

Local Business in focus



Chiswick BNI

with Jeannie Shapiro

Hello Chiswick Businesses. We're delighted to be back with our latest article for the Chiswick and Kew Herald.

We're assuming that the reality of 'back to work' has set in after what was such a wonderful summer of sport and pageantry. We honestly though feel that there is a sense of relief to be back to some normality and of course to be doing real business.

We can never say too much about the power of business networking. It can be time-consuming

and you do need to suffer some small talk you aren't interested in but the benefits of networking should far outweigh any of the negatives.

We found this quote which puts it very well "Effective business networking is the bringing together of like-minded individuals who, through relationship building, become walking, talking advertisements for one another." That is an excellent definition and the outcome we hope to expect.

A lot of businesses now do their networking on-line through social media. Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn etc certainly have their place in business but we don't believe they will ever totally replace the power of face to face relationships. You know that old saying of 'seeing the whites of their eyes.' And just because somebody may not look the part, you never know who they may be married to or are best friends with.

Do go have lunch, attend conferences and get to business networking events. Working

the room will eventually pay off and your next customer or prospect may be standing next to you. Trying to meet the MD of Starbucks? That guy waiting for a drink next to you could have played golf with him yesterday.

There are a lot of Business Networking Groups around but BNI is the largest business networking and referral marketing organisation in the world. It is a commitment to join but it is worth it – if you take part, you will get business out of it.



We are lucky to have our Chapter, BNI Hogarth, in Chiswick – it is one of the top business hotspots in the UK and

with our 30 members meeting and working together each week, we are reaping the benefits of our location. Chiswick's vibrant business community is not only great for the big boys we prove it is great for SMEs too.

Do visit us or you'll never know what you are missing. We meet early every week on Thursday mornings at Carluccios on Chiswick High Road. In the last 2 weeks alone, our members thanked each other for nearly £50,000 worth of business. Not bad for SMEs is it? Have a look at www.bnihogarth.co.uk for more information and to contact us about coming along.

We love Visitors and hope we'll see you soon. Local businesses are welcome to join us and see it all in action. There are many business groups around but they come and go – we've been in Chiswick for years and still thriving. Hope to see you soon.

www.bnihogarth.co.uk



Business Focus with Dr Permjit Singh

CREDIT RISK: Are You Protected?

SME credit risk management

Credit scores provide an assessment of a business's financial health, with a low score implying that a business is more likely to fail.

A survey of 700 UK small businesses by credit reference agency, Experian, found that 71 per cent did not check their customers' credit status, exposing them to a greater risk of being paid late or not being paid at all.

The survey also revealed that 39 per cent of small businesses did not know what a credit score was.

Graydon based in Middlesex, provides access to business information on over 100 million entities in more than 190 countries. Companies like Graydon track tens of thousands of UK and overseas companies' trading activities, and financial and credit performance, and over time build up a detailed picture of each company's credit history and status. Some add further value by analysing the information and providing recommendations and credit ratings of companies.

Graydon for example, provides a dashboard of key statistics about a company: overall credit rating, credit limit, likelihood of financial distress in the next 12 months, and payment score (the likelihood the company will pay its invoices on time).

This information is sold as credit reports to companies who might be thinking of trading with a company and extending credit to them, or who are perhaps thinking of extending further credit, or they're concerned about the possibility of default.

"In the current economic climate it is now more important than ever to understand and manage both risk and opportunities that exist in the market" says Craig Evans, Head of Business Development at Graydon UK.

Companies House provides a free online service that provides basic details of a company and this can be a useful initial source of financial information. For just £1 each, regulatory filings, such as annual accounts and annual returns, may be downloaded. Information about security given, such as mortgages, can also be obtained.

Whilst useful, be careful about relying on information from reports because it might be out of date. Companies for example have nine months to file their annual accounts.

It might be easier to just pass on the credit risk of an invoice not being paid by purchasing single debtor protection. Cover is also available over selected invoices, or over the whole sales ledger. When taking out cover, do check whether the policy will pay out where a debtor defaults because of a dispute over the invoice (protracted default) or if it will only pay out if the debtor defaults because they are insolvent.

Outsourcing invoice collection can save companies substantial time and costs, especially where the debtor defaults so collection becomes protracted and involves litigation and court filings.

"Late paying customers can have a disastrous impact on a SME's cashflow and profits. At Pulse Credit Solutions, outsourced credit collection is available for less than the minimum wage", says Kevin Downton at Pulse Credit Solutions.

Dr Singh is Proprietor of Applied Corporate Finance, a Chiswick-based corporate financial services business

www.appliedcorporatefinance.co.uk

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