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July/August/  
September 2020

## Culture, community and connections

Focus on the British and Irish Trade Alliance including an interview with president Paul Whitnell and Manchester Chair, Christiane Hutchinson

## Adapting, not optimising

Analysis from Phil Jones MBE, MD of Brother UK, on businesses coming out of lockdown.

## Slipping through the cracks

Free adverts for our struggling business community who don't qualify for government support through the crisis, plus analysis of lobbying efforts to persuade government to offer support.

## The future of workforce verification and compliance

Interview with Michael Dodd, CEO of V Site Pass - a unique verification and compliance app designed for industrial users.

## Becoming better business leaders

Focus on the launch of the South Manchester Alternative Board including an interview with facilitator Mark Kane.



BITA president Paul Whitnell pictured in Central Manchester

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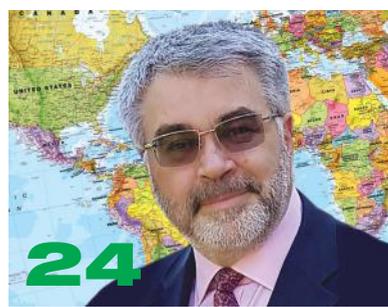
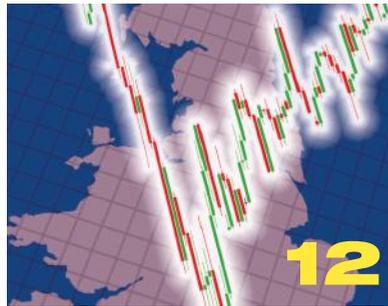
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## welcome to the latest edition of GM Business Connect

and join the fastest growing business to business forum in Greater Manchester.

GM Business Connect is a dynamic business to business bi-monthly magazine that is crammed full of local and regional news, articles, interviews and regular columnists.

The magazine connects businesses across Greater Manchester, and is completely free.

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DESIGNED, EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY  
Jon Cheetham, Paul Mirage.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS  
Strand Web Design

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# news

## Safely Reopening GM campaign launched



GM mayor Andy Burnham has joined business and transport leaders in launching a campaign to ensure that the region's economy can reopen safely from coronavirus lockdown.

The Safely Reopening GM initiative is a coordinated campaign across Greater Manchester.

It's designed to ensure that employers and employees are aware of the information they need to work and travel safely during the continuing pandemic.

Delivered by the Growth Company in partnership with TFGM and GMCA, Safely Reopening GM continues to reinforce the protection of public health as a key priority, with companies urged to allow home working if possible and travellers encouraged to avoid all but essential use of public transport and to walk or cycle instead where possible.

Where home working isn't possible, Safely Reopening GM will provide support and advice enabling employers to support staff in commuting and working safely.

Information supporting employers and employees in reopening the

Greater Manchester economy safely is available via [www.togethergm.org/reopening](http://www.togethergm.org/reopening) and will also be shared on social media using the **#SafeGM** hashtag.

Andy Burnham commented: "Protecting public health remains our number one priority and Safely Reopening GM is a vitally important campaign as lockdown is gradually eased by the Government and people adapt to the realities of working at a time of pandemic."

"I want people to put safety first for themselves and others, wearing face masks in public spaces and ensuring that they are aware of what they need to do to halt the spread of Covid-19."

Mark Hughes, CEO of the Growth Company, said: "A coordinated and aligned approach to reopening the Greater Manchester economy safely is essential."

"Continuing the work started by the Growth Company's **#HereForBusiness** campaign, we now want to provide businesses and individuals with the information and support they need to reopen and recover."

## SMEs expect to borrow £48 billion following outbreak

New research from Aldermore bank reveals that SMEs expect to borrow £48.3 billion to support their businesses following the pandemic.

61% of SMEs anticipate borrowing nearly £65,000 in the following 12 months after the outbreak. Speedy access to funding (23%), higher levels of funding (17%) and a simple application process (17%) are viewed as needed over the next few months.

Tim Boag, group managing director, business finance at Aldermore, said: "Helping SMEs recover following the pandemic will be crucial to the economic future of the UK. As our

research has shown, SME income has been hit hard by Covid-19 with many borrowing funds in order to survive, and with some expecting to continue to do so for the next 12 months.

"The year ahead is going to be as equally, if not more, challenging as the aftermath of the financial crisis.

"Our research shows that the average SME expects it will take them eight months to financially recover after the lockdown ends, and it is going to need a considerable concerted effort by both government and lenders to support businesses to help get them back on their feet."

## Emirates resumes flights from Manchester

Emirates has resumed flights for passengers between Manchester and Dubai, reconnecting people and businesses in the North of England to 30 destinations currently on Emirates' growing network.

The twice weekly Boeing 777-300ER flights to MAN will operate every Wednesday and Sunday. The resumption of flights from Manchester makes the airport the second Emirates UK gateway to reopen, alongside London Heathrow.

This expansion of services allows UK customers to fly to destinations in the Asia Pacific, including Australia, with a convenient connection in Dubai. Jason McVeigh, Emirates Deputy Airport Services Manager at Manchester Airport said: "Our teams in Manchester and Dubai are delighted to be resuming flights for passengers, reconnecting the North with Emirates' global network. We look forward to welcoming passengers on board and have taken comprehensive steps to keep passengers, colleagues and communities safe."



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## Telcom group sign as first tenant for refurbished Hilton House



CERT property has signed its first tenant, Telcom Group, at Hilton House, the recently restored building in the heart of the Northern Quarter, which is believed to be the first significant commercial let in Manchester since lockdown began. Telcom group's move into Hilton House will enable them to further expand their infrastructure operation and support their ambitious growth plans. They will be taking 3,638 sqft in the building, leasing the entire fifth floor and enjoying views of the Northern Quarter and Ancoats. Designed by renowned 1960s architect Richard Seifert, brutalist building Hilton House has been a hidden gem at the end of Hilton Street for decades and developer and owner CERT recently completed

an extensive refurbishment project to bring the building back to life. The refurbishment works, carried out by Ancoats-based contractor Armitage Construction, included extending and completely upgrading the envelope of the building. The owners have also announced it has signed its second tenancy agreement in the same week, as Feel Good Club is set to move in. The first of its kind, mental health and wellbeing venue, will open this summer within an ambitious 2,800ft space on the first floor, thanks to investment from the property company's founder, Howard Lord. The new coffee house is currently in the design phase, and will house a dedicated events space, pop-up galleries featuring local artists, and break out spaces for the Feel Good community to connect. It will also be open to the public, with resources for local corporates, including the ability to hire the new events space, and book bespoke employee engagement workshops. There will be regular events within the new coffee house, including yoga, wellbeing talks, cinema nights, plus a series of workshops. All staff will be mental health first aid trained, with the practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues, and the knowledge to offer support.

## Strategic Analytics Team moves into domestic market

Strategic Analytics Team (SAT) has expanded its offering by moving into the domestic marketplace by taking on an exclusive agreement to market and sell the Sherlock Bike Tracker in the UK. The tracker is designed for use in cycles, although it does have a range of other applications that it could be used for. "In the UK there are on average in excess of 315,000 bikes stolen each year with most not being recovered, with Sherlock you can track your bike to within 5 metres and then take steps to recover it" said Paul Jorgensen, Senior Partner for SAT. As part of the new move, SAT will be working in partnership with bike dealers across the UK to deliver the Sherlock Bike tracker to the end consumer, to give thousands of cycle owners peace of mind.

### Tech stocks most profitable with 30% average ROI in the last 12 months

Data gathered by Buyshares.co.uk indicates that tech stocks are most profitable with a 30.65% return for investors. According to the data, this is the highest ROI in the last 12 months as of June 10, 2020. During the period under review, consumer cyclical stocks had an ROI of 18.89% followed by communication services stock at 15.55%. On the other hand, healthcare stocks had a 14.09% return of investment followed by basic materials at 2.46%. Utilities had the least ROI at 0.68%. Energy stocks were the worst-performing with an ROI of -30.14% with financial stocks coming distant with a return of -6.2%. The real estate had a return of -5.21% followed by industrials at -0.83%. Consumer defensive also had a

negative return at -0.51%. Buyshares.co.uk's research also reviewed the stocks' average return of investment year to date. The tech sector had the highest average return of 10.94% followed by consumer cyclical at 7.7%. The Energy stocks had the worst average return at -28.9% followed by financials at -14.33%. Despite the recent drop in stock prices, some positive signs are beginning to emerge. According to the report: "Unlike before, stocks that would turn the market green are not doing so. However leading tech stocks and pharmaceuticals and consumer cyclical are taking charge. In such circumstances, it would be expected that financials and industrials would be leading the market into recovery."



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# news

## Apadmi expand office for post-lockdown future



Garry Partington, CEO, Apadmi

Mobile technology agency Apadmi has signed the lease for another floor at Anchorage, Salford Quays, to ensure that all team members can work safely when they return to the office, whilst maintaining space for planned growth.

The team is now over 150 strong, with 30 more joining since the start of the year. Developing their workplace to allow for continued collaboration alongside staff well-being became a priority as soon as the impact of

COVID-19 was clear.

Garry Partington, Apadmi's CEO, explained: "This year's brought a change that no one saw coming. Although we've always championed flexible and remote working opportunities, we've never had to do it for the entire company at once. We were all working from home for a couple of weeks before lockdown."

"Now is the time to plan for the future. Whilst we're still actively encouraging the team to stay at home for now, we want to make sure we're ready for the next phase. Our team like to work together, so it's important we find a way to do it safely."

Apadmi have doubled in size in the last eighteen months, recently hiring Jasper van de Luijngaarden as Head of Mergers and Acquisitions and Andrew Smith as New Business Development Director.

## Fathom IT goes full circle

Over the last 20 years Fathom IT has evolved and grown from a fax and printer repair company to a full computer and communications infrastructure service business.

The company offers everything IT related; from hardware repairs, remote support to businesses and individuals, through to installing fibreoptic cables and data networks on large development projects.

The recent lockdown has brought about more homeworking and this has led to Fathom re-energising an arm of its business that had seen little demand in recent years, collection and delivery.

The company is seeing a surge in demand for repairs so has reinstated the full collections service for hardware problems.

Nathan Evans, Fathom IT CEO says, "Clearly infrastructure and IT plays a hugely important part of peoples' lives, as does the ability to work from home in this new era.

"We have quickly adapted our services and offices to the present climate and will continue to be there for our clients; offering computer and phone solutions, supplying new systems and providing hardware repairs.

"Many of our clients; schools, accountants, solicitors, estate agents have continued to operate through this time and we have been there for them.

"I believe nothing is too difficult if you have a determination to get it done.

"Re-energising the collection and return side has enabled businesses to get equipment fixed or upgraded quickly, with our 24-hour turnaround offering a great solution to peoples' IT woes.

"Fathom IT celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, we know that it going to be all about being able to adapt and offer excellent bespoke customer service, no matter what the job."

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## Stockport commercial property heavyweights in surprise merger

As Stockport continues to deliver on its £1bn plan of regeneration and development, property experts Buckley Commercial and Fairhurst Estates are to merge and become Fairhurst Buckley - the largest, independent surveying and agency practice in Stockport.

Both businesses have had a strong foothold in Stockport with Buckley Commercial being in the town centre since 1995 and Fairhurst since 2002. Nigel Blyth will take the role of Managing Director and David Buckley as Director.

Nigel commented: "Fairhurst Buckley brings together two long standing and highly respected Stockport commercial property advisers under one roof.

"We can now provide the highest quality advice and an unrivalled spread of property expertise to our clients throughout



L-R Nigel Blyth, David Buckley

Stockport and the rest of the UK."

David added: "This represents a unique opportunity for us to share our knowledge and expertise with a larger firm and to deliver an enhanced range of property services to all of our clients.

"Although I have operated in the area for 35 years and run a firm of Commercial Property Agents for 25 of those, now is the perfect time for us to grow our business into other areas and provide more in-house services."

## 41% of businesses plan to move banking provider due to slow support during COVID-19

It has been revealed that 42% of business decision-makers have waited over two weeks for a business loan application from their banking provider.

Four in 10 businesses are planning to change their banking provider due to the slow support that has been offered during the outbreak.

This is according to research commissioned by software provider Encompass Corporation, which found that 41% of companies were looking to make a switch due to poor service during the crisis.

The data, which was obtained via a survey of 200 business decision makers in large and medium sized companies, and conducted by independent polling company Censuswide, also revealed that 42% admitted to waiting over two weeks for a business loan application from their current banking provider.

Additionally, 46% have noticed significant delays in their bank's onboarding process since the start of lockdown.

49% also revealed that their bank has yet to directly offer financial support during the crisis, and 40% agreed that their bank's online digital services and support around COVID-19 has been poor.

The impact of slow onboarding, application and compliance processes on companies can be severe, and Encompass found that 45% of companies are planning to make redundancies due to a lack of revenue in the coming months.



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# news

## Celebrating vital role of bike shops on Independents' Day



L-R Wayne Clarke, Insync Bikes with Ian Collins of Devereux Cycles

Manchester bike brand Insync Bikes recently championed the vital work of bike shops to mark Independents' Day UK on July 4.

Insync, owned by India-based Hero Cycles, is celebrating the service provided by its network of local bike shops, which has proved invaluable during the pandemic.

Independents' Day UK is a campaign that exists to support and promote independent retail businesses across the UK all year round, but with an annual focus on July 4. Independents account for about 65 per cent of the approximately 290,000 retail outlets in the UK and are at the heart of local communities throughout the country.

Insync, which has its Hero Global Design Centre in Manchester, sells

its bicycles through a network of around 400 independent bike dealers nationwide, a number it is looking to expand upon.

Bike shops have remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as one of the few businesses able to continue trading in lockdown.

Cycling has experienced a boom period over the last few months as thousands have taken up the sport as one of the government's permitted daily activities. Others have taken to the saddle to commute to avoid the use of public transport.

Wayne Clarke, head of IBD sales at Insync, said it was important to champion local shops, both on Independents' Day and all year round.

He said: "Independent retailers are the lifeblood of the high street, offering diversity of choice and a personal service. At Insync, we are proud of our independent bike shops, which offer a wealth of knowledge to shoppers. They usually have the answers to all manner of questions related to cycling, as well as aftercare support to give you peace of mind. Local bike shops have contributed to the growth in cycling during lockdown, enabling many more people to take up riding, and we look forward to seeing this trend continue."

## Made Smarter reaches major milestone

Made Smarter, the movement helping SMEs join the Industry 4.0 revolution, has reached a major milestone having now funded more than 100 businesses, including 25 in Greater Manchester.

The North West technology adoption pilot is working with SME manufacturers to help them introduce digital tools and technologies to help boost productivity and growth, as well as navigate the impact of Covid-19.

Almost 950 SME manufacturers have secured support, including specialised advice and £2.5m of funding, since the launch of Made Smarter 18 months ago.

This support includes expert, impartial technology advice, digital roadmapping workshops to help manufacturers take their first steps to transform their business, leadership development programme developed in partnership with Lancaster University, and funded digital technology internships.

104 of the businesses have now secured matched funding for 115 projects and are forecast to deliver an additional £100m in GVA for the North West economy over the next three years.

For more information visit [www.madesmarter.uk](http://www.madesmarter.uk)

## Mirrorweb joins Microsoft ScaleUp Programme

Manchester-based web archiving and monitoring solutions provider MirrorWeb has been selected to join the Microsoft ScaleUp programme, an exclusive initiative which grants a small number of high-growth companies access to Microsoft's sales, marketing and technical support.

By joining the programme, MirrorWeb now has the opportunity to further upgrade its platform as growth accelerates. Microsoft's technology expertise will ensure MirrorWeb's unique website and social media archiving software remains secure, efficient and continues to deliver value for its clients in keeping with industry developments.

To be successful in gaining entry onto the Microsoft ScaleUp programme, companies must be startups or growth enterprises at the

forefront of emerging technologies and with the potential to tap into newer markets. Fewer than 2% of applications to the programme are currently successful.

Companies participating in the two-year programme are mentored by numerous industry experts and engage in go-to-market activities to scale their growth globally. Upon graduating, they are supported by a dedicated team of success managers, gaining access to an invaluable range of contacts as part of the Microsoft Partner and Microsoft ScaleUp Programme Alumni networks.

David Clee, CEO and Co-founder of MirrorWeb: "We're delighted to join the programme. Meeting the selection criteria affirms that our innovative platform is ready to support a vast range of clients in their digital transformation".

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# Sue Chapple appointed new CEO of CICM

## Video conferencing could be the key to solving workplace anxiety



Sue Chapple has succeeded Philip King as Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management, the world's largest professional credit management organisation.

Sue, who joined the CICM as Director of Strategic Relationships in 2018, has been interim CEO since Philip's departure to become interim Small Business Commissioner in March.

In confirming Sue in the role, Peter Whitmore, CICM Chairman, praised Sue's work in supporting

the CICM's 8,000 members through the current crisis: *"Sue has hit the ground running and demonstrated exemplary resilience, guiding the team at HQ and lifting the presence of the CICM across our industry and membership despite the CICM facing enormous difficulties."*

Sue has worked at a senior level in the industry for more than 25 years, with particular knowledge and experience of the Public Sector and Utilities. She commented: *"The CICM is a prestigious organisation with a proud history of championing best practice credit management, supporting small businesses, and keeping the cash flowing at every level of the British economy. Our members' skills and qualifications are needed today more than ever, and my priority will be on supporting them and the business community on the long road to economic recovery."*

A nationwide study commissioned by Tech PR agency Eskenzi PR, and carried out by OnePoll, observed the attitude amongst the UK workforce towards remote working and the increased use of video conferencing tools. The survey of a thousand individuals found that software such as Skype, Zoom and Teams have helped to lessen the impact of this abrupt change in circumstances.

Indeed, 6 in 10 respondents feel 'less stressed' or are unaffected by the use of video conferencing whilst working from home. Rather, for many, this is a means of communicating efficiently from the comfort of their own homes.

On the whole, over a third (35%) of respondents would prefer to continue working from home for 2-3 days a week following the alleviation of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Among other motivations for this decision, many cited a reduction in

stress levels. One in 3 individuals feel less stressed whilst remote working, almost half of respondents believe their homes are a more relaxing work environment and a further 36% consider themselves to be more productive.

These statistics appear to suggest that our society is prime to transition into a split three-day week as suggested by the Royal Society for the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA). According to a report by the independent charity, the separation of an organisation's workforce into A and B teams may go some way to resolving today's economic woes.

By having two groups that alternate their days in office, with some working from Monday to Wednesday and others from Thursday to Saturday, organisations can better manage social distancing and the spread of coronavirus.

## Concentrate on your core business and let Esprit handle your palletised or bulk goods warehousing



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Both sites also offer parking for up to 100 HGV's and buses plus office space to rent.

The re-opened bulk docks in Trafford Park can handle vessels carrying upto 4,500 tonnes of freight, direct into the heart of Manchester via the Manchester Ship Canal.

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## Growth Company launches programme of support for thousands of retail workers

The Growth Company have launched an urgent programme of support for thousands of Greater Manchester retail workers at risk of losing their jobs or already made redundant.

The economic impact of long-term store closures due to coronavirus is now starting to take its toll, with many large employers warning of potential job cuts. The owner of restaurant chains Café Rouge and Bella Italia fell into administration recently, with 91 Casual Dining Group outlets closing immediately. The group is cutting 1,900 jobs. Administrators have also been appointed at intu Properties, placing further uncertainty over the jobs of thousands of shopworkers at large regional shopping centres including Greater Manchester's intu Trafford Centre.

In response to the growing uncertainty facing retail workers and employers, The Growth Company has provided specific advice for retail sector workers via the Employ GM website [employgm.org/support-for-retail/](http://employgm.org/support-for-retail/).

Support for retail businesses seeking help is being made available by

the GC Business Growth Hub's coronavirus microsite [www.businessgrowthhub.com/coronavirus/here-for-retail-hub](http://www.businessgrowthhub.com/coronavirus/here-for-retail-hub)

Delivered by the Growth Company in partnership with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and numerous delivery Partners, the EmployGM website [employgm.org](http://employgm.org) was established at the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic to support jobseekers and employers with vacancies.

Specific support for retail workers includes:

- Careers advice
- Skills support
- Redundancy advice
- Vacancy signposting

Part of the Growth Company's **#HereForBusiness** campaign, the GC Business Growth Hub coronavirus microsite contains general information for companies contending with the impact of covid-19, with specific information for the retail sector via a Here For Retail section.

## LECO to target new sectors with innovative mass spectrometry applications



Stockport-based LECO Instruments, developers of mass spectrometry equipment and applications, has signed up to the national SPRINT business support programme.

LECO will collaborate with the Applied Science & Technology Group, based at SPRINT partner, The Open University, to create innovative analytical processes and target several key sectors including food safety, sensory, and forensics and toxicology.

The project will use space expertise developed at The Open University that enabled the analysis of volatile gases on the surface of comets. This expertise supported the innovations required for the Rosetta and Beagle2 missions and more recently, the

proposed PROSPA and LUVMI lunar missions.

The project will enable LECO to target customers with a complete application-specific solution including instrumentation, training and application operating procedures that have been created and evaluated by The Open University.

The project will be funded by a grant from the £4.8 million SPRINT (Space Research and Innovation Network for Technology) programme that provides unprecedented access to university space expertise and facilities.

SPRINT helps businesses through the commercial exploitation of space data and technologies.

# IPSE welcomes ‘sorely needed’ select committee report highlighting businesses left behind by government support

IPSE has welcomed a Treasury Select Committee report out today highlighting the number of businesses who have fallen through the cracks in the government support package.

IPSE is the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed, and is the representative body for the UK’s self-employed community, including freelancers, contractors, consultants and independent professionals.

The report, unanimously agreed by members of the Treasury Select Committee, said the current support package is not enough since it misses out key groups such as freelancers working through limited companies and the newly self-employed. The report estimates that these groups, as well as new

employees and others, make up over a million people who are missing out on support.

The report said clearly: *“The government must assist these people if it is to completely fulfil its promise to do whatever it takes to protect people from the economic impact of coronavirus.”*

Picking up on IPSE’s evidence to the Treasury Select Committee, the report said: *“The Government must find a practical solution to supporting the many limited company directors who are missing out on support because they pay themselves in dividends. IPSE has presented the Treasury with a ready-made solution and we urge the Government to accept and implement this proposal.”*

Andy Chamberlain, Director of

Policy at IPSE, said: *“This report is timely and sorely needed by over a million struggling freelancers and others across the UK who have fallen through the cracks in the government support during Coronavirus.”*

*“We are very glad the Treasury Select Committee listened to our evidence and warning about the freelance groups that have been left behind.”*

*“There are over 710,000 freelancers who work through limited companies, most of whom are now burning through their savings to get by.”*

*“This group in particular is a startling and glaring omission from the government support. There are also hundreds of thousands of people who became self-employed*

*just last year, who, in the early stages of their freelance career, are likely to be in a particularly precarious financial position. The government has left these groups completely out in the cold.*

*“Recent HMRC data shows over a million fewer eligible people than expected drew down on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.”*

*“We urge the government to turn these unused funds to help struggling, left behind freelance groups. We are far from the economy and the freelance sector returning to normal.”*

*“As the Select Committee report highlights, these vital groups urgently need more support if they are to get through the coming months”.*

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# world economy

## V for Victory and the shape of the recovery

**Analysis from Dr John Ashcroft on the global social and economic impact of Covid-19**



### What shape will the recovery be in the UK..? It's a V, it's always a V...

We are at the stage in the economic cycle when questions are raised about the shape of the recovery. Pick a letter from the alphabet and make the case. Jerome Powell, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, suggests the American recovery will follow a 'Slow V'. The association of shape and speed, adds to the confusion. For many, the Powell vision suggests a U. At best it offers a slow bend. A slow U bend perhaps?

The recovery in the UK will be V shaped. Recoveries in the UK always are, at least since 1948 when decent records began. The economy has been in lockdown since the end of March. The impact has led to a shock to output in the second

quarter of just over 20%. Retail sales are down by almost 15% compared to the prior year. Manufacturing activity has contracted by almost 30%. Construction activity was down by almost 40% in the first two months of the quarter.

Service sector activity, has fallen by around 20%. The leisure sector including accommodation and food, has been decimated, as the lockdown continued over the period. The shock to output would have led to a dramatic increase in unemployment but for the introduction of the government furlough scheme.

Rishi Sunak is the most popular member of Cabinet. Little wonder, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is paymaster to over 10 million people. Almost 9 million are on the furlough scheme. The cost to Treasury is greater than that of the NHS.

Into the third quarter of the year, more sectors of the economy will be released from lockdown. Pubs, restaurants and hotels will re-open for business. Social distancing restrictions will be relaxed. All sectors of the retail trade will be back in business.

Our baseline, recovery scenario is modelled by sectors. Each sector will recover at a varying rate. Overall, the economy will be down by 20% in Q2, 10% in Q3 and 5% down in the final quarter of the year.

**We expect UK GDP to fall by almost 10% in 2020, recovering by a similar amount next year.**

The unemployment rate is set to rise by December, unless the furlough scheme is extended to

accommodate the output gap.

Businesses will have to contend with three key challenges as the return to work continues. First, the impact of the Covid Era. Social distancing, PPE and consumer nervousness will impact on retail, travel, leisure and entertainment. The shadow of spikes and a second wave will remain an ever present threat.

Second, the recession impact, job insecurity, rising unemployment, investment cuts and the impact of lower spending, will inhibit the recovery as in any cycle.

Third, the impact of digital disruption. The covid experience has accelerated in three months processes which were expected to take years. Online sales, accounted for over 30% of all retail sales during lock down. Penetration in the food sector moved from 4% to over 10%, a structural shift which will not be reversed. The threat to the high street is becoming more acute as over one in three transactions are lost online.

Flexible working, working from home and teleconferencing, will change the work life balance and the 'nature of work' for many. Agile team working is now the norm. Microsoft Teams and Facebook Workplace, will challenge the development of Basecamp, Slack and DropBox.

Zoom has become the darling of the stock market, increasing in value by almost 400% since the start of the year to a market cap of over \$70 billion dollars. Office planners are going cold on 'hot desking'. It's not good to share, remain Covid aware.

**There will be winners in recovery...**

Government investment will lead to

expansion in transport, infrastructure and telecommunications. The 'greening' of the economy will lead to an expansion in decarbonisation and alternative energies. In the property market, warehousing and logistics will provide the opportunity for expansion, as traditional retail and commercial faces the challenge of AI and Digital disruption.

And of course, online trading will provide the opportunities in digital marketing. Amazon has set the benchmark in User Experience and User Journey which all will have to follow. Payment apps, including Paypal and Square have moved to all time highs. Jamie Dimon's message that cash is trash applies to retail transactions as well as investment advice.

So what shape will the recovery be..? It's a V, it's always a V... but as in any recovery, there will be winners and losers...

Dr John Ashcroft specialises in economics, strategy and financial markets.

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the UK and World Economy. The Saturday Economist Show is now on ZOOM, monthly updates on line.

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# analysis

# We must adapt, not optimise



**Phil Jones MBE,**  
managing director of  
business technology solutions  
provider, **Brother UK.**

On many occasions in my career, I've heard business leaders say that the vital components for success are a deep and unwavering passion, and steadfast commitment to an idea.

And while I appreciate the sentiment, my experience has shown me the opposite. Successful companies are often built by testing assumptions and reacting as new information emerges.

The commitment piece comes after those smaller market tests and experiments have been quickly validated.

Taking this into account and being open to what's not working has often been the key to nailing the right product and sales strategies, and to ensuring our people are connected, engaged and motivated.

I learn something new every day about our customers, our people, the industry we work in and the Greater Manchester business community, and it's important they flow back into our longer-term direction of travel as a business.

## Adapting in a new era

Very few companies will be able to simply pick up where they left off in March and all business models have either seen demand stop, decline or suspend - or in some fortunate cases, accelerate.

Macro-economic forecasts indicate a tough time for the economy and for the prospects of business failure for many.

In response, we must all address the changes on the horizon and consider five key themes to fundamentally re-shape our firms for the future:

**Re-organise** (business model/cost structure),

**Enhance** (do better what you did before),

**Pivot** (re-invent),

**Create** (invent something new to address the new) or

**Capitalise** (grow exponentially from what is).

Some businesses are already doing this. Gin distillers are making hand sanitiser gel (pivot), microbreweries have been rapidly launching direct to home deliveries (enhance) and the web conference business, Zoom, has seen revenues surge by 169 per cent (capitalise).

Adaptability sits at the very heart of this. The severe shock that our regional business community

and the wider economy has felt may bring about a philosophical shift in the way we all do business.

We would be naïve to not plan for similar disruptions in the future. Since the early 20th Century, economies have focused on the quest to find more profitable ways of creating and providing better products and services. Equally, times of extreme uncertainty have led to new ideas and new super successful businesses.

Technology has pressed hard on the optimisation accelerator over the last few decades, helping innovators and disruptors to do similar things with fewer people. This has taken us a long way and also contributed to increased productivity.

However, continual optimisation has also reduced many businesses' ability to pivot and adapt in the ways they need to survive such significant change with their processes being so tightly engineered there is little room for manoeuvre."

## Five to thrive

As we move forward, I've chosen five characteristics which I think those who adapt the best will exhibit:

- Invest in your people and their skills, such as digital or emotional resiliency, to assist you with the ability to rapidly change.
- Create a highly adaptable organisational structure and business model which can flex with demand.
- Have regular interactions with customers and partners to temperature test changes and provide feedback.
- Invest in innovation and experimentation to quickly figure

out what works/does not work and how to ramp your revenues through enhancing what you currently do or capitalising on the new landscape.

- Develop resilient and diverse supply chains to buffer from future shocks.

The first point will be particularly vital in the short term.

People must be at the centre of the change and while many have touted the advent of the connected workforce, this is more likely to be an evolution than a revolution.

Not everybody wants to be a 'connected worker', particularly younger people who may not have the space or location to work at home productively and who miss the osmosis of knowledge many of us have gained from our mentors and colleagues.

The word remains 'flexibility' in business models or working practices as we all move forward. The optimum balance of human and technological capability.

## Re-focus your entrepreneurial spirit

There is no doubt we are working at a time when the economy is very distorted, and the future may seem blurred. But it's important to remember that opportunities often arise from adversity.

Don't be wedded to your business models. Be fast on your feet and focus on adapting, rather than optimising, to reap the opportunities that will open in every sector of the economy.

See you out there.

**Phil Jones, MBE,**  
Managing Director, **Brother UK**



# support

## Slipping through the cracks - help is

The support offered by the Chancellor for UK businesses during the coronavirus outbreak has been unprecedented. However, there are many small businesses that have simply fallen through the cracks and missed out on all available help and support.

In March, the chancellor Rishi Sunak stood in front of the nation and promised on top of the sweeping help introduced that if more support was needed the Treasury have pledged to deliver "whatever it takes" to keep companies solvent.

Since the announcement of many of the schemes, grants and loans to businesses, there have been a growing number of petitions raised amongst many of the businesses missing out on the

available help. These petitions have resulted in hundreds of thousands of businesses registering their voices asking for support for all areas of the business community, particularly for small businesses that are the lifeblood of our economy.

The result of this has been the reaction of the Treasury Committee in taking these issues up as a matter of priority (The Treasury Committee is a cross-party committee of MPs that examine the expenditure, administration and policy of HM Treasury, HM Revenue & Customs, and associated public bodies, including the Bank of England and the Financial Conduct Authority).

So far the Government have responded to the petitions several times and each time the Treasury

Committee have rejected their response as not adequate in addressing the issue. This has now resulted in a 2 hour debate in parliament on 25 June, which will hopefully elicit a response from the government that fulfils the promise of doing all that can be done to safeguard businesses and jobs that are crucial in facilitating our economic rise from the lockdown.

Before the debate the Treasury Committee raised an inquiry into the economic impact of coronavirus which received over 16,000 submissions from affected businesses. So far they have held 10 evidence sessions with ministers, Government officials, Bank of England representatives, regulators and experts, and corresponded



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# needed for businesses **still struggling**

extensively to press the Government to improve its previous responses.

In a statement from the Committee: "Government intervention to protect jobs and livelihoods is welcome but rolling out financial support at pace, and at such a huge scale, has inevitably resulted in some hard edges in policy design and some critical gaps in provision.

"More than two months on from the introduction of restrictions that locked down large sectors of the economy, many people continue to endure financial hardship whilst being unable to benefit from the Government's support schemes.

"In particular, we are concerned about four groups of people:

**Those newly in employment or newly self-employed** "Data suggests that there are typically more than half a million people starting a new job every month, and there are likely to be hundreds of thousands of people who have set themselves up in business since April 2019 who do not meet the eligibility criteria for support."

**Those self-employed with annual trading profits in excess of £50,000** "They are ineligible for support because their profits exceed a cap set by the Government. It has been estimated that around 225,000 individuals may be included in this group."

**Directors of limited companies** "Directors who take a large part of their income in dividends and

are only entitled to claim support under the CJRS on the typically small PAYE component of their income. There may be around 710,000 individuals impacted."

**Freelancers and those on short-term contracts** "They are unlikely to be eligible for either of the Government's two principal income support schemes. We received a large number of written submissions from people in this group.

"The Government needs to do something for these people if it is to completely fulfil its promise of protecting incomes and jobs."

Find out more: [houseofcommons.shorthandstories.com/coronavirus-economic-impact-gaps-in-support-report/](https://www.houseofcommons.gov.uk/shorthandstories.com/coronavirus-economic-impact-gaps-in-support-report/)

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# focus

# Culture, Comm

GM Business Connect have recently caught up with Paul Whitnell, president of the British and Irish Trading Alliance (BITA). The membership organisation has been growing over the past few years, and recently has established a Manchester chapter chaired by Christiane Hutchinson.

We asked Paul about BITA's plans for the future and how they intend to fuel growth:

*"We are 'the people who know people that help people', a motto that encapsulates our ethos, and one that makes our organisation truly unique. BITA promotes and grows our member businesses; successfully increasing trade, creating opportunities for business, and improving the relationship between the UK and Ireland."*

*"We want to help our members achieve their goals and work to create pipelines and opportunities for SMEs to work with our supporters and patrons who often head large multi-nationals, offering the right providers of labour, contractors and supplies."*

*"I founded BITA in 2012, with a view to create a not-for-profit organisation that would work with businesses and business leaders closely, to offer advice and introductions."*

Everyone who has been a member for more than a couple of months knows Paul Whitnell, he is regularly heard making 'ch, ch, ch' noises to quiet the room at their packed events and always busy making introductions for different businesses.

Far from having lots of time to socialise however, Paul usually has a packed diary filled with meetings and events to push BITA forward into their next stage, and to benefit member businesses.

*"In a normal pre-pandemic week I used to travel around 5,000 miles, by train and car, and I can easily work 18 hours a day. Although I think I'll be replacing a few of these with Zoom calls in the future!"*

*"As we grow, I go further afield to keep up with what our chapters are doing, and I split my time hopping between England, Isle of Man,*

*Wales, Ireland and Scotland.*

*"I want to make sure our members are getting the best from their membership and me, so when meeting with new businesses I make sure I promote them and our sponsors."*

*"Over the past year I've been lucky enough to spend quite a bit of time in Manchester where I've been working with Christiane Hutchinson and other board members to help set up their chapter of BITA."*

Paul will usually have three to four meetings a day forming connections, promoting member and sponsor businesses and signing up new members. He is passionate about ensuring their community gets value for money so he'll also spend two days visiting a different area. Based in Kent, he makes sure that none of the chapters are neglected and ensures that they are well equipped to support their chapter members.

It's an incredibly busy life, and although there are enjoyable lunches and interesting meetings, Paul is keen to stress that under the

# and C

fun is a strong business core with a very clear ethos. *"What I'm most proud of with BITA, is that we can offer people something that wasn't available when I arrived in the UK back in 2012."*

*"When I meet someone new to this country, or looking to expand their connections, it's wonderful to be able to offer them the connections and community that we have built";* says Paul. *"When I can clearly see the effect it has on their business, that's what makes me proud."*

*"It can be difficult for people to know how to network effectively, and they can believe that knowledge is something that needs to be hoarded."*

*"Of course, in some instances this is right, but businesses that fail to share information about what they do and what they want, will miss out on opportunities. Sharing information is very powerful, especially when part of a community that wants to help*





PEOPLE WHO KNOW PEOPLE THAT HELP PEOPLE

# unity connections

others achieve their goals.

"With this in mind, we are pleased that our new initiative, the Procurement Hub, is steaming ahead. When launching BITA we intended to provide connectivity and business for our members, as well as a friendly community. We have achieved this, but we are always seeking to improve and provide greater value to our members.

"Although BITA is not industry specific, we have started creating sector specific hubs of business, and we want our members to be able to use these to their best advantage by providing the framework for a supply chain that is interconnected and quality checked.

"Ultimately our members will be able to work together to create an alliance of businesses working collaboratively to access bigger contracts than they would be able to secure on their own. This will also create a so far untapped interconnected supply chain, able to offer full services to organisations struggling to fulfil their skill requirements.

"Our mission as an organisation is to offer a helping hand to people of both countries who are seeking new business, relocating, or adapting to cultural changes in either country.

"The Procurement Hub is the next stage of this mission and has the potential to provide organisations with a supply chain that will deliver savings, retain quality and fulfil skill requirements.

"Sharing information is crucial to the success of the Procurement Hub, and will lead to business growth for our members, but BITA is also about networking and enabling people to forge their own connections."

Does Paul, the networker extraordinaire, have any tips to help people develop those business connections? Paul laughs; "People often want to burst into a room and spray their cards everywhere. I've had people tell me they've handed out 30 cards in 30 minutes; I tell them they won't get a

single person looking to connect with them.

"People worry about making first meetings count, especially as they may only have a few minutes with that person, but it can be a mistake to jump into business.

"I think the best way to network is to do two things; listen and understand. You don't need to show everyone your business cards, you need to show them your personality. We all have shared interests, so find that thing that you're both passionate about, whether it's rugby or flower-arranging.

"Whatever happens you need to make sure that there is a

relationship first, and a solid grounding, before you even think about talking business.

"If a person demonstrates integrity, passion, and generosity of spirit to our members and to BITA, then they're going to do well in business as people will want to work with them.

"As BITA grows, it's important that we offer the right resources for our members and adapt to their developing needs; it's important that our members help us achieve this by telling us what they want.

"We want members to see and grab the opportunities that BITA presents."



BITA Founder  
Paul Whitnell

If you would like to learn more about **BITA** and membership, which is from only £250+VAT a year, please contact our head office on **07587 035740** or email **laura@bita.ie**, who will be available to answer any of your questions or to put you in touch with your Chapter Board or Paul.

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## BITA MANCHESTER CHAPTER

The BITA Manchester Chapter was started up last autumn by appointed Chair, Christiane Hutchinson, CEO of Biramis Management Partners. Since opening the chapter has enjoyed 6 regular networking events taking place on the second Thursday of every month at 5.30pm, in Brown's Bar.

With an attendance level of around 30 CEO's, C-suite decision makers, the Manchester network has been growing from strength to strength. Christiane commented: "Manchester has a rich fabric of networks, hence the dynamism and fertile ground for business. Our Chapter has three streams and we are working on developing all three, as they are complementary in their outreach to our various communities:

**Business:** We are connecting CEO's and Business Owners from construction (a strong core within BITA as a whole), tech, financial and support professional services to those sectors, and not excluding any other sectors! We want to represent Manchester.

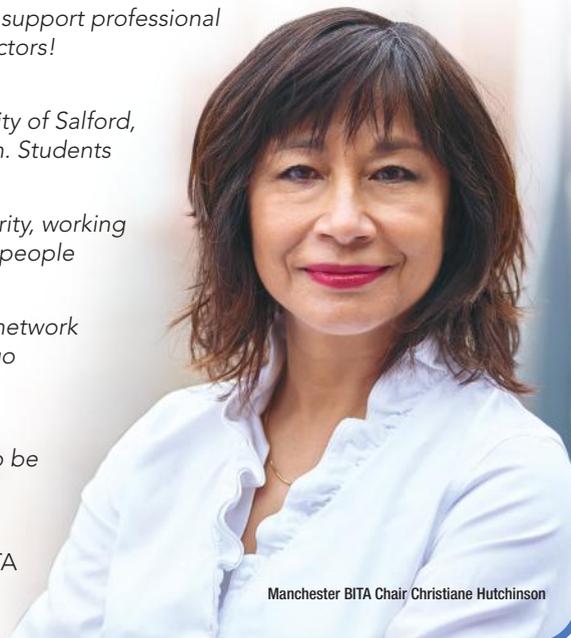
**Education:** One of our Board Members is the University of Salford, and there is a program to support industry and education. Students looking for placements can tap into our networks.

**CSR:** Our chosen charity is Barnabus, the homeless charity, working tirelessly in and around Manchester to reinsert homeless people into society.

"One of the unique differentiators about BITA as a local network is the international opening it offers businesses keen to go beyond the regional boundaries post Brexit.

Our planned luncheon in the Brooklyn Hotel on 4th April attracted around 100 participants. Unfortunately, it had to be postponed due to the pandemic. **We now have a provisional replacement date on 30th October.**

We are currently working on opening our Manchester BITA web page so we look forward to seeing you all soon!



Manchester BITA Chair Christiane Hutchinson

# focus

# The future of work verification

GM Business Connect caught up with Michael Dodd, CEO and Founder of V Site Pass, and asked him about his business which centred around a unique verification and compliance solution designed for industrial users such as the construction sector:

## Tell us about your business?

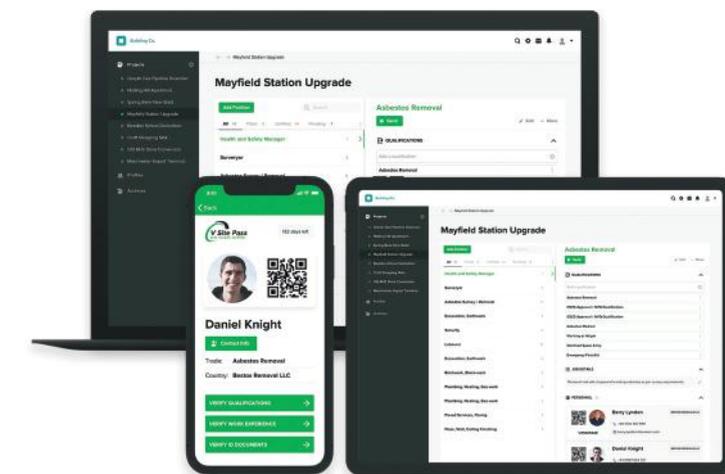
"V Site Pass is a unique platform designed to digitally verify and store the credentials of workers. From a business perspective, this reduces workplace risk for both personnel and commercial users within sectors that require independent validation of workforce credentials to perform specific tasks. It also ensures your business is fully compliant as regards your workforce.

"Our platform independently verifies the credentials of a worker such as Identity, eligibility, professional qualifications, training and medicals.

"Companies can then use this data to ensure their workers are fully qualified to complete the job at hand. We also monitor expiration dates to ensure that credentials remain valid for the duration of the task and flag to employers when they are due for renewal.

"Using a single system for both verification and compliance, the platform offers a full audit trail and total visibility giving businesses the confidence to make decisions based on data and not guesswork.

"Whether it's complying with new regulations, moving your workforce or opening a new location, the platform offers the business agility necessary to respond to change



quickly and accurately."

## Where does your application work?

"The platform has been designed to sit in all environments and to benefit from widespread adoption across a business using mobile, tablet and desktop systems.

"This can guarantee complete flexibility from office to work site. We have also designed it to be intuitive and easy to use, whilst at the same time retaining the highest standards of security."

## What measures do you have in place to make sure users are genuine?

"V Site Pass account holders submit their documentation electronically via our app for verification.

"This information then undergoes a series of automated and manual

checks by industry professionals - including enhanced identity verification.

"Each document submitted will not become available to share through the app until it has satisfied our strict criteria to ensure it is genuine and valid."

## Is the app for both contractor and employee to use?

"There are two sides to the solution, the worker app for use by both employees and contractors alike and the client side where the project requirements and requests are generated and managed.

"With the worker side of the application, all credentials are stored on a mobile phone and can be shared securely from your device to site in seconds.

"The expiry dates are also continually monitored allowing the worker not

to miss an opportunity to work through missing or lapsed credentials.

"The Client side is where the project requirements and requests are generated, managed, and recorded."

## What type of businesses will your product disrupt and why?

"It's not necessarily that our product will 'disrupt' any existing businesses, but what it will do is revolutionise the way that worker credentials are verified and overall reduce risk and improve the safety of vast sectors such as the construction industry.

"The V Site Pass solution will provide a seamless transition for a currently heavily labour intensive, potentially flawed, and costly process.

"It can be easily and quickly integrated into any working site or future project."

## How will your application save money for the construction sector?

"For the client there are a whole host of financial benefits to using V Site Pass:

- By outsourcing the eligibility to work and credential check there is no need to carry out in house checks.
- Every V Site Pass holder has eligibility to work in the UK (current immigration fines £20,000 per worker).
- Every task can go ahead as planned as you can verify in advance the workers are eligible and qualified for the task.
- Potential insurance discounts as you can guarantee everyone on site is who they say they are and are qualified for the task they are being employed to carry out.

"As well as the points listed, the fact that





# force and compliance

*your workforce is 100% compliant and are fully accredited for the work they are doing mean that the chance of any workplace accidents are dramatically reduced. If any incidents do happen, then any insurance implications can be resolved positively and quickly."*

**How secure is the technology used?**

*"V Site Pass uses an end to end encrypted solution to securely store and share your information. This ensures the highest levels of security across all users on a site.*

*"Safeguarding your data is an integral part of our business. We have therefore opted to host all data to the highest possible level with Amazon's ISO27001 compliant AWS cloud infrastructure.*

*"As a business V Site Pass will never share your data with any third party."*

**What are the GDPR considerations in using your App?**

*"The beauty of using the V Site Pass application removes the need for the site to become a data owner. Each individual user is in full control of their own data all the time.*

*"They can choose who they share their information with and when, for how long and when and where the recipient can view it. If they change their minds, they can simply withdraw the permission.*

*"Once the worker finishes the job and leaves site, so does their information. However, V Site Pass leaves a digital fingerprint of their verified data showing they were there and qualified to perform the project task(s)."*

**What sort of ongoing support do you offer construction businesses (for example a helpline/tech support?)**

*"We have 24/7 online tech support."*

**Are you looking to update the technology created on an ongoing basis?**

*"Yes, we have several additional features going on in the development cupboard. Some of these have been our ideas and some are requests from current users.*

*"We will always listen to feedback from our customers and our early adopters have the chance to mould and shape the V Site Pass of the future."*

**Is it just construction that you are currently looking to work with, or are you aiming your business model to other sectors?**

*"Currently construction, oil, gas and power including renewables, but once we're further established we've got our sights on rail, maritime, aerospace, mining and defence."*

**How can people get in touch with you?**

For more information you can either visit our website [www.vsitepass.com](http://www.vsitepass.com) or follow our social media channels:

- Twitter - [twitter.com/vsitepass](https://twitter.com/vsitepass)
- Facebook - [www.facebook.com/vsitepass/](https://www.facebook.com/vsitepass/)
- LinkedIn - [www.linkedin.com/company/vsitepass/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/vsitepass/)
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Or you can email: [info@vsitepass.com](mailto:info@vsitepass.com) or call **01624 639940**

Michael Dodd, CEO and Founder of V Site Pass



# interview

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## Lifting your spirits in a crisis

The hospitality sector has all but closed over the pandemic with very little confidence about what the near future holds.

In an effort to keep livelihoods going, many suppliers to the sector have shifted perspective to alternative activity to ensure their businesses survive.

GM Business Connect caught up with Steve Frehley and Mike Robinson from Jeffrey's Tonic, who until recently were stockists of cordials and tonic syrups to the sector:

### Please tell us what you do?

"We make a range which includes a Classic Premium Indian Tonic Syrup and some delicious Handcrafted Cordials, using natural ingredients."

### How did you feel when you heard that all restaurants and bars had to close in March?

"It didn't sink in straight away. There was a dawning realisation that everything had just stopped. We couldn't communicate to customers new or existing, it was awful to think about all of these businesses coming to an instant halt like that.

"Very quickly we switched focus to online retail, marketing and working on things we needed to improve on."

### Did you think the business would have to hold production?

**How did you react to the problem - and did you take any advice?**

"Currently, we make our drinks using the NowFood facility at Chester University, so we were forced to hold production anyway due to the lockdown.

"We are fortunate to have an online shop as well as existing retail customers; we realised quickly that we needed to focus on that and to throw ourselves into promoting the website via social media.

"We have been receiving much more in the way of online orders (via our website and Amazon) since the lockdown began. Booths also took the opportunity to review their drinks range.

"The government stepping-up to provide financial support has been a big help and we have taken advantage of that. At the same time, we looked at our fixed costs and reduced those where we could.

"We were impressed and thankful to the local business community for how quickly advice and help was provided, including on-line networking sessions, such as your ConnectWorking events for example. These were and are important, not just for prospecting during this period of time, but for support and advice.

"We should also mention the Chester Business Growth Hub team - they were very quick to respond and to offer advice where they could. The business community made us feel reassured that we would deal with

the crisis and work through it."

### What did you do to promote your products online, and how are sales to date?

"As the weeks have rolled on, we have seen a significant increase in direct orders.

"It has been a strange time. Our forecast for the year ahead was significantly focused on the hospitality sector, but we've had to change tack.

"People were turning to online shopping, so we needed to communicate directly with our potential consumers, with a lot of promotion on social media platforms and reaching out to potential retail customers. We've just gained listings in Booths, which is really significant for us as our first major retailer.

"Sales figures are slightly down, but costs have been significantly reduced and the major retail listings give us a real sense of optimism. It's been brilliant to see how many people re-order regularly via our website. We may just be on our way to becoming 'a thing'!"

### When the restaurants and bars reopen will you be calling your prospects straight away or will you step back and let the businesses adjust first?

"This is a tough question. Those that do intend to open will need stock. Whether they want to introduce new

lines is more difficult to predict.

"A number of wholesalers intended to list Jeffrey's before lockdown. If and when that happens, it will for sure help when it comes to reminding businesses that we are still here and available with the same great products."

### Where would you like to see Jeffrey's in 5 years' time?

"In significant restaurant and hotel chains, high-end retailers across all of the UK and in other countries."

### What advice would you give anyone looking to start a beverage business today?

"Contacts are key. Have someone in your team with a lot of experience in the drinks business, and connections.

"Make sure that whatever you are providing is better than your competitors and shout about it.

"Getting in front of the consumer and driving awareness is key, so do plenty of markets and events.

"It's much harder than you think. If you have great products, though, have faith and back yourself. Learn from your mistakes and do not give in!"

### Where can people purchase your products?

"Direct from our website - [www.jeffreystonic.com](http://www.jeffreystonic.com), Booths Supermarkets, Amazon, Master of Malt and OCADO."



L-R Mike Robinson, Maureen Robinson, Steve Frehley



Find out more:  
[www.jeffreystonic.com](http://www.jeffreystonic.com)  
[sales@jeffreystonic.com](mailto:sales@jeffreystonic.com)  
07734 428857

# interview



# Spirited start up ready to refresh the spirits market



Still riding high as everyone's favourite lockdown tippie, gin is continuing to enjoy a fantastic run as the spirit of choice across the UK. Many people are moving towards artisan and specialist variations, including low calorie options to remedy those extra pounds put on during lockdown.

The latest name to land is the Pentone range, consisting of two inaugural brands - Ocean Storm and Red Storm.

GM Business Connect zoomed recently with Philip Pentone Robinson, founder and CEO of The Pentone Family, exploring their backstory and intention to blaze their way across bars and restaurants with the new brands as venues re-open across the summer:

**Philip - tell us about your background?**

*"In 2016 I completed the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme in Italy, exploring law and international trade with a focus on the food and*

*beverage industry. From there I returned to the UK realising I wanted to make and create my own products and began to developing my knowledge of crafting drinks other than our family limoncello recipes!*

*"Running whisky tours and tastings was a great way to begin learning about distilling, and I won a scholarship to study the Master of Enterprise degree at Manchester Business School. This involved researching innovative alcoholic beverages and helped me enormously develop my entrepreneurial spirit (excuse the pun!) and drive.*

*"This was a great foundation to conduct R&D across all beverage categories and test the market in 2018/19, and gave me the opportunity to showcase my innovative beverages in the finals of business competitions 'Venture Further' and 'Venturefest'."*

**Tell us about the thinking behind your latest offerings?**

*"Inspired by our family backstory, we combine tradition and innovation to chart our way forward, seeking to positively disrupt and refresh the UK alcoholic beverages market.*

*"Our tag line #forgedinthestorm is as relevant as ever, as people and business battle through the Covid storm with our innovation led start up powering up. Pentone is a positive symbol of entrepreneurial spirit and endeavour.*

*"One of our main principles is to drink healthier and drink better, which sits comfortably with the idea that people are being more health conscious than ever.*

*"Gin Pentone gives consumers the choice of drinking better without compromising on flavour, with Ocean Storm and Red Storm providing the ultimate refreshment whilst at the same time offering a lower calorie experience."*

**Describe the two new brands you are launching?**

*"Ocean Storm and Red Storm are the flagship spirits in our new wave of lower calorie alcoholic beverages from our over-arching brand 'Gin Pentone'.*

*"At only 40 calories per serving, these innovative gins are made without using sugar and artificial flavourings, otherwise prevalent in the industry. They are made using only natural botanicals to achieve their appealing colour and refreshing flavour. Inspired by their rich cultural heritage, Gin Pentone provide Italian inspiration with British Innovation: a perfect pairing from production to palate.*

*"Ocean Storm tells the story in spirit form of our family's forefather and inspiration - Antonio - who won a gallantry award for single-handedly saving the lives of 28 men in a shipwreck and storm in the Indian Ocean, bringing them ashore, even swimming back to save the ship's cat. As a seafarer, carrying botanicals all over the world, this classic gin with refreshing floral notes is a fitting symbol for the story.*



Philip Pentone Robinson

*"Red Storm is inspired by the adage 'red sky' forewarning of storms at sea. The subtle citrus notes are lifted by a refreshing wave of hibiscus, offering a complementary naturally low calorie gin that tastes every sip as good as it looks."*

**What is the timetable for your two latest brands?**

*"We're launching in time for July Independence Day (also Independents' Day for our Great British businesses), and we're inviting the sector to get in touch straight away for what we see as a great new innovation in gin for the marketplace.*

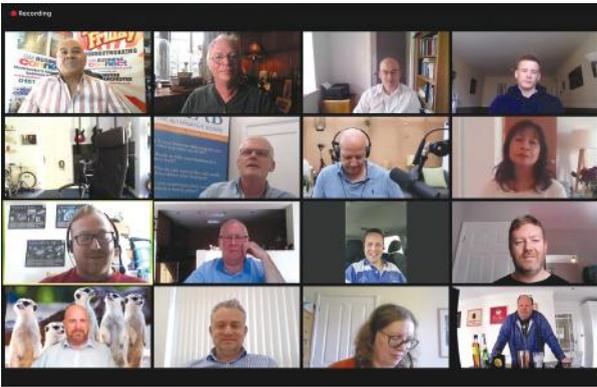
*"So we're asking everyone to get in the spirit and support your innovative independent family business! You'll be able to see Pentone gracing bars and restaurants across the Northwest this summer. Trade can contact directly, and consumers will be able to pre-order online at [www.pentonefamily.com/gin](http://www.pentonefamily.com/gin)"*

For more information follow the family across social media @pentonefamily and @ginpentone on Facebook and Instagram

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[www.pentonefamily.com](http://www.pentonefamily.com)

# networking Virtual ConnectWorking



GM Business Connect have always been prolific networkers within the regional business community. So, when lockdown was brought in on 23 March we were hit pretty hard. After all, there is a difference between not wanting to go out to meet people and being told you cannot!

We had partnership agreements in place with many Expos and Conferences in Greater Manchester to exhibit and meet more of the business community during 2020. Unfortunately, this year looks like usual activity within this sector has either been postponed or simply been cancelled - many businesses are writing this year off.

We believe the future of face-to-face networking in public places will be both restrictive and very slow to re-establish, so for the immediate future of networking we will continue to meet online.

As a business magazine we were hosting two regular monthly events before Covid-19 - First Friday ConnectWorking (in aid of charity Forever Manchester) at sites across the city centre, and ConnectWorking Breakfast in Trafford.

Along with many other networking groups we decided to hold our events online on Zoom.

We started off with our First Friday

Virtual ConnectWorking - normally held at a city centre hostelry at the end of a working week (4 - 6pm on a Friday). This time we got Steve Frehley from Jeffrey's Tonic to mix up some cocktails while we sat in our own homes and talked about possible frustrations we were encountering. We also shared our experiences we were having with Susan Leigh of Lifestyle Therapy which did help the conversation as we didn't want to sweep it under the carpet. We made sure everyone got the chance to do an intro, so we knew who was in the room.

We knew if we were suffering, others in business would also be feeling

frustrated and followed up with ConnectWorking Breakfast which normally takes place at The Belmore in Sale.

This time we asked Edwina Currie Ex Junior Health Minister, Writer, Celebrity and Broadcaster to speak at the event in May. Edwina spoke about the disruption to business and implications and solutions we should adopt. Plus, we did a Q & A on how the government was handing Covid-19.

These were two networking events with a difference. We charge only £5 plus Eventbrite fees and all the money goes to charity - you automatically get entered into the next Forever Manchester's Tombola draw with a chance to win either £500, £250 or £100 drawn by the Charity.

We'll continue to host the online events as they are still connecting businesses. We're finding that giving individuals the chance to pitch to everyone massively helped in the creation of new business opportunities and relationships.

The development of the virtual zoom-based networking model has helped those businesses who work remotely from home develop and retain their business networks, and although it's now 'screen-to-screen' and not 'face-to-face', there is still a huge endorsement for taking part.

Join us for our online events - see our Virtual Diary Dates and book on Eventbrite and reserve your place.

We're keeping pace with the 'New Normal' and will keep calm and carry on connecting the business community across the North West - still in print and online.

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**#CONNECTWORKING**

**ZOOM Networking!**  
Join us on  
**Friday 7 August**  
4.00pm - 6.00pm  
Tickets on Eventbrite

# focus



# An alternative approach to becoming better business leaders

The Alternative Board (TAB) has been around for over 30 years and been in the UK for over 10 of those years. Over that time, they have been offering a fresh, alternative approach to running businesses and creating better business leaders. This has been mainly down to their emphasis on support between members in the form of monthly board meetings and 1-to-1 sessions.

GM Business Connect caught up with Mark Kane, an experienced senior manager, now offering his services to South Manchester businesses after launching The Alternative Board covering the South Manchester area earlier this year.

Prior to launching TAB, Mark worked in financial services for almost 20 years, principally as a senior manager in an investment management company, managing an ISA plan that was worth several billion pounds, and responsible for a specialised helpdesk which administered investments for clients. He ran numerous operational teams through periods of great change, achieved an Executive MBA through Keele University and served on the board of trustees of the company pension scheme.

**We asked Mark to explain in more detail the role of TAB and what it can bring to businesses during an unprecedented time of economic turmoil:**

*"Essentially, we provide local businesses with board of director-style support, advice and mentoring not normally available to independent SMEs and entrepreneurs.*

*"Recognising that peer support can make a significant difference in ensuring that businesses not only survive this period but go on to thrive, we bring business owners*

*and leaders of independently owned companies from non-competing sectors together in a group setting, similar to a board of directors, where they help each other to identify opportunities and solve challenges they each face in their own companies.*

*"From talking to many other business owners, I know there are many leaders out there who are feeling isolated, anxious, and alone. I want to contribute and be a real help to those who need a hand not only with their challenges, but also with the opportunities that will present themselves over time.*

*"The past 6 months or so has been an exceptionally difficult time for most but I have full faith in the support offered via TAB which has helped business owners through previous recessions.*

*"I am also hugely positive about the prospects for businesses in South Manchester and the North West. Businesses in the area will grow, develop and come out of this period much stronger."*

*"The Alternative Board is growing from strength to strength in the North West, and with my new role covering Manchester South along with the hugely experienced and established team of Paul Winterbottom for Manchester West, Ian Gregory for Mid Cheshire, Terry Hayward for Stockport, Macclesfield & Peak District and David Roberts for North Wales, we form part of a wider UK team currently helping over 400 business owners and leaders.*

*"TAB works with independently owned businesses, who do not typically have a board of directors to provide advice, expertise, and accountability to company leadership. What we offer is an 'alternative' board of between 5 to*

*8 business owners from non-competing sectors who meet monthly.*

*"At the meeting they each bring a topic relating to their business; perhaps ideas have dried up, or they need advice on what to focus on. We then spend time on each topic drawing on the huge amount of experience and knowledge around the table."*

**How has the current crisis impacted TAB?**

*"Our success is measured in the ability to get positive-minded business owners around a boardroom table talking through shared issues and finding solutions and support on a regular basis.*

*"This can be achieved virtually just as easily as face to face. Times like these are exceptional, and we're finding by offering a platform like TAB can be crucial in the intellectual wellbeing of business leaders, offering not just guidance, mentorship and problem solving, but an opportunity for personal growth for everyone involved."*

*"I'm keen to work with South Manchester businesses who are eager to learn, who acknowledge that they do not have all the answers, who are open minded and also open to change. Board membership is not guaranteed, as any new board member must be willing to help others and be open to share their experiences and challenges. This concept will be new to most business owners, so I'm organising a series of 'Taster' sessions so you can experience TAB at first hand."*



To find out more contact Mark at:

**[mkane@thealternativeboard.co.uk](mailto:mkane@thealternativeboard.co.uk)**

Phone: **0161 660 9746** Mobile: **0781 257 4622** or visit:

**[www.thealternativeboard.co.uk/manchester-south/](http://www.thealternativeboard.co.uk/manchester-south/)**

# exporting

# The fog is slowly clearing

by **Tony Goodman MBE**

*The blurry outline of the landscape is emerging. And it has changed, we just don't yet know exactly how.*

When I wrote my last article we were in the very early stages of lockdown, with fear and uncertainty as the prevailing emotions around the world.

Since then many parts of the

world have come through the first pass of the virus, though some are still in the thick of it. Political strategies have moved from being nationwide to more regional or hyper localised.

More is understood about the effects of the virus, leading to many younger people 'unlocking' much faster than older people and safeguarding members of society, and these patterns are repeating around the world.

The reaction is becoming far more complex and nuanced but remains dangerous and susceptible to further interruption.

Significantly the world is slowly opening up again, and in spite of local flare-ups the need for business to resume is taking precedence over widespread, preventative, lockdown.

With this comes renewed opportunities for those that are prepared to look around the

world to find them.

### **The dreaded B word again!**

All this is happening at a critical time in the Brexit negotiations, made more difficult by the disruptions and distractions. So, what do we know at this point?

The UK will be leaving after the transition period finishes at the end of this year without extending.

There is a lower ambition set for the



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nature of the deal to be achieved.

There is also a heightened risk of no deal being achieved by the end of this year, but at the same time whatever may be agreed, discussions will continue well into the future and the eventual shape of a deal may not appear for some time.

Whilst this is going on the UK are advancing in their negotiations around the world with some ambitious opportunities including the USA, Japan and the Trans Pacific Partnership prime amongst them. This is a bold programme and statement of intent by the UK Government.

Whatever happens though it is vital to remember that a huge amount of international trade takes place without the benefit of Free Trade Agreements. This especially applies to smaller and medium sized companies.

There is no reason to wait before starting to export to new markets around the world.

At a time when so many businesses have been disrupted and long established risk profiles have been

brought into question, preparation and investigation remain key.

It also pays to see how well you can protect yourself from the risks of trading, whether in the UK or overseas.

Credit and contract insurance, whether for individual customers, invoices or across the board are widely available, and the Department for International Trade also have schemes to help exporters. These are sensible steps that can help make trading more secure.

There are more planning steps that can and should be taken, with the changed world and the constantly evolving business landscape it is even more important than ever to keep up to date with the latest local rules and regulations and not rely on previous, albeit reliable, assumptions.

For instance, it has been easy over recent years to assume that goods can be safely delivered around the world at reasonable cost. That is still largely the case, but global

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BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND

logistics can no longer just be taken for granted.

So, one of your early calls when considering any new sales or sourcing markets should be to your freight forwarder and it would be wise to bring them closer into your planning circle. They can provide invaluable intelligence as conditions change.

[www.great.gov.uk](http://www.great.gov.uk)

As ever, the Department for International Trade provide a wealth of information both via their comprehensive web portal and through their field Trade Advisors.

This great, free, resource is intended to be used by businesses like yours.

There are still huge opportunities throughout the world, and with careful approach and planning they can be invaluable to your business. This is no time to be inward looking because, let's be honest, we need all the opportunities we can find.

## Some lockdown lessons I have learned:

- How important hairdressers are to society.
- Bicycles have a future.
- That working from home does not lead to lower productivity.
- But also working from home does not suit some people at all and lots of people only some of the time.
- Open plan family homes have not been designed with working from home in mind!
- Food home delivery is great.
- Travel is a luxury that we took for granted.
- But travel is not essential to speak to anyone, anywhere, anymore.
- A video call is much more human and connecting than a phone call.
- Change can happen very fast.
- And finally... that I should have invested in Zoom shares last year as a Christmas present to myself!



### Tony Goodman MBE

is a successful exporter and has been doing so through a variety of different businesses. He is currently Marketing Advisor at Forest and Co who specialise in offering guidance on branding, exporting and sales:

[www.forestandco.com](http://www.forestandco.com)



Exporting continues on next page



Continued from  
previous page

## exporting

# Helping independent businesses adapt to new shopping habits

**A Manchester haulier is supporting the survival of local businesses by helping firms adapt to selling online.**

Harbour Freight has assisted independent retailers with setting up a delivery method to reach customers nationwide during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The move has enabled local businesses to sell to some of the 89% of UK consumers who have turned to online shopping during the UK lockdown, according to research from Visa, and scale up or down to meet demand.

The firm is now ready to support businesses kickstarting operations following the easing of lockdown restrictions and looking for ways to reduce their business costs while accommodating fluctuating sales.

The company is a shareholder member of Pall-Ex - a pallet network of SME haulage firms which operate independently, but work together to deliver freight throughout the UK and Europe, and provide a cost-effective delivery model.

Steve Swinburn, Managing Director at Harbour Freight, comments: "We've been helping local businesses navigate the difficulties of lockdown; these are firms that had to close their doors and find new ways of reaching their customers.

"The combination of an online sales platform and a reliable haulage solution has enabled them to become national businesses and tap into the growth in ecommerce purchases

all within a matter of weeks.

"As more and more firms return from lockdown, we believe palletised haulage is the cost-effective solution they need to help their businesses adapt to new customer shopping habits and we hope that we can support other industries as they get back on their feet.

"Our model is built around the movement of fluctuating volumes and reduced miles, so it has provided the flexibility companies have needed throughout the coronavirus crisis and

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# Businesses changing habits

will continue to need as they build themselves back up."

As 41% of shoppers are buying online more frequently and 74% of those will continue to do so in the future, with DIY supplies and furniture top of the shopping list, local businesses need to find reliable methods to reach larger audiences.

Steve adds: "We've been surprised by how demand for services has changed in recent weeks, with a noticeable increase in deliveries from

businesses to customers.

"Our recent investments in IT for customer deliveries enables us to provide the tracking and visibility technology they expect on goods they order online, which had previously been missing from the palletised freight sector.

"Visit [harbourfreight.co.uk](http://harbourfreight.co.uk) for a tailored pallet delivery quote or visit [www.pallex.co.uk](http://www.pallex.co.uk) to find out more about the network.

"Pall-Ex Group is an award-winning



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# apprenticeships

## There's never been a more important time to employ an apprentice

There have been some incredibly challenging times in recent months in the apprenticeship sector. Like the vast majority of organisations we have had to adapt quickly to new ways of working in order to support the employers and apprentices we work with.

However, as we transition back to our normal proactive ways, we can reflect on a number of amazing positives that we have seen over this turbulent period. Firstly, as a result of the huge amounts of hard work in recent years to raise the profile of apprenticeships, we have had more interest from young people than ever before in becoming an apprentice.

More people are recognising that gaining career defining skills and knowledge, while supported by an employer, is a very attractive proposition and an alternative to full time education.

Secondly, although the details are still to come, the very fact that the Prime Minister himself announced a guaranteed apprenticeship scheme would be vital in the social and economic bounce back, was a pivotal moment for the sector. Highlighting the essential role apprenticeships play in society, by enabling social mobility and economic prosperity, whilst fulfilling an essential role in developing the skills the nation needs to move forward economically.

Finally, the way in which the sector as a whole and certainly our amazing staff have responded to the digital transition has been superb. In a matter of days in late March, we moved to 100% digital interaction with our 1,300 apprentices. In the last 14 weeks we have delivered more learning and support to apprentices than ever before. We have averaged over 700 learning, assessment

and support interventions a week, a truly outstanding achievement.

### Who gave you a chance?

However, there can be little doubt that we face enormous challenges moving forward in the apprenticeship sector. The economic challenges we face across Greater Manchester and the United Kingdom will impact the opportunities available for young people, both those currently in apprenticeships and those seeking to be an apprentice.

This is where we are calling on business leaders across the region to think long and hard about their apprenticeship commitments over the next few months.

We have already seen some fantastic examples of businesses re-enforcing their commitments and creating new opportunities for apprentices. But we hope many more will do the same.

Roy Cavanagh MBE, a huge advocate and supporter of Apprenticeships at Salford City College, and the wider apprenticeship sector, has a great challenging question that he often poses to his contemporaries in business; **'Who gave you a chance?'**

Roy received his MBE for services to training. He has worked for Seddon for over 50 years and employed thousands of apprentices in his time. His point is clear, at some point in our lives, someone has given us all a chance to shine and develop a career. Now is the time for us all to do what we can and give apprentices a chance to shine too.

The social impact of a thriving apprenticeship sector is obvious. More and more people learning, working and earning. This can only be a positive. However, as a business community, let us not employ apprentices for this reason alone.

Now more than ever, your organisation needs talented, committed and highly skilled people to drive your business forward in the challenging years ahead. Apprentices acquire cutting edge skills, on new apprenticeship standards which have been designed for businesses by businesses.

Of particular concern in recent months has been the significant decrease in apprenticeship opportunities for generation Y, or millennials as they are commonly referred to. Let us not forget this generation are the first in history to have grown up totally immersed in a world of digital technology.

Their understanding and perception of the opportunities presented by technology is evidently clear. Let us hope they give some of us a chance to catch up and utilise their knowledge and skills to drive forward our businesses.



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# wellbeing

## Starting again as lockdown restrictions lift

As lockdown restrictions start to lift it's becoming increasingly apparent that there are distinct differences in our attitudes towards moving forward.

Some businesses have continued trading throughout and many have thrived due to extra demand for their essential advice, care, goods and services. This requirement may now have to be reviewed and ultimately modified as demand for those specific items gradually wanes.

For those who've had an exceptionally busy year, successfully tailored their offerings to meet specific demands, who've adjusted the way they trade and taken on extra staff to cope with the unprecedented demands for supplies, support or essential goods, it may well be time to refocus. Is this level of demand likely to continue or is it time to yet again readjust and plan for a further change in direction?

Other people will be keen, even desperate to get back to work after weeks of non-trading, in a bid to resurrect their businesses and introduce some normality back into their homes, relationships and lives.

They may have struggled, trying to home educate their children, manage a difficult domestic relationship, juggle their finances and now need to regain some ground, recover as much as possible and start anew.

Some will have stopped trading altogether and may never be able to open their doors again. They may have furloughed staff but have since realised that any optimism about a future return to work was unfounded and is not viable.

In the retail sector many customers are likely to continue shopping online, a decision which impacts on the rental income of landlords too. Hospitality and fitness have been affected too.

Then there are those people who

have become tense, nervous, apprehensive, who feel scarred and scared at the prospect of leaving their homes.

They are consumed by fear and dread at potential dangers out there, may have experienced personal tragedy and can't see a way to move beyond those feelings and resume 'normality'.

**How do we start again after such an unprecedented start to 2020, a new decade that began with such promise, effectively wiped out overnight? The figures speak for themselves.**

More than half of Britain's working population of approximately 35 million are on the state payroll, with one million being added on one day alone in April, at a cost to each household of £1,500 as at the start of May.

Approximately a third of pubs have permanently closed. Roughly 600,000 18-24 year olds could be left jobless and there's been a 97% reduction in new car registrations since this time last year.

The Bank of England has warned that we're on the brink of the worst recession since the great frost of 1709, which is why there's a need to get back on track in the best possible way.

Even though the furlough scheme has been extended until the end of October 2020, with Government loans already in excess of £330 billion, or 15% of the UK's GDP, it's clear that there's a very real need for the country to get back to work and fully trading again.

**Many are in favour of a staggered 'stay alert' approach** to work to avoid overcrowding on public transport, office spaces and in general thoroughfares like shops, streets and public places.

This may require the introduction of flexible shift patterns. Any decisions need to tie in with business requirements, childcare

arrangements and other personal responsibilities and considerations.

**Staff support is important.**

As well as social distancing, personal protective equipment, hand sanitisers and even counselling may be required by staff who've experienced loss or serious health issues. I offer individually tailored workshops and sessions designed to support with this.

Some staff may start their return on a part-time basis as an affordable way to bring the business back to life.

If staff are working from home they'll need a suitable work area, appropriate kit and software capability. Data security, training and technical support probably need to be factored in.

**Decisions on how to move forward operationally** and hold successful meetings, networking, keep contact with existing clients and forge new relationships all need to be agreed.

Software, databases, internet access and communication systems are all crucial in adapting to a more online business presence, whilst social distancing is essential in supporting customers, as well as staff in every area of personal contact.

**Staff communications and briefings** are especially important as many staff will be apprehensive about several issues, from their personal health and safety through to job security.

Specific concerns may be relevant to different areas of the business. Regular updates are a good way of reassuring staff that management is aware of their concerns.

Keep staff updated, whether by meetings, emails or in-person conversations, but avoid too long or formal directives which could appear impersonal or formulaic.

**Focus on nurturing a positive team mentality.** Businesses with an established reputation for treating

their staff well will be in a favourable position. Good relationships with both employees and customers matter in times of crisis, with staff often prepared to work harder and both customers and staff ready to be more patient, understanding and loyal.

Some staff may return to work with changed priorities. They may not be as motivated by money, status or even the job itself and be less keen to travel or work long hours.

This may be a temporary situation, but the needs of both the business and staff may both require a little time and sensitivity to discover their new 'normal'.



**Susan Leigh** MNCH (ACC)

Altrincham, Cheshire and South Manchester counsellor, hypnotherapist, relationship counsellor, writer and media contributor offers help with relationship issues, stress management, assertiveness and confidence. She works with individual clients, couples and provides corporate workshops and support.

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# Virtual diary dates

Due to the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in, all business networking events, shows, expos and 'face to face' events have been cancelled or postponed until further notice.

Rest assured the Greater Manchester business networking community will be back as soon as the current crises fades and we get clear advice from government that all is well, but in the meantime we are presenting a series of 'virtual' solutions available to the business community to keep networking but stay safe. We're also listing a number of events that are pencilled in for later in the year in the hope that the situation has changed by then, and we're also featuring some re-arranged events that have recently moved.

Regular readers will also note our 'places to meet' page has been omitted. Again, once the situation changes we'll be re-introducing this.

## 4 Networking

### Online networking

Cost £6 per meeting.  
Membership @ £19.99 per month.

Notes Visit the website for more information  
[www.4networking.biz](http://www.4networking.biz)

## BNI Alchemy Didsbury

### Online networking using Zoom

Weekly every Thurs 6.30am - 9.00am

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact Andy Walsh 0161 250 5040

Notes Please contact Andy Walsh to arrange joining as a guest

## BNI Graphene Manchester

### Online networking using Zoom

Weekly every Weds 10.00am - 12.30pm

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact John Galloway 07971 161621

Notes Please contact John Galloway to arrange joining as a guest

## High Peak Business Club

Regular monthly breakfast networking + high calibre speakers. All events postponed until the Autumn

Contact [edwinacurrie@sky.com](mailto:edwinacurrie@sky.com)  
[www.highpeakbusinessclub.co.uk](http://www.highpeakbusinessclub.co.uk)

## K-Club

Entrepreneur's networking events

Lunch event (members only)

11 Sep Time, Venue and Cost TBC

Breakfast event

2 Speakers + Full English Breakfast

24 Sep 7.30am - 10.00am

Venue AJ Bell Stadium, Barton-Upon-Irwell,  
Salford M30 7EY

Cost £38.03

Womens event

10 Oct 12.30pm - 2.00pm

Venue Barclays, 3 Hardman Street,  
Manchester M3 3AX

Cost TBC

Online networking opportunities available.  
Contact organiser for more information.

Contact Amanda Manson 07754 069 829  
[www.k-club.co.uk](http://www.k-club.co.uk)

## pro-manchester

Hot topic breakfasts, Sector lunches, Economic Updates, Panel debates - all face to face events postponed or cancelled.

Weekly webinar supporting businesses available every wednesday 4 - 4.30pm

Full programme of webinar-based events available

Contact Nicola McCormick  
07929 671755  
[nicola.mccormick@pro-manchester.co.uk](mailto:nicola.mccormick@pro-manchester.co.uk)

Ilona Alcock  
07711 900435  
[ilona.alcock@pro-manchester.co.uk](mailto:ilona.alcock@pro-manchester.co.uk)

Full listings of online and offline events can be found on: [www.pro-manchester.co.uk](http://www.pro-manchester.co.uk)

## Stockport Expo 2020

1 Day Expo and Conference

26 Nov 2020 10am - 4pm

Venue Stockport County FC, Edgeley Park  
Hardcastle Road, Stockport  
SK3 9DD

Cost FREE

Contact Organised by The Business Bible  
[www.stockportexpo.co.uk](http://www.stockportexpo.co.uk)

## The Business Network Manchester

Online networking to replace monthly face to face networking

22 July, 27 Aug, 30 Sep 11.50am - 2.00pm

Contact Helen Bennett  
0161 823 1384  
[helen@business-network.co.uk](mailto:helen@business-network.co.uk)  
[www.business-network.co.uk](http://www.business-network.co.uk)

## The Business Network South Manchester

Online networking to replace monthly face to face networking.

Contact organiser for future virtual dates

Cost FREE until further notice

Contact Simon Edmondson 07766 493428

[Simon.Edmondson@business-network.co.uk](mailto:Simon.Edmondson@business-network.co.uk)  
[www.business-network.co.uk](http://www.business-network.co.uk)

## Venturefest Northwest 2020

Innovation Expo and Conference

20 Oct 2020 All day

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street,  
Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (please pre-register)

Contact [www.venturefestnorthwest.com/register](http://www.venturefestnorthwest.com/register)

## Venues + Events Live

Event Planner and Organiser Show

Event has now moved online.  
Please contact organisers for further info.  
23 + 24 Sept 2020

Contact Chantelle White 0207 772 8455  
[chantelle.white@oceanmedia.co.uk](mailto:chantelle.white@oceanmedia.co.uk)

**Please note** If you plan to link to any of the above events please ensure all details are correct in advance. Whilst every effort has been made to confirm accuracy some details may be subject to change.

As well as the listings for virtual networking, some of the following organisations may be active with online networking.

Please check their websites on a regular basis for more up to date information:

## Altrincham & Sale Chamber

Contact 0161 941 3250  
[www.altrinchamchamber.co.uk](http://www.altrinchamchamber.co.uk)

## British Irish Trade Alliance (BITA)

Contact Christiane Hutchinson  
00(44)7497 849757  
[www.bitai.ie](http://www.bitai.ie)

## Bowdon Business Club

Contact [Members@BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk](mailto:Members@BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk)  
[www.BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk](http://www.BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk)

## Business for Breakfast

Contact [centralservices@bforb.co.uk](mailto:centralservices@bforb.co.uk)  
[www.bforb.co.uk](http://www.bforb.co.uk)

## Business over Breakfast

Contact Tracy Heatley 07812 076946  
[www.bobclubs.com](http://www.bobclubs.com)

## Carrington Business Park

Contact 0161 776 4000  
[lisa.graham@cbpl.co.uk](mailto:lisa.graham@cbpl.co.uk)  
[www.cbpl.co.uk](http://www.cbpl.co.uk)

## FSB - Federation of Small Businesses

Contact Rose McAteer 07917 628916  
[rose.mcateer@fsb.org.uk](mailto:rose.mcateer@fsb.org.uk)  
[www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

## Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Contact 0161 393 4321  
[www.gmchamber.co.uk](http://www.gmchamber.co.uk)

## Manchester Business Breakfast Club

Contact [info@manchester-bbc.co.uk](mailto:info@manchester-bbc.co.uk)  
[www.manchester-bbc.co.uk](http://www.manchester-bbc.co.uk)

## Manchester Business Catalyst Club Lunch

Contact Graham Shiers 07818 675 310  
[www.businesscatalystclub.co.uk](http://www.businesscatalystclub.co.uk)

## M62 Connections

Contact Bill Dove 07932 044 743  
[www.m62connections.co.uk](http://www.m62connections.co.uk)

## Shout! Network

Contact 01772 935930  
[info@shoutnetwork.co.uk](mailto:info@shoutnetwork.co.uk)  
[www.shoutnetwork.co.uk](http://www.shoutnetwork.co.uk)

## SK8 Networking

Contact Chris Jones  
0161 437 5999 / 07757 710199  
[www.sk8networking.co.uk](http://www.sk8networking.co.uk)

## The South Manchester Business Association

Contact 0161 962 5195  
[smba.org.uk](http://smba.org.uk)

## Trafford Business Club

Contact David Lawton 07973 502595  
[www.traffordbusinessclub.co.uk](http://www.traffordbusinessclub.co.uk)

## Women's 20/20

Contact Catherine Sandland  
[enquiries@2020network.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@2020network.co.uk)  
[www.2020network.co.uk](http://www.2020network.co.uk)

## page 22 ConnectWorking Breakfast

Monthly virtual business breakfast

15 July 9.30am - 11.00am

Cost FREE

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518  
[paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk](mailto:paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk)

Notes Events have gone online for the duration of the lockdown. When it is lifted we return to The Belmore Hotel, 143 Brooklands Road, Sale M33 3QN

## page 2 Manchester Business Expo 2020

1 Day Expo and Conference \*\*Postponed\*\*

Notes Originally scheduled for May at Event City, GM Business Connect are media partners and will publicise updated information as soon as it is available.

Contact 01772 935930  
[www.shoutexpo.com](http://www.shoutexpo.com)

## Manchester Construction Market

6 Nov 2020 10.00am - 3.00pm

Venue Cresta Court Hotel,  
Altrincham WA14 4DP

Cost FREE (please pre-register)

Contact [rosiem@businessmarketevents.co.uk](mailto:rosiem@businessmarketevents.co.uk)  
Tickets through Eventbrite -  
Manchester Construction Market

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

## The Northern Business Expo 2020

2 Day Expo and Conference

16 + 17 March 2021

10.00am - 4.00pm

Contact [northernbusinessexpo.com](http://northernbusinessexpo.com)

Notes Originally taking place at Manchester Central. GM Business Connect are media partners and will publicise updated information as soon as it is available.

## Northern Restaurant and Bar 2020

2 Day Expo and Conference

16 + 17 March 2021

10am-5pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street,  
Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (Trade only)

Contact [www.northernrestaurantandbar.co.uk](http://www.northernrestaurantandbar.co.uk)

## page 11 Digital Transformation Expo Manchester

2 Day Expo and Conference

4 Nov 9am-5pm

5 Nov 9am-4pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street,  
Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (please pre-register)

Contact [dt-x.io/manchester](mailto:dt-x.io/manchester)

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

## Dynamic Networking

Networking moved onto facebook group

Cost FREE

Contact [natalie@dynamicnetworking.biz](mailto:natalie@dynamicnetworking.biz)  
[www.dynamicnetworking.biz](http://www.dynamicnetworking.biz)

[www.facebook.com/groups/DynamicNetworkOnline/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/DynamicNetworkOnline/)

## page 22 First Friday ConnectWorking

Online networking using Zoom

7 Aug 4.00pm - 6.00pm

Cost £5 (Forever Manchester contribution)

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518  
[paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk](mailto:paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk)

Notes Tickets available through Eventbrite. Entry covers a tombola ticket for Forever Manchester.



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