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June/July 2022

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Reports from across the UK on the Construction industry.

Apprenticeships: Skills Bill

Salford City College looks at the impact of the current Skills Bill legislation.

Exporting: Trading with Africa

A look at exporting to Africa with Tony Goodman MBE.

Immigration: Current legislation

A detailed look at the recent changes in immigration law.

Networking: Isle of Man

Review of the recent networking events on the Isle of Man hosted by BITA.

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Niall Walsh, Founder, Garton Global Payments

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editorial

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welcome
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The magazine connects businesses across the UK and beyond, and is completely free.

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news

New-build homes will come with fast and reliable gigabit broadband under new plans

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez has launched a consultation on proposals for changes to building regulations to ensure new homes have next-generation gigabit broadband installed in them as standard practice.

Around one in ten new-build homes are still being built without gigabit connections, mostly in smaller developments, where the cost can be higher or broadband companies have not had the time they need to install connections before houses are completed.

The changes to the law will mean home developers will be legally required to build gigabit broadband into new homes in England and make it a priority as part of building work. They will also need to bring broadband network operators on board to consider gigabit broadband installation when construction plans are submitted to local councils.

The technical consultation closed at the end of February.

Metro Bank is looking for start-ups for second innovation lab

Metro Bank has just launched its second start-up collaboration programme, Metro Bank Magic Makers, and is looking for start-ups in customer experience, community banking, optimisation of systems and data and sustainability.

Drawing on the success of the first programme run in partnership with L Marks, Metro Bank is again looking for innovative solutions that will move the dial on its customer experience.

In 2021, Metro Bank launched its first Magic Makers programme and chose three start-up companies, Surfly, Solidatus and Poly AI, whose innovative solutions ultimately delivered a double whammy both by transforming the Metro Bank customer experience and the Bank's operational efficiency.

The transformative technologies developed by the programme included co-browsing technology designed to enhance customer resolution, a digital blueprint that enables essential data insights and transparency, plus a super human voice assistant able to respond to complex requests and natural conversation from customers.

All three solutions were tested so successfully at the Bank that they have been formally adopted and are currently being implemented.

Through the ten week immersive Magic Makers programme, successful start-ups will have access to first-class mentorship from Metro Bank senior stakeholders, gaining insights from leading experts in the sector and the opportunity to test and validate their solutions.

University Accelerator looks to support next wave of world-leading AI companies

An initiative which helps innovative Artificial Intelligence-focused start-up companies to maximise their full commercial potential has opened for new applicants. The AI Accelerator is now seeking applications, from Scotland, the UK and beyond, from disruptive start-ups with strong growth aspirations. Those accepted benefit from a package of support aimed at helping transform their AI businesses into world-leading companies.

The AI Accelerator has a proud track record in supporting innovative businesses. The 12 cohort companies which have just completed the 2021 AI Accelerator have raised a combined £4.3m through equity investments and grant funding awards while on the programme creating new, high-value jobs in the process.

The programme will be delivered both digitally and in-person by the University of Edinburgh's world-leading Innovation Hub for Data

Science and Artificial Intelligence, the Bayes Centre.

The programme, partnered by global strategic design consultancy NileHQ and supported by Huawei UK, is open to applications from scalable incorporated companies with high growth potential. The businesses must all use AI for wider societal benefit to deliver solutions in core areas such as health and wellbeing, social care, and environmental stewardship.

The Accelerator is highly focused on investment, giving participating companies an ideal platform to develop an investment strategy and meet potential investors. Along with some generous financial support, newly accepted cohorts will also be given the opportunity to scale their business through a series of workshops with trainers and mentors covering a range of commercialisation issues from product pricing to leadership.

The University of Edinburgh is home to the largest centres for computing science and informatics in Europe.



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Google and Chancellor Rishi Sunak launch nationwide digital skills drive



In recent polls 60% of SMEs agree that they are operating in a 'new normal' post-pandemic, with customer and employee expectations radically altered. 35% said they had changed their business radically and 63% agreed that digital skills and tools were now more important than pre-pandemic as SMEs look to grow in a hybrid world.

At an event in Ipswich, Google and Chancellor Rishi Sunak launched the next phase of the Google Digital Garage digital skills training programme, with Google committing to visit towns up and down the country offering free training and mentoring.

Google is also partnering with the Federation of Small Businesses to offer Google Career Certificate scholarships worth up to £87,000 per business to small businesses looking to further develop their tech capabilities.

At a launch event Ipswich, Google and Chancellor Rishi Sunak launched a nationwide digital skills drive to help small businesses adapt to this 'new normal' post-pandemic. Google's Digital Garage digital skills training programme will visit over 30 locations this year, including Leeds, Skegness and Salisbury. Expert coaches will deliver in-person digital skills training to help thousands more people and small businesses to grow their businesses, careers and skills, supporting levelling up across the UK. Entrepreneur and celebrity chef, Levi Roots also attended the launch event in Ipswich providing mentoring and advice to local businesses.

Rishi Sunak said: "Small businesses are at the heart of our economy, creating jobs and prosperity across the UK. It's been fantastic to meet so many SMEs in Suffolk today and to see Google's digital workshop in action which is giving them the tools to grow."

Northern Gritstone secures first close of £215m ahead of making its first investments

Northern Gritstone, the new investment business focused on university spin-outs in the north of England, today announces a first close of £215m having seen strong interest from investors in its proposition.

The company, chaired by Lord Jim O'Neill and led by Chief Executive Duncan Johnson, is expected to begin deploying capital and making its first investments in innovative start-ups over the coming weeks.

Northern Gritstone has attracted funding commitments from a broad and diverse base of investors encompassing local authority pension funds, high net worth individuals, institutional investors and real estate investors active in the tech and science ecosystem of the region.

These include Greater Manchester Pension Fund and West Yorkshire Pension Fund as part of Northern LGPS, M&G, Columbia Threadneedle, Lansdowne Partners, and Bruntwood as well as Andrew Law, the CEO of Caxton Associates, and Keith Breslauer, Managing Director and founder of Patron Capital, both in a personal capacity.

With plans to raise £500m overall, having hit this initial fundraising milestone the company will continue to welcome further backers over the

coming months. Now that the first close has been achieved, Northern Gritstone plans to begin making its initial investments into its proprietary pipeline of world class science and innovation based businesses located in the North of England.



Lord Jim O'Neill, Chair, Northern Gritstone

Having launched in July 2021, Northern Gritstone was founded by the Universities of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield to support the commercialisation of science and IP-rich businesses originating from these three research-led institutions. Many of these opportunities are in the UK's most exciting emerging sectors such as advanced materials, health technology, cognitive computation and AI.

Northern Gritstone was founded with the philosophy of 'profit with purpose', combining attractive returns for shareholders with wider positive, societal and economic impact, including supporting Levelling Up and high-skilled job creation in the north of England.



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news

Employers more open to part-time working

The furlough scheme brought in during the pandemic did not just save millions of people from unemployment and economic hardship, but may have had a lasting effect on the ways in which their employers allow them to work in the future, according to a new report out in May.

The scheme may also have ongoing benefits, according to the first wave of a survey conducted by Cranfield School of Management and CBI Economics which found increased employer openness to and knowledge of how to facilitate part-time working.

Data from whole-organisation representatives and line managers in 208 UK businesses showed that the flexible furlough scheme has impacted employers' perceptions around working practices, increasing openness to part-time working and other forms of flexible working.

Key findings include:

- 62% of line managers said they were 'more willing' to consider employee requests for part-time working.
- 96% said they were more flexible about where their employees worked, and 87% about how they scheduled their hours.
- Over half of the organisations surveyed expected remote and flexible working to increase over the next two years (60% and 58% respectively). 46% also expected part-time working to increase.
- 45% believed the use of flexible furlough has helped line managers learn how to design and manage part-time working more effectively.
- 46% believed line managers have learned how to better match resourcing with periods of peak demand for their business activity as a result of using the scheme.

FM North host networking for the FM Sector



L-R, Mike Annett, Nicholas Miliopoulos, Ian Perton, Paul Mirage

FM North held its latest monthly event in May which was a great opportunity for like-minded professionals within the Facilities Management Sector. Businesses from the Cleaning, Property and Construction industry came together in an informal, relaxed atmosphere to discuss current topics, share ideas, meet new people and make connections within the same industry sector.

Mike Annett, Head of Sales at WowNow Hire said "We were delighted to sponsor FM North in May. The event brings together a group of like-minded professionals, allowing us to raise our brand awareness and

communicate effectively with members of the Facilities Management industry.

"Strong and effective communication is a core value of WowNow Hire, and having the opportunity to sponsor FM North allows us to engage with new people from around the country. This is crucial for the development of strong relationships which enables us to provide the very best service possible to our current and new customers.

"We also look forward to sponsoring the FM North summer BBQ on Wednesday 27th July in Manchester." (see Eventbrite for more details or email danny.cross@tenantco.com).

James' Places secures funding for growth plans

A luxury, boutique hotel and wedding venue operator headquartered in Clitheroe, Lancashire, has secured a multi-million-pound finance package with Barclays to support its ambitious growth plans.

Bowland Inns & Hotels Limited, t/a James' Places, has moved its entire banking to Barclays who have provided a £26m facility to refinance existing debt and provide significant additional headroom to support future growth and acquisition plans.

The group owns and operates an eclectic collection of historic buildings in the Ribble Valley, Lune Valley and the Yorkshire Dales, boasting 8 sites including boutique hotels, exclusive wedding venues, gastropubs and restaurants. Holmes Mill, a multi-award



winning textile mill conversion is home to the group's Bowland Brewery, Beer Hall and Food Hall, in addition to a 39 bedroom hotel and Everyman Cinema.

Turnover for 21/22 will exceed £23m and group employees will number over 450 by the year-end. The new financing package will enable James' Places to pursue an ambitious expansion and acquisition strategy across the North West in the coming years with a trusted banking partner.

Greater Manchester Business Fair

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Nxcoms partners with LCR Connect to bring new gigabit full-fibre network to all businesses across the Liverpool City Region



New Fibre network being installed under the Runcorn Bridge

Spanning the six local authorities of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral, this new 212km digital infrastructure is designed to deliver a next level gigabit full-fibre service to all businesses across the city region, and Nxcoms have been appointed as approved partners for the project.

The work is being completed at pace, with 80km already built, and the whole network is due for completion by the end of 2022 and early 2023.

Nxcoms' Managing Director Andy Thompson said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be chosen as approved partners on this scheme designed to help all businesses across the Liverpool city region.

"It's so important for companies to understand that the government's promise of 100% Gigabit capability delivered by 2025 can only be achieved by a fully-fibre infrastructure. This means that any business that currently relies on old copper-based broadband and telephone systems will need to change to the new system as soon as possible.

"The advantages for a business to change now is not simply to keep their systems functioning when the copper-based infrastructure is decommissioned in 2025, but to boost their connectivity with

lightning-fast gigabit speeds. This can have a massive impact on a business. Changing their phone lines and internet access to the new Internet based services opens up so many possibilities, for example seamlessly integrating the ability for staff to work from home using a VoIP telephone system, video conferencing, or collaborating on projects.

"Changing systems can be a daunting task, but that's where the Nxcoms team can really help. We can get a business connected to the network and online with full fibre in as little as 20 days, and with various options to suit every budget.

"As the customer facing element of this project, we pride ourselves on having a more personal 1-to-1 relationship with our clients, and so we help and advise them on the best way to take advantage of this new full fibre technology in their business."

The LCR Connect project is a £30m partnership shared by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority with Chester-based ITS Technology Group and construction partner NGE. Experts estimate that with 100% full-fibre coverage across the City Region, building on this network, the economic boost could be worth up to £1bn, creating thousands of local job and training opportunities.



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news

Shortlist announced for the Greater Manchester Business Awards

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As the country went into the jubilee weekend celebrations, businesses across Greater Manchester were celebrating too after the shortlist for the Greater Manchester Business Awards was announced.

Now in its 6th year, and once again organised by Rich Media Group International and sponsored by Business Connect Magazine, the event brings together many of the most exciting and forward thinking businesses from across the region.

The event will culminate in a black tie awards evening at Hotel Brooklyn on Friday 2 September, where the winners of each of the 10 categories will be announced.

Here are the shortlisted finalists:

Business Person of the Year

Aaron McWilliam (PropCall)
Duane Cornell (Realm Recruit)
Joshua Thomas (Thomas and Co)
Karen Bexley (Bexley Beaumont)
Phil Eckersley (Bridgewater HomeCare)

Business of the Year (Under 5 Employees)

ECO.IT
Essential Mediation Solutions
FAB Solutions
Happy Smiles Training CIC
Peter James White Electrical Ltd

Business of the Year (5-10 Employees)

LJW Solutions
Mase Consulting
Revive! Trafford
The Hub Events
White Circle

Business of the Year (Over 10 Employees)

Depledge Strategic Wealth
Hive Projects
Manchester Money Ltd
Realm Recruit
The Yellow Door Day Nursery

Business of the Year (Over 20 Employees)

CAYP Psychology
Clayton Hotel Manchester Airport
e-f group
Seddon
4th Utility



Outstanding Customer Service

Bridgewater Home Care
Honest Burgers
Saxon Furniture
Uinsure
34SP.com

Health and Wellbeing of Employees

Fearless Adventures
Mapletree - 3 Hardman Street
MLP Law Ltd
Phase 3
Six Town Housing

Community Business Award

Don Giovanni
Feel Good Club LTD

Happy Smiles Training CIC
Interact Contact Centres
MC2

Innovative Business in COVID-19

Business Travel Desk
Don Giovanni
FAB Solutions
Legacy Pets Cremation Services
Sambro Ltd

Manchester Business Award

Crafty Creations MCR Ltd
Edstart Sports Coaching
Feel Good Club LTD
Legacy Pets Cremation Services
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BITA NETWORKING LUNCH DATES



The British and Irish Trading Alliance (BITA) are hosting a series of high profile business networking luncheons over the next few months bringing together business owners and leaders at iconic venues.

Venues taking part are Anfield Stadium in Liverpool, the Lowry Hotel in Salford, and the Royal Horseguards Hotel in London.

Seats are selling fast through bita.ie/events. All details including dress code are available on the booking page.

Dates for your diary - bita.ie/events:

SOCIAL NETWORKING EVENINGS

Manchester 16 Jun, 5-7pm, every 3rd Thursday of the month.
Clayton Hotel, 55 Portland Street, Manchester M1 3HP

Leeds 15 Jun, 6-8pm, every 3rd Wednesday of the month.
Marriott Cast Iron Bar & Grill, 4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6ET

Liverpool 14 July, 5-7pm, every 2nd Thursday of the month.
Restaurant Bar and Grill, Halifax House, Brunswick Street, Liverpool L2 0UU

London 14 July, 6-8pm, every 2nd Thursday of the month.
The Rising Sun, 61 Carter Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4V 5DY

ONLINE NETWORKING

London 8-9am, every Friday. Open to members and non-members.

LUNCHEONS

London Construction Networking Lunch - Sold Out
8 July, 11.30am-5pm,
Royal Horseguards, Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2EJ

Manchester Networking Lunch

17 June, 11.30am-5pm,
The Lowry Hotel, 50 Dearmans Place, Salford M3 5LH

Liverpool Networking Lunch

23 September, 11.30am-5pm, Anfield Stadium, Liverpool L4 0TF



For further info email laura@bita.ie
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Raise prices or turn off the lights for good - the stark choice facing Britain's high street businesses

Britain's high street businesses could be just weeks away from having to turn off the lights for good due to spiralling costs, a leading industry expert has warned.

With the increasing cost of raw materials, ingredients and imports, the removal of lower VAT rates from April and energy costs more than doubling year on year, the nation's corner shops, takeaways, hairdressers, pubs and gyms are on the brink.

The Federation of Small Businesses has warned that a quarter of a million small businesses are close to folding, while the Confederation of British Industry has warned that a record number of businesses plan to raise prices in the next three months in a bid to survive.

Energy retailer Love Energy Savings has seen first hand how punishing gas and electricity prices have hurt the nation's high streets as they have tracked increases of 124 per cent in bills since this time last year.

This means small traders, typically operating on tight margins, will have to find an extra £10,000, annually on average simply to pay their energy bills.

Data from Love Energy Savings shows that for electricity alone, the price rises are almost impossible to deal with.

Small and medium sized businesses can expect to see their energy bills rise by an eye watering 124 per cent annually.

The average annual energy bill for a takeaway in the UK is predicted to rise from £6,763 in 2021 to an estimated £14,794 in 2022. While the typical shop could see their bills rise from £4,120 in 2021 to £9,266 this year.

Dayna Currie, Strategy Director at Love Energy Savings, says: "The full impact of this will only be seen as we go through the year as business customers move on to new rates when their contracts come to an end. This is generally quite evenly dispersed across the year.

"The biggest price rises from energy providers have really only happened in the last five to six months too, so for some small business owners, unfortunately, the pain is yet to come.

"That is when hundreds of thousands of business owners will need to do their calculations about what kind of price rise they can pass on to their customers in order to keep trading."

Over two-thirds of UK founders launched their business after working in jobs they hated

Over two-thirds (68%) of UK business owners were motivated to start their business after working in jobs they hated, according to new research from Oneday, the new EdTech platform for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Oneday polled 500 UK business owners, via Censurwide, about their journey so far, the challenges they faced, and their primary motivations for launching and running their business. The data revealed that nearly three-quarters (73%) believe that one of the main reasons many entrepreneurs' first start-ups fail is due to a lack of experience and awareness.

In fact, over half of successful business owners (51%) revealed that they would never have achieved the success they know today, if not for past business failures or career setbacks. For context, 43% of the surveyed respondents said that they had suffered a major career setback, such as a failed business, in the past.

A lack of mentorship or guidance was cited as one of the primary challenges to starting and maintaining a business. 68% of business owners said they had almost no mentorship or guidance at all when starting their own business, and three-quarters (76%) said that the process would have been far easier with better support networks and mentors in place.

Together appoints National Development Director

Together has hired commercial financial expert Joanne Fletcher to support the lender's growth plans across the UK.

Joanne, who worked for Natwest Bank for more than three decades - giving her a wealth of knowledge and in the financial services sector - has now joined the Cheadle-based lender.

In her new role she will be responsible for building an extensive network of experienced former corporate and commercial bankers, harnessing their vast experience to introduce business to the lender and to enhance Together's brand across all UK regions.

Joanne said: "I'm excited to be joining Together at such a pivotal time not only for the group but for the specialist lending industry.

"There is currently a gap in the provision of property finance to



Joanne Fletcher,
National Development
Director, Together

would-be borrowers such as SMEs as well as property operators and investors, and Together has always had a 'can-do' attitude when it comes to successfully navigating often complex commercial finance deals, so is in a great place to fill this gap.

"We've already created a network of introducers who have a huge amount of experience and strong relationships with commercial customers across the UK."

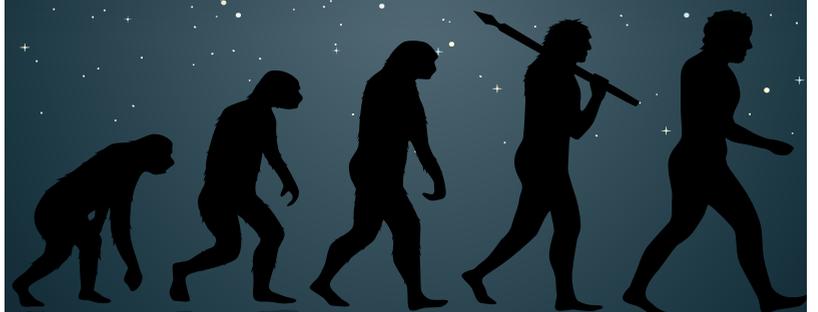
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news

Value of UK business loans written off by banks almost doubles in last quarter of 2021

The value of UK business loans written off by banks nearly doubled in the last quarter of 2021, rising 87% from £190m in the third quarter to £356m in the fourth quarter, says ACP Altenburg Advisory ("Altenburg"), the debt advisory specialists.

Altenburg explains that write offs of loans have been subdued throughout the COVID crisis but are now rising as businesses have struggled with factors such as rising energy prices and the impact of rising interest rates.

The end of Government backed lending schemes such as CBILS and BBLs has also made it harder for businesses to roll over or refinance loans that are maturing.

Altenburg adds that not only do businesses face rising costs but also intense uncertainty over the situation in Ukraine and the lifting of restrictions on commercial landlords'

rights from the start of April.

Dan Barrett, Partner at Altenburg, says: "Businesses will need to start contingency planning around their finances and what impact increased costs and/or interest rates will have. Without Government guarantees SMEs will find it harder to get bank finance and will have to look more closely at alternative finance providers."

The rise in business loans being written off comes as 12,634 companies went insolvent in the last quarter of 2021, nearly four times as many as the previous quarter (3,471). As business profits suffer more will be in danger of breaching the terms of their loan agreements, where those covenants are based on the profitability of that business. A breach of covenants may lead to a lender demanding repayment before the agreed maturity date.

Research highlights the importance of ESG for corporate reputation, investor relations and new business opportunities

According to a new research report, ESG performance and its impact on corporate reputation, investor relations and new business is a growing concern among professionals in Europe's environmental, social and governance (ESG) community.

Key findings in the research report from the European practice at Intalex Technologies, provider of cloud-based environmental, health, safety and quality (EHSQ) management software, are:

- 74% of those surveyed worry that failing to improve ESG performance will negatively impact their brand and reputation in the market.
- 73% of respondents agreed that key stakeholders and investors may start to leave if their organisation does not improve its ESG performance.

- 72% of respondents said a lack of progress towards ESG targets could negatively impact their organisation's ability to win new business.

The Intalex report comes at a critical time, both in terms of post-Covid business recovery in Europe and as the importance of ESG continues to build in the investment community. The ESG Global Survey 2021, a report from BNP Paribas on the role of ESG in investing, found that 22% of investors integrate ESG into at least 75% of their portfolio, with this number set to increase.

Commenting on the report, Intalex's Gavin Stephenson, Director, EMEA & APAC, said: "In today's world, the importance of ESG to corporate reputation cannot be underestimated. Forward-looking organisations need to recognise the direct line between ESG and business success – and take urgent action."

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Experts produce new guide to metaverses for SME owners

Experts at the University of Salford have published a new guide for business owners on the pros and cons of metaverses, as more and more SMEs consider harnessing these fast-developing technologies to innovate and grow their companies.

The 170-page book explores the workings of the virtual world of metaverses and how these can help tech-minded companies in a secure way, as well as highlighting the risks involved.

It has been compiled by Umran Ali, John O'Hare and Allen Fairchild from the Greater Manchester Cyber Foundry after the trio began analysing blockchain, cryptocurrencies, virtual and augmented reality, non-fungible tokens and other aspects of metaverses for a business which had approached

them for technical help.

Allen said their undertaking began as a technical paper, but grew and grew as the trio delved deeper into the subject at the GM Cyber Foundry's virtual laboratory.

Their book, *Money in Metaverses*, has initially been published online on the GitHub platform as an open source guide which can be updated. Allen is a GM Cyber Foundry analyst, developer and team leader working alongside Umran, a senior lecturer in creative media, and John, who is a Bitcoin researcher and the technical director of the Octave Lab, a multi-modal immersive research system at the University of Salford. Lorena Gomez, the GM Cyber Foundry project manager, also contributed. The book can be found: github.com/GMCyberFoundry/Metaverse

Logistics UK appoints new Policy Director

Business group Logistics UK has announced the appointment of Kate Jennings as its new Policy Director, who will join the organisation at the end of June.

Kate's extensive policy career which has included both government and business sector roles, will lead Logistics UK's team responsible for the organisation's policy and representation work with both government and members as its executive director.

"Logistics UK has a well-respected reputation for research-based, factual policy positions which reflect the wishes of its members, and I am looking forward to working with the organisation's expert policy team to expand its sphere of influence with government and other stakeholders," she said. "The past few years has seen a growing awareness of the value of logistics among all sectors of society, and I am looking forward to leading the team as we continue to achieve even more for our members."

Use of TikTok by young business owners doubles during pandemic

Small businesses are increasingly looking to TikTok to build their sales, according to iwoca's inaugural 'top online channels for small businesses' list.

The new list compiled by the small business lender reveals the top online channels that SME owners are using for their business.

The findings reveal that one in ten business owners under the age of 44 now use TikTok, doubling since pre-pandemic, when just 5% used the platform. However, only 1% of small business owners over the age of 44 currently use TikTok for their business.

The growing popularity of TikTok as a channel for small businesses to market their products and services reflects the growing number of people on the platform, with over 13 million active TikTok users in the UK.

The use of social media channels by small business owners has grown over the pandemic, with a 14% increase in owners deploying Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to market their products and services.

The use of company websites remained the most popular online channel, with 40% of small business owners using them for their business.

Facebook is the second most popular, having increased by 3% over this period, with 37% of small business owners now using the platform.

In addition, 19% of small business owners use Instagram compared to 15% pre-pandemic, overtaking eBay for third place. 37% younger small business owners use Instagram for their business, yet just 11% of those aged 44 and over use it.

iwoca spokesperson Mark Di-Toro said: *"The pandemic presented huge challenges for small businesses to get in front of their usual customers."*

"Small business owners responded with entrepreneurialism, turning to new social media and online platforms to market their products or services. There's no doubt that social media is now a fundamental marketing tool for many SMEs to increase revenue, whatever industry they operate in."

New chair for Bishop Fleming

Accounting firm Bishop Fleming has announced the appointment of Pippa Clarke as its new Chair.

Pippa is a tax partner and heads up the firm's Technology, Innovation and Growth sector. Pippa commented:

"I am delighted to be taking on this key strategic role as we embark on an ambitious plan to further grow our

business. I am particularly passionate about the development of our people, and among several other priorities will be working with the team to attract more talented people to our business."

"Excellent people, who reach their potential, will be pivotal to this growth."

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construction

Multi-million-pound upgrade begins on Hope Valley railway line



Ground-breaking work on a £145m rail reliability upgrade between Manchester and Sheffield has finally commenced after a number of delays.

This essential work will remove several bottlenecks on the Hope Valley line to allow passenger trains to overtake slower freight trains and improve reliability, helping people get to their destinations on time.

On Sunday 29 May, and every weekend throughout July, Dore & Totley, Grindleford, Bamford and Hathersage stations will be closed to allow Network Rail and contractor VolkerRailStory Joint Venture to begin building an additional railway line and make key station improvements.

The work is part of a £145m package of improvement and includes:

- A new platform and accessible footbridge with lifts at Dore & Totley station.
- A railway loop between Bamford and Hathersage.
- A new overbridge at Hathersage West, replacing the current foot crossing to improve safety.
- Signalling improvements along the line to improve reliability.
- Platform extensions to allow for more carriages on services.

Hannah Lomas, Principal Programme Sponsor for Network Rail, said: "We're so pleased to see this major work begin – it'll make Hope Valley stations and train services better, and improve reliability for passengers in the future."

Foyne Jones announce new partnership with Buttle's

Foyne Jones, specialist recruitment agency servicing the KBB, Builders Merchant & Construction Supplies Sector, has announced a new partnership with independent timber and builder's merchant, Buttle's, providing a bespoke and outsourced recruitment solution.

Peter Jones, Managing Director of Foyne Jones Recruitment Group says, "Independent businesses are the backbone of Builders Merchants in this country, and I am thrilled to play a part in the future of an industry, which I love so much.

"We do this by partnering with well-established brands and businesses, and Buttle's is our latest partner already benefitting from an outsourced recruitment process created exclusively for them."

Ian Church, Managing Director



at Buttle's says, "With customers including national house builders, developers, contractors, public sector organisations and home improvers, we are taking a pro-active approach to the skills shortage by investing even more in our people and team.

"We are finding that the market is increasingly candidate-driven, so teaming up with a disruptive recruiter like Foyne Jones is going to give us the edge to make fundamental progress."

Major Glasgow planning application submitted



Planning application to transform Lancefield Quay, Glasgow into a thriving waterside residential community has been submitted by a partnership between build-to-rent group Moda Living, investor Osborne + Co and MRP, the property development and investment division of construction company McAleer & Rushe.

An outline application for the development of a four-acre site at Lancefield Quay, Glasgow, has been proposed with 730 homes and a £205m urban village with public squares and river view homes at the heart of the proposal.

It will be Moda's second site in Glasgow and third in Scotland, making it Scotland's largest BtR developer operator with over 1,600 homes.

The site has been vacant since 2007.

This follows Moda, The McEwan in Edinburgh being awarded Europe's first 3* Fitwel accreditation for healthy – a sign of things to come in Glasgow.

Moda is working in partnership with Osborne + Co on a number of masterplan opportunities across the UK.

National Highways selects team to deliver A303 Stonehenge upgrade



National Highways have announced that the MORE joint venture are their preferred bidder for the £1.25 billion contract for the tunnel and main construction work for the A303 Stonehenge scheme.

The joint venture comprises FCC Construcción, WeBuild and BeMo Tunnelling.

They will be making best use of UK skills by using a range of local, regional and national suppliers and contractors to help them deliver the scheme, and will be supported with a design partnership made up of Atkins, Jacobs and the Spanish company, Sener.

This announcement follows a 2½ year comprehensive procurement process

with shortlisted tenderers developing their design solutions for the project.

The contract will become live once the Secretary of State for Transport has concluded the process of relooking at the planning application for scheme, following the quashing of the decision to grant the Development Consent Order last year.

National Highways have suggested announcing the preferred bidder in no way pre-empts any final decision. However, once the planning process is finalised, having a contractor in place will ensure programme timescales are maintained and delivery of the scheme is viable.

The contracts for archaeology and preliminary work were awarded in 2020 with Wessex Archaeology and Octavius Infrastructure (formerly Osborne) announced as the successful bidders.

Interested businesses who would like to work on the proposed A303 Stonehenge project are encouraged to sign up to the National Highways Business Directory, and details added will be passed on to the respective contractors.

Southampton Airport welcomes court decision



which was then dismissed in October. However, the group mounted an appeal which was accepted in December. This has now been declined.

A spokesperson for Southampton Airport stated: "Southampton Airport welcomes the Court's decision. The judgment will allow us to progress our much-needed runway plans, provide certainty to our staff, and play a full part in the emerging Solent Freeport.

"The extension will secure the airport's long-term viability and deliver significant economic benefits to the region, not least the creation of much-needed new jobs, including employment opportunities during the construction phase.

"We appreciate, however, that some of our neighbours have concerns regarding noise and the environment. As an airport, we want to manage and mitigate these concerns."

A recent judgement by a high court judge has resulted in a claim by local campaigners that a proposed extension to the runway at Southampton Airport was unlawful has been overturned.

Eastleigh Borough Council originally gave permission to extend the runway by 164m in April 2021.

Local residents and campaigners then formed a group 'GOESA Ltd' who mounted a claim for a judicial review



Kier Highways awarded major National Highways A417 Missing Link contract

Kier Highways has been awarded a £460m contract by National Highways to design and deliver an upgrade to the A417 between Gloucester and Swindon. The contract award follows a competitive procurement process through National Highways' Regional Delivery Partnership framework.

The A417/A419 provides an important route between Gloucester and Swindon, connecting the North and Midlands to the South of England as an alternative to the M5/M4 route via Bristol.

The Missing Link itself is a three-mile stretch of single-lane carriageway on the A417 between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout in Gloucestershire. The project will see Kier and its team, Volker Fitzpatrick, Arup, Tony Gee and RPS design and construct 3.4 miles of new dual carriageway.

Delivering and supporting critical road infrastructure is at the heart of the Kier Highways' purpose. Kier has been working with National Highways to fully scope the project during the early part of 2022.

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construction

4,000 new jobs for Warrington as Secretary of State opts not to intervene in logistics scheme



Warrington has been handed a major jobs boost after the Secretary of State decided not to review a recent planning decision by the local authority to approve a major new logistics development.

The Rt Hon Michael Gove has powers to 'call in' large schemes but has decided against exercising them in relation to developer Langtree's application for its Six56 Warrington scheme near Appleton Thorn.

The decision gives the green light to 4,000 new jobs and 3.1m square feet of new warehousing, whilst unlocking £7.1m a year in new rates income for Warrington Council.

"This is a major milestone for the development of Warrington's economy as it seeks to adapt to market conditions," said Langtree group chief executive John Downes.

"The Secretary of State has acknowledged that local authorities are best placed to decide what is right for their community and this news will not only unlock £180m of development, but generate substantial rates income each year for investment in local services."

The scheme is on land bounded by junction 20 of the M6 and junction 9 of the M56 motorways.

The focus on the logistics industry makes most sense in that context, says John Downes: "It's a very sustainable site and the north west is currently suffering from under-supply of logistics space."

"The sector pays well, with average salaries around £29,000 a year."

"In a development of this size there will be lots of roles available, from entry-level up to senior technical

and managerial jobs."

And, says Mr Downes, Langtree is committed to ensuring its investment is felt across the local economy via its supply chain engagement programme.

"The impact of our investment will be multiplied if we can engage local suppliers in the construction and operation of the scheme and we are committed to ensuring as many contracts as possible go to local firms," added Mr Downes.

An intensive period of work will now commence before the construction of units can begin.

This includes the agreement of the detailed design elements of the scheme and the introduction of significant highway and public realm improvements in and around the site.

Pagabo reveals winners for £1.56bn Civils and Infrastructure Framework



Winners of £1.56bn worth of civils and infrastructure contracts through the Pagabo procurement framework sees 48 suppliers added to their brand-new framework, which went live at the beginning of June 2022.

The awards include Buckingham Group, John Sisk and Son and Galliford Try Construction.

The new framework will run for four years until May 2026 and will allow local authorities and public sector bodies to procure a range of projects such as rail, nuclear, bridges, roads, maritime, telecommunications, water, and alternative power projects.

Pagabo have appointed 48 core and reserve suppliers across the four framework lots, which cover value bands of up to £30m and above. This provides ample supplier choice for clients, with the geographical breakdown also providing equal opportunities for SMEs alongside large organisations.

Jason Stapley, managing director at Pagabo, said: "We're really pleased to see our new civils and infrastructure framework go live with a range of excellent suppliers, especially after such great interest and demand from the market. The framework, which is the first that Queen Elizabeth Facilities Ltd will be acting as the contracting authority for, will provide clients with that all-important confidence in the suppliers they choose for their projects."

"Providing the vehicle for compliant procurement of built environment works means that we have a big responsibility when it comes to helping meet the ambitious net zero targets set out by government. We are committed to working with public sector bodies to achieve this through consideration of emerging technologies and project controls, while connecting clients with the right suppliers."

The RO Group serves up further success at Solstice Park

Hertfordshire-based real estate specialists the RO Group has announced that it has successfully pre-let two food retail units on its development at Solstice Park in Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Work on the units is well underway and practical completion is expected this Summer with customer visits expected to commence later this year.

Tenants include leading food retailer Greggs, the well loved British bakery

chain, which specialises in savoury products and sweet items. A second unit is being developed for Taco Bell, the American fast-food restaurant chain, that offers Mexican-inspired foods.

In addition, once construction of the site is complete, Gridserve, a sustainable energy solutions provider, will install eight High Power Chargers for electric vehicles, which will be located adjacent to the food retailers. Their next generation chargers are

supported by renewable energy from their own hybrid solar farms and provide up to 350kW of power, the fastest currently available charging speeds.

RO has enjoyed previous success at the 160-acre mixed use Solstice Park development, located in central southern England between London and Bristol. There are already a number of leading international and national food and beverage retailers as well as trade counter occupiers.



Trammell Crow Company acquires 28-acre site near Manchester from Telereal Trillium

Trammell Crow Company, developer and investor in commercial real estate, has acquired the freehold of a 27.8-acre site near Manchester in the northwest of England from Telereal Trillium.

The site, on Manchester Road, Heywood, offers development opportunity for 475,000 sq ft of Grade A logistics space, featuring excellent transport links at an already well-established industrial area. Just five minutes from Heywood Distribution Park, the site is located within one mile of junction 19 of the M62, four miles of three major motorways (the M60, M62 and M66), and an hour's drive of the port of Liverpool, Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, and Leeds Bradford Airport.

Mike Forster, Head of UK Logistics at

Trammell Crow Company, said: "Located in a prime logistics market and with outstanding transport links, our latest UK acquisition has significant potential. As with our other sites in the UK, on which we have secured planning consent due to a collaborative approach with local authorities and communities, we plan to develop a logistics asset that is environmentally sustainable and socially beneficial.

"This site will create new jobs for local people, both in its development and when it's operational, replacing an old and no longer fit-for-purpose space with one that is well designed, environmentally friendly, and makes a positive impact in Heywood and the surrounding area."

Pandemic decline in demand for London flats yet to subside

Demand for apartment style living across London is yet to return despite a move back to normality for those living and working within the capital.

That's according to the latest research by Ocasa, the specialist rental platform, who looked at tenant demand for flats across each region of Britain, as well as current stock levels.

With the rental sector already notoriously expensive, it's hardly surprising that smaller flats and apartments form much of the rental stock currently available on the market as they enable a lower cost of renting.

In fact, Ocasa found that flats currently account for 55% of all rental homes listed to let across Britain.

London is home to the highest level of flat rental stock at 83.3%, closely followed by Scotland. However, work from home advice during the pandemic caused

demand for London flats to plummet as professional tenants looked further afield for affordability.

Despite a return to normality, it seems as though demand for London flats is yet to follow suit. In fact, of the current flats available to rent across the London market, just 31.9% have already had a let agreed with a tenant.

This means that London ranks just seventh out of all regions of Britain when it comes to demand for flat living.

It's the East of England that currently ranks top as the nation's flat rental hotspot. A huge 50.9% of all flats currently available in the rental market have already been snapped up, closely followed by the South West where the tenant demand sits at 50.6%.

Aggregate Industries brings together its Manchester Readymix offering and Stalybridge Readymix under SRM brand

Construction materials supplier Aggregate Industries has brought together its readymix concrete offering in Manchester and local market leaders Stalybridge Readymix - which it acquired in 2020 - to operate under the brand SRM.

The move will bring together the best of both businesses; in particular Stalybridge's knowledge and extensive experience of the local market, and Aggregate Industries' additional supply capabilities through its two plants which serve the city and its extensive product range.

Customers will also benefit with SRM orders managed through a newly created Area Hub based at the Stalybridge plants.

The hub will manage the entire process of taking orders through to shipping the concrete to site.

Joanne Wilkins, Area General Manager at Aggregate Industries, said: "We are delighted to join forces with our colleagues at Stalybridge to create SRM.

"With an innovative product range including our ECOPact sustainable concrete solutions and the local nous of the teams serving the area, we are well poised to drive construction in the region into an innovative, green future."

Ryan Cropper, the new Hub Manager at SRM added: "The new Area Hub is truly a one stop shop for the region's concrete needs. We are always looking at ways we can serve our customers better and through this convenient, streamlined process, coupled with increased capacity and a larger product portfolio, SRM is well positioned to lead the local concrete market."



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foreign exchange

Exploring the foreign

Foreign exchange markets have always been tricky to navigate for any new business starting exporting and importing, and the sector as a whole seems to be dominated by the big corporate banks.

Business Connect caught up with Niall Walsh, founder and owner of Garton Global Payments, situated in Tower Hill, London - a stone's throw from those big corporates in the City of London.

Niall – please tell us how and why you started Garton Global Payments?

"I've been in the Foreign Exchange and Payments industry since 2015, and decided to set up Garton in 2019. The desire to start my own business has always been there. My parents are independent publicans with their own business, and I've always seen running my own company as a natural progression.

"Working for someone else made me aware there were many things both internal and customer facing that could be improved. There were elements in the way particular clients were serviced and treated that I thought could be done much better. It was from this that the plan for Garton Global Payments was developed.

"I found myself bringing clients into the business by offering a level of customer engagement at the onboarding stage that simply wasn't followed through when they were picked up by the account managers. I knew I could do better, and in 2019 I parted company with a view to do just that.

"It wasn't all plain sailing though. After leaving my previous position, I teamed up with a former work colleague to set-up our own foreign exchange business, this turned out to be a big mistake and after a difficult few months we severed ties. At this point the deck was really stacked against me, but I can honestly say the whole experience galvanised me and continues to do so in my pursuit of success.

"I had to ask myself the question at that point was it something I was 100% committed to, and the answer was of course yes. I was 100% committed to growing a new business that would offer a level of support and service way above others in the sector. Out of this Garton Global Payments was born.

"I think the lesson here was that a working relationship is often very different to a business relationship,

and in order to go into business with people, you need that aligned level of trust and commitment to be successful."

It seems that you started the business just before the UK's first lockdown. How did that impact your business growth?

"So, I started work on launching Garton Global Payments in 2019, and we formally started operations in February 2020, just in time for a global pandemic!

"In terms of marketing, my core strategy would be going to trade shows and networking events, also contacting people by phone too.

"Obviously, the shows and events were simply not happening, and even phoning became really difficult with everyone working from home – unless you had their mobiles! Even now, we concentrate on reaching the relevant financial decision makers by calling Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, which seem to be more effective in today's culture of hybrid working.

"Since COVID arrived we've been working hard on Social Media, particularly LinkedIn. We've also been active with email marketing, but in terms of paid-for marketing the only thing we've done is a spot of sports sponsorship with the Blackhall Gaels

GAA Football Club in County Meath, Ireland (the team has a strong family link) and of course your good selves!

"We've been fortunate in that a number of relationships developed over the years between Ireland and the UK have resulted in a number of businesses signing up with us when we were building the company, also those relationships have resulted in a level of digital support with those businesses featuring us on their websites."

Tell us about your perfect client?

"Our bread and butter is very much corporate SME business. Anything from a turnover upwards of £2m to £50m, with generally a headcount of between 10 – 200 staff. This is very much our sweet spot, and an area that we can bring real value, service, and savings.

"The sectors we currently have particular success in are food and beverage, software (in particular SaaS) and construction. We do however cater for private individuals who are buying/selling property overseas or other foreign assets."

How badly was the foreign exchange sector affected by Brexit?

"I feel that it definitely wasn't the armageddon that was first expected for financial services. It was problematic though, but we have been lucky in the fact that the bulk of the companies that we route our payments through all have European bases, so we are able to onboard our



Niall Walsh, Founder, Garton Global Payments



exchange sector



European-based clients and still service them under the European brand of their entity. We have been very lucky in that regard. I think most financial services companies have pursued a similar model and set up in places such as Dublin and Amsterdam, which is where we have set up to circumnavigate the dislocation caused by Brexit.

"Financial services works on a passporting basis. So if you have an entity based in Amsterdam for example, you can then passport your services across the whole of the European Union.

"So we would sell our products to European clients, and it would be a solely European product – all settlement being done in European accounts, all payments routed from European banking institutions – and that would take care of the issue of the UK's financial services being frozen out of the European ecosystem."

Another event that had a global impact – and still does – has been the pandemic. How has this impacted your sector?

"It did in the early stages. You'd see huge amounts of volatility immediately after the pandemic hit. The GBP/USD exchange rate collapsed from \$1.35 right down to \$1.15 – a historic low not seen for decades. Once that initial volatility and knee-jerk reaction had been factored in the currency markets almost 'slipped' straight back into normality then.

"I think it was a very short, sharp recession. In fact, looking back at it 'recession' may not be an accurate description because the whole world essentially went into hibernation. I think the period we are in now for financial markets is in fact much more uncertain, rising interest rates, rampant inflation and sagging consumer confidence are all conspiring to make for a very volatile few years ahead."

The world is not a quiet place at the

moment. How do you view the events in Ukraine having an impact on the global foreign exchange sector?

"There is a real impact on International trade from a compliance and due diligence perspective. The obvious flag is any business or individual with links to Russia, mean that they are frozen out of any transactions. No western businesses can trade with Russia – you can't settle any Russian Rouble payments.

"I suspect these recent moves to freeze Russia out of the global economy may have ramifications in the next 10 to 20 years. I can see Russia and China to a certain extent resenting the US-led West freezing Russia out of the global banking ecosystem.

"This could have a deep impact on International trade flows. Russia and China are well underway in developing their own payments system to run in conjunction with the SWIFT network. I firmly believe we've only seen the tip of the iceberg of these frosty relations, and the US and China will continue to clash as their economic and political interests collide. All told, the globalised world as we've known it for the last 40 years is facing some serious questions."

What are your plans for Garton Global Payments over the next few years?

"Ultimately headcount will be a deciding factor for us. The more people we have in the business the more opportunities we are going to come across. We plan to be 10 strong by the back end of this year, 20 by the end of 2023, and hopefully 35 staff by the end of 2024.

"By this point we would increase the range of products and services on offer. At the moment I'd describe

our product range as pretty vanilla, consisting of spot deals, forward contracts, for example. In the next few years we have plans to look at a range of regulated products such as options, which are high-risk, highly regulated, and are geared to be offered to a more financially advanced client. This would mean a change in how we market ourselves to a very different style of customer."

Would most of your new staff be in sales?

"Absolutely. As we grow though and certainly as we offer different and more highly regulated products, we'd need to look at operations staff, trade support and compliance officers.

"Plus, we're in a great location here at Tower Hill to grow our business. We're centrally located in London, within an hour of a great talent pool of people at the forefront of the

financial services sector. Also, being in London lends authority to our credentials as a fast growing foreign exchange business."

Finally, can you review the services you are currently offering clients?

"We offer products to both private and corporate clients. From a product point of view spot deals (buy now and pay within 2 days), forward contracts (secure now and pay within 12 months), and limit orders (placing an automated trigger at a set rate).

"In terms of service, the way our clients work with us is dependent on their needs and how much relative to their own turnover their foreign exchange exposure is.

"For clients where this ratio is higher – perhaps more than 50% – they will often choose to work with us direct whereby they get a more hands on service, and we can assist them in better managing their exposure to try and limit the risks associated.

"For clients toward the lower end of the scale we will usually set them up with our award winning online trading platform, offering the ability to secure rates 24 hours a day, Monday to Friday."

“I've been dealing with Niall Walsh from Garton Global Payments for around 6 months now, ever since meeting up with him at a BITA networking event in Manchester.

Prior to meeting with Niall, Plastech have transacted all of our foreign exchange payments through American Express, who we've dealt with for 20 years or more.

Garton Global Payments have proved to be very competitive with their pricing against AMEX, offering savings for myself of around 4%, which is a considerable amount of money considering that our spend on foreign payments is in the region of £300k p.a.

On a personal note, Niall is a fantastic person to deal with, very professional and really helpful, and I wish I'd met him 20 years ago!

I would highly recommend Niall Walsh and Garton Global Payments without hesitation to anybody who does foreign exchange payments.”

Paul Quin, Managing Director, Plastech Limited



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Announced Events

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EXP 2022

NORTH WEST
BUSINESS
EXP 2022

Thurs 30th June

9am til 3pm

Exhibition Centre, Liverpool

Fri 21st October

9am til 3pm

Bolton Whites Hotel

apprenticeships

Skills bill paving the way for industry partners

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act was passed on 28 April 2022, paving the way for a range of positive changes which will help transform the skills and training landscape, and 'level up' opportunities across the country.

The Act underpins the government's transformation of post-16 education and skills, as set out in the 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper.

One of the key measures introduced by the Act is the embedding of employers at the heart of the skills system, placing a legal requirement on colleges and other providers to work with employers to develop skills plans.

This would enable the training on offer to meet the needs of the locality. The Act also supports improved access for school aged pupils to meet providers of technical education, so that they can understand the broader range of apprenticeships and T-levels available. In addition, The Act will boost the priority of green skills on offer, supporting the growing green economy development across the UK.

Salford City College Group have a strong and high-quality reputation for their work with employers across the region, demonstrated very recently when the College Group were selected as finalists in the prestigious Association of Colleges Beacon Award 'Employer Engagement' category.

The Group have apprentices employed by over 550 different employers and work with dozens of employers who support high-quality work experience opportunities for students. These employers support fantastic employer designed initiatives, such as Build Salford, a construction industry-specific traineeship programme.

Rebecca Parks, Group Principal at Salford City College Group, believes continuous high-quality and strategic engagement with

employers from across Salford and the wider region is vital to the Group being at the forefront of post-16 education in Greater Manchester.

Considerable investment has been made in this area, allowing us to open our Business Centre in Salford Quays and secure a highly effective customer relationship management system. *"This major reform to the UK's training system will help businesses access the skills they need to boost productivity whilst allowing our learners the best opportunities to progress in their chosen careers."*

For the last three months, the College Group has been working with local leading employers to finalise a new strategic concept for their work with employers. Seddon, who employ over 600 people in the construction sector (many from within Salford and Greater Manchester) have supported the development of the Industry Partner concept.

Nicola Hodkinson, Director and Owner at Seddon, has been a key driving force behind the concept, stemming from a firm belief that employers must work hand-in-hand with Further Education if they are going to get the best talent they need to drive their business forward. *"It is vital that industry work in collaboration with education institutions to develop the best talent for their future,"* Nicola commented.

The concept is now ready to roll out, ensuring employers from across Salford and the wider region play an even greater role in supporting the College. Employers will enhance curriculum through input of expertise and resource, they will continue to provide growing numbers of work placement opportunities and help ensure the College has world class staff by supporting with industry placements and mentoring for College personnel.

The summer term will also bring about a fresh round of Employer

Curriculum Board activity, where curriculum and delivery leaders from across the Group sit down with employer groups to discuss curriculum development activity aligned to the changing needs of industry.

Allan Milne, Director of Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement in the College is passionate about the Industry Partners concept, believing that more than ever, employers are seeing Further Education as a vital source in their ever challenging search for talent: *"In the last quarter, we have more enquiries from employers than in any other three month period,"* Allan said, *"with most wanting to discuss partnerships and how the College can work with them to develop the people they need for their business. This is music to our ears, and what the Industry Partners initiative is all about".*

To find out more about the Industry Partners initiative, contact industry.partners@salfordcc.ac.uk or call **0161 631 5555**

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exporting

Trading with

...and its bustling economies

I recently had the opportunity to meet the Minister for Exports, Mike Freer, and we had a lengthy discussion about exporting as well as about his recent visit to Africa.

Mike is an eloquent, passionate advocate of UK exports and the massive export opportunities that exist for UK businesses, and is intent on supporting them to ever greater success.

He has been spending considerable time in recent months visiting overseas markets and banging the drum for UK businesses.

We discussed the Export Champion movement and how, using our extensive combined experience, Champions are encouraging more businesses to start or increase exporting.

If we can help more businesses understand the extent of opportunity that exporting gives them and that it is far easier than most realise, then our efforts will

pay dividends. However, it is not easy to reach and engage with the many thousands of businesses that could benefit from exporting and more needs to be done.

The DIT is responsible for helping UK businesses sell overseas, through its International Trade Advisors in the UK, and network of advisors working in markets throughout the world, identifying opportunities, smoothing engagements and facilitating business promotions.

This amazing resource and help is available to all who want to board the exporting train.

The DIT are taking the trade opportunities with Africa very seriously. Africa has its own Trade Commissioner, and the position is at Ambassadorial level.

In addition, Liz Collier is the North West lead Advisor on Africa. There are also several North West based business groups focussed on Africa.

There is no shortage of help available.

It is not just large businesses that can take advantage of the opportunities to export around the world. Even micro businesses are able to, if they chose to try.

I personally know of several businesses that started exporting simply by listing products online, whether Ebay, Amazon, their own website or others. This can build up to a substantial turnover, without them ever having to leave home.

Does that sound too simple? It isn't. It is a real opportunity open to very many small businesses.

Minister Mike Freer recently made official visits to South Africa and Nigeria and described them as "bustling economies". Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, described Africa as being "on the rise".

These comments reflect the rapidly

growing economies and opportunities that exist in Africa, often overlooked by UK exporters. Africa and its 1.4Bn people and £2.1Tn GDP encompass a diverse range of countries and markets. Africa possesses huge natural resources: agriculture, diamonds, minerals, oil and much more.

Agriculture is an important export for South Africa (including, from personal experience, some fabulous wines) but equally for Morocco in the north.

Natural resources are prevalent throughout the continent and high value manufacturing is growing rapidly.

Exports of these and many more goods have created economies averaging 5% annual growth over the last decade, and increasingly sophisticated and wealthy markets across Africa.

It is not just civil engineering, pharmaceuticals and financial services - the natural preserve of large companies - that are providing opportunities for UK exporters.

Africa...

The UK has a well justified reputation for quality products and services, and these can find ready acceptance throughout Africa.

The English language is a natural advantage for UK businesses as it is widely spoken across Africa, especially in business and premium markets.

There is widespread demand for UK products and services and there are a very wide range of opportunities.

With 54 countries in Africa, it may seem daunting to decide where to start; my advice is to look for similar markets to those you sell in elsewhere.

Individual markets may not be that large, but they can still be highly valuable.

When you are searching for a distributor, look for a firm that has experience with importing from the UK.

They can then help you with complying with local regulations and will understand the processes needed to import into the country.

You could be fortunate and find a great partner who you can work with across multiple markets.

The big question is then: how do you find the right distributor?

You could ask for recommendations, look up on Google, ask the Department for International Trade staff, or set out to meet

potential distributors at a specialist exhibition.

There are very many exhibitions across the world and in the UK to choose from. These are a great way to meet potential customers and distributors.

The Minister told me of exactly such an exhibition that he attended in Lagos, Nigeria, he commented *"There is so much to be excited about in South Africa, Nigeria and the wider continent, and that comes with vast opportunities to invest, export and trade with. This was an insightful visit and I'm looking forward to returning in the future."*



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



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Exporting continues on next page



Continued from
previous page

exporting

Northwest freight forwarder launches the first British shipping line in 40 years

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic caused havoc across the globe and not least in the supply chain industries where ocean freight schedules and equipment availability was impacted by many different factors.

Shipping costs rose to unprecedented levels and many industries struggled to meet shipment targets due to lack of freight space availability.

Cargo owners needed support, but something radical was required to overcome the global challenges.

In response, UK-based freight forwarder Allseas Global Logistics established a new shipping service named China Xpress - a new

initiative intended to provide relief to customers who were facing increased ocean freight rates, as well as, reduced reliability due to the knock-on impacts of the global pandemic.

The Allseas founder, Darren Wright and his team, worked hard over the coming months to broker a deal which would see the company commit to a series of vessel charters that would create immediate space availability.

Working alongside Peel Ports Liverpool, Allseas opened up a brand new shipping lane which would link the Far East to Liverpool.

The very first route of its kind with direct services from China

into Liverpool port, opening up opportunities for business across northern England and creating a necessary shift from the UK's historical reliance on its southern ports.

Following a successful first year of the China Xpress service, the freight forwarder have now made the long term commitment by launching the first British shipping line in 40 years.

This month sees the official unveiling of Allseas Shipping Company.

The new shipping line specialises in import and export services from China to UK/Europe, along with import services from Bangladesh to the UK, offering direct routes

creating greatly reduce shipping transit times from origin to destination.

The company has also announced a series of long-term vessel TC (Time Charter's) including its most recent addition and first vessel to carry the company name 'The Allseas Pioneer,' a 2000 TEU fully cellular container vessel.

Shipping line and Group founder, Darren Wright said: "The Allseas Pioneer is the first in a series of six of our own branded container vessels, with an investment of over \$150 million, such is the commitment we have to the new company and the customers using it to steady their Supply Chains."

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immigration law

How are immigration laws changing in a post-pandemic and post-brexit nation?



The UK is recovering from the economic effects of COVID-19. In fact, the nation's economy has grown by 7.5 per cent in 2021. This, along with the easing of restrictions, means that people and businesses can begin to make plans for a future free from lockdown restraints.

So how does this affect immigration law?

Here, we will explore what the UK immigration landscape will look like throughout 2022 and how this may influence employers' decisions.

How have Right to Work checks changed?

In recent months, the government has introduced changes to the Right to Work check. As of 6 April 2022, employers must check an employee's eligibility to work through the Home Office online check, rather than accepting physical cards. This will apply when presented with Biometric Residence Permits ('BRPs'), Biometric Residence Cards ('BRCs'), or Frontier Worker Permits 'FWPs'.

BPRs have been the main form of Right to Work checks since July 2015. These documents granted non-EEA citizens and their dependents the right to remain in the UK for more than six months. Prior to this, individuals were issued with stamps, (vignettes), in their passports. Since May 2014, for those people in the UK who require permission to work and reside with a vignette, this endorsement must be in a current passport.

Employers will also be able to use

certified Identification Document Validation Technology ('IDVT'). This service carries out digital eligibility checks on behalf of British and Irish individuals, instead of only using the manual document-based check. Current practice is that British and Irish nationals need to show copies of their passports as part of their right to work check. With the Home Office keen to enable employers to use digital means to confirm employees' right to work, legislation has been brought in to enable this to occur from 6 April 2022.

The aim is to: *"Assure prospective employees' identities and eligibility, using consistent and more secure methods, reducing risk and allowing them to recruit in a safer way. Enabling the use of IDVT for Right to Work and DBS checks will help to support long-term post-pandemic working practices, accelerate the recruitment and onboarding process, improve employee mobility and enhance the security and integrity of the checks."*

If you're looking for a list of the certified providers, the Home Office will publish one in due course.

Has the number of businesses accepting sponsor licences risen?

The Home Office issues sponsor licences to businesses that would like to sponsor international workers. In recent years, the number of licence holders has risen significantly. In fact, according to Home Office data, there were 38,812 Skilled Worker (formerly Tier 2) sponsored licence holders as of Q4 2021. This is the highest

number of licence holders since the scheme started in 2014. Despite the pandemic and Brexit causing economic uncertainty, in the last year alone, there has been an average of 3.61% growth in sponsor licence holders, equating to over 1,000 new licence holders per quarter.

This data, coupled with the lowering of the skill level for foreign nationals wishing to work in the UK in 2021, means the trend of companies obtaining sponsor licences and the numbers of skilled foreign nationals being sponsored will grow.

There are certain sectors that were reliant upon EU nationals, such as healthcare and hospitality. It is likely that these sectors will receive the highest number of Skilled Worker visas.

How has the conflict in Ukraine influenced temporary immigration concessions?

On 17 February 2022, due to the conflict within Ukraine, the Home Office published temporary concessions for Ukrainian nationals. Now, they are able to switch between family visas to points-based system visas, such as Skilled Worker visas. This applies to British nationals and their family members living in Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK.

Seasonal and temporary workers, such as HGV drivers, are also being given permission to extend their stay until 31 December 2022. The Home Office will directly contact employers and Scheme Operators about this. With the situation ever evolving, the Home Office's concessions will likely be updated.

What are the new visa categories?

The Home Office is introducing three new visa categories. The details are brief, but this is what we currently know:

- First is the **Global Business Mobility Visa**. This will make it easier for existing overseas businesses to send personnel to the UK, whether they already have a UK presence or not. The plan is to bring together the Intra-Company Transfers and Overseas Sole Representatives under

one visa category. As a result, this might make it easier for firms to come to the UK with a team as opposed to either an individual (such as is currently the case under the Overseas Sole Representative route) or already have established themselves in the UK.

- Next is the **Scale-Up Visa**. The visa, which will enable some of the UK's fastest-growing businesses to access overseas talent, will be open to applicants who pass the language proficiency requirement and have a high-skilled job offer from an eligible business with a salary of at least £33,000. Unlike previous visas, this may not require a sponsor licence issued by the Home Office.

This is a potentially big move for skilled foreign nationals looking to make the UK their home and sponsors hiring more skilled workers, especially considering the costs involved with obtaining a licence and sponsoring an individual and the Home Office waiting times, which at the moment over 80% of cases are taking over four weeks to be considered.

- Last is the **High Potential Individual Visa**. This will apply to individuals who have graduated from some of the top global universities, who are skilled within their profession and will not require any sponsorship. No job offer requirement or any other requirement to have a sponsor is a big deal. The only route that offers something similar at the moment are the Exceptional Promise/Exceptional Talent visas, but these are limited and the requirements are far more stringent.

These mooted changes are welcome to ensure that, post-Brexit, the UK remains one of the top destinations for global talent and businesses to set up.



Younes Ech-Chadi
Senior Associate
Winckworth Sherwood

Isle of Man



BITA series of events the Isle of Man to

Business leaders from the UK, Ireland and USA experienced a fantastic range of business networking events hosted and organised by BITA (the British and Irish Trading Alliance).

The 3-Day Spectacular which took place at the beginning of May was the biggest series of events organised by the Isle of Man Chapter of BITA since lockdown.

Chapter Chair, Brendon Kenny, thanked all guests, plus the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, the Department for Enterprise, Beach Buddies, and the many local businesses and individuals that helped to create a packed programme of activities.

Visitors enjoyed social and networking events, plus visits to tourist attractions. Sustainability and related topics were themes running throughout the three days. The aim of the tour was to showcase the Island both as a visitor destination and as an International business centre.

President of Tynwald, Laurence Skelly MLC was the guest of honour at the first event, a cheese and wine tasting evening (supported by Isle of Man Creamery and The Wine Cellar) at the House of Manannan in Peel on May 4.

The following morning the tour continued at The Claremont Hotel with a breakfast seminar organised by Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce. Anne-Marie Martin, Director of Global Business Networks for the British Chambers

of Commerce (BCC) gave a presentation to Chamber and BITA members.

The event, sponsored by Grant Thornton, also featured David Corlett, Head of External Relations at the Cabinet Office, who focused on new post-Brexit trading arrangements which offer potential opportunities for Island businesses.

In the afternoon guests had lunch at Bradda Glen, and took part in a sustainability-themed seminar led by Beach Buddies' founder, Bill Dale BEM.

That included contributions from Brendon Kenny who spoke about the environmental risks posed by plastics, and the potential that the Isle of Man has to lead by example with innovative solutions to tackle the problem through engaging with likeminded organisations such as Changing Streams CIC and many other companies on the Island.

Joney Faragher MHK - Leader of the Manx Labour Party - took part in a Q&A session which covered a variety of issues relating to climate change and the Island's net-zero targets.

Jennie Thompson, a BITA Isle of Man Chapter Board Member and Executive Director at Ellanstone Ltd, said the 3-Day Spectacular had been very successful with around visitors from businesses representing a broad cross-section

of sectors including finance, construction and the entertainment industry.

None had travelled further than Dean Koocher from Rhode Island, USA. He's Managing Director of the New York-based company Kidstream (an award-winning business which offers unique, carefully curated, educational, on-demand, commercial-free TV shows for children).

His journey to the Island is a good example of the international reach of BITA's business network which, in addition to regional Chapters across the British Isles, also has a global forum.

Dean was introduced to BITA, and the Isle of Man, by Paul Hardman (Joint Owner of Flix, the state-of-the-art animation studio based on the Island). Flix' impressive



Bill Dale BEM gives a presentation about Beach Buddies at BITA's Bradda Glen event. Seated are Joney Faragher MHK, Leader of the Manx Labour Party; and Brendon Kenny, Chair of BITA's Isle of Man Chapter.





showcase overseas business leaders



Isle of Man
Chamber of Commerce



Hands across the sea. L-R Brendon Kenny, Chair of BITA's Isle of Man Chapter; Bill Dale BEM, Founder of Beach Buddies; Joney Faragher MHK, Leader of the Manx Labour Party; Paul Whittell, BITA's President and Founder; and Jennie Thompson, a BITA Isle of Man Chapter Board Member, and Executive Director at Ellan Stone Ltd.



L-R Paul Hardman, Joint Owner of Flix, and Dean Koocher, Managing Director of Kidstream.

is a big thing for us."

Paul Hardman commented: "One of things we're keen to promote is that the Isle of Man sits in a prime location between two strongholds of animation – the UK and Ireland.

"There are a lot of opportunities here to work with the industry in the UK and Ireland, and that's one of the reasons we're here today to support BITA."

The 3-Day Spectacular concluded on Friday (May 6th) with a round of golf at Mount Murray, followed by a business networking lunch at the Comis Hotel with the guest of honour, His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John Lorimer KCB DSO MBE.

He was joined by VIP guests from the Isle of Man Government including Chief Minister Alf Cannan MHK and Enterprise Minister Dr Alex Allinson MHK, plus representatives from many UK businesses.

In addition to being a social and networking event, BITA shared that the occasion also assisted three charities dedicated to supporting veterans – Rock 2 Recovery, The Manx Legion Club and Heroes on the Water.

BITA IoM are proud to be working with MMC offering PR & Media support.

BITA – founded in 2012 – is a non-profit networking organisation that encourages its members to build relationships to generate business through educational and social events held in the UK, Ireland, and Isle of Man. The organisation has regional Chapters across the British Isles, including the Isle of Man Chapter which was launched in 2018.

portfolio includes the popular BBC CBeebies show, Dog Loves Books.

Dean said that Kidstream was considering relocating its world HQ to the Island because of the advantages it offers, both as an International business centre and in terms of the quality of life.

He said: "It's my second visit to the Island, I came here in September last year. I enjoy just being here.

It's a great place with great people. I feel the Manx Government has been welcoming and supportive to Kidstream relocating, and that



L-R Tom Bean, Andy Thompson, Paul Mirage



It wasn't all down to earth business, and a bit of aerial networking (and island sightseeing) was appreciated when Andy Thompson from Nxcoms decided to take to the skies. As both a helicopter and plane pilot, Andy booked an hour's flight with fellow pilot Tom Bean from

Yellow Helicopters based at The Private Jet Centre. This was the perfect opportunity to fly around the Island and take in the coastal views. Also invited to sit in the back seat was precious cargo Paul Mirage of Business Connect Magazine. Paul commented: "Why fly with one pilot when you can take two!"

For more information please visit www.bitai.ie, or email Laura, BITA's operations manager laura@bitai.ie

ppc

Everything you need to know about Pay-Per-Click (PPC)

While not as cryptic as its organic counterpart (SEO), paid search marketing is arguably just as puzzling when factoring in keywords, budgets and bids, ad ranks and so on.

And, for many businesses, pay-per-click (PPC) is a vital investment in terms of digital marketing.

So, with that being said, let's have a look at everything you need to know about PPC.

What is PPC?

PPC falls under search engine marketing, and is a form of online advertising that works on a system which charges people when a user clicks on their ad.

PPC is used for many things, with the 3 most common campaign goals being to increase sales, generate leads, and promote brand awareness.

What's the secret to good PPC?

PPC is all about relevance. If somebody is searching for a specific product or service, making use of PPC allows you to show a targeted ad at the exact moment that search happens. As long as it's relevant, PPC campaigns can be wildly successful.

What's wrong with purely organic searches?

While a strong SEO strategy is great at improving domain authority, keywords are becoming increasingly competitive by the day, meaning that ranking in SERP's is more challenging.

SEO and PPC work best when they're used to compliment one another.

Why does PPC involve bidding?

The long and short of it is that, like most things in life, placements (where your ad shows) is limited.

The easiest way to level the field is by creating a bidding system, where the highest bidder wins. With that being said, platforms like Facebook and Instagram take engagement into account, while Google Ads focuses on relevance, meaning that your placements are put in the position where they'd fare best, no matter what.

Which platforms are best for PPC?

While search engines are usually the most popular because of how they display ads relevant to searches, platforms like Google Ads, Microsoft Advertising and Facebook ads are the top contenders. With that being said, Google is (by far) the most valuable for any PPC campaign.

5 benefits of PPC

1. PPC contributes to business goals

PPC is great for aligning website traffic to the end goal. It can support various aspects of the sales funnel and the path your prospects take.

It's great for fostering the middle ground, and help the middle of your funnel through downloads, signups, entries and purchases.

Regardless of your goal, PPC campaigns are great at driving the most valuable engagement to your site.

2. PPC can be measured

By making use of both Google Ads and Google Analytics, you'll have access to much more information and high-level performance details on things such as impressions, clicks and conversions.

3. PPC offers instant entry

While gathering traction in SEO requires ongoing efforts, and can take months of investment, Google Ads offers you that within a few minutes of launching your campaign.

Additionally, it's not as constricting, meaning that you can easily cast a wider net if you're looking for new prospects.

4. It's cost effective

PPC advertising gives you control over a much wider range of options for reaching potential customers, including targeting, ad placements, and budget. You can set your own ad budget and bids based on what you are willing to spend. If you want to scale up, you'll see the ROI, and if you want to take a break, you can easily pause your ads.

4. PPC ads are easy to produce

One of the best parts of PPC is that it doesn't require sophisticated designs or technical skills. Campaigns are

easy to set up, accessible to every company, and platforms like Google Ads (or a digital marketing agency - if you use one) are there to walk you through the steps.

5. What makes a good PPC campaign?

While there are a myriad of things you can learn to master PPC, if you have a knowledge of your target audience, relevant keywords, catchy graphics and landing pages that convert, you'll find success quickly.

~ ~ ~

And there you have it!

You've officially embarked on the journey into the sphere of PPC advertising!

If you'd like to learn more about digital marketing, why not get in touch with us?

We'd love to hear more from you - and help you grow with effective PPC strategies!



Henri Scott

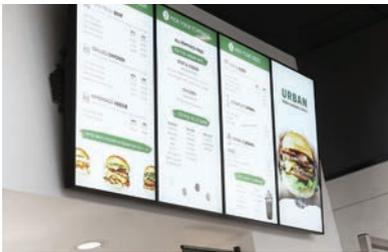
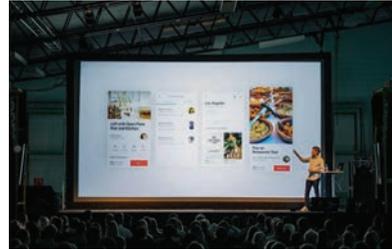
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digital signage



Embracing a **visual** revolution



With the rising popularity and use of dynamic digital content, the business world is embracing interactive and large-scale digital signage. But what is it and how can you use it to your advantage?

Digital Signage refers to display technologies like LED or video walls, projection and LCD monitors that vividly display webpages, videos, directions, restaurant menus, marketing messages or digital images.

Digital signage functions in different settings - public spaces, museums, sporting arenas, churches, academic buildings, retail stores, corporate spaces and restaurants - to offer wayfinding, messaging, marketing and outdoor advertising.

Digital Signage can be used to provide public information, convey internal communication or share product information to enhance customer service, promotions and brand recognition. It's a powerful way to influence customer behaviour and decision-making, while also enhancing consumer experiences through interactive screens.

Digital Signage can capture up to 400% more 'eyes on' views than static signage and businesses who use digital signage can point to an on average 33% increase in business as a result. This increase is in the main due to an ability to display current, dynamic content that is relevant, promotes multiple offers and that can be updated to reflect real time events

and conditions in minutes and across a full estate of displays.

Digital Signage comes with an initial capital cost, but the very fact that you can 'change your poster' or 'Update your Message' every few seconds mitigates that cost; promote breakfast, lunch, evening offers at the right time; display offers on slow moving products; link displays to weather information - if it's hot, play the advert promoting your BBQ range and if it's cold and wet, play the advert promoting gazebos and indoor furniture - the possibilities are endless. The ROI is usually around 9 months and there aren't many forms of business investments that can say that!

So, whatever sector your business is in, there is a positive use for Digital Signage that will benefit your staff, visitors, customers or, more importantly, your bottom line. The most common applications where the signage solutions are:

Promotions Drive sales of a product or products – promote an event.

Service Offerings Your customers know you for one service, but what other service offerings do you have – advertise them all in rotation.

Interactive Forms and Games Digital signage need not just be a display – you can have interactive solutions that require user input through the screen.

Social Media Streams and News Supplement your product/service

offers with live social media or local news and weather feeds - be current!

Company Information for Staff and Visitors Display live production information onto internal displays; make visitors feel welcome; post important company notices and information.

And many, many more...

Choosing the right signage provider

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wellbeing



Do you compete

against yourself?

When someone is being competitive they're often regarded as having heightened levels of motivation, so fuelling their desire to improve, stretch themselves and elevate their game.

At certain times many of us may feel prompted to move out of our comfort zones, challenge ourselves, prove to both ourselves and to others that we're prepared to do what's needed to succeed, excel and perhaps even beat others, aiming to come out on top.

But, if we're 'not feeling it', competition can trigger us to walk away, feel defeated, possibly even worse than before we started and certainly disinclined to make any further effort.

That's why it's so important to think things through and plan for when you're looking to up your game and compete. And sometimes competing against yourself can be the best option of all, especially at the outset.

Competition requires setting a goal and working towards it. It may mean competing against others, where additional pressure can come from there being a time limit, a fee to pay to get involved, or working alongside others as part of a team effort.

Assessing what's involved, the different stages, noting and addressing any obstacles and impediments and then working to overcome them, using tenacity, determination and negotiation are usually part of the masterplan.

But, the problem of competing with others is that it's rarely a level playing

field. Others may be fitter, healthier, they may want to succeed more than we do, have more available time to devote, with less distractions. We all have different agendas, which is why it's often constructive to start by competing against yourself.

Think about a high-jumper. For them it's always apparent that they only know they've achieved their best when they fail to clear the bar. Otherwise, they keep on going, raising the bar after every successful jump. They're competing against their previous best performances, whilst using the performance of others as a benchmark against which to measure their improvement and progress.

Being in a good place to compete means first clarifying what really matters, what would be meaningful to achieve. The next step is to then identify what's required to reach that goal, whether it be improved fitness levels, better health, more specialised knowledge, skills enhancement, de-cluttering or delegating some responsibilities.

Would it be useful to bring on board a coach, mentor or guide, someone to provide the necessary level of support and instruction, who will require us to check in and be accountable. That in itself can be a useful motivator, moving us into a focussed action plan.

Individual areas of blockage and resistance can be identified and assessed, then subsequently broken down into bite-sized chunks,

ready to be worked on and remedied.

For some, a vision board is the answer, where pictures and images of what they want as a desired outcome are pasted onto a large board, setting out what success means to them, what it looks like.

Displaying your goals on a board or writing them in the front of your diary or journal can be a constant reminder of those aims and what they represent to you, as well as making you accountable to yourself.

Some people claim that all they want in life is to be happy, but that's rarely a goal in itself. Happiness is a by-product of other things; it comes from doing a good day's work, spending a pleasant afternoon with friends, a satisfying workout, a lovely walk in nature. At those times we may catch ourselves smiling at how happy we feel.

All too often we're very clear about what we don't want. We don't want to feel sad, unhappy, bored, alone. Identifying what we do want, how to move into a better place, can often be a tougher ask and require time to move us from perhaps apathy and inertia into more focussed, goal-orientated, clearer thinking. It takes work and effort to de-clutter our customary default and achieve this mindset.

Questioning ourselves, asking, 'how am I feeling, what do I want, what needs to happen to move from here to there, from A to B', can sometimes be enough to start the ball rolling. Identifying the steps we need to take may well be enough to prompt activity and movement. It helps to have highlighted the goals we're aiming for. Doing that allows us to then move forward.

Ensure that you're your own best supporter when you're competing with yourself and working towards an important goal. Accept that some days may be full of distractions, unexpected demands on your time, important deadlines which need respecting. Or it may be that you're especially tired, stressed and need a break. Then there are those times you may have invested a lot of effort

and enthusiasm into something that doesn't work out as hoped. **At those times be gentle with yourself and give yourself a break.**

Understand, too, that it's exciting and sometimes life-enhancing to occasionally follow a detour, or pause for a while, even if it results in you taking a little longer to achieve your goal.

Treat these times as part of the process, which may deliver a variety of unexpected experiences. Enjoy the lessons to be learned, the exercises in patience, flexibility and resilience.

Relish the journey. That's often equally, if not more important than any eventual outcome.



Susan Leigh MNCH (ACC)

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, 'Dealing with Stress, Managing its Impact', '101 Days of Inspiration #tipoftheday' and 'Dealing with Death, Coping with the Pain', 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

diary dates

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BITA (British and Irish Trading Alliance)

Online networking using Remo:

BITA South West every Tuesday
8.00am - 9.00am

BITA London every Friday
8.00am - 9.00am

Cost FREE until further notice

Live face to face events:

BITA London Monthly Social Networking

14 July 6.00pm - 8.00pm, every 2nd Thurs
Venue The Rising Sun, 61 Carter Lane,
Fleet Street, London EC4V 5DY
Cost FREE

BITA Liverpool Monthly Social Networking

14 July 5.00pm - 7.00pm, every 2nd Thurs
Venue The Restaurant Bar and Grill,
Brunswick Street, Liverpool L2 0UU
Cost FREE

BITA Leeds Monthly Social Networking

15 Jun 6.00pm - 8.00pm, every 3rd Weds
Venue Marriott Cast Iron Bar & Grill,
4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane,
Leeds LS1 6ET
Cost FREE

BITA Manchester Monthly Social Networking

16 Jun 5.00pm - 7.00pm, every 3rd Thurs
Venue Marriott Victoria and Albert,
Water Street, Manchester M3 4JQ
Cost FREE

BITA Manchester Lunch

17 Jun 11.30am - 5.00pm
Venue The Lowry Hotel, 50 Dearmans Place,
Salford M3 5LH
Cost £85+VAT (BITA members
get discounted tickets).

BITA London Construction Lunch

8 July 11.30am - 5.00pm **SOLD OUT**
Venue Royal Horseguards, Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2EJ
Cost £170+VAT (BITA members
get discounted tickets).

BITA Liverpool Lunch

23 Sep 11.30am - 5.00pm
Venue Anfield Stadium, Anfield,
Liverpool L4 0TF
Cost £80+VAT (BITA members
get discounted tickets).

Contact Paul Whitnell paulw@bita.ie
Laura laura@bita.ie www.bita.ie

Best of Bolton Business Show 2022

1 Day Business Expo

21 Sep 1.00pm - 7.00pm
Venue Bolton Whites Hotel,
De Havilland Way, Bolton BL6 6SF
Cost FREE (pre-registration required).

Contact boltonbusinessshow.co.uk

Business Connect Magazine are
media partners

BGH Match

Business Growth Hub networking

23 Jun 8.30am - 10.30am
Venue Old Rochdale Fire Station,
Maclure Road, Rochdale OL11 1DN

5 Jul 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Venue Social Value Roundtables
TalkTalk, Colgate Lane,
Salford M5 3LZ

12 Jul 8.00am - 10.00am
Venue Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street,
Manchester M2 3JL

19 Jul 9.30am - 11.30am
Venue Office Tech & Space, Globe Lane,
Dukinfield, Tameside SK16 4RG

Cost all events FREE
Contact nick.shepherd@growthco.uk
businessgrowthhub.com/match

BNI Graphene Manchester

Weekly every Weds - includes hot lunch
10.00am - 12.30pm

Venue BOX Deansgate, 125 Deansgate,
Manchester M3 2BY
Cost FREE for visitors

Contact John Galloway
07971 161621

BNI Vision Cheadle

Online weekly every Weds - zoom
9.15am - 11.15am

Cost FREE
Face to face every month - zoom
Contact for details 9.15am - 11.00am
Venue Bramhall Park Golf Club, 20 Manor
Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 3LY

Contact Rebecca Moloney 07899 967 469
rebecca.moloney@uwclub.net

PAGE 6

Business Fairs

Annual business fairs across Northern sites.
Free to visit, all sectors welcome to exhibit
(see details page 4).

Greater Manchester Business Fair

7 Jul 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue AJ Bell Stadium, 1 Stadium Way
Barton-upon-Irwell, Salford
M30 7EY

Contact manchesterbizfair.co.uk

Wirral & Chester Business Fair

22 Sept 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue New Brighton Floral Pavilion,
Marine Promenade, New Brighton,
Wirral CH45 2JS

Contact wirralbizfair.co.uk

Halton & Warrington Business Fair

10 Nov 10.30am - 3.00pm
Venue DCBL Stadium Halton,
Lower House Lane, Widnes
WA8 7DZ

Contact haltonbizfair.co.uk

Contact Tony Haines 0151 709 8932
tony@liverpoolba.com

Business Catalyst Club Manchester and Leeds Networking Lunches

Manchester - 7 Jul, 20 Oct

Leeds - 15 Sep, 24 Nov
Costs, Timings, Venues and booking details -
contact organisers below:

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

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FM North

Networking event for professionals in the
FM, Cleaning and Construction Sector

4th Weds of each month

22 Jun 4.00pm - 9.00pm
Venue The Wharf, 6 Slate Wharf
Manchester M15 4ST

Cost FREE

Contact danny.cross@tennantco.com
Tickets available through Eventbrite

High Peak Business Club Regular monthly breakfast networking with high calibre speakers

17 Jun Insurance 7.30am - 10.00am

16 Sep Lloyds Bank 7.30am - 10.00am

14 Oct Progressive Energy 7.30am - 10.00am

11 Nov Manchester Central 7.30am - 10.00am

9 Dec Autumn Statement 7.30am - 10.00am
Venue Chapel en le Frith Golf Club,
Manchester Road, Chapel en le Frith,
High Peak SK23 9UH

Cost £25

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

K-Club

Network Breakfast Events and
Lunches for Entrepreneurs

Monthly (please see website)

Venue Manchester based

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

M Postcode Business Hub

Face to face and zoom business networking

22 Jun 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Venue Banyan Bar & Kitchen, Vantage Point,
Manchester M3 3PL
Cost FREE

Contact kyle@mpostcode.co.uk
manchesterevents.mpostcode.co.uk

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Merseyside Business Expo 2022

1 Day Business Expo

30 Jun 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue King's Dock, Port of Liverpool,
Liverpool L3 4FP
Cost FREE (pre-registration required).

Contact shoutexpo.com

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Northwest Business Expo 2022

1 Day Business Expo

21 Oct 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue Bolton Whites Hotel,
De Havilland Way, Bolton BL6 6SF
Cost FREE (pre-registration required).

Contact shoutexpo.com

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media partners

pro-manchester

Hot topic breakfasts, Sector lunches,
Economic Updates, Panel debates
Full programme of events available online

Contact Nicola McCormick 07929 671755
nicola.mccormick@pro-manchester.co.uk
pro-manchester.co.uk

Shout! Network

Fortnightly networking. Breakfast Included.
Venues across Lancashire, Greater Manchester
and Liverpool.

Preston Tuesday Morning group 9.30am
Shout! HQ, PR2 2YF

Bury Tuesday Morning Group 9.30am
Red Hall Hotel, BL9 5NA

Bolton Wednesday Morning Group 8.00am
Bolton Whites Hotel, BL6 6SF

Wigan Wednesday Lunch Group 12noon
Gathurst Golf Club, WN6 8EW

Leyland Thursday Morning Group 9.30am
Fox Lane Sports & Social Club, PR25 1HB

Wrea Green Friday Morning Group 8.00am
The Villa Wrea Green, PR4 2PE

Burnley Friday Morning Group 9.30am
Burnley Football Club, BB10 4BX

South Ribble Tuesday Morning Group 9.30am
British Commercial Vehicle Museum, PR25 2LE

Bolton Tuesday Morning Group 9.30am
Dunscar Golf Club, BL7 9QY

Penwortham Wednesday Morning Group 9.00am
Penwortham Golf Club, PR1 0AX

Southport Wednesday Lunch Group 12noon
Old Links Golf Club, PR9 7QS

Manchester Wednesday Lunch Group 12noon
Worsley Park Marriott Hotel, M28 2QT

Burnley Thursday Morning Group 9.30am
Burnley Football Club, BB10 4BX

Chorley Thursday Morning Group 9.30am
Verat Space, PR6 7BX

Preston Friday Morning Group 8.00am
Shout! HQ, PR2 2YF

Blackburn Friday Morning Group 8.00am
Blackburn Rovers FC, BB2 4JF

Manchester Friday Lunch Group 12noon
ABode Manchester Hotel, M1 2DB

Liverpool Friday Lunch Group 12noon
Liverpool Marriott City Centre, L1 1RH

Lytham Friday Lunch Group 12noon
Liverpool Marriott City Centre, FY8 4LE

Fortnightly networking is on a sector lock-
out basis. Please contact Shout! for further
information. Costs also vary.

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

The Business Network Manchester Virtual and Live networking - inc seminars.

21 Jun 12noon - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.00am start)
Venue The Lowry Hotel, 50 Dearmans Place,
Salford M3 5LH
Cost £48

Online - 29 Jun 11.50am - 1.30pm
Venue Online
Cost £15

20 Jun 12noon - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.00am start)
Venue Hyatt Regency Manchester,
55 Booth St W, Manchester M15 6PQ
Cost £48

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

The Business Network South Manchester Virtual and Live networking - inc seminars.

16 Jun 11.30am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.30am start)
Venue Mottram Hall, Wilmslow Road,
Mottram SK10 4QT
Cost £46.80

7 July 11.30am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.30am start)
Venue 90 Dorchester Way, Tytherington,
Macclesfield SK10 2JP
Cost £46.80

7 July 11.30am - 2.00pm
(Optional seminar 10.30am start)
Venue Best Western Pinewood Hotel
on Wilmslow, 180 Wilmslow Road,
Handforth, Wilmslow SK9 3LF
Cost £46.80

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

Third Thursday Club

Networking purely for construction and
property attendees. Every third thurs.

16 Jun 12noon - 2.00pm
Venue East 59th, Victoria Gate, 3rd Floor
Rooftop, George St, Leeds LS2 7AU

Cost Invitation only - please enquire.

Contact Rachel Shaw
rachel@ad-hoc-admin.co.uk

Don't forget your business cards!

Please note If you plan to attend 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.

places to meet

Cottons Hotel & Spa

10 minutes to Manchester Airport, 138 bedrooms, 13 meeting rooms capacity 200 delegates, 3 dining areas, AA Rosette awarded terrace restaurant

Manchester Road, Knutsford
WA16 0SU

victoriaseddon@cottonshotel.co.uk
01565 600333
www.cottonshotel.co.uk

DoubleTree By Hilton Manchester Airport

230 bedrooms, 11 meeting rooms, restaurant and bar, 24Hr gym, On-site parking, airport shuttle

Outwood Lane, Manchester
M90 4WP

cheryl.garnett@dtmanchesterairport.com
0161 435 3000
http://www.hilton.com/
manchesterairport

Genesis Centre

Various sized meeting and conference rooms, Fully serviced offices for short or long term lets, On-site café and break out room

Birchwood, Warrington WA3 7BH

deanhaslam@citibase.co.uk
07976 567739
citibase.com

Go Serviced Offices

Meeting room, Free WiFi, Free parking, Free refreshments, Lounge and seated garden area, Capacity for 6 people

Ground Floor, Prospect House, Columbus Quay, Liverpool L3 4DB

charlotte@gogreenofficesolutions.com
07494 090 373
www.goservicedoffices.co.uk

Hollinwood Business Centre

Meeting rooms, Free hi-speed wifi, Free Parking, Café, Touch screen TV, Capacity for 60 People

Albert Street, Hollinwood, Oldham
OL8 3QL

walter.urquhart@bizspace.co.uk
0161 511 9450
www.bizspace.co.uk

Hotel Brooklyn

Bed and breakfast, Cosy meeting rooms, Large banquet space, Accessible rooms, Designed for disabled guests

59 Portland Street, Manchester
M1 3HP

khealey@bespokehotels.com
0161 518 2936
www.hotelbrooklyn.co.uk

Manchester Central Convention Centre

Large and small scale conferences, Meeting rooms, Event spaces, Central location

Petersfield, Manchester M2 3GX

sales@manchestercentral.co.uk
0161 834 2700
www.manchestercentral.co.uk

Marriott Hotel Manchester Airport

Brasserie Blanc Bar & Restaurant, San Carlo Bar & Restaurant, Executive lounge, 2 Function spaces (140 and 50 capacities), Courtyard (private outdoor dining)

Hale Road, Hale Barns, Manchester
WA15 8XW

chris.pilling@marriott.com
07881 312158
manchesterairportmarriott.co.uk

Marriott Manchester Victoria and Albert Hotel

148 bedrooms and suites, 9 meeting and event rooms with capacity for 240 people theatre style, Restaurant and bar, South facing terrace, Private dining, Business centre

Water Street, St John's, Manchester M3 4AW

askus@thevanda.co.uk
0161 832 1188
www.marriott.com/manva

Marriott Hotel Liverpool City Centre

Brew Bar (food and drinks), Oliviers breakfast restaurant, Merchant Bar (private bar/event space), 2 Function spaces (240 and 50 capacities)

One Queen Square, Liverpool L1 1RH

chris.pilling@marriott.com
07881 312158
liverpoolmarriott.co.uk

Orega Arkwright House

Crompton (seats 10) and Hargreaves (seats 8) meeting rooms, both come with Free WiFi, Clevertouch screens, Video Conferencing, Catering (extra cost)

Parsonage Gardens, Manchester M3 2LF

reception.arkwright@orega.com
0161 667 8100
orega.com/manchester-arkwright-house

Regus Digital World

Meeting rooms of various sizes, Free hi-speed WiFi, Central location, Beautiful roof terrace

1 Lowry Plaza, The Quays, Salford
M50 3UB

uk.meetingrooms@regus.com
0161 601 7700
www.regus.com

Regus King Street

Meeting rooms for 4, 10 and 12 people, Free wifi, Kitchen amenities, City centre location, 24 hour access

82 King Street, Manchester
M2 4WQ

manchester.kingstreet@regus.com
0161 935 8000
www.myregus.com

Regus Spinningfields

Fully serviced, private meeting rooms, Free high-speed broadband, whiteboards, TV/projector, refreshments, Meeting rooms of varying sizes

10th Floor, 3 Hardman Street, Manchester M3 3HF

uk.meetingrooms@regus.com
0800 279 7131
www.regus.com

Regus St James Tower

Meeting rooms of various sizes, Hi-speed WiFi, Central location and good traffic links

7 Charlotte Street, Manchester
M1 4DZ

uk.meetingrooms@regus.com
0161 521 9800
www.regus.com

Regus Trafford Park

10 person, 6 person and 4 person meeting rooms, Free WiFi, Free Parking, Close to Motorway

4th Floor, Centenary House, 1 Centenary Way, Manchester
MSO 1RF

manchester.traffpark@regus.com
0161 504 2500
www.regus.com

Salford City College Business Centre

Hot desking space, Free Wi-Fi, Formal meeting rooms, Event and conference space, Collaboration and breakout spaces, Tea and coffee facilities, Free parking

Frontier House, Merchants Quay
Salford Quays M50 3SR

business.centre@salfordcc.ac.uk
0161 631 5555
www.salfordcc.ac.uk

SPACES Deansgate

Boardroom style meeting rooms
Presentation style training room
On-site Deli, Parking (chargeable), Hi-speed WiFi, Cycle store

125 Deansgate, Manchester
M3 2BY

uk.meetingrooms@regus.com
0161 519 2000
www.spacesworks.com

Leeds Marriott Hotel

Events space, Executive Lounge, Bar & Grill, Executive Rooms and Suites, 17 Meeting and Event Spaces

4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane
Leeds LS1 6ET

zoe.hands@marriott.com
01132 366366
www.leedsmarriott.com

Worsley Park Marriott Hotel

Restaurant and Bar, 9 Meeting rooms, Leisure club & Gym, 18 Hole Golf Course

Walkden Road, Manchester M28 2QT

libby.blackwell@marriott.com
0161 975 2000
www.marriottworsleypark.co.uk

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If you'd like to host our magazine at your site and feature on this page please contact Paul.

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Kyiv, Ukraine, pictured in 2021. Near the famous statue of Motherland.

[dec.org.uk/appeal/
ukraine-humanitarian-appeal](https://dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal)