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High Noon Lunch with John Swinney and Ellis Watson

AGM & Business Showcases

Forster Group on the importance of developing young people

How the chamber works to connect with key stakeholders on your behalf
The most frequent cliché that one hears in business is that "what matters most in business is people". Like all aphorisms, the reason that this is a cliché is because it is universally true and perennially so. In fact, I would go as far as to say that business is merely a series of interactions between people and time spent in an enterprise investing in people and developing their skills is at the root of business success. This edition of the Chamber magazine will focus on personal and business development and I absolutely believe that nothing matters as much as training your folk.

I served for more than 10 years in the Army and, during the Cold war, it was all about training for the unimaginable. We trained endlessly in long forecast cycles of ever more complex exercises building from the ground floor to the higher command levels over a year, before starting again the next season like a university or college year. Our people were our product and as a leader I was measured by my soldiers – if they were performing well, it followed that I was leading them well: Serve to Lead is the Sandhurst motto.

Business is the same. I was lucky in 1998 to join Citibank – then the world’s largest back with 140,000 employees worldwide. Citibank was OBSESSED with training and as an employee 2 week (2 week???) quality courses were a feature and a week every year of advanced sales training was mandatory. I loved Citibank and it surely remains one of the best employers in the world. And, do you know, I was good at my job. So were my colleagues: professional, sharp, informed, valued and part of a team whose ideals and missions we understood and shared. With 140,000 colleagues that says something. And that experience placed the value of investing in your team in stark relief and my Citibank experience was exceptional.

And the value of training and development should never be allowed to slip down the priority list when you are an entrepreneur and business owner. I have had no formal training in a decade until I had some one on one coaching with a DACC member earlier this year. It was fabulous to have an independent business coach to who took personal development and insight to a new level and got me thinking down dozens of new routes and avenues and got me to focus on me and my weaknesses and strengths. Brilliant. I was wholly rejuvenated after 2 hours and could have talked all day. We are never too experienced or knowledgeable to neglect our personal development, at all levels, and our businesses thrive when we take time to think of them and the team that makes them tick. Time spent training is never wasted and teams need investment to make them grow and bloom. When we are too busy to invest in our staff, we need to press PAUSE – then invest in our staff!!

Tim Allan, President
CEO, Unicorn Property Group
It’s well known that after the main summer months of July and August, businesses hit the ground running in September and it kicks off a season of great activity and action.

Well, that has never been truer than for the Chamber and the team here – there has been a plethora of events and activities. We launched Season 2 of our 2015 Training Academy; held a really interesting Explorer Breakfast at Dundee FC, thanks to our sponsor Royal Bank of Scotland; enjoyed a truly inspiring High Noon Lunch as part of Angus Business Week and rounded off the month with our largest ever Business Showcase & AGM event at the Caird Hall.

Our Training Academy sessions allow members to deliver a short session on a topic that they have particular experience in, and we find these are great for both personal and business development. Members attend from all sizes of business, from smaller companies, where the owner will come to expand their skillset, or larger organisations, where several team members will use the sessions to compliment the on-the-job training they receive in-house.

At the High Noon event in Angus, 150 businesspeople heard from John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, and Ellis Watson, MD of DC Thomson Publishing. Both speakers delivered key messages for businesses, emphasizing how important it is that we innovate, influence and take action to grow our businesses, in order to have a positive impact on the economy.

The Business Showcase & AGM, with 60 exhibiting members, was a key event for the Chamber, and alongside the event, a Funding your Business for Growth seminar spotlighted case studies from businesses who had successfully used a variety of methods to raise funds to develop their businesses.

We welcomed new Directors and unveiled a new Platinum Partner: GS Group. Like all our Platinum Partners, George Stubbs and the team at GS Group share our energy, ambition and passion for people and business in Dundee & Angus.

This has been a really enjoyable first year in my role. I would like to say a huge thank you to our team who work hard to deliver a strong programme of member engagement and support, allowing us to retain & attract businesses and grow the Chamber. They are a huge credit to DACC.”

Alison Henderson
CEO, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce

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doors to host a Think Global event with DACC in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise.

Andy Lothian, Insights Chief Executive, shared his experiences of building a successful career and global business.

This breakfast is part of an ongoing programme of international activity organised by the Tayside Regional Advisory Board, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce and partners, to raise awareness to the local business community of the opportunities that can be achieved by looking to markets outside of Scotland.

The partners aim to build the ambitions of companies that operate in close proximity to each other and encourage each to think, compete and trade globally.

Creating an international mindset for businesses across Tayside, these events show that exporting is a key theme that touches across all parts of business, rather than just one small element.

The event attendees left feeling motivated and inspired to think wider in terms of the reach of their businesses, and how to get their products and services to far-flung customers in new ways. A really worthwhile and enjoyable morning!

George R Donald Schools Enterprise Challenge

PUPILS FROM DUNDEE secondary schools took part in a Lord Sugar type challenge on Wednesday 11 November 2015.

The George Donald Fund, which is the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce’s charity, and Abertay University, organised the first Schools Enterprise Challenge at Michelin Athletic Club.

Sandra Burke, a trustee of the charity and former CEO of the Chamber, has been instrumental in resurrecting this Schools challenge and giving a focus to the charity to take it forward.

Senior Business Studies pupils were paired with top Dundee business minds to tackle a business scenario. The challenge tasked pupils to brainstorm, design and present their ideas for a professional services careers event.

The judging panel, consisted of Alison Henderson and Mark Munsie, who are both trustees of the charity, and Steve Ross of Shackleton Technologies. The judges saw each school present their ideas then after careful consideration and a very difficult decision, St Pauls RC Academy came out on top. The winning school was awarded with a team trophy and a tablet each donated by Shackleton Technologies.

Thank you to all of our sponsors; Tokheim Ltd, ZUDU, MacRoberts, Henderson Loggie, My Pinkie Promise, RSB Lindsays, Bank of Scotland, MMG Archbold, MAJR Group, Thorntons, Michelin, Shackleton Technologies and Dundee City Council.

Alison Henderson, Chamber CEO and charity trustee said “This is the 50th anniversary of the George Donald Fund. Launching this dynamic new enterprise competition was a fitting tribute to a man who worked so hard for local businesses as chamber treasurer and secretary for over 40 years. He had such faith in young people as the entrepreneurs of the future and we hope this will become an annual event in the business calendar.”

Explorer Breakfast at Dundee Football Club

AFTER OUR RECENT visit to Tannadice we crossed the road and visited Dens. Chamber members were invited along to the Explorer breakfast at Dundee Football Club where they got a behind the scene tour of the premises.

Attendees had the chance to grab a breakfast roll (provided by DoubleTree Hilton) before sitting down to hear about the running of the club from Managing Director, John Nelms. We then got a chance to see the various lounges named after legendary Dundee FC players from yesteryear including Scotland stars Alex Hamilton and Alan Gilzean, the Dundee FC Boardroom, Directors’ Box and the recently refurbished dressing rooms.

We were happy to welcome 60 of our members to the event that was hosted in the Legends’ Lounge, which celebrates the Dundee FC Hall of Fame Inductees from down the years.

ON THE 15TH July 2015 Turkish Airlines hosted their second golf tournament at the incredible Gleneagles golf course. A whole host of amateur golfers participated on the day which included corporate clients and other notable figures at the prestigious event. The day started off with registration and breakfast which was followed by the group photo and the game began.

After the tournament had finished the scores were totalled then the players headed inside for dinner and the awards ceremony. The awards were presented by Turkish Airlines Scotland General Manager Ahmet Serhat Sari, Consulate General of Turkey Semih Lutfi Turgut, President of the Turkish Golf Federation Ahmet Agaoglu and Financial Times Ian Edwards.

There was a tie for 1st place between Neil Macrae of Golf Kings and Dundee & Angus Chamber very own Colin Loveday. 1st place was then decided on a card playoff which was narrowly won by Neil Macrae.

There is already a lot of interest in next year’s tournament which sees the winner go onto the final in Belek, Antalya and play in the Turkish Airlines World Cup Final.

INSIGHTS, THE GLOBAL learning and development company based in Dundee opened their
SQA JOURNEYS
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DACC hosted a High Noon Lunch at Carnoustie Golf Hotel on Wednesday 16th September 2015, kindly sponsored by Business Angus.

A DACC “High Noon Lunch” is an opportunity for members and non-members alike to network and mix with other business professionals, while having a sit down lunch and hearing from key speakers and business leaders.

The lunch was a highlight of the Angus Business Week programme that saw varied and informative business events laid on throughout Angus between 14th & 18th September.

The theme focused around “Setting the Agenda for Business in Scotland” and welcomed two high profile speakers who are closely aligned to the topic; Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Ellis Watson, CEO of publishing company DC Thomson & Co Ltd.

Few people have as well informed or as insightful views on Scotland’s economy as John Swinney, and we were delighted that he agreed to join us during this key event.

John Swinney is a Scottish National Party politician who is currently the Deputy First Minister of Scotland and the Cabinet

“Economic growth – this is a challenging area but one which can bring great rewards.”

JOHN SWINNEY

(1) John Swinney, Deputy First Minister; (2) Ellis Watson, CEO, DC Thomson & Co Ltd; (3) Table sponsor – Balhousie Care Group; (4) Table sponsor – Dundee & Angus College.
Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy, John is also the Member of the Scottish Parliament for Perthshire North, having previously represented North Tayside (1999–2011).

During his keynote address, the Deputy First Minister set out his priorities for economic growth, highlighting the importance of innovation and increasing the international reach of Scottish companies. “This is a challenging area but one which can bring great rewards,” stressed John Swinney.

Theresa Wishart, MD of Journeycall, was one of 160 local business people who attended the High Noon Lunch. “Both talks were very interesting and very topical,” said Theresa. “Every business in Scotland is facing challenges at the moment so events like this, which enable us to bring everything into focus and to network with other local companies, are very helpful.”

The second speaker, Ellis Watson, is CEO of DC Thomson Publishing, one of the world’s largest family owned media groups. He was previously global CEO of Syco Entertainment, the joint venture between Simon Cowell and Sony – running the global format and commercial strategies for X Factor and Britain’s Got Talent, as well as the recorded music businesses.

Alison Henderson, DACC Chief Executive said, “We were delighted to have Ellis Watson attend this event to speak to such a large number of Chamber members. Ellis entertained and inspired us to think about how we, as businesses, could connect with the political agenda. It is vital that we understand how this affects our organisations and take action to ensure that we innovate, increase productivity, and for business to continue to have a very direct and positive impact on the UK economy.”

Amongst the 160 guests were table sponsors, Dundee & Angus College, Balhousie Care, Thorntons and Clydesdale Bank, including our overall sponsor Business Angus. We would like to thank them all for their continued support at key events. Please do keep an eye out for our next “High Noon Lunch” taking place next year.

“All photos: Graham Hood Photography

(5) Guests of DACC table; (6) Table sponsor – Business Angus; (7) Table sponsor – Clydesdale Bank; (8) L-R: Deborah Miller, Fiona Armstrong, Colin Loveday, Liz Cameron, Alison Smith (event sponsor, Business Angus), Tim Allan, Alison Henderson & Dougy Agnew

“Every business in Scotland is facing challenges at the moment so events like this, which enable us to bring everything into focus and to network with other local companies, are very helpful.”

Theresa Wishart
James BUCHAN

James is an innovative and enthusiastic entrepreneur looking to make a positive impact in the world. His First Class Honours Business and Economics M.A. laid the foundations for a professional career which primarily involved analytical and management positions held in London, the US and Japan within the Retail and GPG sectors. During this time he worked on the analysis of consumer behaviour and application of data driven models involving the world’s largest databases. In early 2014 he eventually succumbed to the lifelong desire to start a business, Zudu Ltd., a pioneering and fast growing digital agency based in Dundee. He is passionate about ensuring Dundee gets the recognition it deserves for digital innovation, encouraging investment in the region and actively contributes to the youth employment agenda in Scotland. Other proactive interests include digital/crypto currencies, boxing, rugby and travelling.

Stuart TAYLOR

Stuart has worked in the construction industry for over 50 years and is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Commencing in private practice as a quantity surveyor with DI Burchell & Partners he subsequently moved to contracting, working for a variety of local companies. After joining Andrew Shepherd Construction in 1992, he ultimately became Managing Director and joint owner of the company.

During his career he has been involved in several start-up companies primarily in the property development sector and continues to run a property business with a mixed residential and commercial portfolio. He also has retail experience in the form of owner of a builders merchants which was taken from start up to sale to a national chain.

David HAY

David has worked in the technology industry in a sales & marketing role for over 15 years, having started out his career within the Mobile Communications and Business Telephone Systems. Having left Edinburgh for Dundee in 2005 to help start up HoundDog in 2005, David grew sales from a few hundred pounds a month into a recurring revenue business with monthly revenues in excess of £500,000.

In his last few years at HoundDog, as well as heading up UK sales, David was also looking after EMEA and APAC and helping increase sales through the distribution channel. After 7 years with HoundDog/GFI, David left to help co-found his current software business, Allthings, in March 2013.

Following in the footsteps of his father, David is keen to help the chamber and it’s members and contribute towards the fantastic job that the current team are doing. When he’s not focusing on Allthings and the latest trends in digital marketing, David is a keen cyclist, swimmer and loves to ski.
NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Karen Webster

Karen Webster, HR Operations Manager, of dispenser manufacturing firm Tokheim UK Ltd has been in post for two and a half years. Prior to that Karen worked for five years as HR Manager for Large Aircraft and latterly HR Projects Manager within Corporate Services for BAE Systems, before returning to Dundee.

Karen’s first started working in the Public Works Department for Dundee City Council and received support in further education and career progression. She is very passionate about employers engaging with schools, colleges and universities to educate, develop and retain talent in Tayside and Angus. Karen is excited to be part of Dundee & Angus Chambers of Commerce at a time where there are many projects in progress that have potential to have positive, long term impact on the economy of Dundee & Angus.

Craig Sommerville

Craig Sommerville, Operations Director at GSK (GlaxoSmithKline), Montrose, a science-led global healthcare company. Originally from Dundee, Craig attended The University of Edinburgh and holds a PhD in Organic Chemistry. He has over 20 years experience in the Pharmaceutical Industry encompassing manufacturing, strategy, technical development, procurement and contract management at sites based in London. Craig returned to Scotland recently to join GSK Montrose and is passionate about growing the business whilst ensuring a safe, compliant and productive manufacturing facility.

EXISTING BOARD MEMBERS

Colin Loveday

Colin Loveday, 4G Scotland

Deborah Miller

Deborah Miller, MacRoberts

Mark Munsie

Mark Munsie, Dundee Heritage Trust

Dave Valentine

Dave Valentine, Valentine International

Dougy Agnew

Dougy Agnew, Henderson Loggie

Tim Allan

Tim Allan, Unicorn Property Group

Ian Collins

Ian Collins, Bank of Scotland

www.dundeeandanguschamber.co.uk
Member Helpline 01382 228545
Al-Maktoum College
Open Lectures

THE FIFTH SERIES of Open Lectures at the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education in Dundee is now under way, attracting keynote speakers from home and overseas.

The free lectures, which were introduced in 2010, have proved to be a great success while maintaining the College’s high profile at local, national and international level.

Three of the eight lectures in the current series, covering topics related to religion, Islam, Muslims and interfaith relations, have been held with the next due on Thursday, February 18. The final talk is scheduled for June this year (2016.)

“We aim to offer a variety of stimulating, informative and thought-provoking topics presented by prominent scholars in their field of expertise,” said Dr Hossein Godazgar, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the College.

Richard Messitt, Client Director at Zudu said: “We are over the moon to be able to offer our customers a new payment option. Bitcoin is truly an astonishing innovation. The deep understanding of both economics and programming required to create it makes it a coding masterpiece.

“It’s so much more than simply a currency. The blockchain technology that underpins it can and will change many industries. Our ambition is to help Dundee capitalise on a new technology that could prove as important as the internet itself.”

Partnership Recognition Event and Awards Presentation

ALMOST 200 GUESTS attended the 10th annual Partnership Recognition Event and Awards Presentation at Carnoustie Golf Hotel to celebrate the fantastic partnerships that exist between education, employers and the wider community within Angus.

As well as announcing this year’s winners, the event provided the opportunity to thank those employers, organisations and individuals who have worked with us, our schools and young people during the last school year.

A total of 135 employers and local organisations were recognised with a ‘Partners in Learning’ Award. These organisations were nominated by Angus schools in appreciation of the support and assistance received during the last school year to enhance the learning and teaching opportunities within their school.

In addition there were three Partnership Excellence Awards this year: Enterprise & Entrepreneurship, Community & Social and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics).

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the Partnership Recognition Event in Angus, an Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Forster Group Ltd and GSK Montrose who have both demonstrated an unflinching on-going commitment to the education agenda in Angus.

Congratulations to all who were recognised on the evening!

For further information, support and guidance on education and employer partnerships, or if you are interested in working in partnership with local schools in Angus, please contact:

Lesley Watson, Business Liaison Officer, Angus Council – Schools & Learning
Tel: 01307 476443 / 07554 437079 or Email: WatsonL@angus.gov.uk

Dundee digital agency to accept Bitcoin

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL AGENCY
Zudu has announced it will now let customers pay with Bitcoin. In fact, if you choose to pay for a website or app with the world’s favourite cryptocurrency you will get a 10% discount!

If you’re unfamiliar with Bitcoin, it’s a decentralised digital currency that has taken the fintech world by storm since its inception in 2009.

The peer-to-peer currency allows electronic payments to be made between people without the need for an intermediary to process the transaction. For many, Bitcoin represents a major step forward in how value is stored and transmitted worldwide.

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Al-Maktoum College
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“We aim to offer a variety of stimulating, informative and thought-provoking topics presented by prominent scholars in their field of expertise,” said Dr Hossein Godazgar, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the College.

Dr Godazgar believes the events, which are filmed and available to view via the College website, strengthen the links between the college and the community at large.

“Many distinguished academics have welcomed the opportunity to take the path to Dundee to deliver lectures that attract a lot of interest from the local community,” said Dr Godazgar.

“Our audiences certainly relish and welcome a unique opportunity to discuss with experts various aspects of Islam from a variety of perspectives.

“People from all walks of life have come to the college to listen, learn and take part in the post-lecture discussions, which are always lively because of their enthusiasm.

“Our guest speakers have all said that they enjoyed the experience as well.”

Further details on the Open Lectures can be found on the college website – www.almcoil.org.uk
Annabelle Ewing MSP Attends Graduation Event

YOUTRAIN WERE DELIGHTED
Annabelle Ewing MSP, Minister for Youth and Women’s Employment, attended the Graduation Event to award our apprentices with their certificates and say a few words.

We awarded all our Modern Apprenticeship Achievers with a presentation of certificates and enjoyed a tasty brunch to celebrate.

MD Duncan Macleod commented, “It is especially important to highlight the successful completion of an apprenticeship. The apprentices have a sense of achievement and it celebrates all the hard work and effort they put into it.”

We would like to thank the Minister, the companies that work with us to make the Apprenticeship Programme a success and, most importantly, the apprentices themselves. We hope everyone enjoyed the occasion.

The future looks bright for Arbikie and for Angus

IT’S ALMOST A year since Arbikie launched Scotland’s first potato vodka and what a year it’s been!

Arbikie Highland Estate is owned by brothers John, Iain and David Stirling. The Stirling family has been farming the land surrounding Lunan Bay since 1860. The single estate distillery, overlooking Lunan Bay on the Angus coast, grows, distils, matures and bottles on one site making it a truly ‘farm to bottle’ operation.

Arbikie Vodka has been a tremendous success, receiving international acclaim by winning Best Vodka at the Paris Cocktail Awards and a Double Gold Medal at the China Wine & Spirits Awards. GQ Magazine also named Arbikie Vodka as one of the ‘world’s best’. This is an incredible achievement for a company trading for less than a year.

Arbikie recently launched Scotland’s first single estate gin called ‘Kirsty’s Gin’, named after their Master Distiller Kirsty Black. The botanicals used are indigenous to the Angus area and all grow wild on the estate.

In September Arbikie filled its first cask of whisky making it Scotland’s first white and brown liquid single estate distillery.

Arbikie is fiercely proud to represent the Angus region. The entire mantra of the company is ‘farm to bottle’. This concept rests on the notion that all ingredients used to produce its spirits are locally sourced. Using locally-grown produce, Arbikie can trace the ingredients in its products and benefit from the ideal growing conditions in Angus.

Iain Stirling, commented: “It’s been a whirlwind of a year and we’ve achieved an incredible amount. We are determined to grow a global business and put Angus on the map as a region synonymous with quality food and drink produce. We are headed to the USA with UKTI as part of the gin trade mission in October to fly the Angus flag. There is a lot of hard work left to do but we are confident about the future.”

Expansion at Dundee Audi

DUNDEE AUDI IS expanding to meet customer demands. Started in October and running until February 2016, this £1 million project will bring the showroom up to Audi’s exacting 2020 standards.

Floor space is set to increase by one third, providing a display area for 12 new cars from Audi’s ever-growing product range. Office space is also set to increase, offering customers extra privacy when discussing their next purchase.

Warm, stylish wooden flooring is planned for the public area along with new eco-friendly lighting to show the cars at their best.

The work is to be carried out by the Stirling-based Robertson Group who will be doing their utmost to ensure disruption to existing customers is kept to a minimum.

The transformed facilities will provide a fitting home for the new, eagerly-awaited, Audi A4 which is due in the UK very soon.
Blue2 score with Rangers!

BLUE2 WAS THRILLED to win the pitch to design and develop a brand new website for Rangers Football Club. A progressive, dynamic website has been created, reflecting the club’s position as one of one of the world’s most famous football brands. The site is packed with information, statistics and features to help fans find all the details they need on any device or browser.

Nial Chapman, Blue2’s Digital Director, said: “The team at Rangers have been great to work with and their determination and enthusiasm is infectious. With a mix of nationalities in our development team, we’re big fans of football, so this project has been really enjoyable for us. We’re fully behind Rangers and we wish them every success in the new season.”

Stewart Robertson, Managing Director of Rangers Football Club, added: “We are delighted to announce the completion of the new look www.rangers.co.uk Blue2’s bold design will help to bring supporters closer than ever to their club and I am sure our worldwide fan base will enjoy the rich content and features available on the new platform. We are in the process of rebuilding Rangers Football Club and a revamped website is the latest step in that process.”

As well as launching the new site, Blue2 is looking at other exciting projects they can work on with Rangers.

Porters Bar & Restaurant on Dundee’s City Quay is an exciting new restaurant in the city

OUR TEAM OF experienced chefs have created exciting and innovative dishes on a menu that caters for all tastes.

All ingredients are locally sourced – beef is from farms in Angus, seafood from Arbroath and lamb from Forfar with the vegetarian dishes on the menu sure to impress all tastes. For those who are just in need of a light bite, there is a nibbles section that will not disappoint and the homemade shot desserts are also out of this world!

All of this can enjoyed with some wonderful, carefully selected wines which are served by the glass and by the bottle. The cocktail list has many classic and fresh drinks that have proven extremely popular with many customers who just keep coming back for more! For those who like a beer the draught and bottle selection is a must. Then there are the platters of gin, whisky and vodka which give the customer plenty of option to taste our wide range of premium spirits.

If it’s a meal for 2 or a table for a large party, Porters is the place to be in Dundee with a warm welcome from our team guaranteed.

Porters also cater for families with the children’s menu made with fresh ingredients.

Please visit our website for further details – www.portersbar-restaurant.com

Open Tuesday – Sunday, Coffees served daily, Lunch 12-3 (Saturday 12-5), Evening Meals 5-Late, Sun Terrace to the rear of the restaurant. Car Parking available

Thorntons named as top performing business

THE TAYSIDE AND Fife leading law firm has been named as one of Scotland’s top 10 best performing businesses. Thorntons climbed 33 places to eighth in this year’s prestigious SME 300 table following a year which saw turnover and profits grow significantly.

The league table, which measures the performance of Scottish headquartered companies with a turnover between £8m and £20m, showed Thorntons to be the country’s highest-climbing law firm.

The firm’s growing stature has been driven by growth in its private client, estate agency, land and rural, education and personal injury practices, with growth in some areas rising by 20 per cent. This has seen turnover rise from £14.38 million to £16.28 million and profits increase by more than £1.3 million to £3.98 million.

The table covers Thorntons’ 12-month-period to 31st May, 2014. Since then, the firm has also successfully completed mergers with Fife-based law firm Murray Donald and Montrose-based Watts Law.

Joint Managing Partners Craig Nicol and Scott Milne said: “Reaching the top 10 of the SME 300 reflects the tireless work...
Binn Groups drives forward Scotland’s Modern Apprenticeships

Binn Group is helping drive forward Scotland’s Modern Apprenticeships scheme by offering two places each year to young people interested in pursuing a career behind the wheels of their vehicles. The Perthshire-based waste management and recycling leaders currently employ more than 40 drivers across a fleet of vehicles, ranging from pick-up trucks to articulated lorries. Now they want to give apprentices the chance to learn all aspects of the LGV driver’s trade through the new scheme.

“There is a shortfall of around 80,000 drivers in the UK at present,” explained Binn Group Transport Manager Mark Cairns. “Here at Binn Group we are looking at an ageing driver population and – like other employers across the country – we have to do something to address the problem of high demand and low supply.

Encouraging young people into the profession is essential if we are to stem the tide and the Modern Apprentice vehicle allows us to do just that.”

Binn Group plans to employ one new apprentice every six months. The new starts will undergo a year’s training in all aspects of the job from washing waste collection vehicles through to basic mechanics, as well as their focused driving instruction.

“The scheme allows apprentices to learn while working and earning a wage, and gain a qualification at the end of it,” said Mark. “We also intend to give our apprentices a full-time job at the end of their training.”

Apprentices keen to take up Binn Group’s offer will find themselves rotating through all the vehicle platforms at the company, working on large 18-tonne waste collection vehicles and 44-tonne articulated lorries, as well as vans and pick-ups, as they work their way through their LGV Class 2 and Class 1 training. They will also work in the workshops and alongside the management to learn all sides of the driver/operator’s job.

Anyone interested in applying for an LGV Driver Apprenticeship at Binn Group should contact Mark Cairns on 01577 830833 or email mark.cairns@binngroup.co.uk.

Shackleton’s Managing Director joins IT leadership group

Shackleton Technologies Managing Director now Executive Council member of IT Industry Leadership Group

Shackleton Technologies, a leading IT Managed Services Provider (MSP) based in Dundee, has announced their Managing Director, Steve Ross, has been named as an Executive Council member of an information technology (IT) industry leadership group.

Steve has joined the CompTIA UK Community, a group of industry leaders that collaborate to advance technologies that are vital to the IT industry and its customers. The group also provides guidance and leadership on the programmes, education and research offered by CompTIA, the non-profit trade association for the IT industry.

Steve commented, “I am excited to be a part of the CompTIA UK community to join forces with other industry leaders in the further advancement of technology.”

“We’re extremely fortunate to have Steve join us,” said CompTIA spokesman. “His working background and business experience in the IT industry and the ongoing development and issues facing our industry assure that the programmes we develop, the initiatives we support and the positions we champion will have strong support across the industry.”

Steve brings more than 12 years of business experience and consultancy in finance and technology operations to the Council. He is the co-founder and owner of Shackleton Technologies, a local business that provides consultancy and IT Managed Services across the UK, providing clients with services to suit their business needs. Shackleton’s understanding and experience in the industry is unparalleled.

For more information, please visit www.shacktech.co.uk.

www.dundeelandanguschamber.co.uk
Member Helpline 01382 228545
ADVERTISING FEATURE

AUTUMN BLOWS IN THE NEW A4

Lomond Fleet Team are excited, the New A4 is arriving and will be with us at the end of November and the factory ordering has officially opened.

90 percent of the 4th Generation A4 has fresh components and boasts lower kerb weight. Virtual Cockpit as in the TT is an option alongside copious amounts of driver assistance packages, offering 30 systems! You have the security and confidence of the most advanced safety systems.

With 7 engines, 3 gearboxes and 54 variants, there is an option to suit you as a company car driver, most importantly weighing in as much as 120kg less than the outgoing model and a drag coefficient of 0.23, making the A4 the lowest in class. Most importantly the Co2 starts at 99g.

The Lookers Fleet Team will be visiting companies across the central belt in November with a Roadshow, offering company car drivers the opportunity to discuss the fantastic technology and the ability to test drive. If you wish the team to include visiting your business, please email to the address below and we will include you on our tour.

Audi Fleet Team. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Ayr & Hamilton.
Jacqui.lee@lomondaudigroup.com – 0141 565 6389
Al-Maktoum College Courses

The Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education is offering a range of SQA awarded and credit rated courses in the following subject areas:

- Professional Diploma in Islamic Economics and Finance
- Advanced Diploma in Islamic Studies
- Advanced Diploma in Arabic Language
- Diploma in Arabic Language
- Certificate in Arabic Language
- Introductory Certificate in Arabic Language

www.almcollege.org.uk

Full and Partial Bursaries available - find out more.....

DM Training Consultants Ltd, Office 3 Badentoy Business Centre, Badentoy Crescent, Portlethen, Aberdeenshire AB12 4YD
Tel: 01224 784461  e-mail: info@dmtraining.org,  www.dmtraining.org

REHIS FOOD HYGIENE

Elementary, Intermediate and Diploma in Advanced Food Hygiene

It is important that all staff working behind the scenes are adhering to customer service in a different format, by understanding the food journey and the points at which they have to manage the journey of the food.

Do your staff understand the implications of not following the rules regarding food hygiene and how they could be the source of food poisoning?

Courses can be delivered in-house, attending one of our public courses or through E-Learning depending on your preference.
Vivomotion reaches local and international audiences

OVER THE LAST few months, work produced by Vivomotion has been exhibited at several exhibitions, both locally and internationally.

“One of the aims of Vivomotion is to communicate scientific concepts to a wider audience and exhibitions of our animations are a terrific way to do so,” explains Dr Mhairi Towler, CEO at Vivomotion.

The first exhibition was held in May at The Institute of Medical Sciences at Aberdeen University http://aberdeenartlab.squarespace.com/

Work from Mhairi's animation masters was also shown in May at a multi-media exhibition at the Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris. www.epigenesys.eu/en/in-the-news/all-news/1304-hashtag-visions-of-epigenetics.

Further work showing the formation of a bacterial waterproof coating was shown at an exhibition that ran over the summer at LifeSpace, a research-driven science art gallery at the School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee.

Finally, an animated sequence prepared by Vivomotion was shown at Dundee Science Centre as part of the exhibition, ‘Nature’s Equations – D’Arcy Thompson and the Beauty of Mathematics’ which ran from August until the end of October.

It’s time to Xplore Dundee

DUNDEE’S MAIN BUS operator has officially launched its new brand, name and livery.

No longer known as National Express Dundee, although still a part of the National Express group, the local business is now called Xplore Dundee. The new name, along with its brand new green livery and logo, was designed in partnership with students from Dundee and Angus College and pays tribute to the city’s heritage of exploration and discovery.

Five new vehicles – Wrights Streetlites – are joining the company’s fleet and there’s been a refresh of the bus network with new timetables offering easy-to-use, turn-up-and-go services. Even the paper timetables have received an overhaul and each route has now been assigned a colour to make it easier for passengers to spot their regular services around the network.

Managing Director of Xplore Dundee Elsie Turbyne said, “This is a fresh new look for our business. It’s one we’re very proud of and we hope our customers will be, too. We want to do our bit to ensure Dundee’s public transport system is top-class at a time when our city is growing, developing and looking to the future. I am confident that our investment in these new vehicles and our new identity, along with improvements to the timetables, will take our services to the next level.”

mtc. sponsor fashion awards

WHEN THE HERALD contacted mtc. to discuss the possibility of becoming digital partners through sponsorship of the category ‘Best Online Newcomer’ at this year’s Herald Fashion Awards, it seemed the natural thing to do.

Having delivered bespoke eCommerce solutions for Bluechip companies and some of the UK’s top independent retailers for over 10 years, mtc. was delighted to celebrate the success of online platforms within Scotland’s fashion industry.

mtc. is no stranger to what it takes to succeed online in an extremely competitive marketplace. Having implemented its custom-built eCommerce solution into their ever-expanding range of eCommerce clients’ websites, the focus has been always on delivering ROI to the client while giving the customer great user experience.

David Rankine, Business Development Director at mtc. said, “As Scotland’s leading eCommerce developer, we are extremely proud to be sponsoring the award of ‘Best Online Newcomer’ at this year’s awards. With Internet sales reaching record levels, we admire The Herald for recognising how online platforms and digital interaction have given businesses and consumers alike, direct access to the industry not only here in Scotland, but also the global marketplace.”

The award was presented at a Black Tie event in Glasgow on Sunday 15th of November, 2015.
Insights’ three-year plan for significant growth

INSIGHTS LEARNING AND Development is planning to double the size of its business over the next three years. Founded by Andi Lothian and his son Andy in 1993, Insights is an innovative learning and development company headquartered in Dundee with offices in over 40 countries. The company currently employs more than 300 people globally and has an annual revenue of circa £40m.

Since April 2015, Insights has placed 60 people in new and back-filled roles with hiring expected to follow a similar pattern to meet on-going growth demands.

CEO Andy Lothian said: “For the past 20 years we have been on an exciting journey. We have worked towards fulfilling our organisation’s purpose – ‘to create a world where people truly understand themselves and others and are inspired to make a positive difference in everything they do’.

“Our three-year strategy outlines a handful of subtle yet significant changes that will determine the next 20 years for Insights.”

In support of the business growth ambitions, Insights is focusing on new geographic priorities, global operations and serving customers whose approach to people development aligns with its own approach.

Andy added: "Recently, we added new distributors based in China and Pakistan, and a new regional office in Poland."

MMG hire Zudu for their technical upgrade

TAYSIDE CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS MMG Archbold have taken another step forwards in embracing digital technology and the advantages it offers in reaching potential clients and easing processes for current clients through commissioning a new website.

Their current offering www.mmgca.co.uk serves its purpose, but does little to demonstrate the forward-thinking attitude of the firm which only a few months ago introduced a new app – MMG Archbold.

Wanting to collaborate locally, Managing Partner Paul Chricton said that even from the initial proposal it became obvious that Zudu, web and app developers in Dundee, were the right people to work with as they understood the firm’s vision. Zudu, who themselves recently rebranded, are fast becoming one of the go to innovators in web design as demonstrated by their own site www.zudu.co.uk

In collaborative meetings between MMG Archbold, marketing advice partner My Pinkie Promise and Zudu, a new website design is coming together.

Paul says their search for the right web design firm to work with on this project started with the aim of “future proofing the business and bringing accountancy into today”.

Talking directly to the client, the firm’s core principle of facilitating a client’s “aims and aspirations”, is the focus of the new design. The website won’t contain endless information pages, but will lead the user through a series of dynamic stages, accessing the right information, online portals and services they are looking for.

Johnston Carmichael staff raise money for charity

STAFF FROM SCOTLAND’S largest independent accountancy and business advisory firm, Johnston Carmichael, have raised over £2,270 for charity.

The Forfar office participated in a series of fundraising initiatives for the Angus Foodbank, a charity providing emergency food and support to local people in crisis in the Angus area. As well as donating non-perishable food, staff from the office raised a fantastic £861 from monthly dress down days, bake sales and other activities.

The charity intends to purchase food for emergency boxes which are distributed to those in need to ensure they have enough food to last at least three days. The money will also allow the foodbank to deliver the food boxes to those in need and living in remote areas of Angus.

Four staff members from various Johnston Carmichael offices took part in the Great Glen Challenge raising £1,410 in aid of the Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RSABI). The charity provides financial assistance, support and advice to people who have worked in Scotland in land-based occupations and are suffering hardship. The 70k challenge included kayaking 7km, running 7km, walking 12km and biking 34km.

Johnston Carmichael has strong expertise in 13 key industry sectors and more than 630 partners and staff based across its 11 strategic locations in Scotland, making it one of the top 20 accountancy firms in the UK.
Business is booming for Kangaroo Self Storage

EVEN DURING AN economic dip there are opportunities for some businesses to flourish. One of these is the self-storage industry.

During a downturn the number of people moving house reduces, causing greater breaks in the property chain, meaning storage can be required. In addition, there are rising numbers of people moving back home to live with family as they can no longer afford their mortgage or rental payments, resulting in the need for storage. Sadly, there's also an increase in divorce rates, often meaning storage is required for household furniture.

Business requirements also change as many companies are unsure what the size their order book will be in the future. With the wide range of storage options at Kangaroo Self Storage, they can upsize, downsize or vacate completely, as their order book dictates.

The population is continuing to grow and with this growth comes increasing pressure on space, as well as continued movement towards urban living and a rise in people working from home. These factors put further pressure on people to maximise their limited living space and therefore use self-storage as a lifestyle option to store their ever-increasing quantity of belongings.

Kangaroo Self Storage has experienced two years of 30% per annum growth during a time when the economy has either stagnated or regressed. This is due to the wide range of storage options on offer, as well as meeting the increasing market demand.

Remaining nimble and flexible in our offer has been the key to Kangaroo Self Storage’s success during the current economic uncertainty.

LocalMotion Land Trains growing in appeal

LOCALMOTION LAND TRAINS has completed its second summer season in Broughty Ferry. The company launched a new route for 2015 which incorporated the main shopping areas of Brook Street and Gray Street, as well as the sandy beach and harbour area.

Director Elaine Stewart commented: “We’ve had very positive feedback from the public and local businesses who feel the train adds to the ‘buzz’ in the heart of Broughty Ferry’s busy retail area.”

The Land Train also operated in Lanark, Glamis and Baxter Park during the summer as its appeal is becoming more widely recognised.

Through connections made as members of the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce, Local Motion Land Trains formed a strong link with the St Andrews BID initiative. This resulted in the train operating a route in St Andrews during the Open Championship. This was welcomed by visitors and locals, and provided a unique opportunity for local businesses to advertise on the large panels on the side of the carriages during this prestigious event.

Although the summer season has come to a close in Broughty Ferry, the Land Train will be in action on Sunday December 13th in Gray Street. A short route will be operated from Santa’s Grotto beside Visocchi’s from approximately 12 noon to 4:00pm.

Elaine acknowledged the support of the many businesses that have taken advantage of the advertising opportunity the Land Train offers and supported the Land Train.

Anyone interested in promoting their brand on the Land Train should email info@lmlandtrains.co.uk

Exciting news at MacRoberts

GAVIN THOMSON HAS joined our IP, Technology and Commercial (IPTC) Team. He will support the existing activities of our IPTC team in the Dundee area.

We’re also pleased to welcome Laura Wilson as MacRoberts’ first Procurement Director. Laura will play an integral role in the management and co-ordination of the tender process.

This commitment to growth helps strengthen our key areas and the services we can offer our clients.

In September, we launched a new website www.macroberts.com as part of a corporate re-branding. The re-brand gives MacRoberts a far more contemporary look and feel.

More good news! The firm was recently appointed to Scottish Government’s legal panel framework, making it one of a select number of law firms that can tender for work with more than 100 public bodies over the next four years, offering multi-million-pound opportunities.

MacRoberts secured places on two framework panels, covering corporate and commercial contracts and major projects.
Mackays’ business challenge for Tayside schools

MACKAYS’ TAYSIDE JAMATHON is the new ultimate business challenge for secondary schools. Business support organisation Elevator and Business Gateway, which helps to facilitate the growth and start-up of new and existing businesses across Grampian and Tayside, developed the Mackays’ Tayside Jamathon in collaboration with the famous Arbroath-based jam producers as a means to support entrepreneurial behaviours to Tayside’s youngsters.

It was a great success with a total of 21 teams across seven schools taking on the 26-day challenge by developing their very own ready-for-market Mackays jam or marmalade product. Throughout the project the 118 students effectively ran their own business by selecting a board of staff, carrying out market research, managing their finances and branding and marketing their new product.

At the end of June each team was invited to pitch their idea to a panel of industry experts. Discovery Jams of Grove Academy and Tava of High School of Dundee impressed all three judges with their product and innovative pitch and made it through to the final which was held at the Dundee Flower and Food Festival.

The teams had 250 jars of their limited edition labelled jam to sell at the festival and were judged throughout the day by five secret shoppers, as well as three guest judges. They were marked on presentation and dressing of their stalls, selling skills and, of course, the jam! Both teams sold their entire product and raised over £1,000 for Dundee Foodbank and Children 1st. Grove Academy and the High School of Dundee students oozed entrepreneurial spirit throughout the project. Discovery Jams of Grove Academy were crowned the winners of the Jamathon 2015.

WRB Gas turns up the heat

DUNDEE FIRM, WRB Gas is doing more than its bit to eradicate fuel poverty in Scotland. The company will be upgrading heating systems and installing energy-saving measures in properties throughout Scotland.

WRB Gas will be working on the Scottish Government’s flagship national energy efficiency scheme, Warmer Homes Scotland.

Warmer Homes Scotland is a £220 million, seven-year government initiative which launched on 1st September 2015. It provides insulation, efficient heating and renewable technologies in the homes of households struggling with the cost of high energy bills, making homes warmer, more comfortable and more affordable to heat.

WRB Gas Director, Bob Ward said, “This is the first government scheme that genuinely targets people most in need and are we are delighted to be involved.”

To find out more about Warmer Homes Scotland, or make an application, you can call Home Energy Scotland free on 0808 808 2282. Home Energy Scotland advisors are available on the phone Monday – Friday from 8:00am to 8:00pm and on Saturday from 9:00am to 5:00pm.


New Wellgate Centre Manager

JON WALTON, WELLGATE’S Centre Manager, left his position on October 9th to take up a new post as City Centre Manager, Plymouth Business Improvement District (BID).

Peter Aitken, currently Operations Manager, will be taking on the position of Centre Manager with additional support from the management team. Peter has been at Wellgate for over 5 years and recently collected a Sceptre award as Operations Manager of the Year in a ceremony held in London.
Why enterprise mentoring can help SMEs thrive in Dundee
There’s no doubt that 2015 has been another successful year for Scottish SMEs, and with start-ups on the increase more than ever before, Ian Collins, Bank of Scotland Senior Manager, for Tayside and Fife, and an enterprise mentor volunteer gives his views on how mentoring can help businesses thrive in Dundee.

We often hear how small and medium sized businesses are the linchpin of the Scottish economy. And this is for good reason, SMEs currently make up 99.3 per cent of all businesses in Scotland, and providing an estimated 1.1 million jobs, according to the Scottish Government. This year, in recognition of this, the UK Government has taken many measures towards helping support SMEs, most recently through the creation of new enterprise zones, allowing small firms in areas across the UK to pay reduced taxes.

Yet while sound financial support is vital to ensure SMEs continue to prosper throughout Scotland, expert guidance and mentoring is crucial to their ongoing success. Money will only take these businesses so far, support from experienced professionals is what will give companies a greater chance of success. We know that start-ups have a one in four better chance of surviving and thriving over three years if they have a mentor. Studies have also shown that an overwhelming 95 per cent of people found working with a mentor to be good to their confidence and motivation to succeed.*

A popular and proven way in which SME business owners and budding entrepreneurs can gain support is from external business experts. Known as enterprise mentoring, this can help business owners determine the parts of their company that they need to focus on in order to grow. This sort of support can also help define a broad strategy for growth, rather than focusing on day-to-day issues that can easily overwhelm smaller companies.

An enterprise mentor will have extensive business experience and would have been chosen by their own business to act as a mentor based on their strong skill set. In addition to providing guidance on specific areas, a mentor can also help entrepreneurs who have a product idea but are unsure of how to turn it into a viable business. We often find that even the most ambitious individuals struggle with business acumen, so their business plans lack structure and foresight. That’s where a mentor can step in to offer support.

In a nutshell, a mentor is there to act as a trusted confidant and can work with the business for as long as needed. They will cover five key areas regardless of their specialism and will always:

- Offer an outside perspective on both you and your business on your agenda.
- Listen, in confidence, to any concerns about your business and help you to find solutions to problems.
- Help you by sharing their own experience of both failure and success.
- Give friendly, unbiased support, signposting and guidance.
- Share honest and constructive feedback and help you overcome barriers to your success.

All across the country, companies have pledged people and time to help mentor small and medium-sized enterprises. At Bank of Scotland, as part of Lloyds Banking Group, we’ve pledged to develop our strong network of enterprise mentors across the UK by increasing our mentor volunteers to 500 this year to offer wider business support to new and established SME.

To find out more about how your business can be supported by a mentor please visit: www.bankofscotlandbusiness.co.uk/business-guidance/business-mentors/

*BVM report

“Money will only take these businesses so far, support from experienced professionals is what will give companies a greater chance of success”
Business Showcase & AGM at the Caird Hall

With 60 exhibiting members, a Funding your Business for Growth seminar and the Chamber’s 2015 Annual General Meeting, the 23rd September was a day full of connections, inspiration and a chance for members to get together and explore ways of doing business together.

The Funding seminar spotlighted case studies from businesses that had successfully used a variety of methods to raise funds to develop their businesses, and was very warmly received by attendees. Whether your business is in technology, retail or design, there was much to learn from the speakers about how they had worked with their bank to support expansion, used crowd funding to develop new products for new markets or raised investment to grow their business in global markets.

At the AGM, DACC welcomed new Directors and unveiled a new Platinum Partner: GS Group.

The new Directors take the Board to a full quota of twelve individuals, representing their member organisation and a wide range of sectors, business size and geographical location. You can read more about them on pages 10 & 11.

Like all our Platinum Partners, George Stubbs and the team at GS Group share our energy, ambition and passion for people and business in Dundee & Angus and are very warmly welcomed.

“Whether your business is in technology, retail or design, there was much to learn from the speakers”
I feel proud to be a member of the chamber! You have such a great team!

(1) Stephen Mill, Struans Dundee
(2) Tim Allan, President, addresses the AGM
(3) Enjoying the after-AGM refreshments!
(4) Nicola Donnelly, Time Lifestyle Boutique
(5) Eve Hughes; Nicola Donnelly, Time Lifestyle Boutique; Laura Lucas, Inspirential
(6) Martin & Co with David England, hamper winner
“great to see the Chamber being passionate about businesses across Dundee and Angus”
“the Showcase really helped me reconnect with fellow Chamber members – I’ve got loads of leads to follow-up”
Faced with the challenge of the availability of funding to directly support business growth or innovation, Angus Council began exploring alternative solutions including Crowdfunding, a means of funding that allows ideas to be taken forward and become a reality with the power of the crowd. As a result and working with partners and Crowdfunder, Crowdfund Angus, the first local authority led crowdfunding platform in the UK, was launched in August 2015 and now businesses, community groups and individuals in Angus can raise funds as part of this pioneering crowdfunding scheme.

The first modern crowdfunding campaign was started by a Scotsman – Fish – of the band Marillion. In 1997 the term crowdfunding was yet to be coined and many music fans had only minimal access to the internet. However this didn’t stop the band pioneering a funding method which is currently looking likely to engulf all others. Short of money to put on a planned North American tour the band turned to fans, successfully raising $60,000 (or £39,000) to travel the US.

Crowdfunding is currently worth $34 billion globally and with the UK offering all 4 types of crowdfunding we are the market leaders. The four different types of crowdfunding are:

- Equity based crowdfunding which allows businesses to offer up shares in their business for a cash reward.
- Debt based crowdfunding which allows businesses to offer up their idea to encourage the ‘crowd’ to submit loans for the business.
- Donations based crowdfunding which is already established in daily life with sites like ‘Just Giving’.
- Rewards based crowdfunding which allows businesses to offer rewards for cash to take their idea forward, such as a product, service, or exclusive reward.

When looking at crowdfunding, businesses need to consider what they want to raise funds for, what rewards they could offer and who would star in their video (campaigns with a video are 40% more successful). A key area for businesses to consider when investigating potential crowdfunding campaigns is their social media as the most successful campaigns have a good knowledge of social media and can engage the ‘crowd’ effectively.

Crowdfund Angus is a rewards based site, that since its launch has already raised over £67,000 for the 8 projects currently on the site with most of them surpassing their original targets. The Business Angus team are keen however to see more business projects coming forward.

When looking at crowdfunding, businesses need to consider what they want to raise funds for, what rewards they could offer and who would star in their video (campaigns with a video are 40% more successful). A key area for businesses to consider when investigating potential crowdfunding campaigns is their social media as the most successful campaigns have a good knowledge of social media and can engage the ‘crowd’ effectively.

The Crowdfunder platform launched two years ago with support from Plymouth University, Professor David Coslett, Interim Vice-Chancellor of Plymouth University, said: “As a founding partner of Crowdfunder, it’s exciting to be part of an initiative that is providing financial and support package for businesses, social enterprise and community organisations in Scotland.”

Phil Geraghty, MD of Crowdfunder said: “Angus Council is leading the way in Scotland by becoming the first local authority in Scotland to embrace crowdfunding. By joining Crowdfund Angus, the council are working alongside the community while creating great opportunities at the same time.”

To get you started, the Business Angus team and Crowdfunder are available to help with the development of your crowdfunder campaign and the technical elements so just get in touch at externalfunding@angus.gov.uk. And check out the latest projects raising funds on the Angus Crowdfunding Portal www.crowdfunder.co.uk/campaign/crowdfund-angus.
There has been a growing interest and desire by clients to locate their newfound businesses potentially in, and or within close proximity of the waterfront regeneration areas.

E-zone is a business start-up advice and support organisation set-up in 1998 by Dundee City Council, to promote self-employment within Dundee. It is aimed at clients who may require a greater degree of practical input necessary to achieve a successful outcome. In particular, E-zone focuses on potential entrepreneurs who may lack necessary business acumen, direction or resources to readily engage in setting up enterprises. Working with partner organisations, E-zone aims to remove barriers to enterprise by offering better access to business support services including improved access to business planning, business advice, support and finance.

As part of Dundee City Council’s Economic Development Department, E-zone is experiencing a dramatic change in attitude of clients and their anticipation of positive economic changes that the city’s waterfront development can bring to their businesses. There has been a growing interest and desire by clients to locate their newfound businesses potentially in,
and or within close proximity of the waterfront regeneration areas.

A survey of business set-up in Dundee revealed that since 2013 an increasing number of new businesses have done so and set-up in Dundee DD1 postcode area.

As well as being varied and interesting, these businesses offer a wide spectrum of provisions from childcare to civil celebrants, from boutiques to IT and computer game designers, and from hairdressers to auto repair stations.

DD1 location has been considered by these businesses as being the right area for their activities in anticipation that securing space early and before the completion of the waterfront redevelopment can only contribute to their sustainability and future growth. These businesses are determined to be part of the exciting changes ahead, guaranteeing their future expansion and measurably contributing to further economic development of the city.

Working collaboratively with all council departments, E-zone offers its comprehensive package of support to new-start-ups in Dundee. E-zone offers help in business planning development and where applicable utilises expertise of appropriate council departments such as Licencing, Property, Planning and Environmental Health in the process.

Working in co-operation with other start-up agencies and the Dundee Employability Programme, E-zone offers wide-ranging support to businesses whether starting up, at growth stage or employing people.

This approach ensures that for potential entrepreneurs and new starts, navigating processes of setting up and running a business is much less complicated. E-zone ensures that every potential business is given the opportunity to utilise all advice and support the city has to offer.

For more information on E-zone services please see our web pages www.dundeecity.gov.uk/ezone.
Maureen Douglas
HR Director, Forster Group and CITB Board Trustee

Developing Young People

Maureen Douglas, Forster Group Human Resources Director and CITB Board Trustee, on the importance of developing young people

“Being competitive, working innovatively and staying one step ahead are critical factors in the continued success of any business”

Your people are your business. Recruiting and retaining the right talent is essential, not just to meet today’s needs, but to ensure you have the necessary skills and experience in-place to help you grow your business.

At Forster, we understand where we are and have a clear vision of what we need to look like to deliver our business plans over the next decade.

Securing talent with the right skills and attitudes can be a challenge, especially when your Head Office is in Angus and you work on 100 construction sites across Scotland.
Our solution is a simple one; we employ young people and lots of them every year.

Why do we do this?
1. To secure a future supply of skilled trades to meet demand and grow our market share
2. To create our own flexible and multi-skilled talent pipeline
3. To adopt a stable, cost effective approach to growing our workforce
4. To provide fresh ideas, skills and insights
5. To nurture a culture of creativity and continual improvement of processes through mentoring
6. To strengthen our links with local community groups, schools and colleges
7. To enhance our reputation as an employer of choice

In fact, over a quarter of our 100+ workforce are under the age of 25.

On site …
Our core work is roofing one in five of new build homes. To address the shortage of skilled trades working with industry we led the creation of a new roof tiling Modern Apprenticeship qualification. To deliver the two year program we created our own Skills Academy which allowed us to embed our values and standards of workmanship as well as enabling our apprentices to complete their off-site training together. The residential course has been a resounding success and is being developed further to enable the up-skilling and re-skilling of experienced workers. By the end of 2016, we will have recruited 24 Modern Apprentices and up skilled and qualified 34 experienced workers.

In the office …
We have been recruiting young talent directly from secondary schools, colleges and universities since the creation of our business in 1990. In 2006 we introduced annual recruitment of 5th/6th year school leavers into our estimating, purchasing, surveying, design, administrative, HR and finance teams. Many of the 25+ apprentices recruited have built their careers at Forster, achieving technical and professional qualifications along the way. In fact some are now developing their own teams of young people, which continues to keep our business vibrant, fresh and adaptable.
The Chief Executive and Board of Directors of the Chamber regularly consult and meet with key stakeholders locally and nationally to discuss issues of importance and relevance to members and the Dundee & Angus business community.

Whether there is an issue that affects many members, like transportation or infrastructure, or specific issues that a business asks for our support on, it is important that the Chamber maintains strong relationships with many different organisations in order to be able to have a frank and open discussion, or bring different parties together to agree a way forward.

Here are some of the activities that we do on a regular basis:

Lobbying and campaigning to local and national government, politicians and the media
- Quarterly meetings with senior staff & councillors at both Dundee City Council & Angus Council
- Lobbying through Scottish Chambers to Holyrood & Westminster parliaments on many issues – both generally & specifically
- Regular & close connection to DC Thomson, publisher of Courier and other local publications
Inviting high profile politicians, policy makers and planners to speak and debate with our members

Since 2014, we have hosted Nicola Sturgeon (in the run up to the Referendum, as then Deputy First Minister), Jim Murphy (Scottish Labour), Malcolm Roughead (CEO VisitScotland), John Swinney (Deputy First Minister), Chris Law, Dundee West MP to Westminster, who all came to speak to our members at events etc.

Providing a rapid response to media enquiries on business issues

We are regularly contacted by the media to respond to comment on business issues, which requires immediate response, and it would be usual for there to be at least one media article per week which mentions the Chamber & references our support/commentary on local issues.

Generating our own news and real time commentary on topical matters

Our website, social media and magazine are extensively used to share our own news and commentary.

Making maximum use of our communications channels: website; social media; direct mail; e-news; business magazine

We have rapidly grown our audiences in the last year, using our communication channels – one example of this is our web stats:

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Keeping in touch and working with key stakeholders on behalf of our members

We currently connect on a very regular basis with our Platinum Partners, who are amongst the largest public & private sector organisations locally, and who would be classed as key stakeholders in our local area. They are:

- Abertay University
- 80 Bank of Scotland
- DC Thomson
- GSK
- DA
- MTC
- Pneus Michelin
- Michelin CHANGING TIRE
- NHS Tayside
- Dundee University
- GS Group
- Dundee Chamber of Commerce
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Chambers

Making sure your chamber is visible and influential at key local forums and events

We are asked to partner in, speak at and be on the panel at many local events, from the Annual Tourism Conference, to the Dundee Economic Summit. Our Board and staff regularly attend key events and represent the business community. Our CEO is an invited member of the Dundee Fairness Commission.

Building a reputation for being a powerful advocate for the business perspective

We are the first point of contact locally for the media as the voice of business. Both Councils ask us to survey the business community on their behalf, and via the Scottish Chambers, we are very often handpicked amongst the Chamber network to host key national organisations who are looking to connect with the business community locally, such as Microsoft, VisitScotland, Skills Development Scotland, Santander, Abellio etc

Participating in key business sector partnerships locally, nationally and internationally

We represent the business community at Community Planning Partnerships, in Economic Development forum meetings, and at national level our Directors represent various sectors, such as digital, creative, investment, manufacturing in groups and policy meetings. We are an integral partner & driving force in the newly forming Dundee & Angus Developing the Young Workforce Group, which is being set up as a direct recommendation of the Wood Commission, with Scottish Government funding for the first three years, to establish an employer-led group to engage the business community with the future workforce to influence education policy and ensure more young people are employed by businesses.

Being actively connected to the Scottish and British Chambers of Commerce

We are one of the most active and responsive members of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, and often receive this feedback from many members of their team. Our relationship with British Chambers is more arms length currently, as we are not direct members, but have begun the process to join in the near future. We are affiliate BCC members via our relationship with Fife Chamber. We do engage with BCC through our Internationalisation & Exporting work for members, and attend their training and conferences.

We would be happy to discuss any of this activity with you, and look at ways that we can work to support members in this area.

Alison Henderson
Chief Executive Officer, Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce.
Never let anyone define your strategy for you! No-one knows your business and its potential better than you do.
A manufacturing site, part of a European group of 15 car tyre plants, we don’t actually develop new business directly. For us in Michelin Dundee, our version of business development is all about performance in the first instance and then creation of a Strategy that motivates Michelin to give us a bigger slice of the pie. Our focus therefore is to deliver the best performance and most compelling Strategy to attract long term investment and bigger access to the market.

On October the 23rd 2013, myself and two of my senior team went to France with a radical new strategy for the plant. This strategy gave a completely different view of our potential long term contribution to the overall business and was not in any way aligned with our existing Strategy or Mission. So interested was our European team they gave us 6:30 to 7:00pm on a Thursday night in Clermont Ferrand right in the middle of France!

In that half hour we successfully presented a long term vision with levels of performance and profitability that were hard to ignore. At the end of the session it was clear we’d made an impact!

Since that meeting we’ve been on a whirlwind journey towards a completely different future with more jobs, significant increases in output and new products to make. Today we’re starting the deployment of some of the key elements and some others are still under development and review. The biggest visible change that people will be aware of is the construction of our new warehouse. At 20,000m² it’s a huge building and a challenging construction project. We’ve had to re-root one of our wind turbine cables; move a 2m diameter sewer pipe; discharge and treat enough ground water to fill 9 Olympic size swimming pools; accommodate a 1 foot diameter high pressure Gas supply to the City; build a new entrance to the site and a new road; import 70,000 tonnes of stone on 3,500 trucks to build up the site to the same level as the current factory buildings and as I write, we are about to start the equivalent of piling, or in our case 3,000 Vibro Compaction Sites! This new warehouse allows us to completely re-engineer our logistics and, with 95% of our production being exported to Europe and beyond, tackle two of our biggest challenges, cost and proximity to market.

In addition to the warehouse, we were able a few weeks ago we communicate our complete Investment and Growth Strategy as part of a bigger Michelin UK reorganisation. For us in Dundee it confirmed an investment of around £52m in the next 5 years and significant growth in Tonnage. Within this Strategy: We are increasing our Tonnage by 46% over our previous Strategic Plan; We will build a completely new Electric Curing workshop using technology only ever piloted in Michelin; We will modify 2 of our 4 main production lines to produce bigger tyres and so access the biggest part of the European Tyre Market; Install 2 new Tyre Building machines each around £4m to build the tyres of the future; and the list goes on! This transformational Strategy will build a very competitive Tyre Factory with access to the biggest markets and capability to build the tyres of the future. It will add 10 to 15 years onto the life of the Factory!!

So what have we learned? The key to me in all this, is never let anyone define your strategy for you! No-one knows your business and its potential better than you do. So, be bold and aggressive and make it happen! Spot the difference between the two aerial photos. You can see from the second photo the large area of ground just having been cleared in preparation for the building starting. This will give a sense of the scale of the new warehouse project 😃.
Even SANTA gets it wrong sometimes

Has someone got a faulty Christmas present?

Has Santa not delivered what was expected?

Consumers now have 30 days after purchase to return faulty goods and seek a full refund. This is just one of the rules in the new Consumer Rights Act. If you are in business make sure you know the law. Contact us or check www.businesscompanion.info

No-one can get it right all the time, but choosing a Trusted Trader can help – if you need a local trusted firm to carry out work, or are a local business looking to join Scotland’s fastest growing trading standards managed assured trader scheme, then call us on 01382 436260 or visit www.trustedtrader.info for more details.

Trusted Trader - where reputations matter.
There is no law against workplace romances. The Human Rights Act 1998 protects the fundamental right to private life for all individuals. Given that we spend so much of our time at work, it is not at all surprising that many relationships start in the workplace. From provocative gazes across the photocopier to booze-fuelled nights of passion at work functions, over half of UK employees have dated a colleague at some point.

Workplace romances provide scope for a number of potentially problematic issues to arise (you only need to watch a few episodes of Suits for proof of this):

- Sex discrimination, for example, if the business treats one of the lovers less favourably because of the relationship. Imagine a junior colleague courting a more senior employee. What happens if they break up and the junior employee is then demoted or dismissed? Again, this would potentially amount to sex discrimination.

- Sexual harassment – what if the relationship goes sour and the employee who gets ‘dumped’ turns into a crazed stalker? Remember that harassment is conduct related to sex which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive or humiliating environment. This is a very wide definition indeed.

- Victimisation can arise where an employee is subjected to a detriment because they made a particular complaint, for example, complaining about unwanted advances from a colleague.

- Does a romantic involvement give rise to a potential conflict of interest, or risk breaches of confidentiality?

What, then, can employers do to ensure that such romances don’t cause problems in the workplace?

Some American business attempt to outlaw office affairs by having employees sign ‘love contracts’. This is unlikely to work in the UK as employees cannot sign away their legal right to protection from harassment.

Employers should ensure that they have up to date policies governing equal opportunities, discrimination and harassment. Half of the battle for employers is ensuring that staff are aware of the expected standards of conduct in the workplace. Employers are viciously liable for any acts of harassment between colleagues unless they can demonstrate that they took all reasonable steps to prevent the harassment. A well-documented policy, ideally backed up by suitable training is a worthwhile exercise.
We are delighted to announce our appointment as digital partners to Rangers Football Club.

Rangers is an exciting addition to Blue2’s growing portfolio of sporting clients. We are proud to work with St Andrews Links Trust, Scottish Hockey and Sports Oracle - the body responsible for a range of online diplomas for the International Olympic Committee.
What did you say two years ago about your employer? You might not remember but Facebook will!

Facebook and Twitter have transformed the way people communicate, but how does this affect the workplace?

Managing employees’ use of social media remains at the top of employers’ list of concerns. The challenge is amplified by the fact that there are no hard and fast rules about what is acceptable behaviour in this regard.

A recent case emphasising the rise and rise of social media issues at work further highlights the importance of maintaining an effective and robust social media policy.

**Facts**

Mr Smith worked for the British Waterways Board (BWB) within its maintenance team from April 2005 to June 2013. Mr Smith was required to be on standby one week in five for seven days, during which time he could not consume alcohol. In May 2013 one of his managers produced copies from his social media account which indicated that he had been drinking whilst on standby in 2012 (a fact which BWB management already had prior knowledge of) and that he had made numerous derogatory comments about his supervisor.

In June 2013, BWB summarily dismissed Mr Smith for gross misconduct. BWB found, amongst other things, that being under the influence of alcohol and making offensive remarks on social media was unacceptable and a serious breach of BWB’s policy, amounting to gross misconduct.

**Employment Tribunal and EAT proceedings**

Mr Smith brought a claim for unfair dismissal to the Employment Tribunal (ET). The ET held that his dismissal was unfair on the basis that BWB had failed to consider mitigating factors and the historic nature of the comments – which were made two years ago.

BWB subsequently appealed this decision to the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT). It overturned the ET’s decision, finding that the decision to dismiss was in fact, fair. The EAT found that the ET had substituted its own views for that of the employer when it held that BWB did not give weight to the mitigating factors. This was a matter for an employer to decide and the EAT held that BWB’s decision had been within the range of reasonable decisions open to an employer.

**Conclusion**

Policies about messages on social media should be made clear to all employees. The most effective way of doing this is through a social media policy which clearly states what is acceptable use of social media, inside and outside the workplace; and what is not. Employees should be aware of the possible sanctions if they breach the policy.

MacRoberts Employment Team can help you with all aspects of employment law and regularly host seminars and training sessions.

www.dundeeandanguschamber.co.uk
Member Helpline 01382 228545
One of Scotland's most influential plays is officially a sell-out after ticket sales exceeded targets following a fantastic three-week run at Dundee Rep Theatre.

The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil – which was written by renowned British playwright, director and political theorist John McGrath – has been seen by almost 7,500 people since it opened its doors, making it one of the theatre's biggest selling shows.

Performed by Dundee Rep Ensemble, it is the first time in almost 20 years the state-of-the-nation play, which was one of Scotland's first theatrical examples of docu-drama and verbatim storytelling, has been seen professionally.

Audiences from as far north as Aberdeen, and as far south as the Scottish borders, have seen the production, with shows receiving a standing ovation from delighted audiences, and theatre critics awarded five stars to the show.

Nick Parr, the recently appointed Chief Executive at Dundee Rep, described the response to the play as 'overwhelming'.

"We have had the most fantastic three-week run of The Cheviot, and it's in no small part down to the hard work of the cast, crew and the entire team at The Rep, as well as the exceptional direction of Joe Douglas," he said.

"I think it's fair to say that the success of the play proves that many of the social and political issues raised in the piece remain as relevant today in Scotland as they did when it was first written more than 40 years ago."

In 1971, John McGrath set up the theatre company 7:84 Scotland, with the aim of taking popular, political theatre to alternative venues. Its most famous production was The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil, written by McGrath and given its first public airing at the "What Kind of Scotland?" conference in Edinburgh on 31 March 1973, followed by its first public performance a month later at the Aberdeen Arts Centre. Those first performances sealed its position as a cornerstone of contemporary Scottish theatre.

The Cheviot is the story of the exploitation of working class people throughout Scotland's history, from the land clearances of the 19th century to the North Sea oil boom of the 1970s. In order that it appeal to working class audiences, McGrath embraced the techniques of music hall, variety and the ceilidh, with almost the entire production told through the medium of ceilidh dance.

The play brought theatre to a whole new public and has had a considerable influence on generations of playwrights and directors in Scotland and beyond. Many of the issues and themes covered in the play, in particular the political history of the North Sea oil industry, health and safety, working conditions and wages of its workers are still as topical today as they were then.

McGrath's family granted the theatre the rights to the play following discussion between Director Joe Douglas and McGrath's widow, Elizabeth MacLennan, who sadly passed away in June.
There have been several changes in the last few budgets trying to address the perceived difference between employees under PAYE and contractors and other owner managed businesses trading through a company.

These changes, which also include the removal of various reliefs and tax benefits of incorporating sole trader and partnership accounts, have generally meant that the tax burden on Owner Managed Businesses (OMBs) has increased in one way or another.

**Changes to Dividend income taxation and important planning points**

Taxation of dividends will change completely from 6 April 2016. The notional tax credit system will be abolished, which will mean that a lot of basic rate taxpayers will now pay tax on dividends. A new £5,000 dividend allowance will be introduced and, in general, rates on dividends will increase by 7.5%.

This will mean the rate of tax on dividends for an additional rate taxpayer could be as high as 38.1%. This does not mean all taxpayers will see an increase in their tax bill, but for the majority of OMB’s that will be the case. Using up dividend allowances for all shareholders will be essential as well as considering other potential means of extracting money, such as rent, interest on high director’s loan accounts or pension contributions.

It is not just about the tax as the removal of the grossing up of dividends could mean availability of child benefit or personal allowance so all your circumstances need to be taken into account.

You and your advisers will also need to look into potential increases in dividend payments to move reserves out of the company, either as cash payments or credits to shareholders’ loan accounts. This is something that should be considered carefully as everyone’s circumstances are different.

**Changes to taxation of property**

From April 2017 tax relief on mortgage interest for landlords with income at higher rate will be restricted. This can mean a large increase in tax for individuals who own property portfolios and have funded this with interest only mortgages. Use of companies is worth considering.

**Change in use of personal allowances**

One small change that helps lower earning families is that if one spouse or civil partner has unused personal allowance, they can transfer up to £1,060, as long as the receiving spouse or civil partner’s income is within the basic rate threshold.

**Summary**

In some cases it can be costly and time consuming to make adjustments before the above changes kick in, therefore, it is advisable to start planning sooner rather than later.

If you feel any of the above scenarios could affect you personally please contact your adviser or contact us for a free initial, no obligation consultation with Danie or Andy. Call us on 01382 224221.
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Company founders Ian Clark and Paul Barrett draw on unrivalled practical, real life experience from a combined service of 44 years in the Royal Marines; much of this was carried out in the most uncertain and dangerous conditions.
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Mindspace Market Research
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ALISON HENDERSON

This section welcomes the newer members who have recently joined the Chamber.
DACC has created new initiatives in the last year to connect and respond to member needs: the DACC123 Member Promise is a great example of that – share the top three key things that DACC can do to deliver value for your membership, and we will aim to deliver on that promise.

By being proactive and sharing lots of member and business news, we’ve seen dramatic increases in the traffic to our website and engagement with our social media channels. And our events programme is expansive, engaging and seeing record attendances across the spectrum.

Being able to raise the profile of members is important to us. The certificate presentations are warmly welcomed, while the queue to take part in the very popular In Your Shoes Blog continues to lengthen.

We look forward to connecting with all of our members and promoting their businesses across Dundee, Angus and beyond.

Alison

● Free of charge listing with description and contact details in our quarterly business to business magazine “InCommerce”. This is worth £200 at commercial rates.
● Promote your services through our communication channels – website, e-news, social media and InCommerce business magazine.
● Free entry in the Chamber of Commerce Angus & Dundee Online Business Directory.
RE/MAX Dundee
RE/MAX has opened its Dundee franchise as of the 1st of May this year to focus on providing the greater Dundee area with the professional RE/MAX real estate service system. RE/MAX has over 6900 offices worldwide and over 30 offices in Scotland with in excess of 100000 agents servicing the world market. The RE/MAX system focuses on matching buyers to seller’s homes with individualized service making the transfer of this important and sometimes emotional asset as stress free and efficient as possible.
Tel: 01382 597688 • http://remax-dundee.net/

RNIB Scotland
Delivering services to our members need and campaign for their civil and welfare rights. We support children, young people and adults with sight loss to live full and independent lives, and work with others to help minimise preventable sight loss. We support people with sight loss in finding work, and help those in work to retain their jobs.
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We have been established for over 4 years and in that time we have grown from strength to strength with most of our business coming to us by word of mouth. We have a very good track record for the best client and tenant satisfaction. We have never compromised on the quality or service provided to our clients and tenants. We believe in keeping the client and tenant happy and providing them with a friendly service. We have an excellent team within the office who will guide you through all aspects of renting your property or renting a property from us.
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TCO Direct
A modern independent building products distributor in Dundee. At TCO we give you access to 1000’s of market leading products and brands. We specialise in ironmongery, fixings, tools, workwear and site supplies. Our new trade counter at Baluniefield Trading Estate Dundee is now open and we also deliver across Scotland.
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Become a member and have YOUR business profiled here

- Use of the Proud to be a Chamber Member logo on your own promotional material.
- Automatically become part of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce network which represents 26 chambers, 10,000 businesses and their half a million employees – providing a powerful voice for business at a national level.

For further information contact the team on 01382 228545, or email membership@dundeeandanguschamber.co.uk or visit the website at www.dundeeandanguschamber.co.uk
CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP

Member CERTIFICATE PRESENTATIONS

Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa
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Bio Technics
Bank of England

Dundee Football Club
Heal Physiotherapy

IQA Immigration
People Growth
SCR Solutions
Struan Baptie Property Management
Think PR

Unicorn Property Group
Valuta
Cars on Demand
North East Sensory Services
CygnetPEP Ltd
As I write this I finish my 5th month of full-time employment at the Chamber. It's flown in and I can’t quite believe where the time has gone. My responsibilities are varied and include events and membership support, magazine production and exporting cover. I’m enjoying being in full time employment as it means no more university or travelling to Edinburgh on a daily basis. While studying I was fortunate to work with DACC part time so my student life was also very busy but it made the transition to 9-5 life easy. The typical university lifestyle doesn’t prepare you for proper working life.

Donna and I attended a two day course in Birmingham in August to become Certification officers for Certificates or Origin. We both underwent this training to provide support for Shirley and cover when she’s absent. It was great to meet other chamber employees and hear about how all of the Chambers differ. Some of the chamber’s had 2 members of staff when others had 500. September was a crazy month – it saw our High Noon Lunch with John Swinney and Ellis Watson, a Business Showcase with 60 stands, a ‘Funding your Business for Growth’ seminar and our AGM. I got very involved in the planning and carrying out of these events. You don’t realise how much work goes into an event until you’re involved!

The part of my job that I love the most is magazine production. I enjoy collecting content, deciding on page plans then seeing the magazine complete. The last couple of editions have seen the magazine completely transform and improve greatly. 5 months in and I’ve learned a lot, grown and changed as a person and met lots of great members!

Chamber World Host Accreditation

EXCELLENT SERVICE CAN make the difference between your business surviving and thriving, that’s where WorldHost customer service training can help. The chamber team went through their training recently and received their WorldHost accreditation which now means DACC is an accredited organisation. The training was carried out by Ashley at MAJR Properties and included interactive activities using DVD and CD scenarios. “What an enjoyable day training today. A really enthusiastic group who had so much to offer!”

Exporting team is growing!

AS AN EXPORTER, you’ve developed a successful product and now you have to deliver your goods on time and receive payment quickly.

This can be a simple process when you know how, but understanding which document is required for each shipment to each destination can be difficult.

Our export documentation team has grown! We are thrilled that Donna Bell and Rebecca Stott have both successfully completed their Certification Assessment Course, and are now both certified to produce Certificates of Origin on behalf of DACC. The team are here to give support and make the whole documentation process as straightforward as possible.
Scotland needs a step change in digital connectivity

If Scotland is to become a world leading digital nation, then we have to get our infrastructure right. Turning ideas and ambition into businesses, products and services requires Scotland’s people to have access to fast, reliable and affordable digital connectivity but to achieve this, we still have a long way to go.

In terms of mobile digital technology, a glance at Ofcom’s mobile data coverage map shows pretty clearly that Scotland is the worst served part of the UK in terms of the availability of 3G data and the picture for 4G is even worse. It’s no wonder that Scotland’s tourism businesses are angry about us having the worst 3G coverage in the UK – some 12 years after the technology was launched commercially in Britain.

While fixed line broadband is undergoing a rolling series of improvements, aimed at meeting the Scottish Government’s goal of our country becoming a world class digital nation by 2020, the pace of progress does not always appear to keep pace with the advances made in digital technology internationally. Scotland needs a step change in digital connectivity if we hope to be leaders, rather than followers.

What do we need in order to achieve this? The obvious answer is resources and, as we await the outcome of the UK Government’s latest Spending Review, public funding is in danger of becoming even more scant. However, Scottish Chambers of Commerce has been active in pursuing this issue both in a recent meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and in talks with the Scottish Government and opposition MPs in the House of Commons. One of the key lessons of austerity has been the need to maintain investment in infrastructure, giving business the platform to succeed and grow, and as we approach the UK Government’s latest round of cuts to public spending, this experience must be heeded.

At a Scottish level, we must do more to remove the barriers to getting digital infrastructure in place, whether that is mobile telecommunications masts or fibre in the ground. That means a full-scale review of Business Rates – a necessity for this and many other reasons – and measures to ensure that the planning system works to leverage private investment into the development of digital infrastructure in Scotland.

Digital connectivity is fundamental to Scotland’s future success: in business, in tourism and in revitalising our rural areas. Achieving our world class ambitions must be the priority of our new UK Government and our next Scottish Government.
Exporting potatoes and veg

Andrew Skea, Director at Skea Organics, talks about the challenges and how approaches business

When did Skea Organics start and how has it developed?
Skea Organics grew our first crop of organic potatoes in 1999 and soon after diversified into organic vegetables. Over the years we’ve developed markets for these products and subsequently decided to concentrate on the marketing while production is now mostly done by other farming businesses in Angus and Perthshire, with supplies supplemented from as far afield as Wick and the Channel Islands.

Where do you export your products?
Our export markets are mainly within the EU, the biggest ones being Scandinavia, Germany and Ireland. We’re also working on a few other opportunities outside of the EU.

Do you have different types of seed potatoes?
Our seed potatoes are all speciality and premium varieties. While initially specialising in organic seed potatoes, we’ve diversified into heritage and other unique features such as red and blue fleshed potatoes (some of which are not grown organically). We’re finding increased interest in these varieties from gardeners, chefs and niche market retailers. While we don’t expect these potatoes to take a big share of the overall market, the volume is enough for a company of our size.

Some of the interest in blue flesh varieties comes from their reputed antioxidant properties, better known in blueberries, cranberries, etc. The red and blue fleshed varieties have novelty value to chefs in restaurants, at home and for processed products such as crisps.

Have you encountered many obstacles or problems when exporting your seed potatoes?
The obvious obstacles to exporting are languages and currency. We don’t have great language skills so rely on customers speaking English. It’s sometimes easier by email. We do try to make things as easy as possible for customers by offering prices and taking payments in Euros.

The next problem is logistics. The cost of delivery is often a significant part of the price and can take some time to organise. I make an extra effort to visit export customers. It helps to develop the relationship, gives customers confidence in who they’re dealing with and gives me a better understanding of what the customers require.

Seed potatoes are highly legislated with government inspections and certification to control pests and diseases. Thankfully, this all harmonised at an EU level allowing easy trade, but exports outwith the EU are more difficult in small volumes due to legislative and logistics costs.

ANDREW SKEA
GUEST WRITER
www.dundeearanguschamber.co.uk
Member Helpline 01382 228545
# Business Directory

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