



Your Business Advantage Bulletin



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In this month's issue:

- **LOCAL NEWS**
 - 'Who Care Wins' – They Really Do!
 - PSYBT Assistance for Young Ness Man

- **BUSINESS TIP**
 - Businesses and the Environment
 - New Changes to UK Legislation

- **BUSINESS NEWS**
 - New Start Exhibition, SECC, Glasgow

- **OTHER NEWS**
 - Women Entrepreneurs Increasing
 - Silver Start-Ups Boosting the Economy

- **USEFUL LINKS**

LOCAL NEWS

'WHO CARES WINS' – THEY REALLY DO!

Offer businesses the gift of feedback this festive season!

To help our businesses get off to a great start in the New Year we need you to offer them the gift of customer feedback this festive season. Tell us where they could make improvements to their customer service and we will help them put the changes in place.

Request a small batch of feedback cards now. Use the cards to tell us how the service was on your Christmas party night, the service in the shops when you do your shopping or anything else you want to tell us about customer service.

Returned feedback cards supplying contact details will be entered into a prize draw

If you would like us to run a workshop in any other area please let us know. For the full programme please visit the Who Cares Wins website www.whocareswins.org.uk and click on the business section.

PSYBT ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG NESS MAN

The latest young entrepreneur to receive financial assistance from The Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT) is Murdo Alex Macritchie who plans to set up his own business 'The Sulair Restaurant', in Port of Ness.

Murdo, who initially trained in the Army School of Catering, and went on to work as Head Chef in several fine dining restaurants throughout the UK has long held the ambition to open his own restaurant in Lewis. He returned to the island in November 2004 and took up the position of Head Chef in the Crown Hotel in Stornoway. On the look out for an opportunity to open his own restaurant, Murdo seized at the chance to lease a newly constructed building at Port of Ness Harbour which he felt was a perfect location for his business venture.

Murdo approached PSYBT for advice and financial assistance and was successful in his application for a loan of £5000 to help towards equipping his new restaurant. He also secured funding from HIE Innse Gall and The Royal Bank of Scotland.

'The Sulair Restaurant' will be modern, Scottish themed, with French influences offering high quality fare with locally sourced produce where possible. With its delicious and imaginative menus, stunning coastal and Atlantic views, Murdo hopes his restaurant will be a 'must visit' destination for islanders and visitors alike.

PSYBT in the Western Isles offers start-up funding and advice to young people aged between 18 and 30, with a business idea. They also offer expansion funding. For further information contact: Jane Campbell, PSYBT Regional Manager, Business Advantage, Town Hall, Stornoway, on 01851 707475.

BUSINESS TIP

BUSINESSES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Recycling is a now a part of life both at home and increasingly in business and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's 'Waste Aware' campaign has assisted with spreading the word. However despite many households recycling and adopting the 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – businesses are lagging behind.

Sustainable working practices can not only assist with preserving the environment but can also reduce resource wastage and save money in the long run whilst also giving the business a new competitive edge. Scottish Enterprise reports that many businesses are seeing the sense of balancing the needs of the business and the environment. This can be executed by adopting Environmental Management Practices which can take a variety of forms, for instance if your business is looking for new office space enquire whether there are any environmental or recycling policies in place. Also by making sure lighting, computer equipment and machinery are switched off when not in use can not only save energy but also money.

Your heating bills can be cut by 10% simply by turning down you heating by 1 degree and turning off air conditioning when it is not needed also saves both energy and money for the business. For further assistance ask a health and safety or environmental officer to visit your business to assist with compliance.

Remember to publicise your environmental practices to your local community and customers as this will not only increase your credibility but may also put you ahead of your competitors.

If you would like to find out more about turning your business 'green' please visit the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Waste Aware website at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/recycling/index.htm> or telephone the Waste Aware Western Isles team on 01851 709900.

More information is by pressing Ctrl and click onto the following link <http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk/5.10/business-premises/guides/261017/go-green-in-the-office.thtml>

BUSINESS NEWS

NEW START EXHIBITION, SECC, GLASGOW

The New Start Scotland Exhibition will take place on the 14th-15th March 2008, at the SECC in Glasgow, and will be well worth a visit should you be thinking of starting up in business or expanding your current business, or even for inspiration to widen your current business knowledge.

Over 150 exhibitors will be able to provide you with face-to-face advice, there will also be many free seminars and workshops to assist with finance, sales, tax and customer service to name but a few.

In essence the exhibition will be designed to assist you with making a success of your business and for more information please visit the website at <http://www.newstartscotland.com/exhibition/seminars.php>.

NEW CHANGES TO THE UK LEGISLATION

The following are important changes to UK legislation that came into force from 1st October 2007 and may affect your business:

New National Minimum Wage (NMW) Rates:

- ❖ £5.52 an hour to adult workers aged 22+.
- ❖ £4.60 per hour for workers aged 18-21.
- ❖ £3.40 per hour for those below 18 and no longer of compulsory school age.
- ❖ £4.30 per hour or £30.10 per week in total if accommodation is provided.
- ❖ The NMW will not apply to some training related work experience or those undertaking full-or part-time further education.

Increase in Statutory Holiday Entitlement

- ❖ For employees working a five day week the entitlement has risen from 20 days (4 weeks) to 24 days (4.8 weeks).
- ❖ Bank and Public holidays can be included in this.
- ❖ You can round up partial days or leave them as they are but they can not be rounded down.

Business Link have a handy tool to assist you in working out how much annual leave your employee's are entitled to at
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1079427399&r.li=1079484078&r.l1=1073858787>

Tobacco Sales

- ❖ Neither cigarettes, Cigarette papers nor any other tobacco products are to be sold to anyone under 18 years old.
- ❖ All vending machines and shops selling any of these products must legally replace there signs to show the new age limit.

For more information please visit business link at www.businesslink.gov.uk or the visit the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) website at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/bbf/co-act-2006/index.html>.

OTHER NEWS

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS INCREASING

A study has shown that the number of women who have chosen to start up in business on their own has increased to 32.6% compared to 22.2% in 1990.

It has also been stated that the rise in female 'small to medium sized' enterprise owners has also been spurred by the relatively low numbers of female directors and this has motivated women to start in business themselves.

More information is available at <http://kb.integracomcommunications.co.uk/article.php?id=000000332> and <http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk/5.2/start-a-business/news/262595/female-entrepreneurs-boosted-by-pioneers.thtml>.

SILVER START-UPS BOOSTING THE ECONOMY

It has been claimed that people aged 50 and over are responsible for adding £24 billion to the UK economy by starting up in business. One in six new businesses owners are said to be in this bracket with the majority working from home and wishing they had set up in business years ago, the Yellow Pages stated that these 'Silver Start-Ups' have an annual turnover of approximately £67,500. This also shows that their many years of work experience from being employed by other organisations have assisted them in becoming a success at running their own business.

For more information please press Ctrl + click on the following link: <http://www.management-issues.com/2007/10/31/research/senior-startups-worth-billions-to-britain.asp>

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:

- www.hiebusiness.co.uk - very useful for staff and clients and very user friendly support so well worth visiting. The site will be regularly updated so any changes in legislation etc will be incorporated promptly.
- The Business IT Guide website is operated by e-skills UK and assisted by The Highlands & Islands Enterprise offering useful hints and tips on IT solutions for small businesses as they have found that small businesses in the UK are losing millions of pounds from lost revenue due to not being adequately IT literate. Please visit them at www.scotland.businessitguide.com
- A regular 'Socio Economic Update' is published containing useful information on the local economy at: <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/factfile/index.htm>
- 'Aim-Hi' (www.aim-hi.org) is an online forum for Creative Industries sector - please feel free to register you 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.

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Good luck

The Business Advantage Team

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