

## **Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber**

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**28<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

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#### **1. Planning For Success**

Chamber member Dario Bucciari of Manna House Consulting Ltd of Margate informs us that "45% of small and medium enterprises do not have a business plan". Dario claims that you can operate your business more efficiently and more profitably by adopting a strategic business plan which gives you clearly defined competitive advantages. He quotes from the 2008 book, "Strategic Management" where the authors state that "an organisation is unlikely to survive for long, or to become a leader in its field unless there is something distinctive about it". A fair point. If you can spare 21 hours to analyse and plan your business, you should contact Dario by email to [office@mannahouseconsulting.com](mailto:office@mannahouseconsulting.com) or by telephone to 07811 126 682.

#### **2. Computer slow?**

Some Chamber members have complained recently of slow internet connections. Does it take you ages to download the simplest text? If so, it might be worth your while to check the speed of your connection. This can be done in about 20 seconds by logging onto the website at <http://www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk> and clicking on the Start Speed Test button in the middle of the screen. If your download speed is less than 2000 kbps, you should check that you are using the latest updated version of your browser such as Microsoft Explorer 8 rather than Explorer 7 or 6. At the same website, you can also find guidance on service providers and the latest bargains that might give you a better performance at a lower cost.

#### **3. Holiday Entitlement**

Jon Cleverdon of J Cleverdon Chartered Accountants of Broadstairs, tel: 01843 866599, reminds us that the current minimum statutory holiday entitlement of 24 days (4.8 weeks) for a typical full-time worker on a five-day week, has increased. From 1 April 2009, such workers are entitled to a minimum of 28 days (5.6 weeks).

#### **4. Make Your Voice Heard**

The British Chambers of Commerce would like to know how the current economic downturn is impacting on your company or organization and on you and your employees. It will take about 2 minutes of your time to complete the survey which is available on-line, see <http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/6798219246781892342/quick-poll.html>. The results from around Britain are collated and brought directly to the key decision-makers in government.

#### **5. Susan Boyle and You**

Anyone who has just returned from an expedition to the Antarctic may not have heard the name Susan Boyle, although she is the talk of the town among the Emperor penguins of the Ross Sea. Susan Boyle is of course the singer of "I Dreamed a Dream" who appeared on ITV's Britain's Got Talent last month to enormous public acclaim. Her viewing figures on YouTube outperformed the Rt Hon Gordon Brown's explanation of reforms to MP's expenses by a considerable margin. Perhaps our distinguished Prime Minister should have burst into song. According to the Internet video research firm Visible Measures, Susan Boyle's performance has been viewed more than 220 million times. Media sources close to the singer reveal another and perhaps more disturbing aspect of her success. Piers Morgan, a judge on the show, has spoken of the severe pressure suffered by Susan Boyle and has commented on her preparedness to meet the demands placed upon her. Without any reference to this particular case, Chamber members are reminded of the Duty of Care that all UK employers have towards individual members of their workforce. Recent changes in the law impose severe fines and even prison if that Duty of Care is breached. If you are unsure of your responsibilities or would like to review your current legal obligations towards your employees, do contact one of the following Chamber members who will be pleased to advise you. Girlings Solicitors, sponsors of the Thanet & East Kent Insider, tel: 01843 220274; Boys & Maughan tel: 01843 595990; Barnes Marsland, tel: 01843 221466; Bel Denning tel: 01843 262020; Brachers tel: 01622 690691 and Robinson & Allfree tel: 01843 592361.

#### **6. All Change at the Abbey**

Our friends at HSBC have informed the chamber of changes at the Abbey. Banco Santander has announced that it is to spend £12 million in a re-branding of its UK operations which will end brands such as Abbey, Bradford & Bingley and Alliance & Leicester. Abbey's credit cards will be the first to be re-banded this year, followed by the 1,000 branches of Abbey and Bradford & Bingley. Alliance &

Leicester is scheduled to receive the make-over treatment by the end of 2010 when the Spanish bank will have over 1,300 Santander-branded branches accessible to any of its UK customers. According to Santander's UK chief executive, Antonio Horta-Osorio, the re-branding will not result in any additional job losses or branch closures in East Kent or anywhere else in the UK.

## 7. Fast Lane To Boulogne

LD Lines is on schedule to begin in June a new cross-channel ferry service from Dover to Boulogne in its purpose-built new ferry, the Norman Arrow. The vessel is the world's largest diesel-powered catamaran and will be the first Incat 112 metre unit to operate in Europe. The new craft can reach a speed of 40 knots and is designed to provide a temporary home for 417 cars or 567 lane metres of truck space and 195 cars. The accommodation can cater for 1,200 passengers. This magnificent new ship is destined to set a new standard in cross-channel comfort. Prices start at £27.50 each way for a car and 4 passengers. For details, telephone 0844 576 8837.

## 8. Just a Thought.

If you are ferociously focused on ensuring you are never late for any appointment and you always arrive at work on time despite the weather, the vagaries of our road system and the temptation to have that extra slice of toast at breakfast time even though you know that every one minute of delay means an extra five minutes negotiating the Land Rovers, Toyota Shoguns and people carriers clustered around your local primary school, then spare a thought for some advice of which even the Venerable Elvis, Thanet's own hermit, would have been proud. The Thanet & East Kent Insider has unearthed this example of ancient Chinese wisdom: the late worm misses the bird.

## 9. MPs' Expenses

The recent furore over expense claims by our elected representatives at Westminster was thrown into sharp relief earlier this week in one story allegedly emanating from a Midlands town. An MP returning home late was walking from the railway station when he was physically stopped in his tracks by a shell-suited aggressor who demanded: "Give me your money". Somewhat startled by the sudden turn of events, the MP mumbled: "Do you know who I am?" Unperturbed, the mugger repeated: "Give me your money". Recovering himself promptly and in a vain attempt to appeal to the would-be thief's better nature, the winner of the seat at the last general election added: "I'm an MP, you know. I'm the member of Parliament for this town". On hearing this, the mugger did not flinch, but amended his demand: "In that case, give me MY money". We are indeed living in strange times when even the muggers feel a sense of injustice.

## 10. Sponsors

We are grateful to Adecco Recruitment, tel: 01843 609292; Girlings Solicitors, tel: 01843 220274 and Express By Holiday Inn tel: 01843 820250 for sponsoring this edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider.



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**It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.**  
**For details of membership, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk)**