

# Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

## Thanet & East Kent Insider

21<sup>st</sup> August 2010 Issue No.: 121

### 1. Get a Share of £700,000

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber works closely with organisations in Thanet and East Kent to promote a strong local market in business-to-business sales. We are keen that wherever possible, companies based in East Kent should consider using suppliers located here. Thus, we are especially pleased that one large employer which currently spends £700,000 on purchases from suppliers outside East Kent has accepted an invitation from the Thanet & East Kent Chamber to meet local suppliers with a view to restructuring its purchasing policies to favour local companies. Price, quality and service will be important considerations, but there is every reason to expect companies in East Kent will be able to compete successfully on service with price and quality not far behind. The Chamber will be organizing a business breakfast on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010. Chamber members will receive more news during the week in a dedicated email. More details will be available in next week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.

### 2. MSC & Fish In Ramsgate

The Marine Stewardship Council sets itself the objective to “transform the world's seafood markets and promote sustainable fishing practices”. Operating the world's leading certification and eco-labelling programme does give the organization a claim to fame. The MSC states that the demand for sustainable seafood has never been higher and notes that an increasing number of fisheries, suppliers and restaurants are demonstrating their commitment to sourcing sustainable seafood products by getting official certification. MSC is organizing a free event in Ramsgate on the afternoon of Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 for fishermen, suppliers and restaurateurs. Beginning at 1430 hrs with an introduction to the work of the MSC, the afternoon continues with professional presentations from David Blackburn and Alfie Grimshaw on “Sustainability in the fish & chip shop sector” followed by a session on sustainable seafood for restaurants with Tony Welch and Laky Zervudachi of Seafood Holdings. Emily Howgate of the Seafood Choices Alliance will talk about the “Good Catch Project”. There follows advice on marketing MSC certified fish and a demonstration of fish filleting. Refreshments will be available during the interval and afterwards. The event is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and will take place at the Ship Shape Café in Military Road, Ramsgate. Interested delegates are requested to email Ruth Westcott at [Ruth.westcott@msc.org](mailto:Ruth.westcott@msc.org). The Thanet & East Kent Chamber thanks Hannah Arcaro, UK Foodservice Manager at MSC and Louise Askew of Thanet District Council for raising our awareness of the event.

### 3. Code For Sustainable Homes

OFP Ltd has drawn our attention to the mandatory legislation used to rate the environmental performance of new buildings in the UK. The Code for Sustainable Homes is managed by BRE Global: “Ensuring that products and services protect people, property and the planet”. The code assesses nine different categories for sustainable design. Each category has a sub section with weighted credits allocated against them depending on their importance in the overall scheme. The figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government released yesterday show that there were nearly 8,000 post construction stage certificates and just over 27,000 design stage certificates issued up to and including June 2010. The private sector was responsible for just 10 per cent of homes with post construction certificates and 22 per cent of those with design stage certificates. The public sector accounted for 90 per cent of homes with post construction certificates and 78 per cent of those with design stage certificates. There is clearly a long way to go if the private sector is to meet government targets. With its industry leading products, OFP Timber Framed Homes can help you achieve nearly a third of the points needed through supplying the timber products required to minimize energy loss, maximize sound insulation and reduce the

environmental impact of the materials used. For advice and more information contact OFP direct at their Sandwich headquarters, tel: 01304 613298.

#### **4. End of Period of Grace On Tax**

Mark Hurdman of Levicks Chartered Accountants informs us of an important change in a concession from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. As Mark explains: "An HMRC concession, ESC B46, was introduced in 1995 and means that HMRC will not issue penalties for late filing of company tax returns or employers'/contractors' end-of-year returns, provided that they are received by the last working day within seven days of the filing date. The concession ensures that penalties will not be charged where all reasonable steps to file the returns on time have been taken. However, all forms P35 and P14 must already be filed online by the majority of businesses and contractors are no longer required to file end-of-year construction industry returns. In addition, from 1 April 2011 company tax returns for accounting periods ending after 31 March 2010 must be filed online. Therefore, ESC B46 has become redundant and so will come to an end on 31 March 2011. Any businesses filing a return late will have to show that they had a reasonable excuse for the delay in filing to avoid a penalty." For more details, contact Mark direct at Levicks in Broadstairs tel: 01843 862716 or in Canterbury tel: 01227 455183.

#### **5. Doing It Better In HR**

The Thanet & East Kent Insider has often featured articles on issues surrounding Human Resources, mental health and guidance on the latest thinking on improving production in the workplace. Members may be interested in a free and confidential Workforce Assessment tool. Announced in the Human Resources Magazine last Tuesday, The Age and Employment Network (TAEN) and the US-based AARP have launched a UK version of an assessment tool that has been used happily by over 2,000 US companies in the last two years. It enables employers to assess their current and future workforce needs. HR managers are invited to complete the online questionnaire which among other issues covers company demographics, knowledge retention, financial benefits, health benefits, flexible working options, the physical work environment, training opportunities and recruitment policies. Retaining the best staff aged over 50 is viewed as being as important, perhaps even more important, than recruiting the best twenty to thirty-year olds. After registering, it takes about 30 minutes to complete the questions. A customized report will automatically be generated based on your responses. For details, see <http://www.aarpworkforceassessment.org/us/index.cfm>

#### **6. What Chips Can Teach Us**

A respectable businessman with a hard-won reputation for fair dealing, this East Kent resident may not wish to be reminded of the errant behaviour of his youth. But, for a short time in the early 1970s he did have the habit of visiting fish and chip shops in the late evening to ask: "Have you got any chips left?" This leads us to reflect on processes. Just about every business is composed of processes which might be defined as 'a series of activities carried out in order to satisfy a customer's expectations'. Of course, specialists in quality management will tell us that the customer can be someone from within the business as well as an external cash buyer. But in either case, in order to manage the processes with the skills modern management demands, performance has to be measured and action should follow to optimise outputs relative to inputs. Process performance is often measured using data compared to objectives, KPIs or Key Performance Indicators. In most businesses, the critical process is order realisation; in other words, transforming external customer expectations into a delivered product or service. One common KPI for manufacturers and retailers relates to an appropriate level of finished goods: too low and you can't meet customer demand, too high and money is needlessly blocked in the system leading to ageing stock, expensive storage and potential damage to perishable goods. "What has this got to do with fish and chips?" you might well ask. The answer is that when our budding entrepreneur used to put his head around the door just before closing time and ask: "Have you got any chips left?" the answer would almost always be a thankful "Oh yes, there's plenty here". Before disappearing quickly into the night with a gleeful smile on his face and just in time to avoid any flying vinegar bottles, the youthful manufacturer-to-be would unerringly reply: 'Well, you shouldn't have cooked so many'. When you think about it, he did have a point, didn't he?

## 9. Our Sponsors

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