half years, it is a wonder that our civil society manages to achieve anything. It is always great to have the checks and balances in place and everyone has and is entitled to an opinion, but it started to seem that there were some in Parliamentary circles extremely determined to initially hold up the process and then stop the decision made democratically by the people on seemingly two separate occasions.

I am sure many of us brexiteers and remainers alike, were quite relieved with the election result on the 12th December and the fact that we can all move forward into a more certain future of self-help and self-reliance as we step away from the growing impositions of the European Union and negotiate our own trade deals on the world's stage. We are not strangers

to this concept given our standing in the world as the fifth largest economy and our gigantic history for such a small island community. We came very close in the 2007 finance crash to too great a dependence on financial institutions and we were woefully exposed to their impact. Following the referendum to leave the EU, we have seen an improvement in manufacturing potential as European manufacturers based in the UK seek alternative, close to source options. There is no better way to protect your operating costs than to remove the uncertainty of tariffs by procuring locally and this is a complete turnaround from what we have witnessed over the past 46 years with active sourcing across the EU representing huge competition to those in UK employment.

Against the scene of indecision and bitter wrangling over the democratic decision

to Brexit, it was truly important to see the result of a majority parliament supporting democracy and removing any question that the country was undecided.



**ADRIAN HAWKINS**

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

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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.

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# biz4Biz

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A comic book panel featuring a woman with blonde hair, looking stressed with her hand to her face. The background is blue with a white dot pattern.

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