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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

EDUCATION & TRAINING



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At the **heart** of the **East Midlands**

At the **heart** of **local business**

Come and meet DNCC's Director of Membership at the DNCC Stand



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The vision for Love Business East Midlands



There are so many organisations trying to reach out and engage the business community it can be overwhelming for business owners. However within these companies and organisations there is the ability to provide 'game changing' knowledge, opportunity and support.

The vision:

To create a single forum which gives all businesses in the East Midlands a platform to engage with their peers in the business community. One which includes start-ups to global corporations so we all have a way to communicate with each other.

To promote, support and create opportunity for businesses and organisations operating in the East Midlands. Sharing their success and good news stories.

POWERED BY



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To find out more about the partners visit www.lovebusinesseastmidlands.com/partners

Love Business East Midlands Programme Editorial and Advertising

Design, advertising, editorials and production provided by Quiet Storm Solutions.

Do people who are well connected have an advantage in business?



Peter Motley is owner of Business Networks East Midlands, a regular business network gathering which focuses on quality, select lunchtime meetings, and seminars in both Nottingham and Derby.

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”

Research has proven the people you know can often be the key to unlocking your way into a company. It is important to understand how, why and where networking can help you, as well as how to establish and expand your professional network.

There are 1000's of ways I've found to expand my professional network both in person and on line. The underlying tone has to be to make it about others, not about you. The simplest, and most powerful, advice I can give: Nothing expands your network faster than being helpful.

Q Love Business “Why do you think Networking is important?”

A Peter “In growing and larger organisations the buying process can be influenced by several people, therefore gaining influencers and contacts to support your sales process is important. So building business relationships that can make introductions or support you is very important in the current recovery, as managing growth in the next few years will be as difficult as managing the downside of the previous couple of years. Getting and managing the right type of contacts will need to be planned and developed if your growth is to be sustainable.”

Q Love Business “So how does The Business Network help organisations?”

A Peter “By bringing like-minded people together and providing the right environment for them, thereby removing the randomness out of making business contacts. Plus we go out to find people that members want to meet, so we can speed up the process. We regularly have 10 to 15 guests many of whom are not regular networkers.”

Q Love Business ““You’ve been an early supporter of Love Business East Midlands. Why?”

A Peter “It complements our events, as it draws hundreds of business professionals from across the region and beyond, offering new contacts for all”.

It reflects the same values of The Business Network as it has grown out of a desire to be positive about the East Midlands and has grown organically from the incredible efforts of a core group.”

Q Love Business “So, how can people get involved with you?”

A Peter “You can get involved by coming and having a coffee with us on the stand, you can call or email me or go to the website and see our events and pick one you like. You can also contact a member (there are several exhibiting) and talk about coming along with them. We take great pride in that all guests are chaperoned at meetings and feedback shows they enjoy being looked after.”



THE BUSINESS NETWORK EAST MIDLANDS

To book your next event visit
www.businessnetworkeastmidlands.co.uk
or email me your contact details to
peter@business-network.co.uk



Rob Brown



Great News!

I'll show you how to make every meeting count - even if you hate networking!

Networking may not be the elixir for some people and some businesses. There is a certain peer pressure in the business community which says that ignoring networking is a danger because 'everyone else is doing it'. If it is going to work, it must be done as part of a well-thought-out strategy. Even then, there is an element or 'try before you buy' or 'suck it and see'. As a mentor once taught me, 'if you don't go, you'll never know!'

Planning Your Networking Strategy

In developing your career and your business, it is no good being the best kept secret in the world. Unfortunately, many people see networking as a prime way to increase the visibility and embark on a networking frenzy without giving too much thought to a proper strategy. As a result, they attend many events only to find progress is slow, results are haphazard and tracking a return on their investment is difficult.

Despite these good intentions, many people fail to capitalise on the real benefits of networking because of lack of planning and strategy means they network in the wrong way at the wrong events with the wrong people.

Your time is precious, and every breakfast, lunch or evening event takes a good two hours out of your existing clients and customers, your loved ones, your marketing and your inbox. This is why

Rob Brown coaches and trains business professionals around the world to network more profitably, generate high quality referrals and become the number one choice for what they do in a crowded marketplace.



"Having spoken with Rob Brown at conferences, I know his dedication and expertise will do wonders for your reputation, your wallet and your opportunities!"

Lord Digby Jones

UK Government Advisor & Business Champion

you have to make it count. To help you, here are the four P's steps to developing your Personal Networking Strategy that I work through with my networking coaching clients;

1. PREPARATION. This means having the right attitude, setting the right networking goals and doing the right research to ensure you meet the right people. These are all part of preparing yourself to network productively and confidently.

2. PLACES. Networking doesn't have to be just confined to organised, regular networking clubs and events that you know about. Think about the one off conferences, trade shows, exhibitions and seminars that only take place once a year. Think about the company awards evenings and celebrations that only happen every so often.

Think about all the informal situations you find yourself in, like gyms, clubs, school events, hotel foyers and parties. Networking opportunities can be found anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Think trains, planes, automobiles! Think sports events, social gatherings, and queues of any kind.

Networking can be done anywhere where two or

more people come together. So look to create opportunities to start conversations in all kinds of situations. Solicit invitations to the kind of events you want to go to. Get on databases and guest lists. Ask the opinion of the most networked people you know about where they go, how they do it and what they get from each event or situation.

3. PROFILE. What makes a good event for you? What is the profile of a perfect networking situation? Do you want more business, more contacts, more alliances and partners, better suppliers, more referrals or more personal development? What kind of fish would you like to catch or swim with? Whatever they are, you'd better go where these fish are swimming!

4. PRIORITIES. Make the time to network with good time management, strong delegating, intelligent outsourcing and disciplined attendance. Very often, networking is a long term game, so attendance over time or a strong follow-up programme and conscientious diary management is usually required to bring you the results you desire.

www.therobbrown.com

Rob's Top 12 Tips for Networking



Exclusively on video for Love Business

Rob Brown, filmed 12 short videos for Love Business, each one highlighting and explaining a crucial networking skill or discipline. All aimed at making you more effective at networking.

www.lovebusinesseastmidlands.com/robbrown

If you want to inform, influence and persuade you need to understand how people think.

Influencing others isn't luck or magic – it's a science you can learn. When applied ethically, in a systematic process, it's incredibly powerful. Especially when used across your sales and marketing.

There are thousands of ways to get and keep a customer's attention. But you don't want thousands of ways. You want just a simple system that's effective - so you get better results with less hassle. A system so easy, reliable and flexible it's used by start-up businesses selling into micro niche markets - right through to global organisations like the International Paralympics Committee.

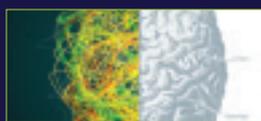
It gets you inside a buyers head, it explains what makes them buy and more importantly what stops them!

The Storming[®] system explains the key psychological triggers of behaviour. Plus how these triggers work within the latest digital marketing technologies. Storming[®] is so simple, you will quickly grasp which strategies to apply where because you will understand how your buyer thinks. Storming[®] is your guide to an integrated sales and marketing system which puts you on the same wavelength as your customer. This means you can predictably grow sales.

You'll understand the basics in a morning at our free workshop - 'Get inside your buyers head!'

Storming[®] is unique to Quiet Storm, it differentiates us from our competition. It's also the process which helps you to discover what differentiates you from yours.

Visit www.quietstorm.net/lovebusiness or call 0845 250 7320 to book your free place.



Sales & Marketing

- Strategies to Increase Sales
- Creating Sales Processes
- Internal Communications



On-Paper

- Advertising & Direct Mail
- Branding & Graphic Design
- Brochures & Publications



On-Line

- Online Marketing Strategy
- Search Advertising & SEO
- Websites & Ecommerce



On-Show

- Video & Photography
- Exhibitions & Events
- Sales Presentations



Support & Training

- Open Workshops
- Online Training Portal
- Coaching & Training

one brief • less hassle • better results

What if you could get inside your buyers head?

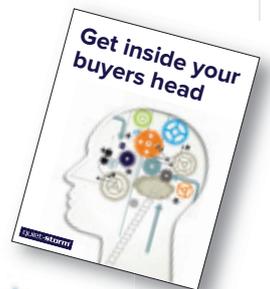


We've kissed lots of frogs,
so you don't have to...



'Get inside your buyers head'
FREE DOWNLOAD

Visit www.quietstorm.net/lovebusiness
and download your copy now!



It all started in our spare bedroom

Now we employ 4500 people, in 23 countries and turning over €350 million

Chris Corbin, started Ashfield In2Focus Ltd in 1997 with his wife Sam then sold the company to United Drug after 4 years where Chris is a director and major share holder. Ashfield In2Focus is what's referred to as a broad based pharmaceutical service company. It provides varying and complementary services to the pharmaceutical industry.

The core of the business is we provide sales forces for pharmaceutical companies

This is because they don't want to employ sales people themselves, so we provide a sales team for them on a contract basis. All the people who work for Ashfield In2Focus on these contracts are permanent employees. That part of the business started in the UK but is now in 23 different countries.

We've also bought a business called Medical Communications; this business employs PHD's and medical doctors who take the results from medical trials and convert them into articles which feature in the medical press.

We also have a meetings and events organisation called Universal World Events and that's the largest healthcare conferencing business in the world. We transport over fifty thousand doctors all over the globe every year.

"The biggest challenge is just having enough good people to manage the businesses"

Succession planning is a huge hot topic here and we try wherever we can to develop our own people and bring them through, so we have lots of training programmes for talented employees and we move them around different departments and different parts of the business. We also send them overseas to try and develop their business knowledge.

"One of the reasons we sold to United Drug was because we needed the business to achieve what it was capable of achieving; in order to do this we needed an injection of capital"

Since the United Drug purchase, we spent over €100 million and we've made 14 acquisitions so

far, with a couple more lined up. This puts a big strain on your people resources, you need mobile people who can go to different parts of the world and quickly get stuck in to the work.

You succeed because of the people you work with, nobody succeeds on their own

If I still had to do everything in this business, then we'd probably only have twelve employees and be in our little office in Market Street. So the key thing in any business is about realising the importance of your people.

Appreciate the part they play in your business and the part your business plays in their lives

Just as business owners are keen to show what they can do, they need to appreciate other people want to show what they are capable of. People ultimately want to work in an environment where they are allowed to grow and show what they can do.

Most people are fundamentally good. They want to demonstrate how capable they are and enjoy their work. This means you need to let people make mistakes, and grow as a result of them. It means you need the right support in place so people can talk through a mistake and don't feel the need to hide it.

As the business leader, I feel it's important to give people time, have a chat, show them they are important. There's a friendly approachable attitude here.

People spend about 60% of their time in work – they need to enjoy it!

People need to feel valued, if you treat people well they repay it in spades. The bigger the organisation gets the more difficult that becomes, so we have social events to get people involved. As a business we strive to treat all of our people the same and provide them with the opportunities to develop.

What's my recipe for success?

Three things all beginning with the same letter...

Honesty – to be honest with each other, about the way you're feeling, performing and what your hopes and aspirations are. This means you always need to face the truth. It's not just about money it's about creating the right culture and enjoying going to work.

Hard Work – Create the right environment where people want to work hard and succeed. I see people arrive early because they want to, we don't have clocking in or out, and people stay late because they want to stay late. People tell me they look forward to coming to work.

Finally, everyone who's successful must retain a level of humility.

Humility – You don't do anything on your own, you become successful through the success of others. I'm sure I've done things which upset people, this isn't a popularity contest. But you should always have the best interests of the business at heart. Because then you have the best interests of the people at heart. We're all employees and colleagues working together, everyone's role is equally important.

I've noticed most successful leaders surround themselves with really good people – I marvel at the skills around me

I've done pretty much every job since we started, from answering the phone to cleaning the office, together with my wife. When there was 3 or 4 people we couldn't afford cleaners so it was down to us. I wouldn't want to go back to doing all those things but everyone in the business is important and has their role to play. I think it's my job to make their working environment enjoyable.

The Midlands is a great place to be based because it's in the middle!

We bring international clients to Ashby every day, with our biggest clients bringing in their senior management team also.

I get organised by Lisa, my absolutely fabulous P.A. to make sure I don't waste my time

I'm sure I do occasionally but it never feels like it. If I'm talking to someone, it's time invested. I spend 2-3 evenings a week having dinner with clients or my team. This week we're taking 20 people out for no other reason than we've just finished our financial year, it's been very good and a lot of people have worked hard to make it happen. We just need to get everything ready for the auditors so I'm taking a gang of them out for dinner. We'll just go and have fun, have a laugh, a meal, people enjoy it.



Chris Corbin is one of the most inspirational examples of entrepreneurship and determination. He firmly believes that it is within the grasp of anyone to build a successful life for themselves and their family.

People often seek responsibility but don't like accountability

Running a business has its downsides as well as its upsides. If you need to make difficult decisions, you must seek wise council but ultimately the decision is yours and it will impact on people's lives.

John F. Kennedy said "Fix the roof while the sun is shining" so you need to make the hard decisions in the good times, not just knee jerk 'reactionary changes'.

When things are going well you should keep your business in peak condition so it will be able to face the tough times when they come. You can only control your cost base. You can't control your sales, you can do your best, you do the best pitches but you can't control the money people spend with you. How much money you spend, is what you control.

Advice for anyone just starting out?

Work very hard, expect very little, protect your cash flow wherever you can and be surprised by success.

BUSINESS TRAVEL JUST GOT TASTIER



Complimentary breakfast for First Class passengers has now been introduced. Offered on weekday trains arriving in London St Pancras before 1000 and on those departing London St Pancras before 0900. Any passenger with a First Class ticket will now be able to enjoy a complimentary lighter breakfast, with full breakfast also complimentary on six trains travelling South each morning.

FASTER TRAINS TO AND FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS



Following significant investment from Network Rail, journey times to London St Pancras will improve from December 2013 for the first time since 2008. From 8 December 2013 our fastest train each day to London St Pancras will take just **2 hours** from Sheffield, **1 hour 31 minutes** from Nottingham, **1 hour 28 minutes** from Derby and **1 hour 5 minutes** from Leicester. For more information visit eastmidlandstrains.co.uk

If you'd like to find out more about our services for business, email yourbusiness@eastmidlandstrains.co.uk and our Business Development team will contact you.

*Selected weekday morning journeys only. Terms and conditions apply.

GET ON BOARD. EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS

Positive Thinking

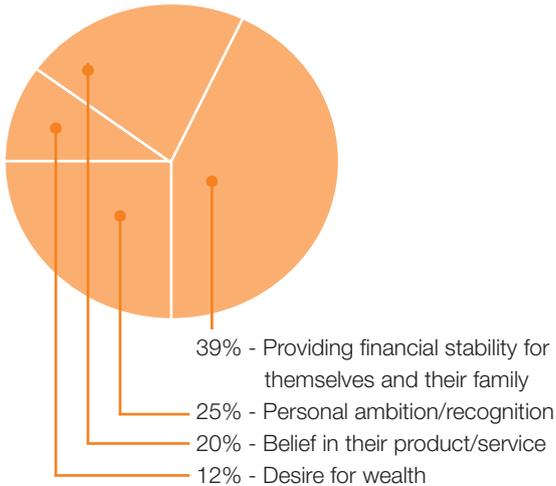
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Geldards is one of the country's leading regional law firms. Our clients, both large and small, trust us to give them high quality legal advice that is **practical, commercially-minded** and value for money. We firmly believe lawyers must provide legal

support with **imagination and business insight**. Whether you come to us with a query or a major deal, we will listen to you and respond with honest, pragmatic advice **tailored to your situation** and the way you do business.

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What motivated you to become a business owner?



When 305 business owners were asked this question, their answers about what motivated them were pretty unanimous.

The reality is because of these emotionally charged personal motivators, the majority of business owners are committed to driving their businesses forward – but at what cost?

You're probably doing more now for less financial reward compared to a few years ago?



- When you're not working do you stop thinking about it?
- Are you spending less time with the family because of work?
- Would you like to find a better way of managing and growing your business?

You know there is no silver bullet But there must be a better way?



The pace of business is relentless, with new technology speeding up everything from communication to delivery expectations.

Here's a quick test to demonstrate what I mean here:

- ▶ Do you have a smart phone?
- ▶ How many emails do you receive a day?
- ▶ What are the expectations on a reply?

Most business owners are 'always on.' Relationships were the foundations of great business but things are changing. What are you doing to make this transition in your business?

There are three critical factors impacting on you as a business owner:

The attention span of your customers is shorter so it's more difficult to build relationships.

The pace of day-to-day work gets quicker, more needs to be done just to stand still. You get less time to think about the future, adjust to the changes in your sector.

So the big question is... Do you manage what's happening or react to what's happened?

If you want to focus your business on profitable growth in these challenging conditions. There is a proven process which will work for your business.

To find out more about the process call 0845 6181909 and ask about the Business Map.

I'll explain the Business Map process at ZERO cost except for an investment of 2 hours of your time. Then you can decide which path to take. Alternatively visit my website www.theprofitkey.com and get the FREE Download 'The Profit Key' which explains how to unlock the potential in your business.

I'll also explain why most business owners are like zebras and why you don't want to be?



Building Extremely Close

Here are 7 great ways businesses of any size can

Spending time with a client, prospect or supplier at an event (when done right) is an incredibly powerful way to strengthen existing business relationships. It can also help quickly build new partnerships and deepen a new clients' loyalty to you overnight.

The key to effective client hospitality is matching the client up with the right type of event. Take one client to a lavish evening and they may feel totally uncomfortable and disengaged. Another person, same evening, enjoys it and you win their heart and mind - find out what they like, test the water! If they are a family person, do something which engages their family. If they like the theatre, a particular band or sport - suggest you can get tickets and would they like to join you.

The biggest myth is hospitality is expensive, because there are many options available, from a pub lunch and sporting fixture to a mega event and the best seats in the house. Understand your budget, the potential rewards and most important of all - what do you feel your guests would enjoy.

Here are 7 tips on using hospitality to win more business

1. Get to know the person - what interests them?

Client hospitality days out are all about getting your key clients or prospective clients out of the office and into a more relaxed and informal setting. An informal setting gives you time and allows you to build a more personal relationship with them.

More meaningful client relations are about more than just the balance sheet. Even hard-nosed clients are human and will be influenced by personal relationships and shared experiences. People 'like people' who are like them. Spending time with anyone you will discover what you have in common, shared interests, aspirations, family. Establishing common interests builds trust and understanding, making your relationship more than just business.

2. Breaking the Ice, Creating a Great First Impression

Strong business relationships are often founded on personal relationships, building this depth through business alone takes time. If you are meeting clients face-to-face for the first time, client hospitality provides a more informal setting. It makes it easier to get to know your clients on a personal level faster. It provides a neutral stage to build rapport - from 'have you been here before?' To conversation about something related to the shared hospitality experience.

3. Nurturing Relationships - Showing You Care

Protecting your business with existing clients is far less costly than the cost of attracting new clients. There are many surveys which point out one of the major reasons for switching supplier is the perception 'they didn't care about our business.' A softer, more personable and informal approach can position you to get great client feedback - 'what could we do better?'

This also means you need to listen, take action and prove you care. The rewards are there if you do - because clients with a stronger relationship with their suppliers are proven to spend more. Plus they are also more likely to refer you to others. Word of mouth is the cheapest and most trusted form of promotion.

Here's what the experts

James Blick
CEO
The Finesse Collection



Whether it's a pub lunch or afternoon tea, getting to know the person is the most important aspect when building close business relationships. Business doesn't always run smoothly, so when there are hiccups, you need to feel confident you can pick up the phone and speak to the person 'one to one.' As the saying goes, "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

www.thefinessecollection.com

Richard Shakespeare
Disability Consultant



When looking to build a stronger relationship with existing clients consider how good your relationship is on a scale of 1-10. If your relationship is a 6 or a 7 for example consider what you can do over the next 6 to 12 months to move that client to a 10, what can you do to enhance the relationship? How will you ensure your business continues to serve the needs of that client? What could you do to turn a maybe into a yes?

www.richardshakespeare.com

Ian Mitchie
co-founder of
Strawberry Fields Festival



Now entering our FIFTH year, Strawberry Fields Festival is widely regarded as one of the fastest growing and most exciting independent festivals in the UK. It wouldn't have been possible without building strong client and supplier relationships. Without building strong relationships you will never acquire loyalty, which is the lifeblood for any fledgling business."

www.strawberryfieldsfestival.co.uk

Client Relationships

really benefit from client hospitality

4. Strategic Hospitality - Less Costs and Higher Impact

Imagine you are going to an exhibition where it's likely you will stay overnight. Now imagine if one of your suppliers offered you a pre-exhibition dinner and overnight accommodation. The supplier may not have the biggest stand at the exhibition, but they will create the biggest impression. PLUS they will have spent the evening with you before you spend anytime with their competitors. Hospitality can be highly effective 'gorilla marketing' using surprise tactics to create a much greater impression than the cost of the alternative - in this case a big impressive exhibition stand.

5. Opportunities to Grow your Network

Part of the attraction of any event is the opportunity to meet like minded people. New contacts that can provide you with potentially new and important relationships. As the saying goes "It's not what you know, it's who you know." An informal setting of an event provides a relaxed opportunity to establish new contacts and develop mutually beneficial relationships. The easiest way to do this is to ask your client if they have a friend or work colleague they'd like to bring along.

6. Involve your Key Staff in Entertaining

The greater number of 'personal contacts' in your business, the stronger the 'client - supplier' relationship becomes. Involving your people in hospitality events means you and your clients can build stronger, broader and deeper relationships. It's also an excellent way to thank your people for their loyalty and strengthen their bonds with the business and each other. This in turn has valuable benefits for morale, motivation and teamwork.

7. Shared Experiences, Get Personal - Get Psychological!

With price and service levels becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate your offer, you need to create a lasting memory. When all things are equal, people buy from people they like. Dr. Robert Cialdini is Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University, his research identified '6 Principles of Influence' all of which are commonly used in hospitality, either by design or happy accident.

Principle #1: Reciprocation

Principle #2: Social Proof

Principle #3: Commitment and Consistency

Principle #4: Liking

Principle #5: Authority

Principle #6: Scarcity

Hosting the perfect event typically engages all six of these powerful psychological factors that affect any persons behaviour. Understanding how they work will help you design the most effective hospitality for your guests, your business and your return on investment.

 Visit www.lovebusinesseastmidlands.com/like
To find out about Cialdini's principles of persuasion and understand the psychological triggers which influence whether we like someone or not.

say..

Martin Cook
Managing Director
The Conference Works



Philip Megson
Director
Quiet Storm



Jenna Parker
Venue Hire Sales Executive
Donington Park



We do all sorts of events, from small workshops with less than 25 people to huge events with hundreds. It doesn't matter what the subject, size or format, one thing is always common. People start off more reserved but by the end of the event they have something in common, what they've just experienced. This means they can talk, begin conversations. When people talk the barriers come down. That's why I feel events are so successful in building relationships.

www.theconferenceworks.co.uk

Quiet Storm is built on strong business relationships or 'trust.' Trust is possibly the major part in the foundation of successful business relationships. Building trust takes time and you need to make the effort. In sales, one of the greatest barriers is suspicion and fear. There are few more effective ways to help you to better connect with 'the person behind the job' than an event. People like people who are like them, find something you have in common - a shared passion. You'll be amazed how quickly your relationship changes.

www.quietstorm.net

Whatever the reason, whatever the business 'people buy people' - which is why a sporting event is a great way to really get to know the person and maybe even their family. You can find common ground if you know enough about someone. Which means you can find a way to make anything work. One tip, it must be genuine - don't expect instant returns. Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, forever to repair.

www.donington-park.co.uk

Businesses often forget how important people are

Peter Tom is one of those unique people who is known equally for his success in the sporting world as well as business.

1956 he joined his father and uncle's quarry business. Aged 16 and unable to read or write, his role in the family business was general dogsbody! With a passion for sport by the age of 23 Peter was playing for Leicester Tigers Rugby Club. It was the days before rugby was a professional sport, so his days were spent working at the quarry and evenings were spent training hard for the Tigers. By 1968 he'd made 130 first team appearances. It was during this period he learned that the fundamentals of business and sports were one and the same.

With vision, energy and a tremendous self-belief he went on to turn the family business into the UK's fourth biggest producer of aggregates, Aggregate Industries plc.

"I learned some great lessons from playing for the Tigers"

I was lucky in that I was involved in both a family business and played for the Tigers, these two experiences taught me the basics. The key factor being whether sport or business, successful people are very focused and put everything in to achieving their success. There's no limit on the time they spent working towards being the best. As Gary Player said, "The more I practice, the luckier I get." So there's no substitute for hard work – which is why it's important you enjoy what you do.

Three key things I took from my experience at the Tigers and have always applied in my businesses:

1) The team is greater than the individuals within it

You can't do it on your own, the team wins or loses. There are no hiding places – everyone's accountable. Win or lose, there's always room for improvement. Before the next weekend's game, sitting down together, understanding the role you and each of your teammates are to play. Understanding what needs to happen to beat the team you're going to face next.

2) The team is like a family – look after each other

You don't need to be friends with the people in the team but you do need to respect them. Especially if you lost a game you should have won. Sitting down with the team and breaking the play down to identify what could have been done differently. Not finger pointing but working out what went wrong, what could have been better? Then taking action to put it right.

3) Focus on being the best - not the prize money

The most successful teams are motivated because they have a passion and desire to be the best. The players practiced

hard because they knew this was the key. Inside or outside rugby, we watched other teams who were successful. What was it they did differently? What could we take and use? Always seeking out the little differences here and there. Constantly striving to make the team even better.

"These key philosophies still underpin the Tigers today and are the foundation for Breedon Aggregates' success"

I recognise our people, wherever they work within the organisation, they know what's going on in the business. They are uniquely positioned to point out where and what we could be doing better. Which is why I always make time to speak with people, have incentives for suggestions and acknowledge their ideas. Human nature is often to hide any problems, so you need to work in any business to ensure your people have the confidence to admit their mistakes. Only when a mistake is out in the open can you learn from it and put measures in to avoid repeating it.

"People need to be valued to the point where they feel the business is theirs"

99.9% of people want to be proud of what they do, the place they work at and enjoy their working day. Which is why we work so hard to create an environment for individuals to fulfill their potential. Be the best they can be at their chosen role and give them a pathway to develop within the organisation.

It starts and ends with having a clear vision - making sure everyone knows what it is and why it's important

This means understanding what you do and why customers choose you instead of the alternatives. It means good housekeeping and an exemplary health and safety record. It means respecting our customers and imagining what they might want or need.

Always striving to be better

I'm fascinated by people who are successful, whatever field whether military, sport, science or business. So I read a great deal because I want to understand how they've achieved their goals. See what lessons I can learn from their experience. One common factor in all the people I read about, is the drive to want to be the best, earning money is a nice by-product. I'm very self critical, I analyse everything I do trying to understand what happened and if I could have done things differently and got a better result.



Peter Tom - Born 1940 in Cornwall

- 1956 - Joined the family business unable to read or write**
- 1963 - 1968 made 130 appearances for Leicester Tigers Rugby Club**
- 1995 - Became chairman of the Leicester Tigers Rugby Club**
(To date, during his chairmanship, the club has won 10 championships and two Heineken Cups)
- 2005 - Sold Aggregate Industries to Holcim for £1.8bn**
- 2006 - Peter's services for sport and business earned him a CBE**
- 2007 - Stepped down as chairman of Aggregate Industries**
- 2008 - Co-founded Marwyn Materials with Simon Vivian**
- 2010 - Became Executive Chairman of Breedon Aggregates Ltd**
A reverse acquisition of Breedon Holdings by Marwyn Materials, Breedon Aggregates Limited is now the largest independent aggregates business in the UK after the global majors. It operates 37 quarries, 22 asphalt plants, 48 ready-mixed concrete & mortar plants and two concrete block plants in England and Scotland, employing around 1,000 people.
- 2013 - Leicester Mercury Lifetime Achievement Award winner**

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DNCC

Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
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Want to access a consumer base which spends in excess of £80 billion a year in the UK economy?

I help businesses understand disability awareness so they can engage more effectively with customers with a disability

In this brief article I want to share with you some golden rules and key considerations.

The more eagle-eyed readers amongst you might have spotted that this article deliberately refers to "Customers with a disability" and not disabled customers. – First and foremost everyone who visits your premises, buys your products or uses your services is a customer.

You need to focus on that customer aspect rather than trying to attach labels to people or worrying about what we are going to do. Ultimately the best way to provide quality support to a customer with a disability is to treat them as you would anyone else.

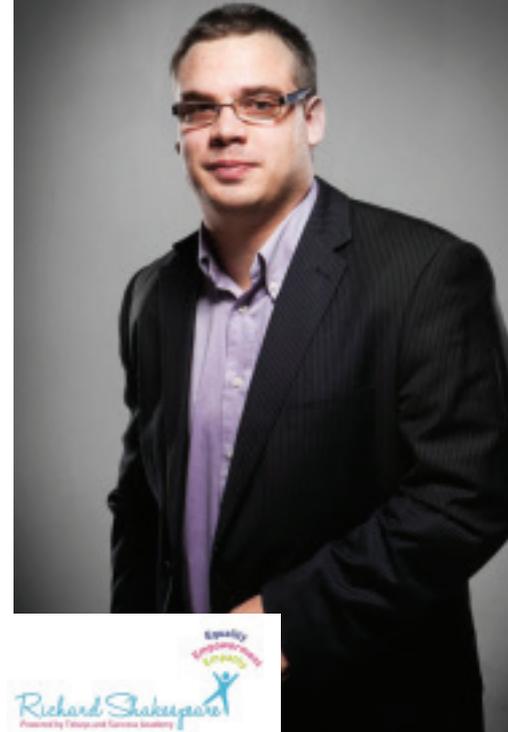
"Make sure that you ask "Can I offer you any assistance" as opposed to can I help you"

A report published by the Office for Disability Issues suggested that for the average business up to 20% of their customer base could be made up of individuals with a disability. It really can make good business sense to be truly inclusive and to value your customers.

If you would like to find out more about how to engage this lucrative customer base...

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“...the three-county Chamber could become the biggest grassroots business voice in the country”

Standing Tall Together

Whilst the local rivalries which exist between Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire have meant the three counties have always been uneasy bedfellows, from a business point of view, they are united and stand together.



George Cowcher, Group Chief Executive of the newly merged Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce,

'There has been a lot of excitement about this merger'

This was cemented late last year when the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce (DNCC), already the UK's second largest Chamber, solidified its position by merging with its sister organisation in Leicestershire.

The new organisation will span the three cities and counties, becoming the premier source of business support, information and representation in the East Midlands.

It will help its members with everything from export enquiries and international trade services to staff development and training, recruitment support and assistance with legal, HR and financial issues.

It will operate as a single group company, but continue to trade, initially, as DNCC in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and as Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce in Leicester.

DNCC Chief Executive George Cowcher has become Group Chief Executive. He is something of a veteran of Chamber mergers, having been brought to the region in 2006 by the Board of the former Derbyshire Chamber to oversee its tie-up with its Nottinghamshire counterpart.

It was a deal which, he says, was a lot more controversial than the Leicestershire one.

"I've been really quite surprised by how smoothly the DNCC/Leicestershire merger deal went, to be honest" he

said. "Certainly, when we merged Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire together, there were more concerns." A ballot held in October 2013 saw members of both Chambers vote overwhelmingly in support of the proposals to merge. It's likely the lack of opposition was due to the fact Leicestershire Chamber members welcomed the huge benefits of being part of the UK's second biggest Chamber.

"In talking to people in Leicestershire, there's been quite a lot of excitement about being part of an organisation with a more successful formula," said Mr Cowcher. "If there are worries, they are from the DNCC side, who are worried about resources being spread too thinly."

Nottinghamshire Chamber was forced into a tie-up with Derbyshire Chamber in 2006 after facing financial problems, but there were no imminent financial issues for Leicestershire.

The latest merger completed two months ahead of schedule. Martin Traynor, Leicestershire's former chief executive, has transferred his responsibilities to Mr Cowcher and his fellow directors. He will stay on in a consultancy role until 31 January, then will stand down.

Leicestershire Chamber, with 750 members, has 11 staff at De Montfort University, while DNCC, with 3,200 members, employs 200 people at five sites, including its Chesterfield head office.

Mr Cowcher says there are no plans to close the Leicester office or cut staff. Instead, the aim is to increase employee numbers and buy a new building in the city.

"We need to make sure those 11 staff provide a firm foundation," he said. "Leicestershire will be able to plug into systems at DNCC."

"The aim of this merger is to bring Leicestershire up to the same level of standing as DNCC. We want to set some firm foundations. In the medium to long-term, I suspect staff numbers will grow in Leicestershire and in the longer term, we will probably look to purchase a building in Leicester to establish a permanent base in the city."

Mr Cowcher said the main priorities are growing Leicestershire's services in order to attract more members. International trade links and training and recruitment services are high on the agenda.

This lack of scale is reflected in a turnover "significantly less than £1m", compared to DNCC's turnover of £7.5m.

Derbyshire

Nottinghamshire



Leicestershire

Leicestershire has a very small international presence at the moment," said Mr Cowcher. We believe international trade is very important. We need to see some growth in that area.

"Also, Leicestershire doesn't deliver anything in training and recruitment. What we will be aiming to do is develop that as well. I think we will be able to improve members' offering quickly.

"One of the things I'm looking to do is to get more resources back into customer-facing activities when dealing with members."

Mr Cowcher said Leicestershire was faced with little choice but to surrender its 153-year-old independence if it wanted to survive as a relevant business organisation.

Its membership had fallen by a quarter in recent years.

Under the merger, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce will keep its president, although the group will have an overall president – currently Newark businessman Tim Parker, who is president of DNCC.

Leicestershire Chamber will have its own members' council, which will feed into the main 22-person DNCC board.

One of the big attractions for DNCC to merge was the access to 750 more members in Leicestershire. It was already the second biggest chamber of commerce in the country in terms of membership numbers, sitting behind Manchester, and the merger won't change that.

But it puts the enlarged organisation within spitting distance of Manchester's membership total, and Mr Cowcher believes that if below-par membership in Leicestershire is improved and the existing DNCC numbers expanded further, the three-county Chamber could become the biggest grassroots business voice in the country.

That clearly places the business communities in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire at a huge advantage in terms of getting bigger, better services for members and a bigger say nationally for this neck of the woods.

It is only three years ago that the coalition Government scrapped Labour's regional development agencies, the bodies set up to put money into provincial economies.

And it's now clear – partly as a result of a review carried out by former Tory Enterprise Minister Lord Heseltine – that it believes cities, local enterprise partnerships and chambers of commerce are the best way to drive local economic development with business help.

But if this strategy is to work, the organisations themselves need to be in the right shape to influence Government policy towards business, and attract funding.

Mr Cowcher continued: "DNCC was already a successful chamber. It has been chamber of the year before and there is massive profile and credibility attached to that.

"But this year is a really interesting year. We've gone from two counties to three and it would be remiss of us to take this step without looking at whether we're in the right shape and organised to deliver.

"This is a step-change and every organisation in these circumstances needs to think, take stock and then move forward."

The vision for the future won't just be shaped by a political agenda

which suggests chambers need to be big enough and professional enough to bat against politicians and civil servants.

Mr Cowcher intends to spend a lot of his time talking to members in the three counties to find out what they want and suggest ideas.

He added: "The merger will allow the two Chambers to pool their resources to better meet the needs of businesses in the three counties, three cities and many towns within the covered area and beyond.

"It will also allow DNCC to extend its broad remit of services to its new members in Leicestershire and to enable the development of new services which reflect the increased impact the new enlarged Chamber will have.

"This development reflects the fact that member businesses from both Chambers recognise the value of merging into a single entity serving the whole of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, which will become the premier source of business information, support and other services in the East Midlands, capable of influencing at a national level."

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★ gem106 *what a feeling*

East Midlands radio station Gem 106 is now firmly on the map as a major force on the local media landscape. Since launching in January 2011, the station has gone from strength to strength with more people tuning in to the point where it is now enjoying its highest ever audience on the 106FM frequency. But what is the secret behind this ongoing success? Managing Director Bob Norman gives us an insight how Gem 106 set's about giving everyone that 'feeling'.

In a time when the commercial radio landscape continues to evolve and change, the most important thing to us is that we continue to be 'the' local choice for both listeners and advertisers in the East Midlands. While other stations take hours of networked programmes from London every day, we're here broadcasting live from the East Midlands twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and that is what makes us unique. We took the bold decision to rebrand almost three years ago. At that time our audience was strong and the station had a well known national brand. It was a lot to put at risk. However we felt confident that by breaking away, creating our own new brand and managing every second of programming each day ourselves, we could offer listeners a more relevant and engaging radio station. In addition our clients would have a more powerful advertising medium at their disposal.

Of course, the music we play is vitally important. The playlist is built on a rich mix of classic songs on which the best moments of our listeners' lives were built, alongside contemporary tracks that people love right now. Think Buble to Adele and Will Young to Olly Murs, with a few classics from the 80s in there too.

Getting the best possible on-air talent is also very important and we feel passionately that all our presenters have that ability to be natural, real entertainers, not cheesy radio jocks of yesteryear. Our breakfast duo Sam & Amy are the perfect example of this. They are exceptional broadcasters, with a genuinely close relationship that listeners really warm to. We were extremely proud to see them collect the UK's Best Breakfast Show at the Sony Radio Academy Awards earlier this year, although neither of them have stopped going on about it since!

Getting the best presenters playing the right mix of music through a local platform has proved to be the recipe for growing loyalty and love for the station amongst our listeners. But, being local, living round here and reflecting the lives of our listeners, is how we really stand out. Taking part is important too, so we get

involved with big local events like Nottingham Riviera, Derby 10K and of course the many autumn events like Abbey Park bonfire attracting 27,000 people and a host of Christmas Lights across the patch including Beeston, West Bridgford and Loughborough.

When we support local causes our listeners respond. Last December we set a target of raising £25,000 to help transform the children's cancer unit at QMC Hospital in Nottingham with our Give It Up appeal. With our listeners help we smashed the target and raised an incredible £70,000.

From an advertising perspective our clients now want something more innovative than just spot advertising so we put creativity at the centre of all we do. We recently created a series of videos for Vauxhall, which portrayed Amy's latest love affair with Adam – the new car from Vauxhall. We also worked with The Nottingham Building Society for their Young Savers account. Here, we invited local children to take part in auditions to feature in a series of videos where they played the part of bank staff. We had a fantastic response from hundreds of children from across the region.

We believe we've done a good job of marketing ourselves. Not many brands can boast a dancing hamster called Sammy as their station mascot! There's still a long way to go as we believe we can continue to grow. This will happen as long as we keep getting all of the above right and keep our listeners entertained.



Bob Norman Gem 106 MD

Keynote Speakers

09.30am - 10.00am

Andrew Bridgen MP & John Allan

National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses



10.10am - 10.30am

Chris Corbin

Managing Director, Ashfield In2Focus
What makes success?



10.40am - 11.00am

Clare Burles

HR Director, East Midlands Trains
How to motivate and manage your greatest asset - your people



11.10am - 11.30am

Rob Brown

Networking Expert & Motivational Speaker
How to make your networking pay!



11.40am - 12.00pm

Scott Towns

British Telecom
What's changing online - and how you can capitalise on it!



12.10pm - 12.30pm

Chris Rose

Head of Brand, Leicester Tigers
How to be champions in business



12.40pm - 1.00pm

David Lloyd

Group Programme Director, Orion Media
What about 'communication and engagement'?



Two Special Sessions

1.15pm - 2.30pm

E-Business Club

Working Lunch
Are you making the most of new online and digital technology?



Pre-Book To Guarantee Your Place

2.45pm - 3.15pm

Kick-start your sales!

Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
21 Things to Win Sales in 21 blistering Minutes!



Pre-Book To Guarantee Your Place



WORKSHOP 1

8.30am - 9.15am

Networking v Social Media

What's the most effective, where & why! A panel of experts on social media let you in to the secrets of those who win business through working smart when it comes to social engagement and relationship building to win new business and keep existing customers spending.

WORKSHOP 2

10.15am - 11.00am

Sales & Marketing Tricks of the Trade!

Discover the hidden gems of lead generation and how to quickly increase sales. The panel of marketing experts and top performing sales people will share their tips on what works and why. They'll help you understand how to target The right customers, with the right message, at the right time plus the right engagement tools.

WORKSHOP 3

11.15am - 12.00pm

Talent Spotting & Apprenticeships

How to find, motivate & keep great people because in 2014 the warning signs are this could be your greatest challenge. Here a panel of recruitment and HR specialists tell you about their best strategies. Plus, where and how to get the best apprentices who have already been prepared for a commercial workplace environment.

Book your place on the workshops now at

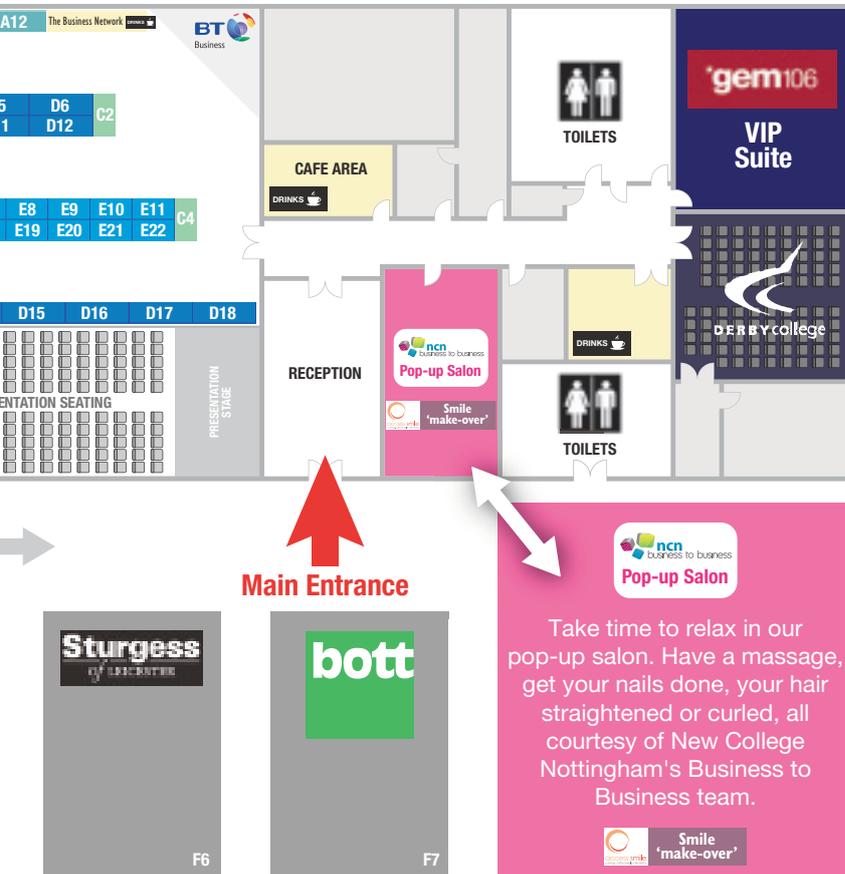
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- A7 Flex Recruitment
- A8 Central Joinery Ltd
- A9 Marvic Joinery Ltd
- A10 Nottingham Trent University
- A11 GEM106
- A12 M-EC
- A13 The Business Network
- B1 Purpose Media (UK) Ltd
- B2 Imago at Loughborough Ltd
- B3 Storming®
- B4 Hallam Internet Ltd
- C1 Future Energy
- C2 East Midlands Trains
- C3 Sturgess Motor Group
- C4 QUAD
- C5 UKTI Trade and Investment
- C6 Plug & Play Design
- D1 CWCS Managed Hosting
- D2 Bott Ltd
- D3 ebusiness Club
- D4 Derbyshire & Nottingham Chamber of Commerce
- D5 Marketing Derby
- D6 Merison Building Maintenance Contactors Ltd
- D7 Midlands Leadership Experience
- D8 New College Nottingham
- D9 IMPACT Apprenticeships
- D10 University of Derby Corporate
- D11 University of Derby Corporate
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- F1 Marshall Honda
- F2 Derbyshire Leicestershire Rutland Air Ambulance
- F3 Derby College
- F4-5 Sturgess of Leicester
- F6 Bott Ltd
- F7 David Wilsons Trailers Ltd
- F8 Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
- F9 Skoda
- F10 Gem 106

WORKSHOP 4

12.15pm - 1.00pm GrowthAccelerator Grant Funding

GrowthAccelerator - Britain's best kept secret and possibly the easiest grant funding ever to access. All these years we have been hanging out for meaningful business support that works in the real world, and it's here! 85% of its 6,000 participants said their businesses grew more quickly as a result of the scheme. 77% said that they had achieved outcomes that they couldn't have achieved by themselves, and 97% of them would recommend the scheme. If you are a limited company, VAT registered and want to grow this is must attend session.

WORKSHOP 5

1.30pm - 2.15pm Business Finance & Unlocking Wealth

Whether you are trying to raise capital, build wealth or access funds from a poorly performing pension scheme this panel of 'money wizards' are experts in both. They can explain quickly and in a non nonsense fashion how you need to pitch your proposition to get the best rates when borrowing. They can also point out the ways to access double figure capital growth. If you want to understand how bankers and other lenders think when lending or investing this is the session for you.

WORKSHOP 6

2.30pm - 3.15pm 'Thinking Skills For Senior Executives'

Practical results focused tools to get immediate results - I know it sounds too good to be true but Andy Gilbert works with senior executives across Europe to quickly inspire their thinking. In this short sharp session he will give you a variety of quick tools which can be deployed in the workplace to motivate and encourage innovative thinking throughout the team. If you employ 50 people plus and want to know how you can engage and enthuse at all levels this workshop can't be missed.

If Facebook are finding it hard to recruit – what chance do ordinary businesses have?



Adrian Hobbs FlexPlus

A looming shortage of digital workers could cripple our potential if we don't act fast

The demand for tech talent is only going to grow as our working and personal lives become increasingly centred around technology.

The UK digital industry will need 300,000 new recruits by 2020 to reach its full potential, according to a recent report from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and e-skills, the sector skills council for business and IT. Even Facebook has said it struggles to find the right tech talent in this country.

Why should we care?

Because technology is central to the local and national economy IT and tech talent powers every sector, from defence to retail and from finance to manufacturing. The UK digital industry currently contributes £69bn to the economy and its growing fast. If businesses can't access the talent they need, they are less likely to be able to grow as rapidly as they want or plan to. On a cumulative scale this threatens our whole economy. A tech talent shortage also threatens innovation and delays in developing new products or services. Which means losing business or orders to competitors.

"If we don't invest in digital upskilling we'll see those jobs outsourced to the new tech hubs like India, Poland & Russia."

But this won't help UK business, as it will cost us more! Because although overseas' contractors will typically have a significantly cheaper daily rate they are attractive. But the costs soon stack up, because using overseas workers means spending more time explaining, going over there, bringing people over here. Ultimately this means there is rarely much if any price difference between using UK or overseas workers. What it does mean is lost opportunities in this region, this country.

The most progressive education establishments are working together with local businesses to develop the skills needed



'Infinity Park Derby' New £200 million business park - John Coyne, Vice Chancellor of the University of Derby said: "Our partnership with Derby City Council, Aston and Cranfield Universities – called Engineering Supply Chain Solutions – has been created to support companies in their growth plans and to put them in touch with academics and best practice from around the world.



Entrepreneurs are not born, they are made

As the East Midlands hub for the innovative Peter Jones Enterprise Academy, Leicester College offers young entrepreneurs the chance to realise and achieve their business dreams.

Digital Studio College

Sponsored by the Derby College Education Trust and working in partnership with key regional employers, will be the first in Derbyshire and will open in September 2014.



Work based learning is the way forward

New College Nottingham's business to business team has proved that sector work based learning pays off. The Sector Based Work Academy is a 6-8 week course that provides unemployed people in the area with the necessary training and work experience to guarantee them an interview at the end of the course. The latest cohort saw an 80% success rate.



Because it's only when businesses and educational establishments work together, the right skills pipeline can be created. Businesses want sustainable recovery and growth, which means they need to take a new look at their employees.

We're all committed to creating a world-class pipeline of talent young or old

Through high quality apprenticeships, new industry-led qualifications and strong partnerships between education providers and businesses. Providing a gateway for people of all ages who are keen to develop their skills.

Helping small and medium businesses understand where the target market for the role they're recruiting for is critical

Businesses can make sure they are ready for our bold new digital future with action early on and a strategic attitude to up-skilling the workforce. Talent is easy to spot but hard to retain – working together we can help businesses understand what they need to do. Getting this right and our economic prospects might not look so stormy after all.

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* Davies, A. (2008). Enablers of Productivity. Staffordshire: Business Link/Benchmark Index

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Derby College Group Focuses on Vital Employment Skills

Derby College has seen a year of expansion and improvement – re-affirming its position as one of the largest and most successful further education colleges in the UK and embedding the organisation’s strategic vision to inspire individual success, support economic growth and strengthen local communities.

Here, Chief Executive Mandie Stravino explains why diversifying into wider areas of education and involving businesses in the strategic growth and direction of the Derby College Group is contributing to the economic health and well-being of the city and county.

Derby College, which has sites in Derby city, Erewash and Amber Valley, offers a number of education and training options including a wide range of academic and vocational subjects, apprenticeship programmes, work-based learning for businesses and Higher Education courses to around 30,000 learners a year.

In the past year, the Derby College Group has expanded into wider areas of education.

Under the Derby College Education Trust, the College is the lead sponsor of Merrill Academy which launched in January 2013.

The Trust is now expanding further with the recent go ahead from the Government to set up a Digital Studio College in Hearnor which will open in September 2014.

The College is also working with key partners such as the University of Derby, Derby City Council and key employers including Rolls-Royce plc and Toyota under a separate Trust organisation to develop the Derby Manufacturing University Technical College due to open in September 2015.

Chief Executive Mandie Stravino explained that refocusing the strategic direction of the Derby College Group had further enhanced its core purpose - to ensure that young people have the skills to make them ready for the world of work; support businesses with a skilled workforce and therefore have social and employment issues to have a positive impact on local communities in the city, county and beyond.

“We are using the resources we have to respond to the needs of our region by providing the skills that businesses require in their future workforce.”

She continued that the needs of businesses was a key element in strategic growth for the College.

“The clear focus of the Group is to provide young people and adults with the skills they need to ensure they are work ready with the skills that businesses need.

“We consult widely with businesses about the skills that they need both now and in the

future and develop the curriculum accordingly whether that is full time courses such as our BTEC Rail Engineering programme or higher management qualifications to support the development of tomorrow’s business leaders.

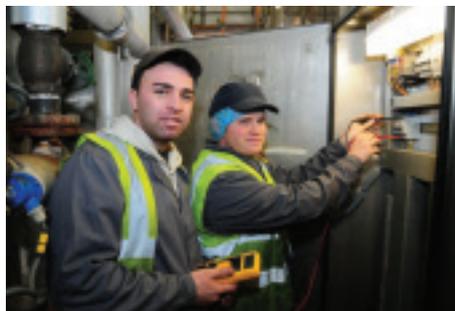
A new independent report by international consultancy EMSI confirms the positive impact that the College makes on the social and economic health of the region.

Amongst the report’s findings was that the skills and qualifications acquired by Derby College learners who are now in the workplace add around £444.5 million to the region’s economy every year.

Ms Stravino concluded: “As an organisation funded by the public purse, it is vital that we quantify the positive impact that we make on the economic health and social well-being of this area and the report makes interesting reading.

“Behind the figures also lies the commentary on the impact that we make to this area - providing young people with the skills that they need to succeed; a skilled workforce that businesses need to grow and increase their competitive edge; and the positive citizens of the future who will make valuable contributions to local communities.”

Derby College works with thousands of employers across the region to address the issue of increasing skills gaps and support their need to recruit and train the workforce of the future.



Among the businesses who work with the College is Kerry Foods in Burton-upon-Trent who have launched a rolling programme of electrical apprenticeships to help meet its need for trained electrical and mechanical engineers now and in the future.

Kerry Foods, one of Burton’s biggest employers, produces chilled meals for Tesco as well as for the Innocent smoothies range. Employing 1100 people at its Mosley Street site, it is part of a multinational group which is currently recruiting.

Site engineering manager Graham Blair said: “Kerry Foods is currently undergoing major site transformation to prepare for future growth so we needed to assess our on-going skills requirements. As a company we benefit from employing people who have been trained in our systems, processes and workplace culture right from the outset.



Chief Executive Mandie Stravino

“The apprenticeship programme we embarked on with Derby College is working well and we plan to take on another apprentice next year.”

Employers are becoming increasingly involved with the delivery of Derby College programmes, including the very successful Career Academy programmes in Professional Construction and Engineering.

Business leaders drive the development of the Career Academy programmes – acting as mentors to students, holding guru lectures and providing paid work placements and internships which are increasing leading to students joining the companies as full time employees.

Among the companies involved in the Professional Construction Careers Academy is Bowmer & Kirkland who recently provided two students with work internships at Derby’s highest profile construction project.



Joe David and Emily Cawdron gained valuable work experience at Derby City Council’s £27.5 million multi sport arena which is being built in Pride Park – working alongside the construction team at Bowmer & Kirkland.

Bowmer & Kirkland Construction Director Paul Lomas explained: “The future of the construction industry is reliant upon the skills and training of today’s students and it is vitally important that they experience what it is like working in a live construction environment as part of their course.

“We have an excellent relationship with Derby College and offering internships to local students is something we were keen to do – particularly on such an exciting project.”



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The FSB's Top Tips for 2014 – An Action Plan for Success!

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'The voice of small business, FSB members attend meeting at No. 10 Downing Street.'

Start setting goals

Many of us wander through life without really considering where we want to be. A good analogy is planning a trip from Point A to Point B. As important as it is that you sort out transport, supplies, timelines, and other elements, the most important tool for the journey is to know how to get there.

Ask a client for a referral

It seems simple, yet many business owners never consider asking their existing clients for contacts with others who may need your services. It can seem to be a hurdle to ask the first few times, but it doesn't need to be. Your request could even be something as simple as an email sent at the end of a project to ask the client for feedback on the project, followed by a simple "If you know anybody who might appreciate our services, please recommend us."

Learn something new about business

Ask any entrepreneur about their knowledge, and you'll normally find the most successful people are those who are willing to admit their own weaknesses. We can't be born experts in everything to do with business, but with some dedication, we can get smarter. Ask yourself where you feel your business knowledge weaknesses are, then find a course or books that can help you to learn more.

Take time for yourself

Ask any business owner his or her number one complaint, and the most common reply will be that there's not enough time to spend with family or on hobbies. The most disturbing part is that it's often not the demands of business that absorb all of our time. We've become used to working long hours, when in actual fact, being smarter about how you spend your business time can allow you to enjoy more home time.

Build rock-solid procedures

The right procedures will make your business run more efficiently. A good system will allow for increased workload and reduce the amount of effort you need to spend on repetitive activities.

Delegate effectively

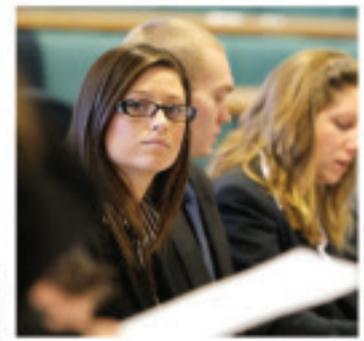
We all want to work less and earn more. Here's one of the greatest secrets of time management: successful delegation. Start by writing down every activity you undertake for an entire week, then review the results. There are likely to be a number of activities that don't help you achieve your goals, or could be done by someone else. Focus on working to get those low-return activities either delegated or removed.

Focus on customer service

It's easy when you're absorbed in delivering to tight deadlines, juggling 100 things, or just having a manic few weeks to forget the reason you have this work. That reason is customers! Customers matter, so unless you're hoping to lose a few, you'd better remember what it's like to be a customer and recall your memories of the best service you've ever received.



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The Air Ambulance Service



The Air Ambulance Service (TAAS) is an umbrella organisation that provides three separate services; Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA), Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance (DLRAA) and The Children's Air Ambulance (TCAA).

WNAA operating from Coventry Airport and DLRAA based at East Midlands airport attend, on average, four missions every single day per helicopter. From road traffic collisions to house fires; fallen horse riders to industrial accidents. DLRAA regularly attend any incident that is life-threatening, where access by land is limited, or where the patient's quality of life would be affected by undue delay.

The Children's Air Ambulance (TCAA) will transfer critically ill children from general hospitals to Paediatric Intensive Care Units across England and Wales, or help move specialist paediatric teams to enable children to receive the lifesaving, specialist treatment and care that they need as soon as possible, cutting transfer times.

We have the fastest and most technologically advanced civilian helicopter available, taking our highly trained medical team to the scene of any incident within minutes, giving our patients the best possible chance of recovery.

All these services are provided without any Government or lottery funding and rely entirely on charitable donations.



To find out more or help support please call **08454 130999** or visit www.theairambulanceservice.org.uk or email enquiries@theairambulanceservice.org.uk

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Where forward-thinking businesses find the inspiration to leap ahead of their competitors. **85% of GrowthAccelerator clients surveyed say they are growing more quickly because of the support.**

So, what is GrowthAccelerator?

This unique service helps ambitious SME's to uncover the real barriers preventing them from achieving their potential, with the support of one of our designated Growth Managers. We then help to identify and introduce the right business coach to work with you – to define your Growth Plan, help focus on your challenges and provide experience and support to help you to overcome the barriers standing between you and your business growth targets.

The service is a partnership between private enterprise and government, which means we can keep the service affordable. Because Government is investing with you in the growth of your business, the cost to you is significantly reduced and your contribution is directly linked to the size of your business. Grant Funding of up to £2,000 per person is also available to help develop leadership and management skills you might need to support your growing business.

Examples of how we've helped...

Robert Woodhead Ltd is a family-owned construction company based in Nottinghamshire and operating throughout the East Midlands and Yorkshire. When the business joined Growth Accelerator, they had been

working through tough market conditions and with 20% annual growth targeted, they needed to improve key areas of the business, including forward planning.

GrowthAccelerator helped Robert Woodhead Ltd to create a common vision, focus on their strengths in a strategic way, improve processes and develop structures to get the results needed in key areas. Since working with the service, their turnover has increased by

over 50% in 2012 and by 20% in 2013. Their work force has grown, from 51 people in 2011 to 80 today.

Hallmark Consumer Services, the online shopping order fulfillment and direct marketing mail specialist, based in

Melton Mowbray, has a goal to double turnover in the next five years. Such a goal required management to focus on all aspects of the business, from product offer and service to defining how to take advantage of, in particular, the booming e-commerce marketplace.

GrowthAccelerator helped the business to focus on their goal, developing a clear and effective marketing strategy to drive growth through new innovations, new services and new markets.

The partnership is yielding results. A new premium Gift Wrapping and Gift Messaging Service has been

“Having someone from outside reflect back what we are saying and doing helped us become more organised and focused as we developed a five-year plan to capitalise on our ‘best value’ approach and realise our ambition of sustainable growth.”

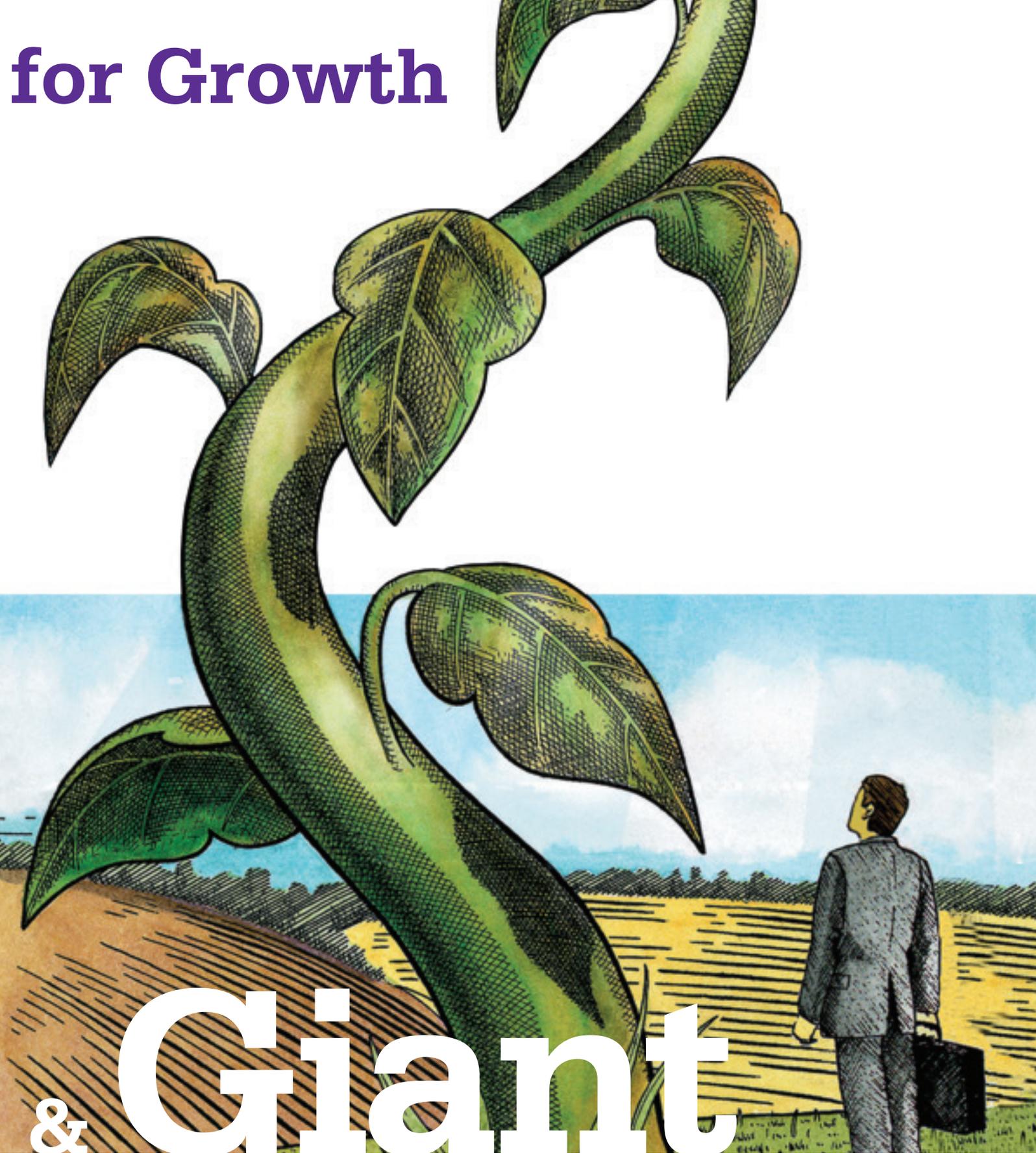
David Woodhead, Managing Director, Robert Woodhead Ltd

“Working with GrowthAccelerator really helped us to bring this to life. We’re interested in the luxury market, and this product launch is the first step on the journey to strengthen our business proposition here both domestically and internationally.”

Chris Hall, Managing Director, Hallmark Consumer Services

launched and has attracted local media attention through carefully timed PR. The business is looking beyond British shores; a new partnership has been formed with a Swiss company to pack and distribute their products in the UK. The team are also focused on taking advantage of opportunities in the growing global e-commerce market.

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Steve Crawford, Centre Director says "I am truly delighted that we have been able to bring College Court back to life. In its new role as a professional and dedicated conference centre it will be a great asset to the University of Leicester, and indeed the City in bringing business to Leicester.

With a great range of facilities, tranquil setting and excellent transport links, College Court is Leicester's leading conference and events venue. Our guests are able to benefit from a wide range of different conference spaces, perfect from two to 160 delegates, fine dining in the College Court Restaurant and a restful and relaxing stay in one of our 123 bedrooms, all designed with the business visitor in mind.

Located just minutes from Leicester's vibrant City Centre on Knighton Road, College Court is a haven of tranquility, surrounded by established trees, landscaped gardens and quiet residential streets. Inspired by our surroundings, we have named each of our conference rooms after the many different varieties of tree on the site and our restaurant boast dishes that echo the iconic sixties design of College Court itself.

Charlotte Sanders, Business Development Manager says "I feel that the business we have achieved on our books so far is testament to the outstanding offering that College Court provides, with £1.2m of enquiries whilst in build stage with people committing to business off plan. The team here is what sets us apart and I am confident that their attention to detail, passion and dedication will continue to provide an outstanding venue for our guests."

We want each of our guests to get the very most from their time with us and we are happy to discuss the different conference packages and options we offer. Please contact a member of our dedicated team to book your conference or event.



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Why do Business Owners ne

Running a business can take up a lot of your time and energy. But because the business has the potential to be worth considerably more than any external wealth streams, managing personal finances is typically a low priority for your typical business owner. However, in some cases business owners could be missing out on tax relief in excess of 60%.

Are you planning ahead or leaving it to the luck of the dice?

If you are like most business owners, your business is probably like a game of Snakes and Ladders. You're striving to reach the ladders to give you a boost up to the next level, but just as you get your foot on the lower rung you disappear back down a slippery snake. And there are plenty of those in the game of business.

Getting into business in the first place is the first step to achieving a life of freedom, fulfilment and prosperity. Not long now before you're making profits, moving out of that dingy office, buying a mansion and having 12 weeks holiday in the sun. The freedom of being your own boss can be intoxicating and it's great to know you're under way.

Of course, it's rarely as easy as that. Statistics tell us that 80% of new businesses fail within the first five years. The reasons are well documented, but poor preparation and inadequate financing are at the top of the list. Kill that snake by putting a proper business plan together and make sure you've got a real handle on how you're going to market your business, sell your service and control your finances. The value of a business plan isn't the plan itself, it's the process you go through to create it that's really important.

You've become established, your product or service is successful and you are ready to move to the next level. You can see how expansion will ramp up profits, widen your product offering and give you greater buying and selling power. Perhaps now you can book those 3 months in the sun.

Unfortunately your expansion plans go hand-in-hand with the need for more cash, bigger premises, hiring decisions and tax liabilities. And now you don't have time for a business plan because you're too busy dealing with your business. Where's my PA?

Your business is ready for sale and you're looking forward to all those years of effort finally paying off with a big cheque to reward you for your outstanding business skills. Tropical island, here I come!

To keep your tax bills low you've been investing in your business, taking out cash in dividend and generally doing anything 'legal' to not pay lots of tax. Which means your profit record is poor and potential purchasers aren't exactly queuing up to acquire your business. And because of the way your company is

structured you're going to have to pay a big chunk of your sale proceeds to the Chancellor, and the money that's left then forms part of your estate for inheritance tax so your kids will lose 40% of that too. The pension fund that you've never really focused on has a big hole in it, and it looks like your tropical paradise will have to wait. Despite the attractions of Bognor Regis, your partner isn't impressed by your suggestion of spending a week there as a retirement gift.

Fortunately there is some great advice available out there from highly experienced professionals who can help you to climb the ladders and avoid the snakes. Look for someone with a breadth of experience, appropriate qualifications, and the savvy to understand your unique circumstances and tailor their advice to your business for maximum effectiveness.

Highly successful people invariably surround themselves with effective coaches, advisers and mentors. Don't slide down the snake of do-it-yourself.

The 5 most common reasons business owners give for not planning ahead

- 1) Simply too busy
- 2) An aversion to pensions and planning
- 3) A distrust of financial advisers
- 4) Economic uncertainty
- 5) A high tolerance to risk

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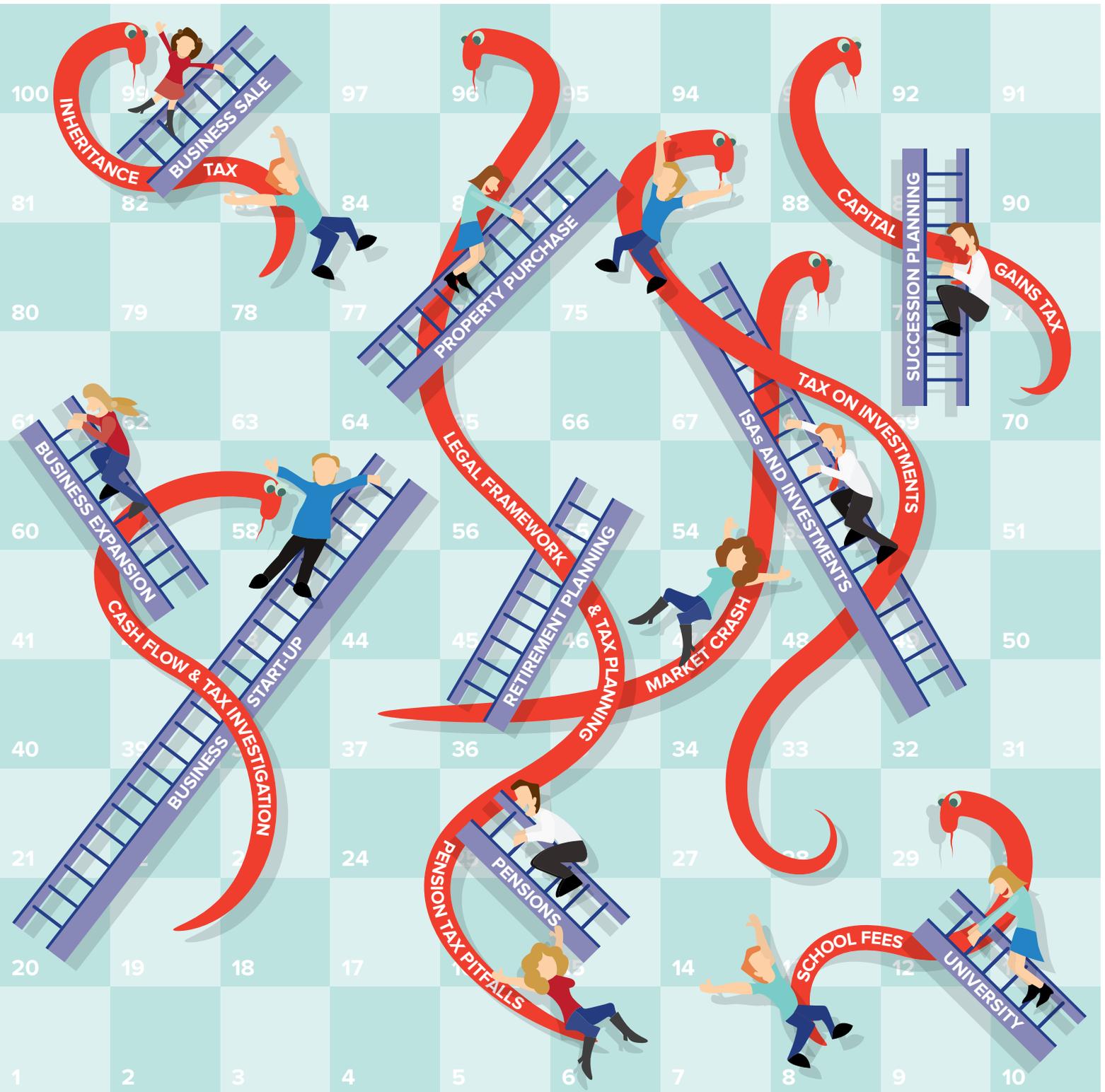
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Our Midlands based HR Consultants have provided HR Advice and support, across the UK, at a strategic and operational level to small and medium sized businesses for just over a decade.

Are you left wondering what to do about staff issues? Perhaps you have absence or performance issues you need to deal with, or you've received a grievance you are struggling to resolve? Help is at hand, as we can guide you through each step of the process ensuring that you comply with legislation.

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_____ New College Nottingham _____

“ Dealing with Mark and his team at Blueprint is a great experience! They respond very quickly to any enquiries and are always very competitive when it comes to quotes. I have complete faith when ordering any promotional products from Blueprint as I know that the final product will always be top quality. Overall top service from a top team. ”

_____ Cooper Parry _____

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