

BUSINESS focus

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Official Magazine of Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce

Autumn 2019



10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Luton-based specialist construction
company Ryebridge celebrates
ten years in business

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Bedfordshire
Chamber of
Commerce

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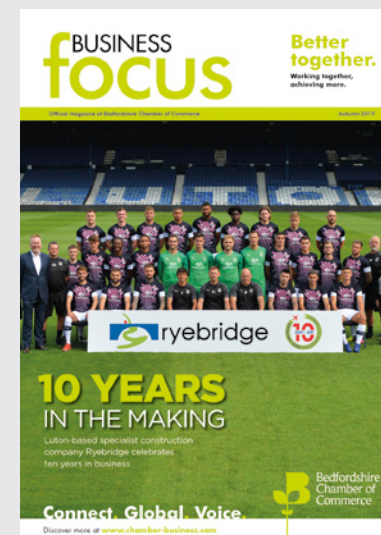
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BUSINESS focus

**Official Magazine of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce**

Our Partners



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Welcome to the autumn edition of Focus

People are at the heart of any business. Without the right people, businesses can't function, thrive or grow.

We may be celebrating one of the lowest rates of unemployment since 1974, but in June 2019 there were an estimated 837,000 job vacancies in the UK. Hundreds of UK businesses are suffering as they struggle to source the right talent to fill these vacancies. It's the result of a burgeoning skills gap and it's putting a strain on organisational growth and development.

What this tells us is that it's time to strengthen the links between education and business – an observation which is consistently fed back to us from our members.

How can we highlight useful skills, vocational paths and developing sectors that could appeal to the large proportion of young people who cannot afford to (or simply don't want to) pursue further education? How can we communicate better with today's youth and ready them for the world of work?

As a part of our Business Ambassador programme, we are asking Chamber members to commit just one day a year to help raise awareness of vocational training, up-skilling programmes and apprenticeships in local schools and colleges. We hope that by forging relationships with local education facilities we can start to attract young, mouldable and ambitious talent into the business community – those who can grasp news skills, offer new insights and promote innovation.

Do you think you could pledge just one day a year?

Let's talk. Drop me an email on
justin.richardson@chamber-business.com

#workingtogether

#achievingmore

#businesstogetherness

Justin Richardson

Chief Executive



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Jeremy Brockis
Chairman of Bedfordshire
Chamber of Commerce

“It was great to hear about the considerable number of commercial property developments that there have been in and around Bedford. Businesses are taking up these opportunities, and there is plenty of scope for this to continue.”

The Chairman's View

We appear to be in for a turbulent few weeks, even without The Ashes and our nervy batsmen. The Brexit debacle continues, possibly coming to a head, and possibly not. The markets are getting jittery about recessions (who'd have thought the expression “inverted yield curve” would hold so much fascination for the media?), and the £ is going down the pan.

Some of this is just hype and the endless desire of the press to sensationalise things and sell papers or fill webpages. But some is not. The country's GDP contracted by 0.5% between April and June this year, the first fall in GDP in over six years. Services continue to outperform many other parts of the economy, but not to the same extent as previously. Brexit uncertainty is the cause of much of this, made worse by the running down of stock levels that were previously inflated by the lack of clarity at the time we were last due to leave the EU in March. It is not much comfort that the government finally appears to have cottoned on to the need to prepare for a no-deal Brexit, something that should have been done a couple of years ago. The country is woefully under-prepared.

However, there are plenty of things to be hopeful about. We will no doubt eventually muddle through the Brexit quagmire, as we always do, and the low value of the £ creates great export opportunities and makes inward investment cheap for overseas companies. At the end of July I attended a series of presentations at the Bedford Business Group, and met with members of the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of Bedford Borough Council.

The Council's Economic Development Team has been very active and it was great to hear about the considerable number of commercial property developments that there have been in and around Bedford. Businesses are taking up these opportunities, and there is plenty of scope for this to continue.

It is also great to see that the Council appears to be very attuned to the need to attract and retain quality jobs in the area. Sustainable, decent housing and a good quality of life are essential to any thriving environment. The fact that Bedford has already been rewarded with several high-quality tenants in these new developments is a testament not only to the efforts that they had made but also the faith that the world of commerce has in Bedfordshire as a business destination.



David Sheridan with the shortlisted students from schools across Luton

Engineering Bursary Award 2019

This year we celebrated 10 years of the Engineering Bursary Award. Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce were pleased to work together again with David Sheridan of Veruth Holdings. The bursary of £15,000 is awarded to a Luton student who is going on to university to study engineering.

The entries were judged by David Sheridan, Brian Hibbert CBE, Ruairi McDonagh, Professor Colin Humphreys of Cambridge University and this year they were joined by Jean-Paul Skoczylas CEng MICE a recently Chartered Engineer who has worked extensively in UAE, Rwanda and now back in the UK.

Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce hosted the award ceremony on the afternoon of Friday 24th May. The Chamber welcomed David Sheridan, students and representatives from Luton Sixth Form, Bedford College and Cardinal Newman Catholic School to the presentation. This year's winner was Zuhayr Hamayun from Luton Sixth Form College.

Zuhayr commented: “I have a real passion for engineering, I have built robots and a bionic hand. I'm pleased David saw this passion in my essay.”



David with his year's winner Zuhayr Hamayun from Luton Sixth Form College

David Sheridan said: “It is now 10 years since the Chamber and ourselves launched this bursary scheme. The number and quality of the applicants improves every year and we are delighted that we are giving Luton students a real opportunity. We have now had 6 boys and 4 girls as winners and all those are going on to great careers. Engineering has infinite possibilities and needs many more to come forward. The judges and I are constantly impressed by the enthusiasm and determination shown by all these young people.”

Counting the cost of domestic abuse to businesses

With one in four women and one in six men suffering from domestic abuse in their lifetime, the human cost is immeasurable, and the financial cost to employers is high. Figures from the Home Office show that domestic abuse costs UK businesses almost £2bn* each year due to absences, lost wages, sick pay and a drop in productivity.

Many businesses may have staff who have faced, or are currently facing, domestic abuse, either as victims, witnesses or perpetrators, yet it is acknowledged that only 5 per cent of businesses have a domestic abuse policy.

With this in mind, Bedfordshire Police recently held its first multi-agency conference for the county's businesses to highlight the signs that someone in their workforce may be a victim, or even a perpetrator, to demonstrate the impact that this can have on a working environment and signpost where to get help.

Detective Chief Inspector Jackie Dadd, head of the force's Emerald team, a specialist unit dedicated to the investigation of domestic abuse, said: "It's excellent that we have been able to bring together employers from across Bedfordshire, to raise awareness of how to recognise and assist employees that are both abused and abusing."

"We spend around a third of our time at work and employers are in a unique position to create a supportive workplace culture that recognises all wellbeing needs and helps to tackle the fear and stigma of abuse and break the silence around this issue."

"There is no excuse for this behaviour, and if you are suffering abuse or violence, remember, it is not your fault. You are not alone, and there are many organisations and people that can help you. We will listen, we will believe you and we can help."

Domestic abuse can be reported by calling 101. In an emergency, always call 999.

* Source: Public Health England July 2018

Employers can find out more about a domestic abuse policy for their workplace from the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse by visiting eida.org.uk - it's free, and helps employers to provide a supportive environment for staff who are affected by domestic abuse in any way.

Helpful tips for employers...

Recognise

1. Look out for sudden changes in behaviour and/or changes in the quality of work performance for unexplained reasons, despite having a previously strong record.
2. Look for changes in the way an employee dresses. Are they wearing excessive clothing on hot days, or have changed the amount of make-up they wear?

Respond

3. If someone discloses experiencing domestic abuse, do not ask for proof. Instead, reassure them that they are believed.
4. Reassure the employee that your organisation understands how domestic abuse may affect work performance and the support that can be offered.

Support

5. Divert phone calls and email messages and look to change a phone extension or mobile number if an employee is receiving harassing calls.
6. Agree with the employee what to tell colleagues and how they should respond if their abuser telephones or visits the workplace.
7. Ensure the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area, and check arrangements for safely getting to and from home.
8. Keep a record of any incidents of abuse that occur in or around the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits by the abuser.
9. Put domestic abuse helpline information where employees can discreetly see it, for example, on the back of toilet doors.

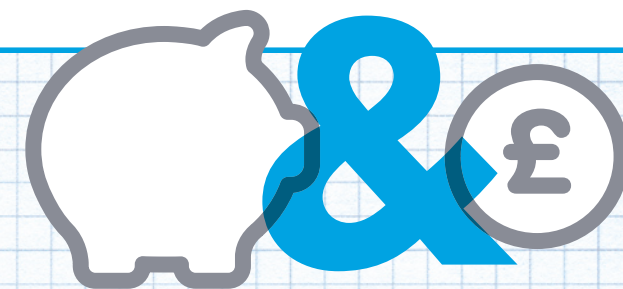
Refer

10. Keep a list of support services offered in your area that is easily accessible, and refer employees to appropriate organisations that deal with domestic abuse.

Signs that someone could be a perpetrator of domestic abuse

An excellent worker, manager, or other professional could also be the perpetrator of abuse, yet may successfully hide this at work. If an individual is often absent, or late, in relation to issues or situations at home, or contacts their partner repeatedly during working hours, this could indicate a need for control. Perpetrators may display bullying behaviour towards others in the work environment, or blame others for their problems, especially their partner. They may not take criticism well, and may act defensively when challenged.

Quarterly Economic Survey Report



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

Our latest results have been published and the outcome for Q2 2019 saw a small uplift in business confidence with 60% of respondents expecting turnover to improve over the next 12 months and 52% expected profits to rise.

- As forecast in Q1 2019, domestic sales dipped with tough trading conditions contributing to a net contraction of 11% points.
- In stark contrast, exporters in Q2 2019 outperformed expectations with results showing that international trade had gains in reported sales and future orders.
- Firms reported freezes in investment intentions for plant & machinery, recruitment and training.

The Bottom Line

To see the report in full please visit www.chamber-business.com

UK Growth Stalling Amid Manufacturing Slowdown

Responding to the results, Suren Thiru, head of Economics at the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

"These results indicate that underlying economic conditions in the UK remain decidedly downbeat, with intensifying uncertainty over Brexit, the rising costs of doing business in the UK and a sluggish global economy combining to suppress key drivers of growth."

"The manufacturing sector endured a challenging quarter with the downward pressure from the running down of excess stock, tougher global trading conditions and rising upfront costs driving a deterioration in a number of the key indicators. While there was a modest recovery in service sector activity, the improvement was insufficient to negate the significant slowdown recorded in the previous quarter and so, together with a weakening in manufacturing sector output, points to minimal GDP growth in the second quarter of 2019."

"The overall easing in inflation expectations in the quarter suggests that consumer price growth will remain muted over the near term. This is welcome news for household finances and leaves the MPC with more than enough leeway to keep interest rates steady over the medium term."



Suren Thiru, Head of Economics
at the British Chambers of
Commerce

Chamber Events

You'll find plenty of opportunities to connect with other Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce members and local businesses at any of our upcoming events in 2019. Events are being added to our calendar all the time, please visit www.chamber-business.com to see what is new.

Connect Over Coffee

Wednesday 18th September, 9.15am – 11am

Moggerhanger Park

Free of Charge

The Chamber invites you to our informal Coffee Morning. This event will give you the chance to explore the various services available to your business through your membership and to network with other new and existing members.

It will include a brief presentation on some of our key benefits. Your membership can benefit your whole business—why not bring colleagues with you?



MOGGERHANGER PARK

Business Breakfast with Active Luton



Wednesday 25th September, 8am – 10am

Inspire: Luton Sports Village

Free of Charge

Recent guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence highlights how employers can and should be encouraged to support employee health and wellbeing. To assist with this aim we are delighted to be hosting a breakfast event with Active Luton so you can find out more. There will also be plenty of opportunity to connect with other guests. Active Luton's Healthy Lifestyles team, part of Total Wellbeing Luton, will explain how they can help you support wellbeing in your workplace with local and national initiatives.

Meet the Buyer

How to become a supplier of Luton Council

Wednesday 2nd October, 9.30am – 11.30am

Youthscape, Luton

MEMBERS ONLY - Free of Charge

Luton Council is committed to increasing its spend on goods and services with local providers in order to maximise the local economic benefits of procurement. This event is aimed at explaining what the Council spends its money on and how suppliers can engage with them to maximise their chances of winning contracts. There will be information on how to write effective bids/quotes and the obligations on companies when they contract with the Council plus an opportunity to ask questions. The Service Manager for Procurement will also provide an overview of the new 5 year Prosperity through Procurement Strategy and explain how it integrates with wider objectives on economic regeneration, eradicating poverty and inclusive growth.

Luton

Network With Your Neighbours

Thursday 10th October, 9.15am – 11am

Keech Hospice, Luton

£10.00 + vat

Join us at Keech Hospice together with the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, for a morning of networking. We have joined forces to provide this chance to meet members of a neighbouring Chamber and make the most of this great networking opportunity. Enjoy coffee & croissants while introducing yourself to like-minded people who could be the connection your business needs to grow. Places at this event are limited so book now and get this date in your diary. We look forward to seeing you there.



Meet the Neighbours

Tuesday 19th November, 12noon – 2pm

Harben House Hotel, Newport Pagnell

Members Only: £17.00 + vat

Business doesn't recognise borders, which is why you should join us for a great event where you can promote your businesses to like-minded business people from neighbouring areas Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire. This is your opportunity to meet with up to 90 different business people in an informal atmosphere with speed-type networking and a light lunch. Make sure you bring plenty of business cards and be prepared for a fun and fast approach to networking. Maximum of 2 people per company.



Christmas Members Reception

Thursday 5th December, 4.30pm – 7.30pm

The Rufus Centre, Flitwick

MEMBERS ONLY - Free to attend

This members' only event offers you the ideal opportunity to network with both new and existing members. The Chamber team will also be on hand to update you on our current services and benefits. Make sure you bring plenty of business cards and be prepared to meet like-minded professionals.

Would you like to promote your business further?

Why not take part in our mini exhibition and let fellow members find out more about you and your business. If you are interested in taking part at a cost of £75 + VAT please drop us an email events@chamber-business.com



At first glance, the four-day week sounds like a concept dreamt up by a holistic think-tank, or perhaps a trade union, or just someone unapologetically work-shy. The idea employee satisfaction can be increased as a result of having to boot-up the computer one day less per week is quite believable, but can this reduction in work days really lead to an increase in output as well?

The idea of the four-day week has come to the fore over the past couple of decades. Its emergence has been in line with our continued move into the service sector and away from traditional 9-to-5 manufacturing. Adding in technology's ability to offer 24-hour global connectivity, plus an upsurge in self-employment, it means our attitudes towards work/life balance have evolved, moving back towards the individual.

Overall, the acceptance of the four-day week as a way of positioning workers so that they stay at maximum efficiency has been embraced only partially so far, and typically in focused geographical areas – Scandinavia, for instance – or in industries that perhaps play by slightly different rules than the rest of us. And yet the growth of the concept, not least in well-renowned forward-thinking, progressive economies, such as Germany, has experts and researchers examining carefully the evidence. Only last year, Pursuit Marketing, a telephone and digital marketing firm in Glasgow, reported a 30% uplift in productivity in the two years after employees were given Fridays off.

At first glance there appears little not to like about an extra day off, but the fundamental theory behind the four-day week is that any 'lost time' on the fifth day is reinvested into the others, either consciously or organically.

Put another way, some firms will attempt to redistribute missing hours into the four days that remain (perhaps by asking workers to start an hour earlier and finish an hour later). Those employees are said to be fresher and in a better frame of mind to focus, because (a) they have the carrot of another day off, and (b) on the whole they are more reenergised from increased leisure time.

Employees are said to be fresher and in a better frame of mind to focus.

This latter concept is really at the heart of the four-day week and employers' pursuit of maximum efficiency. As a population, for the most part we are largely conditioned to subscribe to the idea of 9-to-5, Monday to Friday (with a few obvious exceptions). Experts believe having a clumsy, heavily-blocked schedule creates wastage – the slow acceleration into work mode on a Monday morning; the casual attitude to lunch breaks; the daily post-4pm lull; the drifting, distracted nature of Friday afternoons – and affects our happiness.

The theory is that by getting employees into the mindset that every minute counts, you concertina out these blemishes, creating a workforce that is a flowing, targeted, driven entity from minute one, and more to the point, one that gleans satisfaction from its workplace.

The problem for business owners is buy-in. The likelihood, of course, is that employees will jump on the idea straight away,

but the conditions by which the four-day week works must be obeyed. While scientists believe any new pro-worker concept will lift the brain into super-efficiency mode, they also note that, over time, it will begin to re-centre, so this implies the need for employers to restate ideas regularly, perhaps by hardlining principles (like planning a schedule at the start of each day, or insisting breakfast should be eaten at home, not at desks), or by reinforcing rewards (such as a monthly team outing, perhaps even on 'day five').

A telephone and digital marketing firm reported a 30% uplift in productivity.

By the same token, employees will also need help with the adjustment. They've got to be more self-aware, happy to do away with long breaks, with 'watercooler chat', and with the distractions of social media. They also need to be prepared to go at the task 100 per cent on those work days.

Susan Weinschenk, behavioral psychologist, researcher and author of Brain Wise, says: "It's a fine balance. Employers must tap into and observe workers' circadian rhythms and see if the change is really right for them. After all, fighting against your rhythm won't make you any more productive; working with it, on the other hand will".

Employees should also be encouraged to use 'day five' productively. In other words, the important thing, psychologically, is to replace work with something worthwhile. "Work is a known contributing factor to poor health, so it follows then that time away from work should be spent attempting to reverse the negative impact and effects of our busy lives," says Aidan Harper, researcher at the New Economics Foundations.

Businesses also need to plot around the threat that the company, as a whole, may be uncontactable on, say, a Wednesday. This could be partly countered by leaving some key individuals to work on a designated 'off day', but scientists believed the holy 'day five' must be approached in the same way as a weekend day in terms of removing employees from work tasks, if the maximum effect of the four-day week is to be gained.

On the whole, the secret to succeeding at the four-day week goes much further than stripping out one day from the schedule. More, it is an overall drive to optimise efficiency and to bring about new working practices in every hour of days spent in the office; and the concept will fail if employees simply turn up 20 per cent less with the same mindset as before.

If, on the other hand, they can reconfigure their entire approach to work life and the processes by which they construct their day, the combined potential for commercial uplift and enhanced personal wellbeing are there for all to see. **JE**

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What our clients say about us...

"The information Utilitrack provides is comprehensive and easy to read. We are very pleased with the service provided so far - all we have to do is respond quickly to secure a good deal!"

- Linda McLennan, Actons Solicitors

"I've had numerous offers from others who haven't exactly endeared me to them, whereas Utilitrack have never promised the earth and have always been realistic about what they've said they might be able to do."

- Mark Blundell, Quantrelle Packaging

"The service from Utilitrack is simple and all-encompassing. It simplifies my life and allows me to do what I need to do on a day-to-day basis instead."

- Paul Bromley, Brethertons LLP

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hester.Sowerby@utilitrack.co.uk or
pep.valerio@utilitrack.co.uk

“We know businesses don't consistently get the best deal in a very confusing energy market. So by simplifying which supplier to choose through our free comparison service, we help them save time and money.”

As one of the UK's leading utility consultants we
Help businesses spend less
GAS | ELECTRICITY | WATER



PAY DAY

There's not a company nor sole trader in the land who hasn't invested time and energy worrying about non-payment of an invoice. We've all got to the point where it seems the biggest battle of making money is not the winning of business or the slaving over work... it's actually getting paid at the end of it.

At least today technology is there to help in the form of online invoicing, cashless banking and the ability to get paid the very second a project is completed... if only it were that easy though. Sometimes being smart about your requests for payment is better than becoming angry, as these successful methods prove...

Dynamic Discounts

Just like you pay a premium at the airport to be fast-tracked to the front of the queue, so too will a number of businesses move your invoice to the top of the pile if there is something in it for them. Usually, a discount of around 10% is enough to get payment on its way promptly, but be certain to note a definite payment date... 'by the end of this week', 'within seven days' etc. Many accounts departments will insist they are hamstrung by company policy, but take that with a rather large pinch of salt. The truth is – and this applies to businesses of all sizes, from the sole trader to big multinationals – decision-makers will very often respond positively and quickly to the lure of saving money.

Perks at Pitch Stage

The concept of adding value is another that may well get your invoice through quicker. At the booking stage, negotiate and arrange for 'fast payment' of the invoice in exchange for something additional you can add to the pot. That could be extra content, faster delivery or a quicker reporting timeframe. Whatever it is, as long as the cost to you is minimal, your client feels the benefit of 'something for nothing', and you get paid quicker.

Real Rapport

Building rapport and friendship with clients is something every business owner and executive should be doing anyway, but the use of that familiarity doesn't just stop at winning a contract in the first place and should extend well into the process where you get paid at the end of it. Ultimately, good business is about having fun and enjoying the exchanges with clients, so if they are receptive to

that way of working when you are being useful to them (as a supplier), they should be happy enough to lean back towards you when you're using those good vibes because you want to be paid. Fair's fair.

Look at the Legacy

Just because something's happened in the past, it doesn't give automatic licence for it to be repeated – for instance, we don't still ride to the shops on BMXs with Rick Astley being piped out of our Walkman headphones. And yet, in business, setting a precedent by action can be very effectively worked to your benefit, particularly where getting paid is concerned. Any good piece of accounting software should be able to tell you the typical length of time a client takes to pay, as well as individual payment dates for past invoices. If you can show any previous month where an invoice was paid quickly then use that as sufficient evidence that you expect to be remunerated again in a similarly snappy timeframe.

It's Easy to CC

If you're sending invoices across email, then consider who else you can add to the mix. The very simple action of CCing in someone in the accounts department does two things. Firstly, it ensures the invoice gets to them (rather than relying on your work contact to pass it on), but it can also add pressure to sign it off quickly simply because someone else is 'on the line'. If you're feeling really brave, include in the big boss on the communication, though remember some people can feel uneasy about the idea of being looked over, so judge your CCs carefully for maximum impact and minimum offence.

Pursue a Purchase Order

Many companies use purchase order systems to budget and manage their own cash flow. Make it your business to know if your customer is one of them and, if so, always ensure you have a PO before you even commence work, as there's no guarantee you'll get paid at all without one. JE

10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Luton-based specialist construction company Ryebridge celebrates ten years in business in 2019



Ryebridge is a local success story and Managing Director Daniel talks passionately about how important the local area is to him and his business.

Daniel said: "When we set out on this journey 10 years ago it began like most businesses. We had the vision and desire, but we also needed to build our reputation and it can't be achieved overnight. We have aspirations to keep growing, and at the same time we take huge pride in our local area and believe we have a responsibility to support the local community."

"We believe we have a responsibility to support the local community."

Ryebridge began its days as a family-run business but even through its transition to a multi-million-pound organisation, the family ethos and values remain strongly represented in the organisation.

In 2019 Ryebridge announced its support for Luton Town Football Club, coming on board as sponsor of the away kit. Luton Town Chief Executive Gary Sweet said: "The synergy between Ryebridge's ethos, and our own culture is plain to see, and we are excited to have them as a sponsor as we return to the Championship."

The Ryebridge approach is solution focused, as illustrated by its 10-year relationship with London Luton Airport (LLA), which over the last decade has doubled its annual passenger numbers from 9 to 18 million. Not only does this increase the economic activity within one of the area's biggest employers but it creates jobs and interest in the local area.

Highlights from the Decade

2009

Ryebridge is launched and wins its first job at London Luton Airport (LLA), which has 9 million passengers.

2010

First RoSPA silver award is secured, with the company expanding and moving to its current HQ at Barratt Industrial Park.

2011

The first Ryebridge charity cycle ride. Turnover exceeds £1 million.

2012

Second RoSPA silver award is won.



2013

Ryebridge wins high profile two-year contract at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and scoops its first Gold RoSPA.



2014

Ryebridge completes work on LLA's HV Ringmain, updating the 50+ year old High Voltage infrastructure, and is appointed by Signature Flight Support - demolishing a Hanger to create new stands.

Ryebridge wins its first Green Apple Award for environmental awareness.

2015

A new apprenticeship programme is launched, with an emphasis on recruiting locally and supporting schools/colleges.

Ryebridge continues to work with LLA, with passenger numbers now exceeding 12 million.

2016

Ryebridge announces partnership with Team GB boxing Captain Jordon Reynolds.

Secures the new LLA New Hotel Taxiway project, worth £7 million.

2017

LLA passenger numbers rise to 15.7 million.

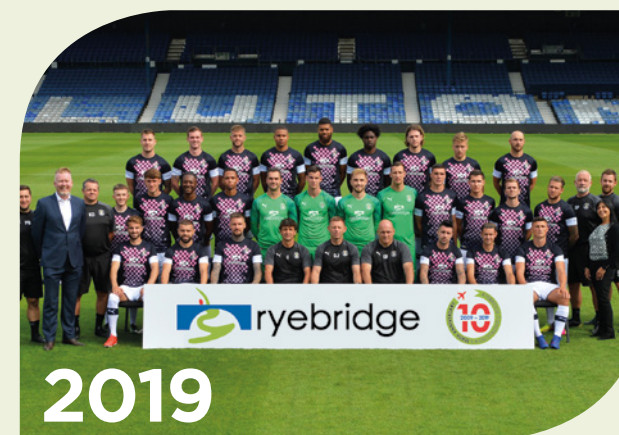
Ryebridge's turnover exceeds £10 million.

2018

Ryebridge launches a bespoke app for staff and is awarded its 7th Gold RoSPA.

Wins the LLA £9.4 million Foxtrot Taxiway project, with the airport breaking the 18 million passenger barrier.

Appointed to prepare groundworks for £53 million Oaklands College redevelopment.



2019

Ryebridge announces Luton Town Football Club sponsorship, a commitment to raising £40,000 for Age Concern Luton and plans are launched for a party!

Crowned Business of the Year at Bedfordshire Business Awards (under 50 staff), praised by judges for 'outstanding initiative, boldness and imagination'.



Ryebridge charity cyclists in Paris

All for Charity

Thousands of miles have been cycled across the UK and Europe, raising close to £300,000 for good causes. Ryebridge has also invested in grassroots football by supporting **Oaklands Wolves**, giving children to access structured football with excellent coaching. **Keech Hospice**, **Level Trust** and **Luton Food Bank** are among the local charities supported by Ryebridge.

On Friday 13th September 2019 Ryebridge is hosting its 10-year anniversary Golf Day and Gala Dinner, this year raising funds for **Age Concern Luton**, a charity committed to tackling loneliness, anxiety and poverty among Luton's older people. The golf day will be a four-ball team event at the prestigious Luton Hoo course. Businesses are able to sponsor a hole. The black tie Gala Dinner will be hosted by former Olympian swimmer Professor Greg Whyte OBE.

Daniel said: "On our guest list is Spice Girl Mel C, rowing champion and double Olympic gold winner James Cracknell, double Olympic silver medallist/swimmer Jazz Carlin, BBC Breakfast's Dan Walker and the UK Invictus Games Team Captain Mark 'Dot' P. It should be an amazing evening. To have a great time while supporting a worthwhile cause is the perfect way to mark our birthday."

- To find out more about these fantastic events visit www.ryebridgeconstruction.com/ryebridge-is-10



Professor Greg Whyte OBE training with Mel C



www.ryebridgeconstruction.com



identifi Auto Tech

identifi Office Professionals

identifi global

GLOBAL RECRUITMENT COMPANY CONTINUES EXPANSION TO THE HEART OF BEDFORD

A recruitment group with global outreach is launching a new company in Bedford's Castle Quarter, using it as a base to expand services into the East Midlands, East Anglia and the Home Counties.

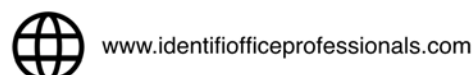
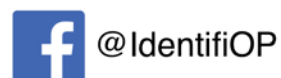


Founded in 2015 by directors Gary Fay and Peter Sanders, identifi Global has quickly established itself with many leading UK and European companies as a trusted, knowledgeable partner with an extensive network in the Cyber Security skilled sector. The new company, identifi Office Professionals, will take advantage of a growing demand for candidates across a range of business functions, including Finance, HR, Sales & Marketing, Procurement and Product. Through its candidate charter the company will continue to apply its candidate first approach to these sectors and plans to provide up to a dozen new jobs within the Bedford business in its first year.

"The Bedford Borough economy is continuing to grow, and identifi Office Professionals' expansion in the borough is another example of significant recent business investment. I'm very pleased to welcome companies such as identifi Office Professionals, who offer services to local skilled residents, to Bedford Borough, and I wish them every success in their new venture."

Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson

In 2016 the company launched identifi Auto Tech to recruit automotive professionals across the UK and Europe. It now boasts the largest database of automotive vehicle technicians in the UK and is recruitment partner for leading vehicle bodyshop repair and advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) specialists. The Auto Tech business will also relocate to the Bedford office.



Member News



Star Platforms provide a Niftylift articulating boom lift to Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club

UK powered access rental company, Star Platforms, provided a 21m Niftylift Height Rider Hybrid (HR21H) articulated boom lift to Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club (HHTCC) so they could update their sponsor signage for the new season.

Located just outside the town centre, HHTCC are a family orientated cricket and social club running many cricket teams within the local community. As the new season kicked off, the time came for them to update their sponsor signage, and they contacted Star Platforms to arrange the hire of a powered access platform to complete the work.

Andy Turbutt, Sponsorship Manager, HHTCC, commented: "Whenever it comes to updating our sponsors' branding or external maintenance, Star have always been helpful in selecting and hiring the right machine for us. With the patio area directly outside the pavilion, a cherry picker makes updating the signage much easier and safer than alternative methods. The machine is also narrow enough to be able to navigate the grounds and trees, so we can reach all areas of the building to carry out the required updates and maintenance".

With a working height of 21m and a working outreach of 12.8m, the 21m Niftylift HR21H articulating boom lift enables users to reach up and over obstacles on the ground to access hard to reach areas and complete the task at hand.

Richard Miller, Managing Director, Star Platforms said: "We are always happy to support local businesses and are pleased to be able to help one of our local cricket clubs with a machine to update their signage. As a sponsor ourselves, it's great to see how well the club is doing and the updated signage is a welcome addition to the pavilion".

For more information about Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club, visit their website: <https://www.hhtcc.co.uk/>.

Working together, achieving more.

Celebrating 20 Years of Commercial Creativity

Back in August 1999 two Luton-born-and-bred entrepreneurs embarked on a journey that neither of them imagined would last for 20 months, let alone 20 years; but here we are in 2019 and Ian Abrahams and Jeremy Brown, directors of JNB Publishing Ltd, are celebrating a major milestone by securing a brand new premises to enable them to continue to evolve and grow into their next 20 years of helping other businesses succeed.

A lot has changed in two decades, including the way the world approaches marketing. In 1999 there was no Facebook, Yellow Pages was a household product and a website was just a nice extra thing to have! All that has changed and marketing your business now is more challenging than ever; trying to stand out and be seen above everyone else. JNB has adapted and innovated to overcome these challenges for themselves and, in turn, for their customers through the ever-evolving range of products and services at their disposal. What hasn't changed is the customer-focused and innovative thinking that has always been at the heart of the JNB approach.

Created as the publishing entity for leisure and entertainment title 'Luton at Large' magazine (which ran for over 16 years), JNB has evolved to become established as a leading creative agency offering design, print and digital services to companies both locally and nationally. Working with national brands such as Capital & Regional, John Lewis & Partners, Arsenal Football Club, Travelopia, Accor Hotels, YouGov and more, JNB combines years of experience with a unique customer service ethos and merges it with a flair for creativity that offers a complete package to help any business raise its brand to the next level.

Continued growth in business has driven the need for more production and staff capacity and, to that end, the second half of this year will see JNB relocating to a bigger, better premises while remaining in Luton, where the company has enjoyed so much success and support from the local business community.

If you would like to engage with JNB on any creative design, print or digital projects to help your business grow and thrive over the next 20 years, then visit www.jnbpublishing.co.uk, email info@jnbpublishing.co.uk or, even better, call 01582 416171 and discuss a bespoke solution to your marketing requirements.



Member News

How training can support your business and staff

When budgets are tight one of the things that businesses cut back on is training. Staff training in many organisations is seen more as bonus, rather than an everyday need. However, you should think of it as an investment, not just of money, but of time too. Training certainly grows and develops the person receiving it, but it benefits their colleagues too and has a positive impact across the business.

Why offer training? It attracts the right people to your business and helps you to retain the right people. It bridges skills gaps by transforming inexperienced staff. Training develops agile teams and builds employee engagement and satisfaction. It improves performance, productivity and moral. Then why aren't more businesses developing their employees? The cost and finding the right training are the two main reasons stated by employers, but there is support for training out there.

Funding is available. In Bedfordshire there is a programme called Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) that helps to solve both these problems. It is funded by the government and consists of specialist providers offering a range of training including ILM leadership and management, team leading, AAT finance and bookkeeping, sales and marketing, social media for business, improved IT productivity, business Improvement techniques and customer services. The SSW programme can also support businesses when they are restructuring with outplacement support and training. There is also funding available for those who need help finding work or becoming self-employed.

Don't miss out! Why not take advantage of the funded training that is on offer?

To find out more about Skills Support for the Workforce call TCHC on 01923 698 449 or contact ssw@tchc.net

Positive Psychology Summit UK

Chill Your Beans and Autonomous Ideas hosted The First Positive Psychology Summit UK in Bedford this April. The event appealed to delegates from across the world with guests from Australia, Qatar, Ireland and Luton to name a few.

We were extremely happy, as positive psychologists usually are, at the turn out and support for this inaugural event. Bedford was a brilliant host with many compliments given to the beautiful river, Italian food and welcoming atmosphere. The event was so successful we will be doing it all over again. Our next venture will be in Derby and we are looking for sponsors as well as submissions from speakers and workshop facilitators.

All information is available on our summit website - www.positivepsychologysummituk.org. We have numerous sponsorship packages available and would love to hear from companies interested in being a part of this inclusive event all about applying the science of human flourishing.

If you would like to speak in more detail, contact Cat Stacey - Chill Your Beans - Positive, Wellbeing, Character Education. 07971 858346. chillyourbeansinfo@gmail.com



HRH The Princess Royal visits the Forest of Marston Vale

HRH The Princess Royal visited the Forest Centre & Millennium Country Park on 30th July to dedicate the Forest of Marston Vale to the The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy.

HRH The Princess Royal planted a tree to commemorate the Forest's accreditation to the project, and unveiled a plaque in the Charity's new Forest Shelter. Her Royal Highness was accompanied on the visit by Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Colonel Chris Sharwood-Smith MBE and during the tour of the Park, The Princess met members of the Forest Team, Volunteers, and local school children.

The Forest joins the ranks of only three other accredited forests in the UK - the National Forest, Epping Forest and Wentwood, in Wales.

Speaking after the visit, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis said "We are extremely proud of The Forest of Marston Vale and the huge impact it makes on our environment and the quality of our community life in Bedfordshire. It is a great privilege to welcome HRH The Princess Royal to visit this wonderful project and for her to dedicate the Forest of Marston as part of the Queens Commonwealth Canopy"

Grant Sorrell, Director at the Forest of Marston Vale said "Today's visit was a huge honour and fantastic recognition of everything the Charity's staff and volunteers put into creating the Forest. I hope everyone living in the region will take pride in their Community Forest becoming part of an international initiative which recognises the importance of trees and forests to all our futures".

The Forest of Marston Vale (Registered Charity No. 1069229) covers the 61 square mile area between Bedford and Milton Keynes and has planted over 1.5 million trees to date, taking tree cover from 3% (the lowest in Europe) to over 15%. Their aim is to plant another 5 million trees, creating a greener heart of Bedfordshire.

Find out more at www.marstonvale.org or www.queenscommonwealthcanopy.org

Myths About Recruiting Apprentices

In my role as Head of Apprenticeship, I am in daily contact with employers discussing how apprenticeships can fit into their businesses, however there is a lot of incorrect information out there about apprenticeships. Here are some examples of things I regularly come across:

Apprenticeships are only for young people - Simply not the case! Apprenticeships are for anyone aged 16 or over, we have a lot of apprentices at the College who have decided on a change of career and used their apprenticeship to retrain.

I won't be able to get rid of them if they don't meet my standards - Apprentices are your members of staff and are treated as such, therefore they are subject to the same HR policies and procedures; the only thing we ask is that you keep us informed at all times so we can offer support to you and the apprentice. If the placement doesn't work out then we will help them identify alternative employment.

There is too much paperwork involved in recruiting an apprentice - The College has worked hard on making this as stress free as possible and all of the forms are electronic to help with the administration.

They won't have the knowledge and skills I need to do the job - The new apprenticeship standards that have recently been released, require us to design a training programme to meet your needs; in the initial stages our delivery team will sit and discuss with you what you need your apprentice to be able to achieve by the end of their apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are for only low level members of the workforce - There are now hundreds of apprenticeships ranging from entry level positions all the way up to doctorate, you can embed an apprentice into your company at any level now.

There isn't an apprenticeship in the area I have a skills gap in - There are currently nearly 700 newly designed apprenticeship standards, at Central Bedfordshire College we can help you identify the best matching apprenticeship to suit your skills gaps.

Apprenticeships are for people who didn't do well at school - the ultimate choice of who you recruit is you, however apprenticeships have various elements to the apprenticeship that the individual has to achieve, for example maths, English, qualifications and end point assessments; the College will work with you to ensure you do not set the apprentice or yourself up to fail.

Apprentices aren't given real work to do - At the beginning of the apprenticeship, you have to agree a training plan to ensure that the apprentice is given the right support to be able to achieve the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be able to work effectively in your organisation.

Apprentices are not paid a lot - Honestly, this varies from employer to employer and what apprenticeship the apprentice is doing. To ensure you recruit the best possible apprentice for your organisation you have to build a package that will attract that right kind of individual for your needs

Apprenticeships are only for new recruits - A lot of businesses are using the nationally recognised Apprenticeship to train their current in-house staff, as long as the individual has at least 12 months of learning, we can support you to build an individualised apprenticeship to meet their needs.

Liz Coughlin, Central Bedfordshire College Apprenticeships@centralbeds.ac.uk



Vindis Group

The Vindis Group is a family owned business consisting of a network of Audi, Bentley, SEAT, ŠKODA, Volkswagen and Volkswagen Commercial Vehicle retailers, spanning six counties plus two new Ducati stores. Whilst we have continued to expand, we have been careful to nurture the core family values our business was founded upon. Our specialist Sales Executives and Service Advisors are trained to ensure that the experience you have in any one of our dealerships is one of extreme satisfaction. The experience of purchasing a vehicle is one that should be enjoyable and our intention is to help you find the perfect vehicle for you.

Kristina Richardson, Bedford Volkswagen's Local Business Manager, runs a monthly networking event bringing local businesses together in her warm and friendly showroom. Kristina has been in the motor industry for nearly 20 years and is well known in her field, not only for her excellent industry knowledge, but also for her absolute commitment to customer service excellence. Kris has seen many changes over the years and tells us that electric isn't the future, electric is very much NOW!

Kristina said: "If you're new to electric cars, we can explain how simple it is to make the switch, introduce you to some helpful Volkswagen technology, and explain how far you can drive. You'll be surprised by how quick and easy it is to charge electric and hybrid cars. From installing your own charge point to finding one away from home, we tell you everything you need to know. Whether you want the low running costs of an electric or the driving thrills of a hybrid GTE, we've got the perfect car for you. From generous grants and Nil Benefit in Kind taxation (BIK) from April 2020 to lower running and servicing costs, buying and owning an electric is good for both your wallet and the environment. From recuperation to different driving modes, we've demystified the technology and can arrange extended demonstration drives so you can see exactly why electric vehicle sales are rapidly increasing."

To speak to Kristina at Volkswagen call 07912 480 980 or email kristina.richardson@vindis.com

Commercial Property Management

Managing your own commercial property can be a time consuming and frustrating experience where, at times, it can feel like the demands are outweighing the rewards. Robinson & Hall, Land and Property Professionals, can manage your commercial property and free up a lot of these issues, ensuring that the maximum rewards can be obtained.

Liaising with tenants We build up a good working relationship with the tenant, gaining important information about the tenant's business and predicting what they may need in the future.

Forward planning and maximising your investment and assets Our knowledge of the industry, of the tenant and the day-to-day workings of the property assist with the forward planning of your property to ensure the maximum is obtained. Managing each of the tenants and their upcoming lease events and expiry ensures that they are promptly and efficiently dealt with, gaining the maximum out of the property.

Knowledge of landlord's compliance and statutory obligations We have detailed knowledge of the statutory requirements and areas of property compliance to ensure the landlord and property are fully compliant.

Tenant screening Before selecting a new tenant, we ensure that in-depth background checks are completed on all areas of a perspective tenant's business. This has proven to minimise future tenant issues and create a good tenant mix for your investment, leading to a higher quality tenant and better tenant retention.

Manage the collection of monies and arrears We make sure that all invoices are prepared and sent out well in advance, monitoring tenant's payment history and promptly chasing arrears where necessary. This ensures a tighter rent collection and allows us to deal with any issues as soon as they arise.

Continual property monitoring Through regular detailed inspections, inspection reports and photographic records, a detailed history of the condition of the property and tenant's business patterns can be built up. This can assist with foreseeing a tenant's business strategy and movements.

Dealing with contractors and utility companies We have a detailed supplier list of reputable and compliant contractors to supply competitive quotes. We will obtain comparative quotes, monitor the works and deal with any feedback from the tenant to ensure the job is completed to the highest standard at the most competitive cost.

Reports and record keeping Having the type of report, the regularity and details of your choice can ensure you have the exact information for your records that you require. This can assist with financial planning and record keeping for your commercial property in a concise and regular way.

Enforcing the lease terms There are times where it may be required to enforce the terms of the lease. By having us on board, we can review the lease and firmly and efficiently ensure that the terms of the lease are enforced.

Pre-planning of works We can put together a detailed plan of the required upcoming works for the property to ensure costs are planned and expected, the property is well maintained, and unexpected costs are kept to a minimum.

If you are considering using commercial property management please contact Tessa Smith, Commercial Property Surveyor at Robinson & Hall on 01234 362939 or email tms@robinsonandhall.co.uk

Ten Years Of Slammin' Hair

Whilst the world was watching Avatar and Up!, bopping to The Black Eyed Peas and Miley Cyrus, and finding themselves surprisingly emotional over Barak Obama's inauguration, Jez Barnett and John Hubbard were creating KeraStraight. Combining science, nature and a dash of obsession, they have spent the past ten years developing treatments and products that build healthy, strong hair. Loved by some of the world's most creative hairdressers, including the team at Trevor Sorbie and Not Another Salon, their award-winning treatments create the perfect canvas for any look; it's a life changer for anyone who wants to repair or grow their hair, for those that don't like or cannot manage their curl/wave/frizz.

Jez Barnett, Co-Founder said: "It's been an amazing 10 years. We've pushed the limit in keratin products and developed protein-based formulas that fight frizz, add moisture and repair damage. We've transformed hair in 15 countries and we continue to be inspired: relentlessly creating new products and forging new partnerships.

There are so many opportunities to improve the health and behaviour of hair. Whatever your hair type, our treatments work hard to create a perfect canvas on which stylists can work their magic. Even the most stubborn hair textures may be transformed allowing clients hairstyles they would otherwise be unable to achieve."

In our world of infinite possibilities and choices, we believe that when you look good, you feel good and you have the energy to follow your desires wholeheartedly.



A blank canvas of healthy, nourished hair means that anything is possible - and you can truly be yourself. Embrace textures, go for those bold cuts, an undone style or even a Hollywood sheen.

Nathan Walker, International Technical Director at Trevor Sorbie, said: "KeraStraight has set the pace for others to follow and their products have helped our team to exceed the expectations of our guests. We are so happy to celebrate KeraStraight's 10th anniversary and we look forward to their continued innovation."

As we celebrate 10 years of fabulousness - we challenge you all to be the very best version of you. Embrace all challenges and be confident in yourself. We promise to do the same - so watch out for lots of exciting new developments over the next few months: we will continue to lead the way.

www.kerastraight.com

New Members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all **New Members** of the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. Members who have joined in the past three months are listed below. You can learn more about becoming a member and all of the associated benefits by calling us now on 01582 522448 or by emailing your enquiry to info@chamber-business.com

Animo Business Consulting Ltd MEPPERSHALL

Business adviser to the SME sector. Specialist in sales and business development but also able to provide general advice

Anne Archer Associates Ltd COLMWORTH

Supporting businesses to increase productivity and engagement by increasing mental and physical health. Pragmatic, relevant, effective, sustainable solutions

Bedford Homeless Partnership BEDFORD

Information and advice about homelessness and rough sleeping

Bedford Independent BEDFORD

Online news desk for Bedford Borough

Countwise Systems Ltd LIDLINGTON

People counting and customer tracking technologies and the footfall data sets generated

CPJ Field Incl. Shires Funeral Directors BALDOCK

Family run Funeral Directors with over 325 years experience in supporting families

Danny Barker Web Design SHEFFORD

Bespoke website design and build, SEO and marketing support with full project management services

David Aragon BEDFORD

Independent merchant services consultant providing businesses with access to a number of different capped rates on payment card transaction processing. Also providing merchants with a free assessment to ensure they aren't being overcharged

Everglow Media BEDFORD

Digital media agency. Specialising in digital marketing. Video and content creation and web design

FusionHub Recruitment Ltd HATFIELD

Recruitment Agency specialising in entry to mid-level commercial roles in Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and surrounding areas. Our mission is to help businesses who value the 'Human' touch in their talent acquisition strategy

hr worksmart BEDFORD

HR outsourcing company, providing support with recruitment, training, employee management systems and staffing issues

Jaltek LUTON

Subcontract electronics - design and manufacture

L1 Transformation Ltd SANDY

Learning and Development professional who writes and delivers Leadership and Management courses. I am also a professional business coach and work with Associates who are highly experienced Leadership and Management facilitators and coaches. I run open courses aimed at Line Managers wanting to develop themselves so they can be a highly effective and productive manager

Livetec Systems Ltd SILSOE

Disease risk planning and management of livestock

National Safety Supplies WEDNESBURY

Distributor of Personal Protective Equipment and Branded Workwear, Flame retardant clothing and consumables products

NETTONIC Ltd BEDFORD

Bedford based Website Design & Internet Marketing Company providing services to new and established businesses

PBC Business Recovery & Insolvency Ltd BEDFORD

Specialist business rescue and insolvency practice, providing advice and support to businesses and individuals with financial problems

Pictons Solicitors LLP LUTON

Provision of legal services

Raring2Go! Bedford BEDFORD

The go-to guide for you and your child

Schlegelgiesse HENLOW

Manufacturing and distribution of weather seals

SPT Compliance Limited AMPTHILL

GDPR/Data Protection Services. Data Protection Officer service, training, audits and redactions

Ten2Two BERKHAMSTED

Experts in flexible working recruitment and consultancy for professional staff for all sizes of companies, across all sectors

The Construction Recruitment Company UK Limited BANBURY

Temporary/contract supply of construction labour and professionals to the construction industry

The Consultancy Home Counties WATFORD

Training provider specialising in supporting businesses upskill their workforce through funded training programmes

True Life Tapping DUNSTABLE

Therapist helping people to overcome emotional blocks in their lives. 1-2-1 online and deliver workshops introducing relaxation techniques

Under The Thumb Sports Massage Clinic LEIGHTON BUZZARD

Sports massage, all soft tissue imbalances, assisted stretching, exercise prescription, stretching instructions, restoring normal movement patterns, improving mobility, instrument aided soft tissue mobility

UTO Limited

A Utilitrack Franchise owned and operated under Licence

BEDFORD

We know businesses don't consistently get the best deal in a confusing energy market. So by simplifying which supplier to choose through our free comparison service, we help them save time and money

Member Profiles

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

CountWise Systems Limited

Nicola Sharp & Jason Farrell
www.countwise.co.uk



Countwise is primarily an analytics business, focusing on people counting and venue occupancy monitoring, for both retail and commercial businesses. The data derived allows our clients to optimise marketing, reduce costs, schedule staffing better and improve operational effectiveness.

L1 Transformation Ltd

Linda LaBrooy
www.l1transformation.com
linda@l1transformation.com



I am a professional course designer of leadership and management courses. Titles include: Coaching Skills; Navigating Change; Influencing; Making the Best of Your Team and Personal Effectiveness. These can be run in-house or I can offer open courses. I can also work with your subject matter experts to create bespoke operational courses.

Everglow Media

Chris Andrews
01234 218983
www.everglowmedia.co.uk | info@everglowmedia.co.uk



We show SMEs how to grow! Developing your marketing strategy in line with your goals we get you in front of a wider audience. Services include Strategic consultation, Digital marketing, Video, Photography, Web design / UX. Social Media and SEO. Contact us today to find out how we can help your business.

National Safety Supplies

Graham O'Sullivan
07525 196228
www.nssgb.co.uk | graham.osullivan@nssgb.co.uk



National Safety Supplies specialises in personal protective equipment (PPE), branded corporate workwear (which we do in-house) hygiene supplies and health & safety equipment. We offer a comprehensive range of brand leading products to satisfy the most demanding of performance criteria.

hr worksmart

Ringo Sandhu
0203 858 7828
www.hrworksmart.com | hello@hrworksmart.com



Managing employees while remaining compliant of employment law can be exhausting, but having qualified HR staff is costly. That's why we created hrworksmart; all your HR needs in a simple monthly subscription or pay-as-you-go service. Services include policy reviews, employee management system & administration, recruitment, training and grievance management.

PBC Business Recovery & Insolvency Ltd

Gary Pettit
01234 834886
www.pbcbusinessrecovery.co.uk



We are a specialist business rescue and insolvency practice that provides practical, helpful advice and solutions to businesses and financial problems. Our approach is friendly, professional and effective, based on a proven history of dealing successfully with businesses and individuals leading to us becoming a trusted firm.

identifi Office Professionals

Neil Whitaker
01234 861000
www.identifiofficeprofessionals.com



identifi Office Professionals offer expert recruitment for employees in the HR, business administration, procurement, sales & marketing sectors, along with AutoTech recruitment across all areas of the motor trade industry. In a field where quality is not a given, we're proud to offer truly principled permanent and contract recruitment.

Raring2go! Bedford, Biggleswade & Sandy

Tilly Bartens
07855 952956
www.raring2go.co.uk/bedford-and-biggleswade



Raring2go! is described as "The Go-To Guide for you and your child". If you are a business that wants to reach parents and carers in the Bedford area then Raring2go! is the magazine and website for you. We deliver 18,000 magazines each quarter through a network of schools.



Schlegelgiesse

Glenn Moat
glen.moat@schlegelgiesse.com



Schlegelgiesse is an international leader in the manufacture and distribution of weatherseals. With over 20 sites worldwide the business has been growing since the 1980s and continues to do so.

South Beds Golf Club

Gary Hooper
07774-652825
www.southbedsgolfclub.co.uk
secretary@southbedsgolfclub.co.uk



South Beds Golf Club, for all your corporate meetings and private functions within a newly refurbished Club house with spectacular views of Warden Hills.

TCHC

Liz Kirman, Paul Riddick
01923 698430
www.tchc.net | info@tchc.net



TCHC is a training provider that delivers short courses and Apprenticeships. We provide skills support for the workforce upskilling employed participants. TCHC also provides skills support to participants affected by redundancies. TCHC can carry out a Training Needs Analysis on your business at no cost to help recommend funded training.

Zebra Stripe

Robert Bryant
www.zebrastripe.co.uk
info@zebrastripe.co.uk



Zebra Stripe is a video production agency working with clients to increase their brand awareness with our services. Today video plays a pivotal role in business marketing strategy and is a vital tool in driving traffic to your website and generating more business leads.

Announcing...

Buzzard Networking's Annual Business Fayre

Networking opportunities to 'get your business working'



Where

Astral Park, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 4AY

Date

Tuesday 24th September 2019

Time

10am – 12pm

Can I book a stand?

Yes - £50 (limited availability)

Why should I attend?

Because you are a business owner and want to meet likeminded businesses

Book your FREE attendance – www.buzzardnetworking.co.uk or 07881 953885



Raj Regmi

Owner, Woodland Manor Hotel

Woodland Manor is a beautiful country house and hotel located in the heart of Bedfordshire. Surrounded by glorious woodland gardens, it is the perfect place for a rural weekend escape. The venue is available for exclusive hire year round for every occasion, including weddings, private parties and corporate functions.

The Hotel is steeped in history. Did this influence your decision to purchase?

Most definitely. I just love historic buildings and, when I first saw the property and then discovered the amazing history, I was intrigued. The story of Woodland Manor, can be traced back to 1812 and we have details of the history on our website. I could envisage everything that has happened here. My wife also loved the history so that made the deal signed! Connections to the past are important to me and bring back memories of where I grew up in Nepal.

Tell me about your previous experience in the Hospitality Sector

I came to England 19 years ago with \$400 and only one friend living here! I started by being fortunate enough to be given employment as a waiter in a wine bar in Selfridges London. The Store Director seemed to like me and always asked for me to be her waiter. I have so much to thank her for because she then put me on a three and half year Management Training Programme. Following my time at Selfridges, I then worked in some amazing venues in London – South Bank Centre, Chiswick Park and a Hilton Hotel.

Having met my wife, we decided that we would want a future in running our own establishment and, six years ago, we started with a small café. We started our own business in March 2013 at Ferry Meadows Café, Peterborough. It was the scariest, yet most exciting times for us and we have since managed to add Lakeside Ferry Meadows to our profile. We are very proud to be working with the Nene Park Trust in such a special venue.

Have you any plans to create a unique experience for guests at Woodland Manor?

When we first came here 14 months ago, the hotel looked a little dated so we knew improvements had to be made. We have laid new carpets, improved the décor in the bedrooms and replaced the light fittings. The main priority we have is the food. We now have a new restaurant called the Glass Room and everything we serve from cakes in our afternoon tea to dinner and wedding meals are all made fresh in house and locally sourced where possible. I want us to be on the map as a first class wedding venue. We have 32 weddings booked for 2019 and my goal is to have 100 weddings eventually.

What motivates you and how do you pass on motivation to your staff?

I came to the UK with nothing and have worked very hard for what I now have. Waking up each day to see what I have motivates me. Plans for building up the business keep me motivated. My Management Team have free rein on running the business – that motivates them and gives them

ownership. Empowering people with trust is paramount. I only question decisions when something goes wrong!

What would be your perfect guest comment?

As I mentioned, weddings are where I want to excel. If we received an email from a bride and groom telling us everything was perfect from start to finish, I would feel elated and delighted we had done an excellent job. The team know what is expected and therefore they produce.

Now to you. What do you most like to do for fun?

I go to Cross Fitness four times a week. It's very intense but I need to be pushed. Family time is very important to me. My boys love drama, music, cricket, basketball and tennis; my wife love food and travel. Being family focussed makes me happy. I was also a Volunteer Police Officer for three and a half years in London and I am looking at applying again locally.

Who would you say has inspired you? Why?

So many people – you will always learn from what you've seen and experienced. However, my main inspiration has been my father. Growing up in Nepal, my father lost his business and home. We then lived, as a family, in one room. Dad would wake up at 4am and go to sell tourist items at the National Park. Once he had sold them he would then make a 4 hour bus journey to Kathmandu, buy more supplies and then make the 4 hour journey back home. He did this for 7 days a week and invested a lot of time making sure we were all looked after. This is what I saw – a man who was committed to working for the family. To be honest, I didn't really see much of him due to these hours and I vowed I would ensure that I had the right work/life balance when I started my own family.

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