

Business FOCUS

Better Together
Working together, achieving more

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Spring 2023

SME BEDFORDSHIRE Business Awards 2023

You Could Be
A WINNER!



CONNECT. GLOBAL. VOICE.



Bedfordshire
Chamber of
Commerce

Discover more at www.chamber-business.com

FREE

BUSINESS NETWORKING

EVENT

9th ANNUAL

WEDNESDAY
19 April 2023
6pm-8.30pm

Leighton Buzzard Golf Club | Plantation Rd
Heath and Reach LU7 3JF | **FREE PARKING**
REGISTER www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk



SCAN
TO REGISTER



Bedfordshire
Chamber of
Commerce



Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Working in partnership



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE
TOWN COUNCIL

01525 631920 • www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk



@LLTCNews



Business FOCUS

Official Magazine of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce

Our Partners



Editor

Paula Devine
Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
paula.devine@chamber-business.com

Design and Print

Treacle Factory
01582 416171
www.treaclefactory.co.uk

© Copyright 2023
Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
Hart House Business Centre,
Kimpton Road, Luton,
Bedfordshire LU2 0LB
01582 522448

Business Focus is an open forum for
members of the Chamber. Your news,
views, features and other items for
possible inclusion are most welcome.

Views in Business Focus are not necessarily
those of the Chamber, the publishers, their staff
or associates.

While every care has been taken in compiling
this publication, and the statements contained
herein are believed to be correct, the publishers
and the promoters will not accept responsibility
for any inaccuracies. Reproduction of any part
of this publication without express permission
from the publishers is strictly prohibited.

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce and
the publishers make no recommendation
in respect of any of the advertisers and no
recommendation may be implied by way of the
presence of their advertisement.

Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce Business Focus Magazine.

Following on from the previous Focus edition we are now in full swing delivering the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) for Bedfordshire. From the outset of the project, we have been determined to put the voice of local employers at the heart of the learning and skills system to build a stronger partnership between employers and further education.

The LSIP presents an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of our current situation and to shape realistic collective goals to address the critical skills gaps and mismatches that exist in the region.

Why is building a local skills and talent pipeline so important? In short, to ensure that businesses have access to the talent they need to remain competitive and meet the ever-changing needs of their markets.

A well-designed pipeline can help address workforce shortages, improve the competitiveness of business and organisations, and support the economic development of Bedfordshire communities. It's crucial in building long term prosperity for all.

You'll see in this issue that skills and talent are a key theme! Kenect Recruitment give their thoughts on how recruitment is changing. Hear from Vicky Trumper, Director of Neville Trust, on why apprentices hold the key to successful business growth along with Willow Tree Distilling and Esther Roche of Derosite Natural Beauty on their national award successes.

Speaking of Awards...don't forget to enter the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards, a great opportunity to celebrate the success of your business and your team.

As the world continues to change and evolve, we believe it is more important than ever to stay informed and seek out new perspectives and ideas, so please don't hesitate to get in touch on 01582 522448 if there is anything we can do to help.

#workingtogether #achievingmore

Justin Richardson

Chief Executive
Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce



Contents

04 Chairman's VIEW

Richard Cooper, Chairman of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

05 Chamber NEWS

Putting local businesses at the heart of the great skills turnaround

09 Economic REPORT

Our quarterly financial report review

12 Member NEWS

Bedfordshire Chamber members share their news and developments

18 New MEMBERS

New businesses that have joined Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

19 Member PROFILES

Learn more about our recently joined members



Richard Cooper

Chairman of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce

The Chairman's **VIEW**

“Best of British” is an oft-used phrase, but what does it really mean?

I know what it means for me. When I visit businesses around the Bedfordshire region, I see certain attributes in companies that are doing well and holding their own in their marketplace. I see businesses that are creative and resilient, able to manage change to gain advantage from evolving market conditions.

I know it's challenging out there. Many businesses continue to struggle to meet targets, but those successfully doing so invariably work to a formulated strategy with a clear plan in mind. They are supported by peers and a network that offers guidance and practical advice for when the going gets tough.

This is where the Chamber comes into its own and I'm proud to be involved – no more so than in these challenging times when we actively support businesses to prosper and grow, finding solutions to problems and bringing people together.

Good news is, however, on the horizon, with inflation decreasing and the Bank of England announcing it is likely to fall at a faster rate during the second half of the year. And as we come to the end of the financial year for many, businesses will be busy budgeting and forecasting for the next 12 months with a more upbeat outlook. Indeed, we have seen a high number of start-ups enter the market since the beginning of the year, signalling renewed positivity and confidence.

Please remember the Chamber is here to support you. Whether you need subject matter guidance, help with international trade, introductions to other companies and peers, or support in elevating awareness of your brand and your business, we're here.

It's the very least the best of British deserve.

“We actively support businesses to prosper and grow, finding solutions to problems and bringing people together.”



Putting Local Businesses at the Heart of

THE GREAT SKILLS TURNAROUND

The challenges local businesses face are not just down to Ukraine, Brexit, and inflation – they're down to a skills shortage that, according to the Government's own figures, extends across some 30 domains.

In one industry alone – construction – the shortage has recently been reported as “alarming”, with 75% of contractors experiencing issues recruiting skilled operatives.

Digital and data skills paint an even bleaker picture. Again, according to the Government, 11.3 million people (21% of the UK population) lack full basic digital skills (independent research suggests these figures are actually much higher). Scarcely, 5.4 million working adults have no form of basic digital skills at all.

And while some of the skills shortage in specific industries can be attributed to pandemic-triggered job-hopping, overall there's a much deeper supply-side worry here: namely, that the training framework that exists is failing to train people in skills that local businesses genuinely require.

There is a genuine will on the part of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) colleges to engage and evolve, but they are restricted by the system.

SO, WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Find out as we continue overleaf...



ABOUT *me*

"This is me sitting in my favourite spot. I am by the river Tweed in Scotland, sat in the spot where I watched my Dad fish for Salmon in 1987.

I'm a freelance photographer who loves his job with over 20 years experience.

I'm reliable, flexible and able to deliver great images to meet your business needs and capture magic moments."

Duncan

25% discount available to Chamber members valid until April 23

DUNCAN JACK PHOTOGRAPHY

07976 925 408

www.duncanjackphotography.co.uk

hello@duncanjackphotography.co.uk

© Duncan Jack



RESOURCEFUL PEOPLE GROUP

Enabling, Supporting and Protecting

We are a fresh, agile **HR consultancy** that loves partnering with our clients, placing the spotlight on your issues and developing **practical and transformational** HR solutions for you and your team.

We believe that finding cost effective solutions that can **enable**, **support** and **protect** both organisations and their employees is fundamental to everything we do.

We would love to start a conversation and explore how we can help you.

Contact us to find out more.

07484 293747

info@resourcefulpeoplegroup.com

www.resourcefulpeoplegroup.com




HBC LOGISTICS

local experts, globally connected

ACCESS TO YOUR OWN ONLINE CUSTOMER PORTAL

COLLECTION WITHIN ONE HOUR OF BOOKING

24h OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY, 365 DAYS A YEAR

WHEN IT COMES TO URGENT DELIVERIES...

WE DELIVER ON TIME, EVERY TIME

SAMEDAY DELIVERIES

SCHEDULED DELIVERIES

OVERNIGHT DELIVERIES

STORAGE SOLUTIONS

PALLET SHIPMENTS

CALL NOW FOR AN INSTANT QUOTATION:

Hertfordshire: 01462 410004
Bedfordshire: 01234 608404

Cambridgeshire: 01223 632004
London: 020 39460004



...continued from page 5

LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

What it is and why is it good for business?

More dialogue is obviously needed between education providers and businesses in the localities they serve – and at Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) we're rolling out makes this progress possible. The Great Skills Turnaround starts here!

LSIP is a Government-led scheme to give employers a stronger voice in articulating the skills need to FE providers, and to ensure changes are made that help people get good jobs and enhance their prospects (win-win!)

We're working with many different establishments that deliver post-16 technical education – FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Higher Education Institutions, independent training providers, and other designated institutions – as well as with employers and other stakeholders such as enterprise partnerships and local authorities.

How does LSIP engage with local businesses and employers?

The first stage in the process is detailed research – including online surveys, employer-focused and group roundtable events, telephone calls and one-to-one meetings – to capture businesses' views on the most urgent skills and opportunities for improvement. This is now underway.

The LSIP will then follow a clear, three-stage process, comprising:

- 1.** *Articulating employers' skills needs – What are the skills employers need locally, but struggle to find? These could be technical, academic, or manual in nature, but could also cover “softer” skills like negotiation, communication, customer service, and so on. We will place special emphasis on businesses who struggle most to get their voices heard by education and training providers.*
- 2.** *Translating employer needs into changes in provision - How can these needs best be met by providers in more responsive ways? New modules, or new courses? Changes in what is taught, or how it is taught? How can accessibility, flexibility, refresher training and upskilling attract and benefit a diverse range of employees?*
- 3.** *Addressing learner demand and employer engagement – What can local stakeholders and employers do to raise demand for, and make better use of, skills, particularly when they are new or nascent (e.g. sustainability, digitalisation, net zero, etc.) but becoming critical?*

What are the LSIP's outputs and outcomes?

The output of the LSIP will take the form of a strategic but concise document – no more than 30 pages in total – setting out the priority changes and time scales needed to make post-16 technical education and training more responsive to the skills needs in our region.

But if the only outcome of this project is a 30-page document, we'll be more disappointed than anyone – which is why it's crucial to understand that it will be much more than this.

In fact, it will be a solid plan for action that can only be published when it has been scrutinised and approved by the Secretary of State.

This means institutions at both Government and education level have a formal commitment to work to, which will in turn help to drive funded change more rapidly and more measurably.

The passion is certainly all there; we're feeling it from many local stakeholders – businesses, educational institutions, and Councils – alike.

If you are interested in getting involved register your interest here: <https://www.chamber-business.com/lcip>

Funded by:

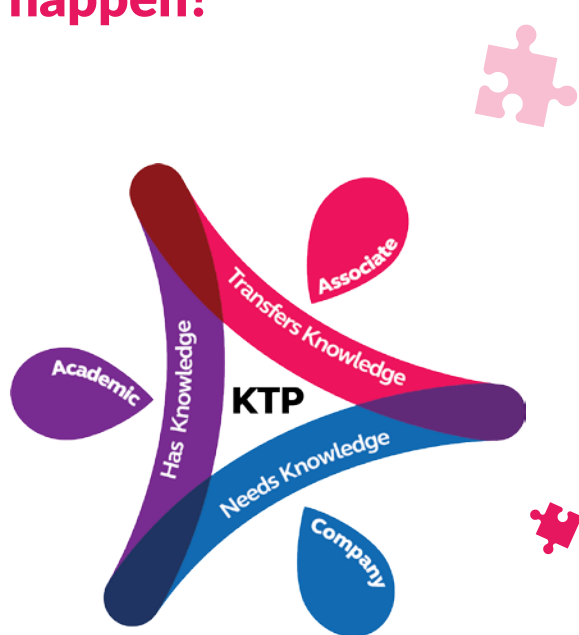


In partnership with:



Innovation is an essential part of any business growth

So, how do you access the expertise needed to make it happen?



Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) help organisations innovate, creating a dynamic connection between businesses and the UK's world-class knowledge base - **such as the University of Bedfordshire.**

The knowledge gained through this unique three-way collaboration can embed expertise and expand capabilities, long after the project has finished.

Benefits to you and your company:

- Consultancy and guidance of a highly experienced Knowledge Transfer Adviser
- Access to exceptional resources and expertise to spearhead your innovation
- Government contribution of 50-67% towards the project costs via a grant
- Increase revenue/profits through access to new markets, new product development, increased productivity and better processes

Contact our KTP Adviser for more information and to register:



www.beds.ac.uk/ktp



KTP@beds.ac.uk

QES Quarterly ECONOMIC SURVEY REPORT

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) forms part of the British Chamber of Commerce's national survey and is the principal business survey in the UK. Its results are closely watched by both the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee and the Treasury. The data reveals a timely and accurate snapshot for the economic climate for businesses in Bedfordshire and beyond.

Our latest results have been published and the outcome for Q4 2022 saw a rebound in confidence with businesses viewing 2023 with cautious optimism.

- Domestic sales and forward orders saw a drastic improvement on the previous quarter with 51% of respondents seeing an overall increase in sales for the period and only 16% concerned about their revenues in the next quarter.
- Export saw small gains in the period 84% expecting overseas sales to improve or remain constant.
- Cashflow for local businesses saw significant improvements with only 12% of respondents seeing a decrease for the period.
- 57% of companies expect prices to increase over the next 3 months – an improvement on the previous quarter where 66% expected price rises

The Bottom Line

David Bharier, Head of Research at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

"The situation remains critical for the majority of SMEs who find themselves cut adrift by monumental inflationary pressures, often driving triple-digit percentage cost increases, particularly on energy.

"Business confidence remains worryingly low, with only a third of firms reporting improvements to sales, and less than a quarter reporting increased investment. The widespread economic damage caused by Covid shutdowns has been compounded by subsequent inflation, global trade crises, and new trade barriers with the EU. For many SMEs, the cost of doing business is now simply too high.

"While the change in administrations from Truss to Sunak may have stabilised markets, the Autumn Statement on 17 November appears to have had no impact on business confidence. Indeed, while inflation is still by far and away the top concern for businesses, taxation has now become far more of an issue for SMEs.

"These results reaffirm the need to create a stable environment for businesses to invest, with energy, improvements to infrastructure, access to skills, and removal of trade barriers, particularly with the EU, all top priorities for firms."



David Bharier
Head of Research at the British
Chambers of Commerce

SME[®]
BEDFORDSHIRE
 Business Awards
2023

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



ENTRIES OPEN!

#SMEBEDS | WWW.BEDFORDSHIREAWARDS.CO.UK



For further information call one of our team on 01908 542720



The SME Bedfordshire Business Awards are in their seventh year and this prestigious celebration of the very best of business across the county once again provides the opportunity for the recognition and celebration of hard work and success.

There is no doubt that the last twelve months have been some of the most challenging for local SMEs. At a time when it is more important than ever that firms communicate and market their success, Awards provide an incredibly invaluable opportunity to stand out from the crowd.

"Every year we hear from previous entrants, finalists and winners about the difference it has made to their marketing and PR opportunities." said Awards Director Damian Cummins. "Being part of the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards brings credibility and robust recognition and is highly sought after."

In 2022 the overall Winner of the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards was Window Ware, an SME based in Cross Park in Bedford who were recognised for their service to the door and window industry since 1987.

Kirsty Maynard from Health, Safety and Employment Law expert THSP, based at the Bedford Business Centre was crowned Business Woman of the Year while Recpetional, a two decade old Digital Marketing business based in the county took away the Employer of the Year title.

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are businesses whose personnel numbers are 250 employees or less. SMEs are also said to be responsible for driving innovation and competition in many economic sectors.

The SME Business Awards are now a national brand. Businesses that win certain categories will automatically make it through to the SME National Business Awards Final where they will be up against the best businesses in the UK.

The SME Bedfordshire Business Awards 2023 are made up of 20 categories that allow any successful business in the county to enter. All entries are judged by a panel of independent experts.

If you want your business to shine and to benefit from all the opportunities this brings the SME Bedfordshire Business Awards 2023 is the best possible way to hit the spotlight.

Could you be a winner in 2023?

Member NEWS

How Recruitment is Changing?

BY STUART AMIES OF
KENECT RECRUITMENT



The world of recruitment used to be a personal thing. Now that we are in an online world many different platforms have emerged to try and assist in finding that ideal candidate. To stay relevant many agencies out there boast about the ability to fill 300 roles in one day using their online service, eliminating the need to speak to any staff member in their team.

Social media has many answers to finding staff, however, unless you know where to look, this may cause more headaches than it solves, with anybody who wants to have a job applying for any role they see regardless of the relevance to experience or qualifications. CV search engines are great if you are willing to pay the charge rates for using that service and even then it won't guarantee you will find the right person.

Recruitment agencies can be a huge pain as well, sending you 20 CVs the second you ask for a candidate or sometimes when you haven't asked for anything! Most of the time the hit ratio of successful applicants is about 10%, of the 20 CVs put through to you even if you want to take on all 20, the odds are that only two will stay with you for the long term.

A recruitment consultant is defined as somebody who matches candidates to jobs, but over the years this definition has become more skewed and misshapen to become that a recruitment consultant must fill jobs. This new mutated version of the title has never sat very well with me and I think that it belittles, not only the job role, but also the candidate – because one size never fits all. Just because a person can work in a warehouse does not mean they necessarily should, perhaps they would actually benefit the company by working in a completely different role than they actually applied for.

In order for a consultant to benefit you they need to basically find you the right candidate for your company and to do that they need to know how your company works and how they will fit into the plan and growth of the business. This new style of recruitment consultant who has loyalty to the company and wants to see it succeed is a rare breed and they are not often the ones who pop by with a large hamper of branded goodies or delivers you a complimentary pizza. They very often before they even start finding candidates for you will want to visit your site and have a discussion with you about your company and what you want to achieve, thus understand not only what you want the candidate to do initially but how they will fit in as the company develops.

So, how is recruitment changing?

It is now more than ever a labyrinthine web of twists and traps that if navigated poorly will never get you to the cheese prize at the end. Remember that the path somebody else takes is not necessarily the right path for you, so make sure that you find the right person who already knows the maze.

www.kenectrecruitment.co.uk | 01908 886424 | 07877 513826

EVERYTHING
YOU NEED... FOR A BRAND
THAT *Sticks!*

**Treacle
FACTORY**
Think. DESIGN. PRINT. DIGITAL.



Things Get Sweeter at TREACLE FACTORY

Now well into their 24th year in business, Luton-based print, signage and creative agency Treacle Factory is celebrating a new addition to their team.

Since 1999, Treacle Factory has been helping businesses, locally and nationally, to grow through a wide range of sales and marketing services. Having recently added a BubbleFree mounting table and a UCJV300-160 UV-curing large format printer to improve their in-house signage capabilities, Treacle Factory have now upgraded their small format print offering with the new V900 Canon digital printing press.

Robustly built and with sustainability a key consideration, the V900 has been engineered for continuous, reliable productivity, consistent colour and class-leading front and back registration accuracy, through the technology within Canon's new Sensing Unit.

The A-1 Sensing Unit adjusts and monitors front-to-back registration and colour accuracy, before and during production, continuously adjusting registration and print quality throughout the print-run, producing highly consistent colour output. Designed to help improve efficiencies and print quality on high value applications, measurements can also take place on long sheets – up to 762mm in length – including 6-panel brochures and short-term posters and signage.

Treacle Factory will be the first business in the UK to operate a V900 complete with this new state-of-the-art sensing technology.

As well as improved quality and sustainability, the V900 will enable Treacle Factory to offer even faster turnaround times, with print speeds of up to 90 pages per minute. The new press also offers an extended sheet capability, allowing the use of cut sheets up to 1,300mm in length to be printed both sides in one pass, opening up a whole new range of products and services to the Treacle Factory portfolio.

To discover how Treacle Factory can help your business grow, visit treaclefactory.co.uk or call 01582 416171.



Luton Town Football Club Community Trust Launches **FIT HATTERS PROGRAMME**

Luton Town Football Club Community Trust are delighted to announce the continuation of their successful health programme, Fit Hatters. As the charity arm of Luton Town FC, the trust uses the power of the football and the club's badge, to engage with their communities through a wide range of sports, health, education and inclusion programmes.

Fit Hatters is funded by the English Football League Trust and offers those in their communities the opportunity to take part in a 12 week structured programme, combining theory based sessions around nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices, alongside physical activity taking place around Kenilworth Road Stadium. Since 2020 the trust has engaged with over 300 participants in the programme, helping them to achieve long term behaviour and lifestyle change.

James Hatch, School and Sport Manager at Luton Town FC Community Trust, commented: "Each cohort attracts around 30 participants, attending on a weekly basis aiming to achieve a range of different goals; from improving their diet, lowering blood pressure and feeling better about themselves. The results speak for themselves. We keep in touch with many of our previous participants and it's great to see how they keep up the good work following our involvement. Because of our connection to the football club, we're able to reach many that wouldn't normally take part in something like this, but feel comfortable doing so with us."

For further information on Fit Hatters or anything else connected with Luton Town FC Community Trust please contact community@lutontown.co.uk or go to www.lutontowncommunity.co.uk



Member NEWS

Esther Roche named one of 2023's MOST INSPIRING FEMALE FOUNDERS

Esther Roche has been named one of the UK's most inspirational and dynamic female entrepreneurs by the f:Entrepreneur '#ialso100' campaign.

Esther Roche, who founded inclusive skincare brand Deroiste Natural Beauty in 2021, is being profiled alongside 100 female entrepreneurs from across the country as part of the campaign to celebrate achievements of women running businesses in the UK today. Esther Roche's mission is to inspire and encourage others to embrace the skin they were born with and not compromise their skin health due to societal pressure.

The f:Entrepreneur '#ialso100' line-up particularly sets out to showcase trailblazing female founders who lead purpose-driven businesses alongside a roster of other responsibilities, such as volunteering, mentoring and community support.

Indeed, Esther Roche was also recognised for being the 'One to Watch' at the Woman Who Achieves Awards and received a business boost from retail entrepreneur Theo Paphitis following her winning tweet during the 'Small Business Sunday'.



On being featured in the '#ialso100' line-up, Esther said: *"I am honoured to be included on this list of such inspirational women. I have only been in business for eighteen months and have already run pop-up stores in John Lewis, Santander and NatWest. The recognition and support from f:Entrepreneur is a massive boost to improve the visibility of my small business whilst being a part of a community of like-minded women who can share successes and learnings."*

This year's f:Entrepreneur '#ialso100' campaign celebrates inspiring female entrepreneurs from adaptive fashion designers to private security companies, social enterprise leaders and ethical product manufacturers. These female entrepreneurs have flourished despite the challenges of the past years, with many still growing or starting new ventures. Many of the businesses featured in this year's campaign also demonstrate a massive commitment to diversity, inclusion and promoting sustainability.

f:Entrepreneur and Small Business Britain's founder Michelle Ovens CBE commented: *"Congratulations to Esther and each of the female entrepreneurs featured in this year's #ialso100. It is so vital that we recognise the contribution that women are making across the UK, and the positive impact they are having."*

To see the full line-up of this year's f:entrepreneur #ialso100 campaign visit: f-entrepreneur.com/ialso-100-2023/

deroistenaturalbeauty.com



NEVILLE TRUST Celebrates National Apprenticeship Week

6th – 12th of February marked National Apprenticeship Week. The week aimed to bring together businesses and Apprentices across the country to shine a light on the positive impact that Apprenticeships make not only to individuals, but businesses and the wider economy too.

The role and benefits of Apprentices within a business are being acknowledged by more employers as a vital investment for the future of their business. Either by taking them on via new roles or by developing existing employees to further their careers and professional development.

Vicky Trumper (above), Director of Neville Trust, a fifth-generation group of family-run businesses, that includes Neville Funerals, Neville Special Projects and Neville Joinery, highlights the three key reasons why hiring Apprentices makes good business sense.

The benefits of hiring an Apprentice are quite simply endless. Apprenticeships help to grow and nurture new skills as well as harness homegrown talent from within your organisation, often helping to increase staff retention within your business. The secret? Treat staff with respect, reward, train and nurture, and the outcome and effects will be felt for many years after.

PLUGGING THE SKILLS GAP

A cost-effective way to grow your business. The chance to train and upskill your existing employees. If you're ready to hire an apprentice, the government's Apprenticeship website is a great place to start. For Neville Trust apprentices have been pivotal to the business' growth and success, and we will continue to invest in individuals who want to take this career route.

www.nevillefuneralservice.com

The Benefits of Safety

BY ADAM SCHWALM, TEMPLERS SAFETY AND SECURITY LTD

I have been working in the health and safety industry for the last 16 years and while I have gained a lot of experience, there is still so much more to learn.

I am often asked, so what are the benefits of having safety? Why do I need it? How much is it going to cost me? A lot of businesses often tell me they do not think they need help or they have it under control and they cannot afford it at this time.

It is always a difficult one to answer, as you are trying to convince someone who may already have had a negative experience or that they just do not understand their needs and that health and safety advice may just save someone in their business or stop them from losing their company completely.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. It sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and members of the public.

It also covers the duties employees have to themselves and to each other and certain self-employed people that have duties to themselves and others.

These duties require us to take reasonable care of our own health and safety, and that we do not adversely affect anyone by our or their 'acts or omissions' at work and to ensure we co-operate with our employer to meet any legal requirements.

For years many industries and especially the construction industry, had a poor safety record with far too many accidents and too much ill health. Too many accidents are caused by people who knowingly work or behave in an unsafe manner. With care, most accidents are totally and easily preventable.

So what can you do to stay safe?

- ✓ *Comply with any safety training, instruction and with site safety rules.*
- ✓ *Avoid the temptation to cut corners to get the job done more quickly; there could be a high price to pay.*
- ✓ *Be aware of how the job you are doing could affect other people around you and stay away from work if you know that you are not fit through illness, drink, drugs or for any other reason.*
- ✓ *If you ever have any doubts, Ask! Speak to your supervisor/manager or a specific advisor if you have any doubts on safety issues.*
- ✓ *There is a moral and ethical element here too, no one should want to see anyone hurt as a result of the actions they take or don't take, when at work. Think of your loved ones or of those that could be impacted by something you do or don't do.*

If you need further advice or guidance, look for a Health and Safety Consultant near you and I am sure they will be happy to keep you and your business safe, healthy and secure!

templerssafetyandsecurity.com

WILLOW TREE DISTILLING shortlisted for National Sustainability Award

We are Willow Tree Distilling, home of the award-winning Willow Tree gin and Bedfordshire's first gin distillery. Based in the little hamlet of Thorncote Green, our premium Bedfordshire gin is lovingly handcrafted in small batches. We use a unique combination of twelve botanicals. Our process of selectively smoking botanicals gives Willow Tree Gin its distinctive flavour. We hand bottle, label and package the products ourselves. We serve gin lovers in Bedfordshire and beyond, and wonderful customers in Waitrose. Sustainability is a huge part of our ethos, and from the get-go, we've implemented many ways of being able to do this. For example, our still runs on a closed-loop system, meaning that we reuse water instead of it running down the drain. Since 2017, we have saved over one million litres of water. One of the main reasons for being sustainable was because of the influence of Mary's dad living in Africa and being very aware of water being a scarce resource. We also compost all the botanicals we use during the gin making process and donate 50p from the sale of every 50cl bottle to The Forest of Marston Vale to help plant trees. Read more about our sustainability impact at: willowtreedistilling.co.uk/sustainability. In 2022 we were recognised for our efforts and won the SME Luton and Beds Business Awards in the Sustainability category and we went through to the SME National Business Awards finals. Although we didn't win, we were honoured to be there amongst other fantastic SME's, including many from Bedfordshire. willowtreedistilling.co.uk



WILLOW TREE GIN 50CL



PLUS... FREE DELIVERY
USE CODE
MEMBEROFFER





Eloise and Mary receiving an award at the SME National Business Awards finals in 2022

Member NEWS

I Love Springtime!

JO WAREHAM TALKS PROMOTIONAL GIFTING

For me a new season is like a fresh start, like that first page of a notebook at school, a crisp white blank sheet just waiting for you to plan whatever you want to achieve, an exciting time for new opportunities, a time for growth plus our outdoor spaces are coming to life, starting to wake up.

For me, the first part of the year is also the time to visit Trade Shows in the UK and Europe to find the next amazing promotional item for my clients. To find something new, something innovative, relevant, on trend and ultimately great value in these challenging times, plus it has to tick the environmental box too.

I get asked all the time, whats new? Is there ever anything really new to the promotional industry? I've been in the industry for 26 years so yes, of course, we see tech changes, the introduction of new colours to a product range, different flavours to confectionary, different trends with clothing and fabulous new packaging ideas. What I have seen, in the past couple of years, has been a huge increase in the range of eco products. They're more affordable, they're no longer a disgusting brown colour or a horrible texture, there is so much more choice and the options we have are way more appealing. Nearly every manufacturer I work with wants to be doing their bit and so do my clients.

Also, I've noticed a huge focus on mental health and relaxation products. Mindfulness journals, relaxing bath bombs, lots of self-care products and let's face it, after a stressful day, we need to be looking after ourselves. Caring for ourselves and the environment.

Also why not indulge your clients with an exquisite branded hot water bottle, some gorgeous branded bamboo socks, a lovely fluffy cotton scarf or a nice branded bobble hat or gloves? Even though we are having more sunny days, it can still be chilly and with energy prices so high, let's think of alternative ways to keep your clients warm this winter without the need to flick on the heating.



For more information or to have a chat about your next innovative promotional item, give The Little Branding Company a call on 087852 951425 or drop an email to jo@thelittlebrandingcompany.co.uk

DIGITAL FUTURE FIRST



Established in 2020, Digital Future First is a free business advisory service for Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, and Northamptonshire. The project, which is part funded by the European Social Fund and will run until the end of December 2023, is led by Supplyant Limited, and co-developed in partnership with dbfb and the Learning and Skills Academy CIC, holding more than 50 years of business experience between the three companies. We understand small businesses and the challenges and problems they face. The whole purpose of Digital Future First is to find out the needs and skill gaps of small and medium enterprises across the local enterprise partnership and connect them to the right support, making them aware of what is available in terms of resources, funding, incentives and grants and how to access them.

Did You Know? There are over 70 online courses available including digital marketing, project management, EV charging installer, data engineering and many more. These courses are co-designed or shaped with employers to respond to their skills shortages and help future proof your business in a rapidly changing labour market and help improve productivity. These courses are 90% funded by the government and are available to business owners and their employees.

digitalfuturefirst.co.uk



INTRODUCING STRIVE 4

We understand that small business owners are often in a lonely position. You are the one who's solely responsible for your business, plus you're working in the business yourself and of course trying to have a life around your work. Your life is busy, busy, busy! You have business goals and ideas, but as you're probably working at capacity the plans have stalled. It's a catch 22 situation – you need to work in the business, but you need to take time out of the business to plan and implement. The result? You stay exactly where you are; static, immovable. Stuck!

In a world that is full of 'shoulds' – you should do this, you should do that, you should do the other – we're here to simplify the shoulds, making them manageable, and allow you to move forward in the right direction. Towards your business success.

Working with you planning growth and projects you will have a sounding board and a confidante. You will have someone to ask you to consider uncomfortable questions. Someone to hold you accountable.

Talking of accountability, it isn't just asking if you've done what you committed to. So often things are put off, it doesn't matter how many times you're asked "Have you done....?". Our accountability is supercharged. If you're consistently not doing what you need to do, we dig deeper and find out why. Once we know why, we can simplify the task, making it manageable and getting you moving forward again.

If this resonates with you get in touch to find out how you can work with us and Strive 4 Success. Contact us at success@strive4.co.uk.



ONLINE GROWTH WITH AMAZON for Kimm & Miller

We first saw the opportunities Amazon held for us in 2020. With the UK locked down due to Covid and normal retail channels disrupted, online business expanded rapidly. With our background in traditional retail gifting and the licensing industry, our experienced team were ideally situated to pivot to the fast-paced online market.

Our most in-demand products of 2020 included postal gift hampers. During such a difficult time, it was heartening for our team to bear witness to the touching personal messages many customers asked us to write inside the hampers for their loved ones. Today, our bestselling licensed and own label products range from novelty Pot Noodle spinning fork gifts and Marmite jar scraper tools, to authentic foodie gifts and flavoured coffee syrups.

In recent years, we've seen a return to traditional retail, yet we continue to see huge growth within our Amazon business. By 2021's close, our small Amazon store had expanded beyond expectations, necessitating the extension of our range in response

to demand. Ultimately this has seen the launch of an entirely new online division of Kimm & Miller, with our Amazon shop its primary focus.

Online growth hasn't been without its challenges: we've had to reassess our usual ways of working, transforming existing products intended for traditional retail in order to create gifts suited to the demands of ecommerce. We believe a great deal of our success is down to investing significant time and effort studying the inner workings of Amazon. We've learnt to combine the trend-driven research of our in-house design team with a data-driven approach led by keyword research.

Crucially, our team have developed an e-commerce driven skill set that encompasses keyword optimisation through to meticulous stock control, all in aid of guaranteeing our customers the highest level of satisfaction. We're very excited about the opportunities we see ahead for 2023 and beyond.

To see Kimm & Miller's full Amazon product range, visit: <https://amazon.kimmandmiller.co.uk/chamber>

New MEMBERS

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all **New MEMBERS** of the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. You can learn more about becoming a member and all of the associated benefits by calling us now on 01582 522448 or by emailing your enquiry to info@chamber-business.com

Als Pals

alspalsmk.co.uk

Charity - Als Pals is a service offered to all cancer patients in Milton Keynes supporting cancer patients and families at home.

Conquest Systems Ltd

conquestsystems.co.uk

IT Services and Support

Crouchers Ltd

crouchers-accountants.co.uk

Chartered Accountants

Duncan Jack Photography

duncanjackphotography.co.uk

Freelance photographer. Based in Bedfordshire who covers: Headshots, Stock images, Corporate events, Sports, Live music and more. I am reliable, flexible and easy to work with. Following a brief, I can be left to my own initiative to cover an event to get the results you require, or actively work alongside your team to capture particular images.

EcoStyle Ltd

ecostyle.co.uk

Design and manufacturer of interactive educational demonstration models

Hab Law

hablaw.co.uk

We are committed to making a positive difference and increasing access to justice for all members of society in a more kind, collaborative and digital way. Specialising in Family Law, Care and Mental Health.

HBC Logistics

hbclogistics.co.uk

Full Logistics business covering Beds, London, Herts, Cambs, Essex, Bucks, Notts, Berks, Oxford, Northampton and the West Midlands.

Luton Town Football Club

Community Foundation

lutontowncommunity.co.uk

Work with schools and local community groups delivering projects to help with Community Health, Education and Inclusion through football.

P W Gates Distribution Ltd

pwgates.co.uk

Third Party Logistics provider

Profound Nutrition Ltd

profound-nutrition.com

Fulfilment Centre specializing in Nutritional supplements and research

Silver Lining Services

silverliningservices.co.uk

Helping small business owners make their plans happen and reach their goals

SkyGlide Ltd

sky-glide.co.uk

Filiming. Ground, Aerial and Time-Lapse

Sue Ryder: St John's Hospice

sueryder.org

Non-profit organisation providing end of life health care to the local community and bereavement support to those in need

Venture Commercial

Partners Limited

venture-commercial.co.uk

Commercial Property Agency and Consultancy: Property Management, Land Acquisition, Lease Negotiations, Business premises sales and purchase, Auctions and Land Development.

Wet Buckle Limited

Freight Forwarders

MARKETING FOR BUSINESSES THAT WANT TO GROW

PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE SERVICES DELIVERED ON BRAND, ON BUDGET + ON TIME



Our suite of brochures is available to download or give us a call to request your hard copy and have a chat about how we can help you grow your business

EVERYTHING

YOU NEED... FOR A BRAND

THAT Sticks!

Treacle
FACTORY
Think. DESIGN. PRINT. DIGITAL.

Incorporating
nettl
of Luton

01582 41 61 71

www.TreacleFACTORY.co.uk

Member PROFILES

Better Together
Working together, achieving more

Member PROFILES are provided as part of membership to the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. You can learn more about becoming a member, so you too can enjoy this and a host of other benefits, simply by calling us now on 01582 522448 or by emailing info@chamber-business.com

Conquest Systems Ltd

👤 Barry Walker
☎ 01234 414851
✉ barry@conquestsystems.co.uk
👉 conquestsystems.co.uk



Conquest Systems provide IT support, consultancy, and managed services for small businesses. As your technology partner we identify the best solutions for you and fully manage your IT, freeing you to manage your business. Delivering complete solutions to optimise your operation, improve collaboration, increase productivity, and safeguard against cyber threats.

HBC Logistics

👤 Megan Spavins
✉ serviceteam@hbclogistics.co.uk
👉 hbclogistics.co.uk



If you're looking for a reliable, competitive and established sameday delivery service, then look no further than HBC Logistics. Our 24/7 availability and outstanding logistics knowledge allow us to provide a first-class, problem-solving service to our customers every day, every time.

Crouchers Ltd

👤 Darren Croucher
☎ 01908 597047
✉ hello@crouchers.co.uk
👉 crouchers.co.uk



At Crouchers we believe our success is measured by your success. As a leading independent firm of Chartered Accountants who partner with owner managed businesses, entrepreneurs and private clients, we are on hand to help you overcome the challenges and obstacles along the way. We listen, we care and we deliver!

P W Gates Distribution Ltd

👤 Chris Lynch | Elaine Glasson
☎ 01707 373105
✉ info@pwgates.co.uk
👉 pwgates.co.uk



P W Gates Distribution Ltd is a family run business trading in Welwyn Garden City and Bedfordshire. The installation of a networked multi-site system has allowed the business to expand helping to keep costs to a minimum and ensuring they are always up to date & secure across all sites.

Duncan Jack Photography

👤 Duncan Jack
☎ 07976 925408
✉ hello@duncanjackphotography.co.uk
👉 duncanjackphotography.co.uk



I am a freelance photographer with over 20 years' experience within photography. I assist companies with headshots, stock images and events to capture high resolution images. I am reliable and flexible to work with.

SkyGlide Ltd

👤 Paul Bishop
✉ paul@sky-glide.co.uk
👉 sky-glide.co.uk



SkyGlide create films, shorts, adverts. We use time-lapse equipment to capture construction build phases. We also use ground camera's and drones, in house editing to promote your company or product, or show your backers progress.

Fifteen Three Digital

👤 Chloe Briggs
✉ chloe@fifteenthree.co.uk
👉 fifteenthree.co.uk



We create bespoke websites that show off your company's best bits and help you to attract the right kind of clients to grow your business. We also help your website to appear higher in the Google search rankings so that more of your ideal clients can find you.

Wells & Co - Brewpoint

👤 Guest Experience Team
✉ reservations@wellsandco.com
👉 wellsandco.com



We're an independent, family-owned business based in the heart of Bedfordshire. Since 1876 we've been focused on two things: running great pubs and making great beer. Whether you're looking to visit our new brewery, have a cozy overnight stay or plan a personal or corporate event, we have something for everyone. Contact us today to see how we can help!

Intelligence. Not just artificial.

**Take
our free
Foreign
Exchange
Audit**

As international payment and banking experts for over 40 years, our people have learnt a thing or two about how to get money moving.

We combine this knowledge with the cutting-edge technology you'd expect from a forward-looking cross-border payments provider, and the exceptional personal service you perhaps wouldn't.

- ✦ Our specialists help you build an FX strategy that aligns to your objectives and risk appetite
- ✦ We give clients access to 120+ currencies, with the ability to transfer funds to 190 countries
- ✦ Payment technology solutions that seamlessly integrate with your systems to streamline and simplify your payment operations
- ✦ Initiate payments, check trends and pull customised reports anytime, all in one place

Use the QR code to book a free Foreign Exchange Audit, where our team will show you how much you can save on your international payments.



**Start a conversation with Moneycorp
to see what we can do for you.**

Speak to Sophia Awan, your Moneycorp representative

+44 7785 462 091 sophia.awan@moneycorp.com

**Scan to book your free
FX health audit**

