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October/November/December 2020

BUILD BACK TOGETHER

Resilience: from setback to comeback

Analysis and advice from Phil Jones MBE, Managing Director of Brother UK, on businesses dealing with the latest pandemic restrictions.

A fresh approach to online learning

Interview with Terry Simmons, Managing Director of Trafford Park-based eLearning Plus+, looking at their new 'Pay it Forward' learning project for businesses.

Greater Manchester Business Awards 2020

Winners of this year's awards revealed at a special live-streamed show.

Surveying success

Interview with Paul Naylor, Managing Director of Altrincham-based Trafford Surveyors, looking at their recent business growth in spite of the pandemic.

The world is a small place

4 page exporting feature with expert analysis from DIT Export champion Tony Goodman MBE.



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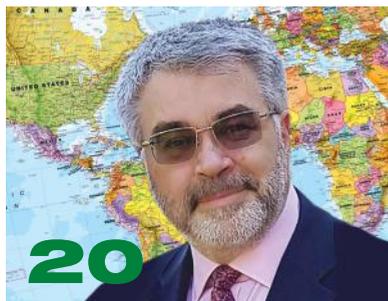
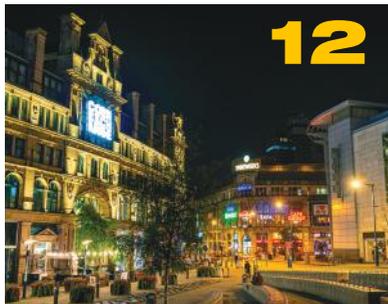
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editorial

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welcome
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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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news



Manchester Central to manage event spaces at Runway Visitor Park

Manchester Central has been awarded the contract to deliver events and hospitality services at Manchester Airport's Runway Visitor Park and Concorde Conference Centre.

The win forms part of the venue's long-term strategy to expand the business by delivering its world-class hospitality and event management services at other prestigious venues across the region.

Home to the iconic Concorde aircraft, the venue offers a one-of-a-kind setting for dinners, conferences, weddings and parties for up to 700 people. Two smaller break-out rooms and an on-site café and restaurant make the park a top choice for event organisers and one of the region's most popular visitor attractions.

Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive at Manchester Central said: "We are absolutely delighted to be moving forward with this new opportunity. The Concorde Conference Centre is the perfect complimentary offer to our iconic City Centre convention centre.

"Our success is a true testament to the skills, expertise and agility of our team of event professionals and, of course, the strong reputation we have for delivering excellence every time.

"Whilst we continue to navigate the uncharted waters that every business is dealing with amidst COVID, we must embrace every opportunity to inject confidence into our industry and showcase the role events play in bringing people together to celebrate, learn and do

business. This addition to our offer will give us even greater scope to do just that. We're working hard on our preparations and can't wait to deliver fantastic events at this unique venue later in the year."

Matt Etchells, Group Head of Hospitality at Manchester Airports Group (MAG), added: "We are pleased to be partnering with Manchester Central as we look towards the next chapter for the Runway Visitor Park and Concorde Conference Centre.

"The Runway Visitor Park is a truly unique setting and we are confident that Manchester Central's experience in events management will help us to realise the full potential of the venue as a world-class conference facility."

Japan/UK trade deal announced

Comments from Andrew Hood, a Partner specialising in EU, Trade, Regulatory, Public Affairs and Public International Law at European law firm, Fieldfisher, on the Japan-UK trade deal recently announced:

"The announcement that the UK has agreed a trade deal with Japan is great news for businesses in the UK that already trade with Japan, and for businesses that will seek to do so in future. It is also positive news that the Government has opened the door to support trade in new areas, like financial services.

"This new deal means there is now certainty for businesses in the UK about what happens to their trading relationship with Japan on the 1st January 2021. While we congratulate the UK Government for securing this agreement, there remains more work to be done with the EU and the rest of the world to bring that certainty to other trading relationships.

"Japan is only one of more than 60 countries the UK currently trades with under EU free trade agreements. On New Year's Day 2021, the UK ceases to be a party to those agreements and by that date must either negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement with each of those trading nations, or failing that, will have to trade under WTO and other international obligations."

Video call fatigue amounts to 862 million unproductive businesses hours

Connected Brits admit to spending hours getting ready for work-related video calls during lockdown and struggling to get back into the zone once the call is over, leading to millions of hours of 'wasted' work time since lockdown.

Employees spend an average of 47 minutes getting physically and mentally prepared before using tools like Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft to communicate with colleagues, clients and other work contacts, according to new research. Once the virtual meeting is over, people take an average of 18 minutes to get their head back into work-mode, with one in ten people taking at least 30 minutes before feeling productive again.

A third of people feel like they've spent more time than is necessary on video calls, and more than half of Brits think some video calls could have been dealt with much quicker by communicating over the phone or email. 44% struggle to keep up with the conversation on a video call if there are too many people taking part. Two-fifths don't like it when other people have their cameras turned off, but 36% admitted to being camera shy and not having their own cameras on during video calls.

The study, which was commissioned by Bayfields Opticians & Audiologists and questioned 2,000 workers, found they spent an average of three hours and 12 minutes each week on video

calls - an increase of 120% compared to before lockdown.

As well as amounting to an estimated 56 unproductive working hours per employee since lockdown begun - which amounts to 862 million hours of 'wasted' time over the last 22 weeks - the number of hours spent 'switched on' has taken its toll on people's physical and mental wellbeing.

54% of Brits have experienced symptoms such as insomnia, headaches, eye strain, anxiety or low moods because of using technology like video calls more during lockdown. On top of that, it takes people an average of 37 minutes to switch off when working at home, and for more

than one in ten people it takes at least an hour to disconnect.

Royston Bayfield of Bayfields Opticians and Audiologists, who have introduced a new range of revolutionary lenses that reduce the side effects of using technology throughout the day, said: "Using several tech devices throughout the day for long periods of time can cause eye strain, neck tension and headaches. Our eyes have to adapt as we move between different activities and screens due to peoples' different working distances and viewing angles. And whilst some devices are crucial to us succeeding in our working lives, it's important we find a solution to this challenge."

MediaCityUK launches smart city innovation testbed



Digital venture builder and investment specialists UP Ventures Group, in partnership with MediaCityUK and The Connected Places Catapult, have announced a ground breaking Smart City accelerator programme. Focusing on people-centred technology, especially in the current health and economic climate, the 'Smart City Innovation Testbed' aims to find ground-breaking technology solutions that will positively improve the quality of life for people and businesses in a post pandemic world.

Europe's largest, digital, tech and creative hub - MediaCityUK and The Connected Places Catapult - are backing the programme aimed at UK based start-ups and scale-ups who have market ready technology solutions that aspire to help people live, work, play and learn in new innovative ways.

The 'Smart City Innovation Testbed' offers an opportunity for progressive

businesses to explore the role of places in the future, including, but not limited to: how technology can enhance safety in existing and new building design and positively enhance future business models.

The programme will take place from January 2021 and last 12 weeks; it will give successful candidates access to a unique testbed, including MediaCityUK's world-leading technology infrastructure, and provide opportunities to pilot innovations within a real-life setting.

The programme is fully funded and there is no equity exchange with any partner.

Applications are now open and will close on 23 October.

For more information and to submit an application go to www.upventuresgroup.com/programmes/smart-city-innovation-testbed/

Marlowe Fire & Security Group relocate head office to Salford Quays

Marlowe Fire & Security has recently announced the opening of the Company's new Head Office facility at Lowry House on Ohio Avenue in Salford Quays.

Established in 1982 in the Northwest of England, the business (at the time known as Swift) was acquired by Marlowe plc in 2016, and rebranded under the name Marlowe Fire & Security in 2018 following the merger of the business with Cornwall based fire protection provider, Hentland.

Since rebranding, the organisation has experienced significant organic growth, diversifying their range of specialist fire life safety and security solutions while considerably increasing their national foot print as part of Marlowe plc's fire and security division.

The Company now occupies a large 25,600 sq ft - Covid Secure - office facility, within the highly desirable Salford Quays. The move reflects Marlowe's ambition not only to be recognised as the UK market leader

they have become but also to provide all Employees with a state of the art place to work.

The move will also support and provide the space to facilitate Marlowe's aggressive growth plans as they undergo a significant drive in recruitment to reinforce their Administration, HR, IT, Compliance and Marketing functions.

The highlight of the new space is the Innovation Suite showcasing the latest fire life safety and security technologies. Designed by Marlowe's in house technical design team, the Suite utilises the latest solutions from Marlowe's major technology partners and is designed to enable easy and efficient swap out as technology is upgraded and improved.

The space allows Team Members, prospects and customers to see, feel and experience the latest fire and security solutions to help them create safe and secure environments whatever their property, or wherever their premises.



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news



Brother joins elite club of world's most sustainable companies

Tameside-based Brother UK has played a leading role in helping its global parent company, Brother Industries, to join the FTSE4Good Index - a select group of the world's most environmentally and socially sustainable companies.

The Index measures the performance of companies demonstrating strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practice, which includes household names such as Apple, Microsoft and Johnson & Johnson.

The listing reflects the global business's success in working to meet the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, from tackling climate change and resource depletion, to reducing environmental pollution and destruction of the ecosystem.

Brother UK has led the way in the group's ESG initiatives, twice winning the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its outstanding achievements in sustainable development.

Last year Brother UK became the North West's only business to receive independent certification for zero waste to landfill with Valpak, which it achieved for the 10th consecutive year. It's also working closely with the group to facilitate and encourage print cartridge recycling. In the year to March 2020, more than 159,000 toner cartridges were returned for recycling by UK customers, up 10% on the previous 12-months.

The business also retained its Investors in People Platinum status - the most prestigious accolade in people management - for the third year running, in recognition of its support for employees and the wider community. This includes employees working with local schools across Greater Manchester to create opportunities for students, volunteering more than 1,500 hours

and positively impacting more than 4,800 people last year alone.

Sam Johnson, community engagement manager at Brother UK, said: "Sustainability and community engagement are ingrained in our culture and play a huge role in every decision, including the development of new products and services.

"From our award-winning apprenticeship scheme to our school volunteers programmes, we invest thousands of hours every year building the futures of local young people.

"We know that our customers share our ethical values and understand that, by selecting Brother, they're choosing a sustainable partner."

Brother International is also the longest standing business partner of deforestation action group Cool Earth, with more than 10 years supporting the organisation.

For more information on Brother UK's ESG practices visit: www.brother.co.uk/about-brother/corporate-social-responsibility-hub

New data shows knock-on effect of domino debt from lockdown business failures

Research released in September - six months after the UK's lockdown - shows 4,058 businesses have failed in this period across bars and restaurants, construction, retail, logistics and real estate

The analysis shows insolvencies in these key sectors have racked up £773,460,406 of insolvent debt, which amounts to 27,138 individual unpaid debts to creditors across the companies' supply chains.

The business failures in key sectors since the UK locked down in March has created a domino effect of debt amounting to nearly £800m of invoices outstanding within their supply chain at the point of administration, according to corporate distress data analysts Red Flag Alert.

With an average individual debt of £28,501, the research found there are a further 227 businesses across the bars and restaurants, construction, retail, logistics and real estate sectors, which are at very high risk of failure.

Construction is the sector with the most lockdown business failures reporting 1,884, owing a total of £364m to suppliers up from £235m of insolvent debt from the same period in 2019. A further 120 companies in the construction industry are at high risk with around half of them expected to cease trading within seven days. Retail followed closely,

leaving £316m of insolvent debt in the wake of the failures within the sector.

Mark Halstead, a partner at Red Flag Alert, explains: "When a company goes into administration, understandably the immediate focus is on the amount of loss of a brand or legacy and the jobs potentially under threat.

"The story that's not often told is the significant pressure this will place on the businesses in their supply chain and the sector that they operate within. The reality is that this research shows more than 25,000 businesses have experienced unpaid bills since lockdown because of the domino effect of these business failures.

"The overall figures seem stark, but in fact they are lower than the same period last year in terms of the total number of company failures and the level of insolvent debt across these sectors as a whole.

"Government support for businesses has created a limbo period.

"Unfortunately, the current outlook is that we expect high levels of business failures and payment defaults during the next six months which will create more stress in these key sectors.

"It's never been more important to understand the strength of the companies within your supply chain and any to pinpoint any potential distress."

Cyber security still a massive problem with businesses

39% of UK business decision makers have admitted to dismissing staff members due to a breach of company cyber security policy since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, according to new research from Centrifly, a leading provider of Identity-Centric privileged access management (PAM) solutions.

The survey of 200 UK business decision makers, conducted by independent polling agency Censurwide, also revealed that almost 65% of companies have made substantial changes to their cyber security policy in response to Covid-19 and 100% remote working. Despite this, 58% agreed that employees are more likely to try and circumvent company security practices when working from home - indicating a fundamental flaw in the execution of security measures in a remote-working model.

In an effort to combat poor security practice from employees, 57% of business decision makers revealed that they are currently implementing more measures to securely authenticate employees. Such measures include biometric data checks, such as fingerprint and facial recognition technology, and other multi-factor authentication steps when gaining access to certain applications, files and accounts.

Andy Heather, VP, Centrifly, comments: "With more people than ever working from home and left to their own devices, it's inevitable that some will find security workarounds, such as using personal laptops and not changing passwords. It's also possible that the changes in security procedures are not being communicated well to employees, and many are practising unsafe internet usage without even realising.

"The reality is the weakest link in any organisation continues to be the human element. Combatting this issue starts from the top. CIOs and business decision makers must implement strict and transparent, cloud enabled and identity-centric security solutions."

Manchester tech firm SRO Solutions delivers major IBM Maximo digitisation upgrades for offshore specialist MODEC



Eccles headquartered tech firm SRO Solutions has completed a major digitisation project for offshore giant MODEC at its operations in Ghana.

The project, part of a series of high value digitisation upgrades SRO has completed for the business since 2018, has resulted in a more efficient and accurate inventory for MODEC in Ghana streamlining its onshore headquarters in Accra with its vessels

the FPSO Kwame Nkrumah (KNK) in the Jubilee Oil Field, and FPSO Professor John Evans Atta Mills (JAM) in the Tano Ennyera Ntomme (TEN) Oil Field.

The latest piece of work saw SRO improve MODEC's current system, which was prone to ordering errors resulting in stock lying in storerooms for longer than necessary and purchasing orders being raised to order materials which were already held in stock.

SRO senior consultant Jonathan Ritchie, who led the projects, said: "The business processes MODEC was working under were not fit for purpose. After improving these areas using IBM's Maximo, we implemented some additional features and functionalities, resulting in increased speed and accurate inventory usage and volumes."

Coronavirus-hit family businesses continue to be the backbone of the North West economy

The new IFB Research Foundation The State of the Nation: The UK Family Business Sector 2019-20 report published recently showcases the unwavering relevance and contribution of family firms.

In the North West there are over half a million family businesses, making up 88% of all businesses. They employ over 1.4 million people, over half of all employees in the private sector and 37% of the North West's total employment. Country-wide, the report reveals family firms contributed £657 billion to UK GDP in 2018, 31% of the UK's total GDP.

Their contribution to the UK economy has continued to grow over the years, with £196 billion paid in tax to the Exchequer in 2018, around one quarter of the UK Government's total revenue and almost twice the budget of the NHS in England.

The report also provides a glance at the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis on the family business sector. It estimates that, between February and May 2020, family firms' output is likely to have declined by 30%.

Analysis by industrial sector shows that accommodation and food services businesses experienced the greatest loss in output, contracting by 91%, while the 390,000 family firms in the arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services sectors have faced the large challenges.

Sir Michael Bibby, Chairman of the IFB Research Foundation, commented:

"This report provides important new information on the state of UK family business. It provides fresh insights into what family businesses do, how many people they employ, the impact they have on, and looks at how COVID-19 may have affected the sector."



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news



An innovative venture supported by Irwin Mitchell aimed at securing the survival of independent grassroots music venues across the UK has announced the latest artists set to perform gigs in aid of the project. Launched in August with support from bands including Elbow, Passport: Back to Our Roots has already raised over £75,000 for venues struggling due to Covid-19.

Synth Pop legends, three time Brit Award winners and six time Grammy Award nominees Pet Shop Boys are among the latest big names announced for forthcoming campaigns raising money for grassroots venues together with Brit Award and Ivor Novello Award winning singer - songwriter KT Tunstall, who will play two exclusive gigs - one in her home county of Fife and another in London.

Members of the public who choose to be entered into the draws can win passes for themselves and a guest to one of the five new gigs announced and help to raise much needed funds for those venues struggling to survive post Covid-19 along the way.

A £5 minimum donation will enter fans into the prize draw to win entry for themselves and a guest to their chosen gig. Funds raised will directly support both the individual venue and the Music Venue Trust Crisis Fund, to ensure all threatened grassroots music venues will benefit.

The exclusive performances given by the big name artists in independent venues will take place

in 2021, when social distancing rules allow gigs to begin.

The specialist media and entertainment team at Irwin Mitchell is supporting the initiative with contractual, commercial and regulatory legal advice to Inner City Music, the charity behind Manchester's Band on the Wall who have partnered with the Music Venue Trust to deliver the project.

Laura Harper, Irwin Mitchell partner and media & entertainment sector lead, said: "It is no secret that the lockdown, coupled with social distancing rules, have had a devastating impact on music venues. Government support for the culture sector, however welcome, is unlikely to be enough on its own to ensure survival for some of our best loved grassroots venues, making this project an essential tool in ensuring we all have music venues to go back to next year."

Pet Shop Boys will play the Electric Ballroom, London, while other names announced include Passenger, who will play the Komedia, Brighton while tenor Russell Watson will appear at Stoller Hall, Manchester.

Passport: Back to Our Roots is produced by registered charity and independent grassroots venue Band on the Wall, the Music Venue Trust and Stephen Budd Music (creator of War Child's Passport: Back to the Bars & Passport: To BRITs Week series). For more information visit: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/passport-back-to-our-roots

SMEs continue to show resilience

If the UK was to enter another period of lockdown, the average small business could survive for four months, according to new research from Aldermore Bank.

A quarter (26%) of small businesses could survive the current situation indefinitely, a 36% increase on April 2020. 2.2 million SMEs have now adjusted their business plans in light of the pandemic

The new research reveals that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a 30% loss in monthly business income; a small improvement from 34% in April for the average SME. Nearly one in five (18%) small businesses have seen a decrease of more than 70% of their business income.

To ensure their survival, many businesses are proactively taking steps to protect their business. Two in five (38%) SMEs have adjusted their business plans due to the

pandemic as they anticipate future issues such as a fall in revenue (38%), another period of lockdown (32%) and an ongoing period of economic downturn (30%).

Tim Boag, group managing director, business finance at Aldermore, said: "Whilst the economy has started to open up, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on the SME community. The current situation is uncertain, and the threats of further localised lockdowns are a concern to businesses who are trying to recover from the economic shock of the pandemic.

"However, it's encouraging to see that SMEs are being resilient in the face of the adversity and we praise their efforts to adapt their business models, find different and innovative ways to increase income, as well as diversifying into new markets."

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Manchester lender to sponsor new TV series fronted by property expert Simon O'Brien

Cheadle-based lender Together has been announced as partner of a new Channel 4 national property television series. The auction finance specialist has provided a commercial loan for contestants of the show, The Great House Giveaway, to buy properties at auctions around the UK.

Each TV episode will bring together teams of two people who have never met - and never owned their own homes before - who will be given a set budget and six months to refurbish their property before selling it. They will keep any money they make.

Together provided funding for the pioneering new format, which will be presented by well-known property expert Simon O'Brien, after being approached by Welsh-based production company Chwarel.

As part of the sponsorship deal, the

specialist auction finance firm was given exclusive access to film behind-the-scenes footage, which will appear on its website and social media channels after the series starts in October.

Chris Baguley, commercial managing director at Together, said: "This is a fantastic new format and a series that we're proud to sponsor. As one of the leading players in auction finance, and our long-standing record in supporting the market, it was the obvious fit for our brand. We're really excited to see the series when it airs and wish all the contestants the best of luck!"

Presenter Simon O'Brien will be a familiar face to many, having appeared as Damon Grant in the soap Brookside for many years, as well as his numerous other acting roles.

BluJay LSP Platform receives Frost & Sullivan 2020 Product Leadership Award

Provider of supply chain software and services, BluJay Solutions, have announced that the BluJay LSP Platform has received the Frost & Sullivan 2020 Product Leadership Award.

The platform is purpose-built for logistics service providers managing multiple modes of transport, supply chain partners, and customs regimes via its Transportation, Warehouse, Yard, Customs and Mobility management solutions.

"Logistics service providers (LSPs) operating in complex, international logistics environments seek to manage multiple modes of transport (e.g., ferry, rail, ocean, and air), supply chain partners, and customs regimes all while both striving to meet their customers' ever-more sophisticated

requirements and keeping costs low," wrote Sankara Narayanan, Senior Industry Analyst at Frost & Sullivan. "BluJay has reimaged the role of supply chain software solutions and services through a unique combination of data, networks, and applications to empower manufacturers, distributors, freight forwarders, and retailers with a truly friction-free supply chain workflow."

The platform is used in over 18 countries at hundreds of locations by some of the world's most well-known names in the European logistics industry, including Mainfreight, Rangel, and as announced recently was selected by Gebrüder Weiss - one of Europe's largest privately held logistics service providers.

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analysis

Resilience: from setback

Phil Jones MBE, managing director at business technology solutions provider, Brother UK, looks at the current issues for businesses with returning restrictions due to Covid-19.

The news at the moment is all too familiar. The broadcasters could almost be forgiven for recycling bulletins from March, with coronavirus cases rising again and regional restrictions coming back into force.

At a time when we thought we were on the up, and when we've grown used to a narrative centred around recovery, the news that restrictions could be in place for another six months has been an understandable blow for many.

So, as we come to terms with the fact we've potentially moved from a U-shaped crisis into a W-shaped one, a conscious effort is needed from all of us to keep going - both in our personal and professional lives.

We will need to draw on our individual resiliency.

If you look up the definition of resilience in the Oxford English dictionary, it means 'the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties' or put simply, 'our ability to positively cope'.

Having run a large business for

many years, a phrase that I quickly became accustomed to was 'becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable'.

Almost every day brings new challenges, and there are some practical coping mechanisms that I have used - and continue to use - to help me get through them.

1. Look after number one

If you're running a business, you've got to keep your own spirits up if you're going to help others do the same. Investing in your energy levels is key.

The ability to self-care is so important, but it's often one of the first things to go out of the window when you're working long hours and feeling the pressure.

I try to follow a 'DESK' policy when there's a lot on. That means choosing at least three of the following four areas and making them a priority: **Diet** (eating well), **Exercise** (at least 30 minutes per day), **Sleep** (giving your brain time to process your thoughts by going to bed earlier) and **Kindness to self** (indulging a hobby or activity that brings you joy, without feeling guilty about it).

Crises make it very easy for us to default into bad habits, despite being when it's most important to ensure you remain in great shape - mentally, physically and spiritually. Think like an athlete, encompassing rest and recovery as part of your overall high-performance plan.

2. Avoid zooming in, zoom out!

It's easy to get caught up in what's going on, especially when the coronavirus outbreak is dominating the conversation whenever you speak to colleagues, friends, family, and when you turn on the radio or TV. It's hard to get away from it. This can often have a compounding effect.

A good level of self-awareness is essential when you're facing any problem - even more so under these circumstances - so you can spot your pre-determined response mechanisms kicking in and ensure you're managing them effectively.

This process is called emotional regulation. You're turning down your human response mechanisms like fight/flight, and resisting the urge to start over-thinking, catastrophising

or mind-reading. These are examples of 'cognitive distortions' - habitual ways of thinking that are often inaccurate and negatively-biased, and that come with the risk of jumping to conclusions and beginning a negative spiral.

Sound familiar?

If it does, don't worry, you're only human! But if you can get a handle on your emotions, you'll be hard pressed to find a problem that you can't overcome or work through more effectively. So zoom out, take a breath, understand your emotions and focus on kicking in pragmatic behaviours.

3. Get your problems well-defined

Creating wider context around your problem is an important step, and in my view, this is where people don't spend enough time.

Undoubtedly, tighter restrictions are going to cause significant disruption in all areas of our lives, and it's easy to feel overwhelmed thinking through the various implications. Define what those implications will be for you - and be specific and unambiguous when you do. List them all, and sort through those you can control and those you can't.



brother
at your side

to comeback



Then, for the elements with your control, spend time working on the solutions you can put in place. Put actions against them that you can take, and start implementing as soon as possible. The old Chinese proverb of 'a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step' comes to mind. Take an action, however small.

If something's outside of your control, I've found the Buddhist term of 'patient acceptance' to be the most appropriate coping mechanism. Instead of attaching

ourselves to things we may perceive we have lost as a result of a situation, it's better to accept where we are, welcome whatever comes and then work with that.

By investing your time in working on the things that are within your control, you'll feel more of a sense of momentum, rather than becoming a product of someone else's decisions. As the saying goes, 'be a chess player, not a chess piece'.

4. Create your own horizon to keep your motivation

I'm a firm believer that it's possible to find meaning in adversity - and whether we're responsible for five people or 5,000 people, as leaders, our teams are looking to us to show them the way.

That means projecting a vision they can buy into, that might differ from the direction their emotions may be pushing them at any given time.

Take the 2008 financial crash for example - at the time, it was all-consuming in the business world, but we moved past it and came back stronger, capitalising on the opportunities during the following recovery period. It now seems a long time ago.

We spoke of the future beyond the crisis, acknowledging the short-term pain but also the longer-term gains we might make.

And the same will ultimately be the case for the coronavirus pandemic. It will be over at some point, and we need to remind ourselves of that, to give ourselves the hope and motivation to keep going.

Taking a long-term, pragmatic view of yourself and your business, beyond what you're currently dealing with, is the key to moving forward, and to strengthening your ability to deal with the knocks.

So keep the long game in mind wherever you can. Re-frame the moment and create a longer roadmap, to put what's happening now into the context of the bigger picture.

5. An opportunity to grow

To take all of this one step further, I'd like to end by introducing the concept of 'anti-fragility'.

Developed by Professor Nassim Nicholas Taleb - the man behind the

'Black Swan' theory - it relates to how we not only withstand unexpected shocks, but can actually improve because of them. In contrast, resiliency is about snapping back to how things were when the unexpected shock has passed.

The Covid-19 crisis is both systemic - changing the way we run our businesses and how we behave as consumers - and existential, meaning it's impacting how we think about our existence overall. I'm sure that spending months in lockdown will have made you re-evaluate what you want from your life and what really matters to you.

If we see this moment in our lives as a chance to emerge fitter, faster, stronger and with more clarity, it'll give all of us hope for the future. A question that often crops up in my mind is 'What is this experience teaching me?', as a reminder to not get too buried in the moment, but to trigger that zooming out perspective, even in adversity.

Coming back from a setback, getting stronger from the experience and growing as a result, will ultimately improve your potential to reset, recover and re-build.

I saw this quote from Louis L'Amour recently which I thought was rousing: *'There will come a time when you believe everything has finished. That will be the beginning.'*

One thing I know about the business community in and around Greater Manchester is that we are incredibly good at sharing, collaborating and supporting each other.

We'll all be experiencing different challenges within the narrative of the last six months, so let's commit to calling someone we know, checking in to see how they are doing and finding out how we can help.

See you out there.

Phil Jones, MBE,
Managing Director, Brother UK

There will come a time when you believe everything has finished. That will be the beginning.

Louis L'Amour

analysis



Manchester hospitality looks to a positive future

By **Shaun Hinds**, Chief Executive, Manchester Central

The recovery of the hospitality sector is a collaborative effort

I don't need to tell anyone about the difficulties facing the events and hospitality sector.

Navigating the ever-changing array of rules and regulations, trying to operate a 'viable' business whilst interpreting seemingly endless, confusing and contradictory guidance.

After the relative highs of August where we all ate out to help out and in doing so drove some of our favourite establishments to their busiest August on record, the sector could once again be on the verge of more restrictions which will further impede an incredibly fragile recovery.

I say recovery, sadly it's not a recovery just yet. To add to the complexity, the widely used furlough scheme comes to an end in a few weeks throwing more fuel on the fire of uncertainty.

I could write far more words than space permits on the rights, wrongs and injustices of the impact on our sector, but there's not much I'd say that many people have not already thought, considered and written.

Instead I'll offer a forward-looking assessment for when and how things might start to get back to some semblance of what we used to call normal. In my business, hospitality is an essential element of our event proposition. Not just what we deliver inside the venue, but the local and neighbouring bars, hotels and restaurants.

We estimate that for every £1 spent in the venue another £5 is spent in the local area. People love coming to events in Manchester because of the

vibrancy and quality of our hospitality scene. I would go as far as saying that our hospitality, music and sporting offer is our greatest tourist attraction.

There's incredible appetite and pent up demand for people to return to enjoying all the hospitality that Manchester has to offer. As soon as the conditions allow, we'll see the streets teeming again with local and visiting customers.

Events fuel much of that demand and incredible efforts are being made to win approval for a return to business, sporting and music events. We must remember though there's a balance to be struck between delivering a safe and viable event with something that happens to be desirable and enjoyable.

There comes

a point where the restrictions might outweigh reason for going out. Delivering a compromised or substandard event helps no one, and so various bodies in the industry are pushing to get meaningful events live and operating as soon as possible.

You may have seen the Albert Hall and the O2 in London making plans for larger scale activities later in the year. This will hopefully be the first of a number of larger scale activities returning, including that Manchester staple, bringing fans back into stadiums for the footy.

When it starts, the flood gates will open just a bit wider and we'll see that reflected in our hospitality businesses across the region.

In the meantime, we must keep doing all we can to meet the guidance and rules whilst delivering a desirable experience. It's been incredible to see how the sector has responded, implementing and enforcing a raft of new measures consistently and effectively.

There is no doubt

that our operators can ensure a safe and secure environment with a much lower risk of infection than many of the unregulated establishments.

It's imperative that we continue to press and demonstrate that point.

I'm incredibly encouraged by recent events such as Caravan Salon in Dusseldorf with 107,000 visitors where zero infection cases have been reported some 3 weeks later. Evidence of our ability to ensure a safe environment.

Right now, our sector is incorrectly seen as part of the health problem when in fact we're part of the economic and societal recovery.

I don't, for one minute, underestimate the challenge faced by many, if not all businesses, as we head into winter, but if we keep enhancing our protocols, thinking creatively about our offer, and tackling each challenge with our inherent professionalism, the narrative will change and our industry will begin to emerge from this crisis.

And speaking on behalf of the 500,000 visitors Manchester Central brings to the city each year, I can't wait.





Employee rewards are our business.
People are our priority.

Hi, we are Davidson Asset Management but you can call us DAM. Based in Glasgow, Manchester and London, we work with some of the biggest names in the hospitality and leisure sector – from the Dorchester Collection to Radisson Hotel Group – to build employee reward programmes that help to **recruit, retain and build the best teams in the industry.**

With our services ranging from Corporate Pensions and Group Risk Schemes to Financial Education and Workplace Mortgage Advice Sessions, we have over 16 years experience in designing and implementing unique employee benefit packages that will help to **meet your unique business goals and keep your people happy too** – a win-win situation in our eyes.

Plus, we appreciate that every employer's goals are different which is why our team pride themselves on being there to support your specific needs with **a friendly and personalised approach.** Whether it's via our traditional face-to-face meetings and reviews, or our variety of digital communications, we want to **ensure that you and your people feel connected with DAM each step of the way.**

Contact our business consultant, Kevin Greenwood to **book your initial no-fee, no-obligation meeting,** as well as to discuss how we can offer further advice and support surrounding your individual financial planning journey.

For more information please contact
kevin@damgoodpensions.com
or visit us at damgoodpensions.com

DAM
Making Pensions Personal

focus

GM Business Connect recently met with Terry Simmons, Managing Director of Trafford Park-based eLearning Plus+, to share with us how the business evolved and how the introduction of their new initiative, the 'Pay it Forward Learning Project', will help individuals to thrive in these challenging times:

Terry - many thanks for talking with us. Please can you describe how eLearning Plus+ developed as a business?

"eLearning Plus+ was actually born out of iDigital Marketing which was started in 2011 to focus on creating interactive digital content that organisations could use to build strong relationships with their target clients. iDigital Marketing continues to support blue chip clients and SMEs, creating innovative digital content to drive their marketing engagement, so there's still great synergy between the two businesses.

"One of the services iDigital Marketing offers is overhauling PowerPoint Decks so they connect better with the audience through strong visuals and interactive elements, which led to us getting involved in converting internal training decks for organisations.

"As our success in this area grew, we decided to upskill using professional online authoring tools to create compelling online learning experiences. Along the way, we also found that many organisations were unhappy with their Learning Management System, so we decided to build our own, which now helps support thousands of learners.

"All of which leads us to eLearning Plus+ today, which has a creative and passionate team of experienced specialists covering instructional design, graphic design, video, animation and platform development, so we can literally create and deliver any kind of learning content."

How do you help businesses with their people development and what are the current issues you see around training?

"Our total focus is on transforming individual performance within the workplace to introduce

A fresh approach to online

clear business improvements and enhance company results. The one thing I truly believe is that great people make a great company, and if you want great people you need to develop and nurture them, so they deliver to their full potential.

"But we recognise for this to happen, we need to help organisations reconsider how they train their employees. After speaking with a wide range of organisations about their training activities, a clear picture began to emerge outlining the training issues they faced. For example, much of the existing training doesn't engage or inspire learners, lacks motivational support or is obviously a tick box exercise and is therefore under-valued.

"We also see that many learners are time starved, so they need training that works around their role. That's why our off the shelf courses are around 60 minutes. It enables the learner to develop new skills and knowledge, but they can still get on with their day to day job and start using this newly acquired knowledge at the same time.

"Interestingly, we've also found that trainers are recognising they have confused gimmicky activities with effective learning, and whilst gamification can of course introduce a level of fun and interest, this needs to be carefully thought through, otherwise you end up with training courses that are more of a distraction than a true knowledge tool.

"On top of this, we found learners don't want a set of talking head video courses, as they're not a great learning experience. They want relevant and engaging interactive content that targets their learning needs and can be used when and where they need it."

So having identified the issues, what do you offer to help businesses train better and overcome them?

"Businesses want to get better at delivering training that is focused on measurable learning outcomes, so we focus on three main streams to support engaging and effective learning.

"Firstly, by fast tracking their learning delivery with our off-the-shelf elearning, which consists of over 120 pre-built online training courses covering the majority of workplace roles and needs. This means businesses don't need to create their own online training content from scratch but can immediately offer device friendly content that can be used at a time, place and pace that best suits the learner.

"Secondly, by supporting existing L&D teams with our bespoke content creation service, helping with everything from micro learning, interactive video and animated explainer videos through to fully immersive and interactive courses that use scenarios and role play. Most in-house L&D teams are already over stretched, so supplementing their content creation using our friendly team frees up this resource to focus on their existing projects.

"And finally, by providing an effective way of managing learners and learning content, by helping handle course registrations, tracking and reporting with SmartLMS, our powerful Learning Management System.

"Perhaps most importantly, we help our clients by clearly defining the results or KPIs required from their training initiatives and then delivering cost effective learning experiences that achieve these results."

Tell us about where you were and what you were doing as a business up to March this year. How has Covid-19 affected yourselves?

"Our plan was to launch our new off the shelf catalogue of workplace courses in April and raise awareness of how we help organisations meaningfully improve their training delivery. We were focusing on networking as well as exhibitions and events to promote both eLearning Plus+ as a learning content developer and our new off the shelf courses.

"Clearly this all came to a grinding halt and at the time, it really felt like one of those rabbit in the headlight moments. It had an impact on all the work that had been put in by the team, and the months of preparation and planning, but we knew we had to find alternative ways to show organisations how we can empower their training delivery, so we took stock and set out a new action plan.

"We started attending virtual events across Manchester and have made some great connections with individuals and organisations that are both innovative and bold in wanting to move their training forward. Then, as many others have done, we embraced video conferencing tools rather than face to face meetings and to be honest, this has worked really well for us.

"It's been so effective for both sides to schedule a discovery call and find out what kind of help a business requires. At the same time, we can demo any of the solutions we offer, which helps us better understand the training needs and therefore suggest an appropriate way forward.

"We've also been running webinars and focused discussions covering areas like effective learning for remote workers and what training might look like in the longer term, and we'll continue to run these as we've had such great feedback.

proach learning

eLearning Plus+

"Please check our website to book onto future webinars."

Your new initiative 'Pay it Forward Learning Project' has now been confirmed. Please tell us about this?

"The whole team at eLearning Plus+ are really excited to launch the Pay it Forward Learning Project which provides free workplace based online learning for individuals (via an appropriate charity) who are trying to find their way back to employment. This includes ex-offenders, the homeless, veterans and the unemployed who want to demonstrate to potential employers that they have made the effort to show a level of personal commitment to grow their skills and enhance their employability.

"Demonstrating that they have the right attitude is challenging for many of these individuals as they often have to work harder to prove they should be considered for the role. To help improve their chances of securing employment, these learners can obtain a Certificate of Achievement from the course, which they can present when they attend interviews.

"This initiative might be something that organisations with a social values/responsibility aspect to their business could consider and their support would really change peoples' lives. We're proud to say that the Salford Foundation is one of the charities we are working with and who are supporting those in real need.

By the way, it's really simple to support. Individuals or organisations just visit our online course store and buy the Pay it Forward Learning Product. It costs just £20 and for each one bought we will provide one of our charities (or the charity they nominate) with any of the courses from our Business Essentials Catalogue up to the numbers purchased.

If anybody wants to find out more about the project, just visit our website: www.elearningplus.co.uk or get in touch with me directly on: terry@elearningplus.co.uk"

What are your future plans for eLearning Plus+ ? Have you any new projects or offers in the pipeline?

"Although we're in challenging times, we're currently planning for significant growth over the next few years and are keen to help those organisations that have the ambition to take their learning to the next level.

"We'll continue to add further courses into our Business Essentials Catalogue and we would love to hear from organisations about the courses they would like to see us introduce. Next, we're looking to change the way organisations deliver training, by helping them create course content that truly connects with the learner through the development of captivating learning experiences.

"And we're also finalising a range of fast track services that support more of a blended learning delivery for Training Organisations, by helping them introduce unique digital learning modules alongside their face to face or virtual delivery."

How do you think Covid-19 will affect your business in the near and medium term?

"We're now seeing a lot of interest from the more flexible and forward-thinking businesses that are using this time to upskill their staff and get them ready (future-proofed) as lockdown is increasingly lifted.

"There's also no doubt that the nature of training has changed considerably in the last few months and will continue to do so.

"We've always advocated blended learning to combine the effectiveness of instructor led interaction with online digital modules to boost the effectiveness of the training.

"So, we'll continue to create supportive learning solutions for those organisations that recognise the impact that great training has on helping their people become truly great."



Terry Simmons, Managing Director,
eLearning Plus+

If you would like to learn more about the **Pay it Forward Learning Project** and the support **eLearning Plus+** offers visit: elearningplus.co.uk or phone **0161 669 4418**

focus

The Greater M Business



Now in its fourth year, the Greater Manchester Business Awards has had to change its format considerably to remain relevant under the current restrictions for Covid-19.

To replace the scheduled black tie event, the winners were announced on the 4th September at a special live streaming ceremony featuring ITV's Paul Crone. The live announcement revealed the 8 category winners in

a special broadcast over YouTube, put together by organisers Rich Media Group International.

GM Business Connect have been media sponsors from the very first event that took place in 2017, kicking off with a glitzy black tie awards ceremony at the Edwardian Radisson Hotel in the centre of Manchester. From there the event has grown in popularity, so new organisers this year - Rich Media Group - were very keen to

keep the momentum going.

Organiser Sophie Richardson (digital marketing manager, Rich Media Group) commented: "Like GM Business Connect we've been involved with the awards since the first event in 2017.

"When the opportunity to take over as organisers came up we jumped at the chance as it was always such a great way to mix with a fantastic variety of businesses.

"We had got as far as booking the venue for the winners' ceremony in September, plus the entries had started arriving, when Covid-19 changed the whole outlook for the awards.

"Many similar events seemed to take the decision to cancel outright for this year, however, so many people had taken the time

and effort to put together detailed entries, plus the fact that we felt it important that businesses needed the platform to raise their profiles in this difficult climate, that we decided to go ahead.

"So, rather than trust that social distancing rules had been relaxed enough to put on a live event, we decided to go virtual with a live streaming winners' show at the beginning of September.

"This ended up as a fantastic way to support our shortlisted businesses, as well as showcase our own credentials as a video production company.

"Looking forward to 2021 we are assuming we're all able to go back to a more traditional celebration of the awards culminating with a fabulous black tie evening.

"In fact we've booked the venue already - the brand-new Hotel



L-R Jonathan Edgeley, Asad Raffi, David Smallwood

Business Person of the Year - **Jonathan Edgeley (Sanctum Healthcare)**
Business Innovation/New Business - **Sanctum Healthcare**



Venue Manager Kate Maddocks and Community Team Leader Martyn Preston

Business of the Year (over 10 employees) - **Stockport Homes Group**
Community and Social Responsibility - **Stockport Homes Group**



The Greater Manchester Business Awards 2020

Manchester Awards 2020

Brooklyn in Manchester which features amazing views over the Manchester skyline. Plus, we've also chosen our charity partner for 2021- Pennine Health Care."

As media sponsors we followed up the awards ceremony by visiting (following social distancing guidelines) the winners of the 8 categories along with

Sophie, presenting them with their actual awards. There were 3 businesses that scooped double awards this year - making a total of 5 winners across the categories.



Sophie Richardson

To find out more about how to enter the 2021 Greater Manchester Business Awards either contact Sophie direct on sophie@richmediagroup.co.uk or keep checking the website: greatermanchesterawards.co.uk

RICH MEDIA Group INTERNATIONAL

Rich Media Group International comprises a number of companies, some of which have been around since 1997. The divisions are:

- Rich TV specialising in corporate video/photography and TV production.
- Rich Drones PfCO fully qualified compliant and insured drone photography and videography services.
- Rich Video specialising in wedding videography and transfer services.
- Rich Digital specialising in social media management and digital services.
- Rich Music, audio and video recording for artists and artist management.
- Rich Productions specialising in theatre tours videos, photos, audio visual, project managing and merchandising.



Managing Director, Phil Eckerley

Employer of the Year - Bridgewater Homecare
Wellbeing in the Workplace - Bridgewater Homecare



Owners Greg and Kirsty Dillon

Business of the Year (under 10 employees) - GreatDrums Limited



Charlotte Timperly

Customer Service Excellence - Manchester Princess Parties

For more information about the Greater Manchester Business Awards 2021 supported charity visit:
www.penninecare.nhs.uk/charitablefoundation

focus

The Greater Manchester
Business Awards 2020
DOUBLE AWARD WINNERS

Stockport Homes Group
One team, transforming lives

Stockport Homes score twice

Winners of both the Community and Social Responsibility category plus Business of the Year (over 10 employees), Stockport Homes Group are very much the embodiment of a modern socially conscious organisation. Formed in 2005, and led by Chief Executive Helen McHale, the organisation has grown at an incredible rate and now has over 600 employees. GM Business Connect caught up with Helen to find out more...



Helen McHale,
Chief Executive, Stockport Homes Group

Firstly, congratulations on winning not one but two awards. How has this news been received by your colleagues?

"At Stockport Homes Group, celebrating success is part of our culture. Naturally our colleagues are delighted to be recognised in these awards which reflect both our social conscience and the commerciality that is essential in maintaining and developing the vital core services that bring it to life.

"Of course, our true success is in the outcomes we achieve for our customers and the communities we serve."

Can you briefly tell us how Stockport Homes Group grew into the organisation it is today?

"Our evolution is based on ensuring we can continue to deliver and develop new services to meet customer need in a world of reducing public resources.

"In 2016 we established a Group structure to make savings and generate new funding and income for reinvestment back to our core business. We rebranded as Stockport Homes Group which

is now made up of four companies.

"Firstly, Stockport Homes manages council housing, the homelessness service, and a range of other neighbourhood and support services on behalf of Stockport Council.

"Next we have Viaduct Partnerships whose role is to build new homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and outright sale with Stockport Council.

"Three Sixty is our third company, delivering large scale capital works at competitive rates. This will evolve to engage in commercial building projects in the future.

"The fourth business is Foundations Stockport, our community benefit society, working to alleviate poverty and provide positive opportunities."

One of your awards was for the Community and Social Responsibility category. Can you tell us what you are doing as an organisation to achieve success in this role?

"Community and Social Responsibility is intrinsic to achieving our 'One team, transforming lives' mission which goes above and

beyond traditional housing and offers many more community and support services.

"We tackle wider social, economic and environmental challenges; enhancing the sustainability of our communities; providing opportunities for customers and staff to reach their full potential, and for partners to deliver more by working together."

Can you describe your working relationship with Stockport Council?

"Stockport Homes is an Arms Length Management Organisation to Stockport Council. Our relationship with the Council is governed by a long-term Management Agreement and we work together strategically on a range of shared objectives.

"Through the development of the Group structure, Stockport Homes has explored new opportunities, innovating in order to support the Council in the achievement of its objectives and the ever changing economic and political environment in which it operates. SHG and the Council work constructively together for the benefit of Stockport and its residents.

"Viaduct Housing Partnership is an excellent example of how we are successfully working together to achieve a common goal, in this case increasing the availability of quality, affordable housing."

Has the current pandemic had an impact upon your organisation?

"We're proud to have continually delivered excellent frontline services during the pandemic, whilst prioritising the safety of our customers and staff.

"As well as essential services, we have worked hard to provide additional support including employment support for local residents and customers facing financial struggles.

"We've actioned wellbeing calls to our Carecall customers, customers over 70 and more vulnerable customers, and supported the community with the distribution of food parcels. We've also supplied access to affordable food through 'Your Local Pantry', our volunteer-led community initiative to reduce food poverty and food waste.

"Another area of particular concern during the pandemic is domestic abuse - we have made contact and offer support with victims and survivors."

What are your plans for future growth for the Group?

"We have widened the scope of our activities by developing new social housing and we will own 1,000 homes in our own right by 2021, as well as managing approximately 11,500 on the Council's behalf.

"We are also exploring business opportunities in parallel markets, such as developing for sale and selling repairs, maintenance and facilities' management services locally and in neighbouring boroughs. We want to do more to support the most vulnerable in society; those looking for work, leaving prison, with mental health and addiction challenges for example.

"Our strategy will continue to evolve in line with customer needs and our desire to always exceed expectation. We will continue to drive this through our entrepreneurial, but values led, approach; building productive and efficient partnerships; maximising on external funding opportunities; and engaging and motivating our employees to be the best they can be."



Stockport Homes HQ at Cornerstone on Edward Street in Stockport

Find out more about the work Stockport Homes does for the local community: www.stockporthomes.org

focus



TRAFFORD
SURVEYORS

Surveying Success

In the past months after the initial lockdown there have been many stories of businesses struggling and having to drastically alter the way they function simply to survive.

For one Altrincham-based business the opposite has been the case. GM Business Connect caught up with managing director Paul Naylor from Trafford Surveyors to find out more about the ongoing success story of their business.

Can you briefly describe how Trafford Surveyors came about and have developed over the years?

"We have been steadily building our reputation now for 20 years. Previously I used to work with Longden and Cook. My old boss John

Monkhouse FRICS was well known and respected in the area, and when the company folded I took over his business and client base.

"I had to change the name so chose something that represented what we do and where we come from - and Trafford Surveyors was created!

"From the start we wanted to be known as the local choice for property valuers and independent surveyors. We strongly believe in offering no nonsense professional straight talking advice for a sensible fee.

"We've grown over the years and broadened our horizons, picking up new clients from a range of sectors. One in particular has a distinctly religious theme with clients like the Salvation Army, The British Muslim Society (valuing their headquarters and mosques throughout the UK). Other holy orders from the Catholic Church (convents) and Jewish institutions - it is surprising to me how we get this work as we don't advertise!

"We do however sponsor Altrincham FC - who have been recently promoted, and Bowdon Rugby Club. We're also sponsoring a local singing group and other local groups of interest."

You seem to have grown as a business in spite of the pandemic - can you go into detail why this has been the case?

"Surprisingly the pandemic has seemed to have increased our workload. I put this down to the fact we are a small business. We simply couldn't switch off, and no one was going to pay me to sit about as furlough did not apply to me as a director.

"Other larger firms either shut the doors or operated on a skeleton staff, so once the local property sector, including estate agents and solicitors, realised we were open and could keep their deals rolling, we became inundated. This is where it is so important to build local relationships as a business and keep the dialogue going with key individuals across the property sector."

Can you describe the size of your business - have you got offices in any other parts of the UK?

"Over the years we did have plans for a national expansion. We used to have offices in Glasgow, Caernarfon and Cambridge, however we now focus on local bespoke clients who prefer a timely independent professional service - and it's better for us and our customers to concentrate on that 100%."

I know you've been on TV helping Dom Littlewood with his Cowboy Builder programme - can you describe the experience and what your role was?

"The media experience with Dom was amazing. We got 15 minutes of primetime TV exposure - where I was hailed as the RICS expert. The programme has been repeated many times and lots of people still ask me about the experience.

"The producers asked me to view a property and produce a report focusing on the roof - which simply needed patch repairs totalling

£750. The 'householder' (an actress) then called the dodgy roofer out to inspect and quote on the work. He was of course already known to trading standards with the programme exposing his nefarious business practices!

"He was filmed with hidden cameras effecting poor repairs in a shoddy manner - myself and Dom were in the garage at the property watching this on hidden cameras, and my role was to talk through the quality of the repairs to Dom and the TV audience.

"Once the 'Tradesman' presented his inflated bill for the shoddy work - myself, Dom and the cameras rushed out and confronted him - scary times and not my usual modus operandi! Needless to say the guy denied everything, got in his van and skedaddled.

"It was a fantastic experience being involved in a TV programme, particularly explaining technical processes and terms to the layman and Dom of course was great fun - a typical cockney geeza!"

What are your plans for future growth for the Business?

"Future plans? Definitely more of same. We have seemed to find a perfect niche as local experts offering a trustworthy service for realistic rates.

"We're thinking about possibly recruiting a trainee chartered surveyor - my son Timothy who will be coming out of University next year could fit that role as he will no doubt be looking for a job! He has been shadowing me for years - learning the basics - so he would make a great assistant and turn the company into a true family business."



Trafford Surveyors is an independent firm of RICS Accredited and Certified staff.

They are committed to the guidelines specified in RICS Red Book which details mandatory practices for their members undertaking professional surveys and valuation services.

Find out more - contact Paul Naylor on 0161 929 8257,

email pnaylor@traffordsurveyors.co.uk or visit www.traffordsurveyors.co.uk

Paul Naylor BSc MRICS
Chartered Surveyor and RICS Registered Valuer
Managing Director of Trafford Surveyors Ltd



exporting

There is a shortage of available 40' containers in Asia, and as a result transport costs are rising sharply. There are resultant delays, and this robust export demand has the potential to slow down global economic recovery. Also, China has some of the busiest ports in the world and one of the busiest routes is between China and the USA west coast ports.

There are so many questions that arise from this, and many lessons to be learned that it is a challenge to know where to start.

Why isn't this on the front of every newspaper?

Does it mean we will go short of food?

Does this mean that it is a bad time to export?

Isn't there a global pandemic slowing down trade?

Why is this happening now?

And of course,

The world is a

What can be done?

I have no idea why the media have not picked this up, but I would not even begin to understand what drives their agenda. It is of course highlighted in the trade press.

I am not concerned that we will go hungry, but maybe that was why Rishi encouraged us all to eat out, to fatten us up just in case.

This is an excellent time to export from our perspective. Exporting to Asia can actually give a distinct advantage as return freight rates should be lower than normal due to the freight companies looking to get containers back to Asia as quickly as possible - even returning them empty on occasion.

There is also clear evidence that economies, especially the USA, are rebounding quickly from the pandemic downturn, though it is yet to be seen whether this will be sustained.

It also highlights where the main freight traffic routes are and just how much the internationalisation of trade has developed. Ricardo lives, breathes and prospers!

There are many reasons for the container shortage problem occurring now.

There have been interruptions in Asian ports caused by lockdowns, and some may not yet be back to full strength.

There may also be an overhang

of shipments from the height of the pandemic. It will take some time for all aspects to work their way through the system and for the future position to become clear.

There are always options, though they are not always given the consideration they deserve. Air freight is much more commonly used than many may think. When you have urgent or very high value to weight ratio products it can be obvious.

Rushing the latest smart phones or medicines by airfreight adds very little to the unit cost and has the advantage of speed to market. In my time I have had customers ship crisps and popcorn, basically boxes of air, by air freight, such was their rush to taste these delights.

With the reductions we have seen in air



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passenger numbers this year, it makes sense for the airlines to give over empty weight allowances to more freight.

What about road freight I hear you ask? Well why not. Road freight from China to the UK can take between 23 and 28 days, depending on the origination point and number of drivers (with my thanks to Stacey Byrne of Kerry Logistics for this little gem).

Whilst not yet a common route or indeed a green option, this can fill a need for urgent and cost effective requirements and may grow in usage if the container crunch persists.

So far we have focused on freight with Asia, but what about the rest of the world?

Well there are implications, and the world

is becoming ever more complex and interconnected. When considering exporting or importing, it is a good idea to involve your freight consultants at an early stage.

That leaves us with Europe and our trade with the EU and beyond.

As I write this article the game of Brexit bluff continues between the UK and EU. Both sides seem to have the odd blink, but then pin their eyes back open again. It is hard to see some kind of deal not happening, even if the talks break down first, which I can foresee as a possibility, and WTO becomes the adopted route.

This game of poker does not have an end date attached so even if it is WTO on 1st January 2021 that is not

likely to be the final position.

So, will there be massive queues at the channel border?

Well there certainly will be if it snows, that always happens. The noises I hear are that the planning has been sufficient on both sides that even if it is WTO, things will move more smoothly than some feared, though still with some delays.

Freight is in the hands of professionals whose livelihoods depend on ensuring minimum transfer times and efficient deliveries. That is not to say that strikes and blockades by French farmers and fishermen are not a possibility.

But why should 2021 be different to all other years.



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

The Irish connection



Steve Swinburn,
UK General Manager,
Harbour International Freight

Harbour International Freight has a tradition of offering specialist trailer services to and from Ireland and the UK.

Following continued development over the past decade they now provide a full freight forwarding service via their integrated European Network.

They are based in 16 locations throughout the UK and Ireland, and GM Business Connect caught up

with Steve Swinburn, UK General Manager at their head office in Eccles:

What services do you offer to/from Ireland or in the Irish market?

"We provide daily departures from our UK depots to our own depots in Dublin, Cork and Belfast covering the full range of Next Day and Standard services, from a carton to a full load and everything between, along with full ADR services."

How would you view prospects in the Irish market now? How badly was it affected by Covid and is it recovering now?

"We have seen a dramatic pick up on volumes throughout the summer and in particularly

September. We haven't been hit too hard unlike some as we have a very broad customer base covering FMCG to Chemicals and manufacturing.

"So, with that range we have weathered the storm quite well. April was the hardest hit month with volumes decreasing around 30%."

What effect do you think Covid will have on the Irish market going forward?

"It is going to continue to be something to watch and see. As the the lockdown was lifting we saw consumers returning and freight volumes improving, however, with new restrictions in place it will make the run up to Christmas even more interesting - we will be watching to see if the usual seasonal upturn will be there."

Did you/are you taking any measures with regards to Covid now?

"With the current spike in the UK Northwest and with our UK head office based in Manchester, it has been particularly challenging.

"We have followed all government advice and exceeded it, with a strong multiple daily cleaning regime of our facilities, and all drivers ensuring units and FLT are cleaned at the beginning and end of shifts including any driver changeovers at night."

How important is your membership of the Pall-Ex pallet network?

"With the recent acquisition of



Exporting continues on next page



Continued from
previous page

exporting

The Irish connection *continued*

the Pall-Ex network from Hilary Devey, and now Fortec, by the membership and management, we are now a leading shareholder member and able to play our part in key decisions and the direction of the network.

"Volumes are increasing month by month network-wide, and Harbour in particular has experienced a 100% increase in volumes for the UK domestic market over the same time last year with 5 nightly trunks into both Northern and Central Hubs."

What are your growth plans in the immediate future?

"We are currently mid-build on our new Dublin facility which will be 160,000 sq. ft when completed.

It will be operational mid-2021, it is a €14 million investment on behalf of our group which will bring massive operational efficiencies and growth.

"We are also looking at replacing our UK head office in Manchester with new larger facilities in Q4 of 2021 to enable us to service our growing customer base throughout the North and Midlands."

"To support the increase in volumes we are experiencing we've added additional vehicles to our haulage fleet in Manchester along with new vehicles in our Cork depot. This includes the recent purchase of some new Montracon double deck trailers."

Have you been recruiting during the pandemic?

"We have recently in our Manchester depot recruited four new members of staff, and are currently looking to further add to that later this year and next.

"With Brexit looming this may increase further with Customs Clearance staff."

Has there been any noticeable changes in the run up to leaving the EU?

"Building up enough goods for the supply chain to avoid any Customs impact has meant stockpiling of freight and goods in warehousing.

"This has resulted in pushing up demand for warehousing in the North, with some logistics providers doubling or tripling warehouse costs as demand

is far out stripping supply.

"It is only the tip of the iceberg, with these costs inevitably being passed on at some point to the end consumer.

"In Felixstowe for example freight coming into the UK from China and beyond is currently facing a two week delay due to capacity and restrictions."

What are your long term plans going forward?

"We have over the last 8 years increased our turnover in Manchester from £900,000 to £6 million, and we're looking at the new decade with a similar objective for expanding.

"We are always on the lookout for growth opportunities, including any bolt on acquisitions to support our long-term business plans whether that be in the UK, Ireland or Europe."

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How will the **potential** of **WTO trade tariffs** affect **worldwide shipping**?

by **Bryn Atherton,**
Allseas Global Logistics

As trade and commerce continue as normal during the Brexit transition period, many companies who regularly import and export goods with Europe are becoming increasingly concerned about the threat of a 'no deal' Brexit.

There is plenty of speculation that a free trade agreement between the UK and Europe could yet be achieved. But with discussions still ongoing it's looking increasingly likely that the UK will revert to WTO trade tariffs from January 2021.

It's reported that approximately 40% of the UK's average annual exports are Europe-bound, and around 50%

of imports into the UK arrive from Europe. With these high statistics, the consequence of leaving the single market could have an effect on many UK businesses. As a freight forwarder helping clients move many categories of products to and from Europe, we're often asked how WTO will affect shipping and the movement of goods.

The well-published phrase of 'Keep calm & carry on' has been widely used and adopted in recent times, and I believe this sentiment is equally appropriate when it comes to the shipping industry. Because whilst the media often like to sensationalise a state of chaos at the ports and huge import duty increases, the reality is likely to be more straightforward.

When you dig deeper into the statistics, reports show that approximately 47% of imported goods will have zero tariffs under WTO, compared with 27% under current EU tariffs. And when it comes to the reported lengthy queues of trucks at the ports and extensive delays of moving freight between the UK and EU - again, this doesn't need to be the case.

Away from the news headlines, UK business, the shipping industry and the authorities have been preparing for years. Freight-forwarders like ourselves have undertaken new customs training programs to ensure we're fully ready and prepared for the change, whichever tariff route that takes.



Bryn Atherton,
Commercial Director,
Allseas Global Logistics

And whilst there will be the inevitable early challenges you get with any change of protocol, I strongly believe these will be short lived.

It's in everybody's interests to keep trade moving and shipping lanes bustling.

Freight-forwarders like ourselves exist to take the burden away from shipping and transporting goods from and to the UK. This includes advice and support on customs entries, tariffs and documentation, so businesses can rest assured that the freight industry is ready to support them.

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finance

Furlough fraud - avoiding investigation

The first fines have been issued to businesses that have inappropriately claimed from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), including one person who claimed £495,000.

The government set out a number of rules and guidelines which need to be followed for claims, and employers that have struggled to understand the rules of the scheme, or that did not seek legal advice prior to furloughing employees (including office holders, company directors and agency workers), may have unknowingly failed to comply with CJRS rules, and may therefore risk investigation by HMRC.

Furlough scheme rules

If you've previously claimed from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and are continuing to claim from the CJRS Flexible Furlough scheme which is now in place and may be trickier to manage, as part of the application process you will know that the portal requests the employer to make a declaration they have complied with the rules.

Do you know what the rules are?

- You ensured that employees furloughed between 1 March and 31 July did not work whilst on furlough leave for a minimum of

3 weeks per furlough claim, and that claims were only made for 80% of furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 per month plus employer's National Insurance Contributions (ER NICS) and employer pension contributions, and no fees, commissions and bonuses were included.

- If you're claiming from the flexible furlough scheme from 1 July onwards, where employees are able to return to work part time, you will need to issue a new written agreement to the employee detailing what hours they will work, and each time the number of hours or shift pattern changes, a further new agreement will need to be issued - you will need to keep records of these agreements for 5 years.
- The maximum number of employees you will be able to furlough from July onwards will have to equate to the highest number of employees you have claimed for before 30 June, and furlough claims will no longer be able to be made across these months.
- You will need to keep a record of all CJRS claims made for 6 years, including all hours worked and all hours furloughed; your calculations; amounts claimed;

and reference numbers for each claim.

- From 1 August, for any employees on furlough leave, the government will pay 80% of wages/salaries up to £2,500, however the employer will need to pay ER NICS and employer pension contributions. You will have the responsibility for paying your employees.
- From 1 September, for any employees on furlough leave, the government will pay 70% of wages/salaries up to a maximum of £2,187.50 with employers paying 10% up to a combined £2,500, as well as paying the ER NICS and employer pension contributions. You will have the responsibility for paying your employees.
- From 1 October (the last month that the CJRS will be active), the government will pay 60% of furloughed employees wages/salaries to a maximum of £1,875, with the employer paying the remaining 20% to the £2,500 cap, as well as ER NICS and pension contributions. You will have the responsibility for paying your employees.

When do HMRC start investigations?

Once a CJRS claim is submitted via the portal, it takes four to six working days for payments to be made to the business bank account. This provides HMRC with the opportunity to use their testing method for incorrect details or fraudulent claims.

With HMRC being highly alert to the possibility of employers abusing the scheme, they have set up a telephone hotline and an online whistle-blower service for employees to report any employers who have abused/are abusing the scheme.

At the end of June 2020, HMRC had received over 3,000 reports of fraudulent use of the scheme including some employers having

allegedly instructed their furloughed employees to continue to work.

HMRC may ask employers to provide evidence confirming that employees that have been furloughed would otherwise have continued in employment if the pandemic had not arisen.

What do I do if I've made a mistake as an employer?

Whilst HMRC are looking to "claw back" money paid out as part of the CJRS rescue package from fraudsters, the government acknowledges that some businesses will have made genuine mistakes through their furlough applications. As a result, they have reassured that they will show leniency in these circumstances.

Where businesses have come to realise they have made a mistake or have knowingly made a false claim, a new law being passed through parliament will give a 30-day notification period for employers to own up and admit their offence or error.

If you realise you have overclaimed from the furlough scheme, you can do one of two things:

- Identify corrections in your next furlough claim by completing the section that identifies whether you need to reduce the amount to take into account any previous overclaim. The claim amount will then be reduced accordingly. As mentioned above, employers should keep records of all claim details including any adjustments, for a period of six years.
- If you do not need to make any further CJRS claims, then employers can pay any overclaimed amounts directly to a HMRC account via Faster Payments, CHAPS or Bacs. You will first need to contact HMRC to obtain a 14/15-digit payment reference number.

After the initial 30-day grace period, HMRC will begin to pursue the company through their own investigations using criminal and civil powers. Where an employer has broken the CJRS rules, they risk having to pay tax charges and





ation for genuine claims

penalties of up to 200% of the amount incorrectly claimed.

What are the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Bonus rules?

On 31 July, further details of the CJRS Bonus were announced by the Government whereby any employer that has made a genuine claim from the CJRS, will be eligible for a £1,000 one-off payment per furloughed employee, if they are retained in employment after the CJRS ends on 31 October, until at least 31 January 2021. The rules state that employees must meet the following criteria:

- They were furloughed and had a CJRS claim submitted for them that meets all relevant eligibility

criteria for the scheme.

- They have been continuously employed by the relevant employer from the time of the employer's most recent claim for that employee until at least 31 January 2021.
- They have been paid an average of at least £520 a month between 1 November 2020 and 31 January 2021 (a total of at least £1,560 across the 3 months). The employee does not have to be paid £520 in each month, but they must have received some earnings in each of the three calendar months that have been paid and reported to HMRC via Real Time Information (RTI) (therefore the employee must have up-to-date RTI records for

the period to the end of January).

- They are not serving a contractual or statutory notice period, that started before 1 February 2021, for the employer making a claim.



Les Leavitt

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At LWA, our aim is to support businesses ensuring their compliance to all HMRC regulations including claiming from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

We've also successfully assisted many of our Payroll Services clients in making their CJRS furlough claims.

We hope that the information provided helps you to understand the rules in relation to the scheme, however if you are worried you may have overclaimed or need further guidance on claiming from the Flexible Furlough Scheme, please contact our team on **0161 905 1801**, who will be happy to help.



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apprenticeships

There has never been a more important time to employ an apprentice ...and let the Government help you

Youth unemployment levels have rocketed in recent months as the lockdown period has really had a negative impact on entry level jobs, with an additional 154,000 young people out of work.

This huge growth in unemployment risks impacting the future of this current generation for many years to come.

Over recent months, we have held a communication campaign urging employers to maintain their investment in apprentices, detailing the great attributes that new, young talent can have in supporting business through these turbulent times ahead.

Millennials are the first generation

to have completely grown up in the digital era and have skills and expertise in this area that many of us can only dream of.

The Government have backed this up by offering significant grants to employers who recruit new apprentices into their business, which, attached to already existing support, can provide employers with up to £3,000 per apprentice to help with costs.

The new incentive scheme runs until the end of January and is

beginning to have an impact.

Louise Jones, Employer Services Leader at Apprenticeships at Salford City College, commented, *"The incentives are really starting to have an impact, with employers recognising that the financial support will help them bring fresh new talent into their business at a time when they need it the most."*

"Most businesses have rapidly expanded their digital operations and processes, and this really suits the apprentices we are

providing them with".

Head of Apprenticeship Delivery, Karen Kenny, has also worked hard with the apprenticeship delivery team to ensure a new apprenticeship programme is being quickly introduced.

The Digital Support Technician programme is proving to be popular with employers, developing the skills within their business. Karen commented, *"The new digital apprenticeship standard will enable employers to help develop digital skills across their business, so they have the capacity to train and support other staff."*

Prior to lockdown, the apprenticeship sector was on a very positive trajectory, following a period of major reform and improvement.

The Government is determined that this continues, and the incentives are vital in ensuring this happens.

Apprentices need employment, and employment can only come from committed employers who see the potential in developing brilliant, young talent in their business.

We may not all agree with all political decisions that are made, but this decision to back our young people is one we must all buy into.

The talent and passion available is amazing, so now is the best time to let them have a positive impact on your business.

For more information on how you can recruit an apprentice for your business with us, contact us on

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economy

Recovery **still on track** despite fears of

lockdown - but fears for job losses increase



Analysis from Dr John Ashcroft on the economic impact of Covid-19

Our views on recovery are unchanged.

We expect output to be down, by around 10% in the third quarter, and down by 5% in the final quarter of the year.

Output for the year as a whole, will be down by 10%.

Unemployment is set to rise to between 2.5 and 3.0 million, a rate of 7.5% and 8.5%, without any additional extension to the job support scheme.

Latest data confirms output in the UK economy fell by 21.6% in the second quarter compared to the prior year. Manufacturing output was down by 24% and construction output was down by almost 40%.

Service sector output fell by 22%. The hotel and leisure sector was down by a staggering 87%. Data from the Civil Aviation Authority confirms passenger numbers in the UK were down by 99% in Q2 as lockdown and travel bans were imposed.

Overseas tourism remains problematic. Passenger numbers have risen but are expected to be just 15% of prior year levels in the third quarter. The good news is that restrictions on overseas travel will mean that almost 80 million people will be looking to holiday in the UK.

Latest survey evidence suggests a strong recovery in manufacturing and construction is underway. Retail

sales remain buoyant. The housing market is experiencing an increase in demand and price levels, plus online sales and logistics are driving growth in the retail sector.

Retail sales increased by almost 3% in August. Excluding fuel, total sales volumes increased by over 4%. DIY led the charge. B&Q and others benefited, with DIY sales up by 20%. Garden centres were blooming. Green fingers tapped the tills with a 17% increase in horticultural goods sales, year on year.

The upturn in the housing market also boosted sales of white goods and floor coverings. Pride in appearance appeared to take a back seat. Sales of clothing, cosmetics and footwear were down over 15%. Watches and jewellery sales were down by 12% in August.

The surge in online sales continued. The year on year growth was over 50%, accounting for 28% of all retail transactions. Online food sales were up by 90% year on year, accounting for 10% of all food action. Ocado has overtaken Tesco as the UK's most valuable retailer. Recruitment is increasing at Amazon, Deliveroo, and THG.

In the property market, a record amount of warehouse space was let over the latest three months, as online retailers seek to increase capacity.

The pressure on conventional retail continues. Lower levels of workers

in the office are placing pressure on Pret, Greggs and Hotel Chocolat. Just 60% of working adults were travelling to work by the end of September.

Next boss Lord Wolfson has warned thousands of traditional retail jobs will be lost as a result of the rapid transition to online retail.

The hotel and leisure sector has been badly hit by the lockdown measures. The introduction of the 10pm curfew could lead to the loss of 300,000 jobs as 12,000 pubs and bars call time for the last time, according to a recent report by Oxford Economics.

Sector specialists have warned of one million jobs lost in the hospitality sector and 300,000 in the events business as lockdown continues.

Hopes remained for an extension of the furlough scheme until the end of the year at least. It was not to be. Rishi Sunak cancelled the Autumn Budget and announced his Winter Plan.

The Chancellor's Winter plan revealed, the furlough scheme would come to an end as stated at the end of October. There would be a further extension of the VAT cut for the hospitality sector.

Generous cash flow provisions were added for VAT and Loan repayments. The complex Job Support Scheme would be introduced. At best the jobs crisis may be postponed to the end of January.

With just weeks to go before the end of the job retention scheme, more than one in ten workers remain on furlough, according

the ONS. The Office For Budget Responsibility fears that over half of those on furlough, at the end of September, could end up losing their jobs.

"I cannot save every business, I cannot save every job" warned the Chancellor. "Can't Pay, Won't Pay" suggest the critics.

Government borrowing is expected to rise to over £200 billion in the first six months of the year.

Could the furlough scheme be extended? At a projected cost of £52 billion by the end of October, so what of a further £20 billion into Easter next year?

The Chancellor may not be able to save every job but he may have to do better than his Bleak Mid Winter Plan if the surge in job losses is to be avoided.

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

He is author of *The Saturday Economist*, great updates every week on the UK and World

Economy. *The Saturday Economist Live* is now available as a podcast and on Zoom.

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cashflow

How safe is your credit?

You know the score, don't you?

Your credit score that is.

As consumers, most people are proud of their credit score and look after it to ensure that if and when they may need a loan, a new car, credit card or a mortgage they will get automatic acceptance at the best possible rate.

However, in business you may not review your credit rating or you may not even know you have one.

Just like the consumer credit environment the business world relies on credit ratings, amongst other things, in their decision making process when considering whether to grant credit facilities.

Have you ever run a credit report on your own business?

If not, you should consider doing so for two reasons, firstly so you can see what information the credit reference agencies hold on your company, and secondly so you know what to expect your clients and potential clients to disclose to the agencies.

During lockdown the government introduced a number of funding solutions for businesses to enable them to get through the uncertain months ahead.

Local councils provided grants to businesses, the government guaranteed cheap business loans and other lenders supported businesses with alternative funding.

Bounce Back Loans were very popular as they were cheap, easily obtained with a one year payment holiday and five years to pay after that.

However, those loans have to be paid back, and if you can't or don't pay your business credit rating could be adversely affected.

It is therefore of great importance that you avoid negative information on your credit file such as Court Judgments, Defaults and Winding Up Petitions.

Be open and honest with your clients and funders and expect the same from your clients. Wherever possible pay your trade creditors on time or even a little early if you can.

Also make sure you file any required documents such as Annual Accounts and Confirmation Statements at Companies House on time.

The government allowed filings to be delayed during lockdown so it could be easy to forget about them now that moratorium has been lifted.

Since lockdown was lifted the government have taken stock of their support for businesses, and estimates suggest that companies are now burdened with £70 billion of unsustainable debt, of which £20 Billion is attributed to the government guaranteed lending schemes.

With a second set of distancing restrictions announced for the next 6 months the government are providing further support to businesses, especially those that employ staff.

However, the support is in the form of incentives, relaxations on paying back previous lendings and free advice rather than cold hard cash.

It is therefore likely that there will be a sharp rise in business insolvencies. The Office for National Statistics estimates that one in twenty limited companies in England and Wales will be pushed into insolvency this year.

Former employees of those businesses may decide to start their own businesses rather than search for alternative employment. Those new businesses will have no history or credit rating so, whilst supporting new businesses is commendable, you should proceed with caution

if you are approached by a new business seeking credit terms.

Payment up front or at least a 50% deposit would minimise your risk and also show goodwill from your new client.

Make sure you have written terms and conditions in place with all your clients, issue invoices as soon as a job is completed (or earlier if you can), and don't be afraid to chase clients for payment.

Sticking to these principals won't guarantee business survival, but good practice will give you the fighting chance you need to survive and grow your business during these difficult times.

If your company is profitable then its worth will increase, and therefore so will your credit rating.



Paul Daine

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wellbeing

Moving forward from redundancy

Some of us may remember the concept of a job for life, where you worked for a large blue-chip company or solid family business and received opportunities for training, promotion, travel and even relocation, leaving only due to personal choice or circumstance.

Today this is a somewhat alien concept, with many people changing their jobs every three years or so through boredom or redundancy.

A job for life is pretty much extinct.

As companies fold, get bought out or reorganise, redundancy has become a regular occurrence with some people being made redundant several times in their working lives.

And, as we move through this global pandemic, it's increasingly commonplace to find someone whose role has changed, whose way of working has been revised and who now works part-time, from home, has gone from staff to contract or whose duties have changed.

Often there's little choice but to comply with the company's decision.

But what a depressing word 'redundancy' is, meaning no longer needed, outdated, unwanted, superfluous!

Let's look at ways of lifting the mood and moving forward from redundancy;

Start by reconciling yourself as to why it's happened.

Redundancy is when a job, role or position is no longer viable, relevant or adding value to an organisation's working practices. So, avoid the temptation to take the decision personally.

There are many reasons, especially at the moment, why your role may no longer meet the business's needs.

Being made redundant is less likely to be about you and more about present circumstances.

Could now be a good time to take the plunge into self-employment? You're probably already managing on less and there seems to be fewer job opportunities.

If you've a hobby, interest or good idea that you'd like to road test, now might be a good time to trial it and explore what you need to learn and action to improve your chances of success.

Maybe you could partner up with someone who complements your business plan, so sharing your expenses or find an experienced ally to initially coach or mentor you.

Think of ways to work without money changing hands. Take the pressure off needing to earn by exchanging skills and trading with others differently; cleaning, gardening, baking, book-keeping, admin, virtual PA are some ways you could work for each other.

Support yourself and maybe gradually grow your contribution into a full-time, permanent business.

Think about the many people you know who reflect back on being made redundant as the catalyst for achieving what they now have.

They'd never have made the move to change career or start their own business if they'd been salaried and committed to regular employment.

It took that push for them to find the courage and motivation to start anew.

Consider your options. Look at your skills. Ask yourself what you'd like to do now that you've had time to think and perhaps discover what you don't want to do and also what you're good at and enjoy.

Identify your transferable skills. If you've got good people, management, selling or organisational skills, are good with your hands, enjoy finances, these are all skills that can be applied successfully in several business settings or even to working on your own.

If you've little work experience and want to enhance your abilities - look to volunteering. Maybe in a charitable organisation, a youth group or as an apprentice.

Or cold call, make contact, perhaps with HR, and see if you're able to source ways to learn and obtain some experience in an organisation you like.

If you're looking for a new job online agencies can be one way to find vacancies.

Or use business networking sites like LinkedIn to search in niches that are of interest. Ask around on social media or through friends, family and contacts, both on or offline to explore if they know somewhere that's looking to recruit.

Investigate options to retrain. There are grant-funded opportunities available through government schemes and colleges.

Look to refresh your CV. What might an employer be looking for in a new recruit? Tailor each application to the specific job you're applying for, rather than use a generic one and include a covering letter.

If necessary be prepared to utilise a professional to help with this as well as having a professional photograph taken. Treat it as an investment in your future.

Potential employers look for things like a consistent work history, relevant interests, appropriate skills, like time management, coping with

stressful situations, successes you've had, adversity overcome.

They're keen to know what you can bring to the job and why you want it.

How flexible are you?

Do you want full-time, part-time, shift work, working from home?

So much is new and open to negotiation. We're all finding our feet in this new 'normal'.

Now could be the time for you to open new doors and make the very best of this opportunity as you move forward from redundancy.



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.

She's author of 3 books, all on Amazon and with easy to read sections, tips and ideas to help you feel more positive about your life.

To order a copy or for more information, help and free articles visit

www.lifestyletherapy.net

For more articles, information or to make contact please call

0161 928 7880 or visit www.lifestyletherapy.net

Virtual diary dates

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

Rest assured the Greater Manchester business networking community will be back as soon as the current crisis 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

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

ConnectWorking Breakfast

Virtual business breakfast

Next event TBC 9.30am - 11.00am

Cost FREE

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518
paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk

Notes Check gmbusinessconnect.co.uk for future events. Live networking will take place at the Belmore Hotel, 143 Brooklands Road, Sale M33 3QN once restrictions are eased.

Digital Transformation Expo 2021 Manchester

2 Day Expo and Conference

19 May 9am-5pm

20 May 9am-4pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street, Manchester M2 3GX

Cost FREE (please pre-register)

Contact dt-x.io/manchester

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

Dynamic Networking

Zoom Networking

Cost FREE

Contact natalie@dynamicnetworking.biz
www.dynamicnetworking.biz

www.facebook.com/groups/DynamicNetworkOnline/

DynamicNetworkOnline/

First Friday ConnectWorking

Online networking using Zoom

6 Nov, 4 Dec 4.00pm - 6.00pm

Cost £5 (Forever Manchester contribution)

Contact Paul Mirage 07708 987518
paul@businessconnectpublishing.co.uk

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

High Peak Business Club

Regular monthly breakfast networking + high calibre speakers - all events via Zoom

6 Nov, 4 Dec 7.40am - 9.00am

Cost £5

Contact edwinacurrie@sky.com
www.highpeakbusinessclub.co.uk

K-Club

Entrepreneur's networking events

Virtual Breakfast - Speaker + networking

19 Nov 7.30am - 10.00am

Cost FREE

Keep an eye on the website and social media for upcoming event details.

Contact Amanda Manson 07754 069 829
www.k-club.co.uk

Manchester Business Expo 2020

1 Day Expo and Conference

Postponed until 2021

Notes Originally scheduled for 2020 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

The Northern Business Expo 2020

2 Day Expo and Conference

16 + 17 March 2021

10.00am - 4.00pm

Venue Manchester Central, Windmill Street, Manchester M2 3GX

Contact northernbusinessexpo.com

Notes GM Business Connect are media partners.

Northern Restaurant and Bar

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

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

Full listings of online and offline events can be found on: 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

The Business Network Manchester

Online networking to replace monthly face to face networking

21 Oct, 19 Nov, 9 Dec 11.50am - 2.00pm

Cost Please inquire

Contact Helen Bennett
0161 823 1384
helen@business-network.co.uk
www.business-network.co.uk

The Business Network South Manchester

Mix of online networking running with face to face networking.

5 Nov 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue Mottram Hall Hotel, Wilmslow Road, Mottram SK10 4QT

3 Dec 10.30am - 12.30pm

Venue Pinewood Hotel, 180 Wilmslow Road, Handforth, Wilmslow SK9 3LF

Cost £46.60

Contact Simon Edmondson 07766 493428
Simon.Edmondson@business-network.co.uk
www.business-network.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.

Some of the following organisations may be active with online networking.

Please check their websites regularly for more up to date information:

Altrincham & Sale Chamber

Contact 0161 941 3250
www.altrinchamchamber.co.uk

Bowdon Business Club

Contact Members@BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk
www.BowdonBusinessClub.co.uk

Business for Breakfast

Contact centralservices@bforb.co.uk
www.bforb.co.uk

Business over Breakfast

Contact Tracy Heatley 07812 076946
www.bobclubs.com

Carrington Business Park

Contact 0161 776 4000
lisa.graham@cbpl.co.uk
www.cbpl.co.uk

FSB - Federation of Small Businesses

Contact Rose McAteer 07917 628916
rose.mcateer@fsb.org.uk
www.fsb.org.uk

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Contact 0161 393 4321
www.gmchamber.co.uk

Manchester Business Breakfast Club

Contact info@manchester-bbc.co.uk
www.manchester-bbc.co.uk

Manchester Business Catalyst Club Lunch

Contact Graham Shiers 07818 675 310
www.businesscatalystclub.co.uk

M62 Connections

Contact Bill Dove 07932 044 743
www.m62connections.co.uk

Shout! Network

Contact 01772 935930
info@shoutnetwork.co.uk
www.shoutnetwork.co.uk

SK8 Networking

Contact Chris Jones
0161 437 5999 / 07757 710199
www.sk8networking.co.uk

The South Manchester Business Association

Contact 0161 962 5195
smba.org.uk

Trafford Business Club

Contact David Lawton 07973 502595
www.traffordbusinessclub.co.uk

Women's 20/20

Contact Catherine Sandland
enquiries@2020network.co.uk
www.2020network.co.uk



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University of
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MANCHESTER

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CLINIC

**TalkTalk
Business**

Providing SMEs across Greater Manchester with a free digital transformation needs analysis report

Using strategic digital transformation as the catalyst for increased productivity in SMEs across the Greater Manchester region.

What is the Digital Transformation Clinic?

Salford Business School, in partnership with TalkTalk are supporting Greater Manchester SMEs as they emerge from COVID-19. We understand that current business priorities lie around operational delivery and there is little time and space to consider marketplace strategy.

We want to help businesses fill this gap and become more productive, resilient, profitable and sustainable. We will do this by helping SMEs to strategically transform their operations through the implementation of crucial digital technology.

What's the problem?

- ✓ Covid 19 reinforces the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VULCA) being experienced by all businesses
- ✓ Covid 19 exposes a lack of resilience and the fragility of supply chains
- ✓ Covid 19 rapidly accelerates in-company need for strategic approaches to digital transformation
- ✓ Covid19 has introduced a new set of priorities for organisations to consider

How do we know this is the right pathway?

The Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy highlights the need for interventions that improve business productivity. Based on the experience of our academic enterprise colleagues we know that strategic digital transformation is the catalyst to generate these improvement across the region.

How can we help your business with strategic digital transformation?

We use digital transformation as a holistic activity that touches all aspects of the business and includes coverage of its systems, organisational culture, communications, processes and people.

What will we do?

✓ Free digital transformation needs analysis report

Sponsored by Talk Talk, the digital transformation clinic will provide each business with a FREE needs analysis report that examines the business context, current challenges, horizon scanning and recommendations for urgent actions and changes. The report will create a step-by-step guide for digital transformation for your business.

We will run a technology integration workshop to assess the need for organisational cultural change as well as the development of technology skill sets within your workforce.

- ✓ We will run user acceptance visioning workshops with your staff and develop an innovation portfolio matrix for your business.

**SALFORD
BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

For further information please contact:

Email: SBS-Enterprise@salford.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)161 296 2222

www.salford.ac.uk/digital-transformation-clinic