



## **Finding Your Business Edge No. 3**

Week beginning 13<sup>th</sup> February

### **ABOUT US**

Finding Your Business Edge is a new programme brought to you by Penwith Radio and presented by Dr Alan Jones, who amongst his other credits has presented business training and coaching for small businesses, entrepreneurs and companies like Kelsall & Steele; GE Money and Xerox.

Each programme will bring a round up of the business news; interviews with local business owners and a range of ideas to help you find your business edge.

### **News**

#### **National Skive Day**

Apparently the 6<sup>th</sup> of February has been dubbed '*National Sickie Day*'. A combination of wintry weather, dark mornings and evenings, Christmas debts and the 'long wait' until the next holiday contribute to this particular day being a favourite for those wanting to 'chuck a sickie'. According to the law firm ELAS more than 400,000 employees are believed to have taken the day off work on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

That kind of absenteeism is estimated to have cost British businesses £34m in lost output and productivity.

Despite this an ELAS spokesperson notes that fake sickness days are on the decline with people becoming more and more fearful for their jobs in the current economic climate.

#### **Wasting Your Money**

A report issued by British Gas Group plc, has suggested that small businesses are wasting up to half of the money they spend on electricity by powering their business premises after hours.

The information compiled from 6,000 British Gas 'smart meters' shows that 46% of electricity consumption by businesses was used after business hours. Specific examples of wasted use included lighting car parks, leaving vending machines switched on overnight and at weekends and keeping display lighting on.

Maybe now's the time to review your businesses energy usage with view of saving money in the coming months.

## **Service Sector bucks trend**

A report compiled by Markit and CIPS shows that the service sector grew at its fastest rate for nearly a year in January.

Employment levels in this sector were also noted as rising at their fastest rate in four years.

Clearly the Service Sector is one of the UK's key sectors making up more than two thirds of the economy.

## **£50 million in contracts still available...**

The organisers of the Olympics (LOCOG) say that small businesses can still benefit from the £50m in contracts that have yet to be awarded. The website CompeteFor ([www.competefor.com](http://www.competefor.com)) has advertised a number of contracts which are still 'up for grabs'

Contracts are still available for caterers, security, events, web design, construction, marketing, publishing, IT and hospitality.

Since most of the major UK cities in the UK will be hosting athletes, and many overseas visitors it won't be only London based businesses that could benefit.

## **Working Mums Live**

Workingmums.co.uk is holding their second flexible careers fair on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March at the Business Design Centre in Islington. The event is free for all attendees and there will be changing stations and crèche facilities for children.

The fair will feature 'family friendly employers', workshops and seminars, business funding with guest speaker BBC Presenter Joanne Gosling a successful mother of three who has written a book called Simply Wonderwoman.

You can register by visiting [www.workingmumslive.co.uk/london](http://www.workingmumslive.co.uk/london)

## **Business Thoughts - How I hate budgets!**

### **In the words of a local businessperson...**

Every time an accountant told me to put together a budget for my company, my response was - "When I get the time I will!" I just never seem to get the time.

For several years when I first started my company I never paid attention to a budget. I knew if I made money by looking at my financial statements and that was good enough for me.

Also, every time I tried to put something together I never compared my actual financials to the budget numbers I created.

Two years ago, I decided to take a different approach.

I developed a forecast for a quarter of what I expected income and expenses to be.

I came up with the figures based on the previous year's actual numbers. It was easy to look at last year and just add a percentage increase to the numbers. Then I took the time to review once a month the forecast with where we were at that point.

By using this system of creating a forecast and comparing that to actual financials on a monthly basis I was able to focus on income areas that were falling behind and stop expenses that I didn't need to make.

I am an avid fan of informational products. I buy tens of pounds worth every month. With the forecast in place I caught myself spending more than I allocated and was able to just cut back the next month. The great thing about this system is that you are not locked into a specific figure each month but yet you stay within guidelines of where you want to be before the year or quarter finishes.

The best way to set this up is to use a financial program such as Quickbooks or Peachtree.

Track all income and expenses using the software.

The next step is to print financial statements that track what you have done.

Then take the numbers of your financial statements and increase your income by the percentage you want to raise revenue by.

Look at expenses and determine what categories will increase based on the sales increase. This will become your financial projections.

The last step is to review your actual financial statement (Income Statement or Profit and Loss) to your projections.

Have systems in place to increase revenue and decrease expenses as necessary.

## **Business Provocation**

### **The Success Trinity**

**PRESENTATION** – how your business presents itself

This is everything about your BRAND and your BEHAVIOURS

**PROMOTION** – how your business gets the 'word out'

Not only your PR and marketing but how your business ENRICHES the network it sits within

**PUBLICITY** – how your business tells its story

Sharing in successes by foregrounding the way your business has 'solved problems', 'helped others', 'eased pain' and delivered over and above your own high expectations



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[www.aljones.net](http://www.aljones.net) : [www.penwithradio.co.uk](http://www.penwithradio.co.uk)

A Quick Plug: Finding Your Business Edge the Book is available from this link:

<http://ow.ly/8KbmU>

### **Finding Your Business Edge**

This little book is based upon some of the coaching work undertaken with companies like Xerox; organisations like the School for Social Entrepreneurs, SME's, Local Authorities and sales teams across the UK. The aim of the book is to encourage businesses of all types and sizes to consider their sales processes, their value proposition and their solutions so as to be more effective in todays market place. Whilst it may seem that the bulk of the work in the book is focused on Business 2 Business solutions there is much that is directly relevant to the retail and Busines 2 Consumer market