



## Your Business Advantage Bulletin



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## LOCAL NEWS

### **FUSION – BUSINESS START-UP OPPORTUNITY**

**Have you always wanted to start your own business but need the good idea?  
Have you already started a business but feel that your business has limited potential?**

A successful Fusion member, who has excelled in his sector in the Highlands and Islands and continues to run two very successful businesses, has launched a search for new committed entrepreneurs. Because of current business commitments and ventures, he is offering a product that has already been developed following many tens of thousands of pounds of investment, to a Highlands & Islands based entrepreneur.

The commitment from the member (and Fusion will gladly help as well) is to help set up the entrepreneur (you?) in a new company with ownership of the product within the new company. Help would be given to raise the finance and to build a supportive set of people around the new venture, which is a software product that will be sold to Scottish businesses.

Fusion will do the initial screening of candidates for this opportunity before putting a short list of potential entrepreneurs in front of the Fusion member. The successful candidate will have to demonstrate total commitment to building a new business and must have the confidence and skills to sell the product to businesses, face to face around Scotland and then beyond.

For more information please contact Bruce Morrison on 01463 667303 or [bruce@fusionlinking.co.uk](mailto:bruce@fusionlinking.co.uk). To find out more about Fusion and how to join press Ctrl and click on the following link: [www.fusionlinking.co.uk](http://www.fusionlinking.co.uk).

### **YOUNG RURAL ENTREPRENEUR AWARD 2007**

The Young Rural Entrepreneur Awards focus on businesses with a rural theme and the entrepreneurs behind them who are dedicated to sustaining the rural economy. A cash prize of £10,000 is available and there is also an upper-age limit of 35 years old. For more information please visit [www.thefield.co.uk](http://www.thefield.co.uk).

## **HIGHLAND TOURISM AWARDS 2007**

Another recognition and awards opportunity with a deadline looming is the Highland Tourism Awards, [www.highland-tourism-awards.co.uk](http://www.highland-tourism-awards.co.uk) which are dedicated to increasing the standards and the tourism experience in the Highlands and rewarding those who have achieved this.

The deadline for entries is the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007 and the following are the categories that are available to enter:

- ❖ [Best Visitor Experience](#)
- ❖ [Community Tourism](#)
- ❖ [Customer Care](#)
- ❖ [Highland Ambassador of the Year](#)
- ❖ [Highland Dining Out Experience](#)
- ❖ [Highland Young Ambassador of the Year](#)
- ❖ [Innovation](#)
- ❖ [Investing in the Environment](#)
- ❖ [Marketing Initiative](#)
- ❖ [New Tourism Business](#)
- ❖ [Tourism People Development](#)
- ❖ [Highland 2007](#)

The Highland Tourism Awards website also gives tips on completing an entry form and therefore please do not hesitate to visit and nominate your business for an award. Please visit [www.highland-tourism-awards.co.uk](http://www.highland-tourism-awards.co.uk) for further information.

## **BED BUGS BITING**

VisitScotland have reported that cases of bed bugs in the Outer Hebrides are on the increase. They have advised accommodation providers and visitors to be vigilant and look out for small blood spots appearing on pillows and bedding on a regular basis.

Providers should also check that their businesses insurance policy covers for damage by pests, as an outbreak of bed bugs can be very costly.

For further information please contact the council: [www.cne-siar.gov.uk](http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk).

## **BUSINESS TIP**

### **TIPS TO BOOST SALES**

Without customers businesses simply can not survive and therefore it is always important to think of different ways to keep your existing customers and to also attract new customers to boost your sales. Here are a number of methods that can be employed:

**Promotions and Special Offers:** The scale of the offer must be relative to the purchase. The extra's that the customers think they are getting should not affect your profits as these costs will have been absorbed and therefore should all be extra profit.

**Point of Sale Advertising:** By placing certain products beside the checkout people are more likely to purchase these as impulse buys. Always place a low priced good here as the customer is already committed to buy another good and therefore are more likely to purchase another lower priced good e.g. confectionary, stationary and small gifts.

**Free Samples:** Free trials and samples allow new customers to recognize the value of your product and also persuade them to buy your product instead of your competitors products.

**Complimentary Purchases:** Suggesting to customers who are buying a certain product that another product would also be useful with it, like batteries, stamps, and lotions, can also increase sales. Explaining that previous customers who bought the same product also bought other complementary products can also boost profits.

**Communication:** Tell your customers what you offer as part of your sales pitch and this can be done in the form of leaflets, newsletters, emails, mail shots, and advertising or press articles. This also helps to build a rapport with your customers and you could then also find out why they choose to shop with you and what you can improve on.

**Increase trust:** By communicating with your customers and showing your knowledge in your specific sector you will also gain their trust and therefore they may come to you for advice and products rather than a competitor.

**Customer Service:** Ensure your staff are offering a high quality of service and know what they are selling. By analyzing and measuring you can identify which products you need to market more and sell more of.

When taking all the above into account be careful not to be too pushy and scare customers away, it should be a steady process to ensure customers are '*constantly informed and educated and reminded of your services*'. For more information please visit [www.smallbusiness.co.uk](http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk) or [www.tanderinetrees.co.uk](http://www.tanderinetrees.co.uk).

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **EMAILS AND CUSTOMERS**

By ignoring emails sent to you by potential customers you are losing money. 90% of people surveyed stated that they would take their custom elsewhere if they waited too long for a reply or received none at all. It is estimated that on average customers have to send 3 emails to a business to receive a satisfactory reply. Automated responses and wrong email details on websites also infuriated customers. For more information please visit <http://www.freelanceuk.com/news/2375.shtml>.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **TESTING OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT**

It has been confirmed that the supposed mandatory annual testing of all business equipment by qualified electricians is a myth. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are advising that for most office electrical equipment, visual checks for obvious signs of damage and perhaps simple tests by a competent member of staff are quite sufficient. A risk assessment could be undertaken that is 'fit for purpose' for the appliances and equipment that are in question.

For more information please visit the HSE's website on <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf>.

## **USEFUL LINKS**

The following are useful links that may also assist you succeed and grow in your sector by networking with other groups and gaining more tips and information:

- A regular 'Socio Economic Update' is published containing useful information on the local economy at: <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/factfile/index.htm>

- A new online forum has been launched by 'Aim-Hi' ([www.aim-hi.org](http://www.aim-hi.org)) for all Creative Industries - please feel free to register your interest and visit the site at <http://s4.invisionfree.com/aimhi/>.
- The Creative Industries section of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar also publishes a periodic newsletter on the website at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/eds/creativeindustries/index.htm>. Creative Industries focus on the arts, crafts film, and television, publishing, and new media sectors and therefore this is worth a read if you specialise in this sector to help you keep ahead of your competitors.

If you have any feedback or suggestions for us to make this service more relevant please e-mail your comments to [business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk). If you wish to discontinue your subscription to Business Advantage please send a blank e-mail to [business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk) putting UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject box. Remember that we guarantee never to sell or give your e-mail address to anyone else.

**Good luck**

## **The Business Advantage Team**

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