

# Business Comment

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020



**Special Report:  
Skills, People  
and the Future  
Workplace**

**Edinburgh**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
*Inspiring Connections*

# International Enterprising Leading Local Strathclyde

The **final** word in business education

Strathclyde Business School is a top business school within a leading international technological University, recently named UK University of the Year in the prestigious Times Higher Awards 2019.

As a long-established, pioneering business school, we understand the business needs of organisations, from SMEs and start ups to global players.

With seven international centres, we know first hand the importance of global thinking and we continue to introduce innovative business programmes and bespoke executive education to suit the demands of an evolving business world.

Our acclaimed MBA programme can be studied on a full time, part time or flexible learning basis which means you don't have to give up the day job – or travel far – to get a world class MBA.

[www.strath.ac.uk/business](http://www.strath.ac.uk/business)

## Skills, People and the Future Workplace

Welcome to the latest issue of Business Comment, your magazine.

As we continue to emerge from lockdown, and the impact of the global Covid 19 pandemic becomes ever more apparent, it has never been more important that the Chamber does all it can to help our members as we move into the reset, rebuild and recover phase.

Almost every business would agree that people are its greatest asset, but businesses suffering huge financial pressures are faced with the prospect of reducing all areas of cost – including their workforces. Already we have seen an enormous percentage increase in claimants of Universal Credit in Edinburgh and the Lothians, with the actual number being 10,600. Tens of thousands of others are still furloughed, and there must be concerns around the future employment of many.

We are determined to work with our members, with local and national government, with agencies and with others to seek to mitigate job losses – it is surely better to work to keep people in work than to try to find them new employment. However, there will undoubtedly also be much work to do to find new work for those who are made redundant, and for a

generation of school-leavers about to enter the most difficult jobs market in many years.

This issue looks at the vital importance of skills, with Skills Development Scotland encouraging employers to think carefully about job losses, to do all they can to retain their talent, and by doing so put themselves in the best possible shape to ride the recovery which will surely come. They point to the crash of 2008, and explain that those businesses who took the opportunity to invest in upskilling and reskilling workforces were those which recovered fastest and strongest.

Also in this issue, Chamber members Space Solutions explain what all businesses should be considering as they look to bring staff back in to offices and workplaces, in particular to think radically given the pandemic has bust the culture of presenteeism.

As ever, there is a variety of news from our innovative and resilient membership. It is good to see – these are qualities our city certainly needs if we are to see Edinburgh restored.



**Liz McAreavey**  
Chief Executive,  
Edinburgh Chamber  
of Commerce

12

Push to improve Scotland's cycle touring offer



20

Space exploration is happening much closer to home as businesses investigate how best to bring their offices back to life



Contents and Introduction	03
Chamber News	04   06
Developing Young Workforce	08
Chamber News	09
Circular Economy	10
Chamber News	12   13
Top Tips	14
New Members	15
Ask the Expert	16
Corporate View	18   19
Special Report	20   23
In Conversation With	24
60 Seconds   Get with IT	25
International Update	28
Chamber Policy Update	30
Chamber Training	31
Chamber News	34
Chamber Partners	32   36
Inspiring Connections	37
Edinburgh's Newcomers	38

# BT launches major new drive to support the 334,000 small businesses in Scotland

BT has announced an unprecedented package of support to help Scotland's small businesses get better positioned for recovery and growth following the coronavirus outbreak and as they prepare for a post-Brexit future.

The BT Small Business Support Scheme offers a range of new measures to help small businesses boost their connectivity, cashflow and confidence.

The support includes a commitment to pay its 4,500 small business suppliers promptly and within 30 days of being invoiced, to helping firms fund the cost of ultrafast business connections, as well as access to free resources such as business mentoring, digital skills, marketing tools and mental health support.

Alan Lees, Director of BT's Enterprise business in Scotland, said: "With small businesses accounting for more than 99 per cent of all businesses in Scotland, they are the beating heart of our economy, high streets and communities. They deserve the support of each and every one of us to help them thrive into the future.

"At BT, we can use our technology, scale and expertise to help small businesses kick-start recovery and growth by boosting their connectivity, cashflow and confidence. So we've listened to the needs of small businesses and are stepping up to deliver a support scheme which should have something for everyone - whether you're a sole trader, tech-start up, micro business or a larger firm."

BT's Small Business Support Scheme comprises:

## Boosting connectivity:

- Funding ultrafast business connections: BT is helping small businesses fund the cost of an ultrafast business connection (known as Ethernet), by subsidising the total cost by £2,500 per customer.

- Launching bursaries for UK tech start-ups: BT is introducing a new bursary scheme to give 1,000 UK tech start-ups and entrepreneurs a financial head start. Eligible companies can apply for a bursary to benefit from free fibre broadband and mobile bundles.

- Introducing BT Halo for Business: BT has launched the UK's best converged fibre broadband, mobile and digital phone line bundle for micro-businesses. Halo helps businesses stay better connected inside and outside of the workplace, so that they never miss an important call or a sale.

- Helping small businesses to go cashless: BT is preparing to launch a new digital payments solution, to help small businesses move to cashless transactions.

## Supporting customer cashflow:

- Accelerating payment for BT's small business suppliers: BT is committing to pay its 4,500 small business suppliers within 30 days of being invoiced.

- Financial flexibility for the hardest hit: BT has been assisting small businesses in financial distress during the peak of the pandemic by helping them find a flexible option for paying their bill.

## Building confidence:

- Helping small businesses access the full power of digital and social media advertising: BT is looking to help small firms across the UK to better promote their goods and services online.
- Supporting small businesses through mentoring: BT is introducing a new mentoring scheme for small businesses, to provide them with free access to its expertise across strategy, marketing, sales, and more.
- Helping small businesses acquire new digital skills: BT has already helped tens of thousands of small businesses with digital skills training through its Skills for Tomorrow programme and has released new learning content on crucial topics, including how to prevent cyber-attacks and using social media.
- Wellbeing support: BT will be providing customers with access to expertise around maintaining their wellbeing through free online toolkits and webinar series for small businesses.

BT's team of store-based consultants are on hand to help small business customers in Edinburgh. They are joined by BT Local Business East of Scotland, an independent business who works with BT to deliver a personal, local service to SMEs.

"With small businesses accounting for more than 99 per cent of all businesses in Scotland, they are the beating heart of our economy, high streets and communities. They deserve the support of each and every one of us to help them thrive into the future."



## Small Business Support Scheme

Helping small businesses build back stronger by boosting connectivity, cashflow and confidence

### Connectivity

Launching bursaries for UK tech start-ups

Funding ultrafast business connections

Introducing BT Halo for business

Helping small businesses go cashless



### Cashflow

Accelerating prompt payments for BT's small business suppliers

Financial flexibility for the hardest hit



### Confidence

Access to digital advertising

Small business mentoring support

Helping boost digital skills

Wellbeing support



## Unique Edinburgh based historic ship, SS Explorer, wins major award

The SS Explorer Preservation Society, based in Leith, Edinburgh, won a Regional Flagship award in the National Historic Ships UK Flagship competition. The award is great recognition of the work being done to raise awareness of this important piece of Scottish Maritime Heritage.

Allan Dickson, deputy chair, SS Explorer Preservation Society said "This is the first time the SS Explorer has been able to enter the competition and we are really happy to have been named as a regional flagship. It's a great piece of recognition for the ship and we are looking forward to working with National Historic Ships UK over the year in promoting the UKs heritage vessels."

The awards this year were open to all ships on the historic ship register and were judged on how the ships had adapted to the current difficulties and their online and virtual program of events. In previous years the awards have only been open to ships which sail and were judged on their cruising program and visitor numbers.

Hannah Cunliffe, Director National Historic Ships UK commented "I am delighted that we are able to offer these Awards again as a means of supporting the sector at a time when it needs our help most. The creativity and resilience these vessels have shown in developing new online engagement packages to meet the current situation has been impressive and I look forward to working with them all in the months ahead."

The SS Explorers program of online events for this year includes a Marine Engineering Challenge activity at the STEM Academy Scotland, which launched on the 15th of June. Smaller educational activities are being made available throughout the year. A youtube channel hosts a number of videos including

a recently digitally remastered original film from Marine Scotland of the SS Explorer working in the late 1950's as well as a tour of the vessel as she is now. Nearer the end of the year a virtual tour of the ship should be launched which will be a great addition to the



360 deg photos currently available. The Society recognises that both STEM and Heritage sectors are lesser known career options and aims to raise awareness through our education programs and vessel tours.

Ben Macpherson MSP for Edinburgh North & Leith remarked "This recognition is a credit to everyone involved in the SS Explorer Preservation Society, and positively emphasises the cultural and historical value of their ongoing work. I hope this award helps more people to learn about the SS Explorer and its discoveries, both in Leith and beyond"

Based in Leith since 1996 the Society works with other community groups to improve the local economy and increase the prospects of all local residents. Although inside the port itself the ship is open to the public by prior arrangement for tours. During the port open day in 2018 the tour bus stopped and the SS Explorer and a short talk about the history of the ship was given. Forth Ports has been a long time supporter of this historic ship.

David Webster Senior Port Manager Port of Leith stated "We are proud to berth the SS Explorer in the Port of Leith and our congratulations to all the team on achieving this award. The Society works hard to raise awareness of this important piece of Scotland's maritime history."

The SS Explorer Preservation Society is a registered charity, based in Edinburgh, which aims to give our past a future by restoring the Scottish Office's first purpose built marine research ship into a living museum and visitor attraction, raise awareness of STEM and heritage careers and improve our community.

"We are proud to berth the SS Explorer in the Port of Leith and our congratulations to all the team on achieving this award. The Society works hard to raise awareness of this important piece of Scotland's maritime history."

## Andrew Carnegie Business School

"I'm taking my career further with Andrew Carnegie Business School"

### Accredited Professional Qualifications

#### Starting in September 2020

- Management and Leadership (CMI and ILM)
- Human Resource Management (CIPD)
- Health and Safety Management (IOSH/NEBOSH)
- Accounting (AAT)
- Coaching and Mentoring (ILM)

### Part-time/Distance Learning HNCs

#### Starting in September 2020

- HNC Contracting Management
- HNC Facilities Management
- HNC Sustainable Resource Management

### Virtual Classroom Courses

- Project Management (APM and PRINCE2®)
- Management and Leadership
- CPD and IT Short Courses
- Working and Managing Remotely

### Want to find out more?

0344 248 0152

info@carnegiebusiness.com

carnegiebusiness.com

Andrew Carnegie Business School, Fife College, Pittsburgh Road, Dunfermline, KY11 8DY

Bespoke training solutions are also available – contact us to discuss your organisation's specific training needs.





## Take the time to inform and inspire Scotland's Future Workforce

Developing the Young Workforce, Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy, has strong roots in how industry and education work collaboratively to nurture Scotland's future workforce. Yet, as we embark on a new academic term, 'laced with 'new normal' in the water, we are becoming familiar with yet so much uncharted territory; how do we continue this collaboration so when the time is right for you to invest in the 'hiring' the investment now in informing and inspiring offers you a talent pipeline of industry ready young people?

We cannot let go of the need for contact time and real experiences, the human element of our future of work is vital. Yet it seems, like many other aspects of our working world just now, going virtual is the way to keep industry and education connected so our young people today can build awareness and capacity to compete in the labour market of tomorrow.

With research highlighting each industry encounter a young person has increases their likelihood of progressing into something positive after education and their earning potential, the importance of this collaboration to continue is clear especially for those who

face additional challenges on entering the world of work for whom the current situation is amplified.

We are already seeing some great practice emerging locally and nationally. We are currently working with a group of financial sector firms to map virtual talks from industry to the business and foundation apprenticeship curriculum. To support young people to build industry readiness we have volunteers offering time to review CVs and take part in virtual mock interviews. Whilst profiling pathways we have speakers from industry highlighting pathways they recruit from and what skills and attributes they look for.

What about work placements? Can something that has always been so tangible for young people have the same impact at a distance and virtual? Having an experience of the world of work gives young people the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of an industry area, an organisation, a role and activities within that role. Alongside this the experience brings them face to face with the organisations' team members and sometimes customers. Most of these aspects can be achieved at a distance and virtually with some

creativity and will to get involved. Setting projects for groups of young people can be one way to achieve this. Do you have a problem to solve? Do you have some research that needs carrying out? Would you like feedback on your website or online presence? All of these and more could be packaged up to support young people to get their teeth into a real work situation, opening up an experience for them to get industry ready.

The DYW team are working on innovative ways to keep the connection between industry and education alive and we are keen to hear from businesses who have time just now to get involved, simply offering an hour can help or getting involved in development activity – there is something for everyone. Do get in touch.

**Michelle Fenwick**  
[DYW@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:DYW@edinburghchamber.co.uk)

**DYW** | EDINBURGH, MIDLOTHIAN & EAST LOTHIAN  
 Developing the Young Workforce

## Local Edinburgh dad takes on epic running challenge of 215km in 10 days in memory of his baby boy

Local Edinburgh dad, Ian Greenhill, has set himself a huge fundraising challenge, running 21.5km every day for 10 days to remember his precious son, Reuben, who was born last year at 21 weeks and 5 days. The funds raised will support the work of local baby loss charity, Held In Our Hearts.

Ian, who has already raised an incredible £8,000, is nearing the end of his challenge and said; "I'm really enjoying the challenge the running is obviously long but all the money raised so far and the fact that I'm doing it for Reuben and for all the families who have suffered from baby loss helps to spur me on. Also I'm excited to have a pint at the end of it all."

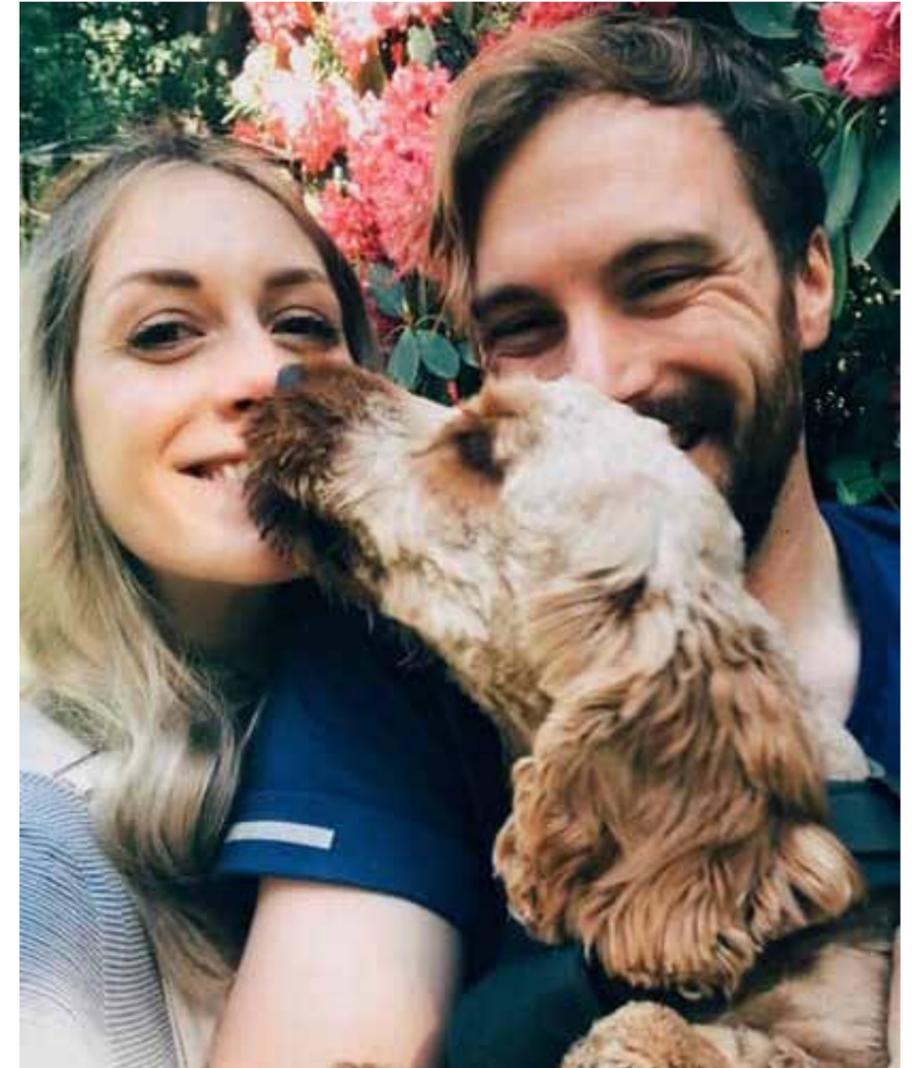
He said of his experience of baby loss; "Last year my wife and I lost our son Reuben. This was an extremely confusing and upsetting time for us and I was confronted with feelings I had never experienced before. We got help from a charity called Held in Our Hearts (formerly SANDS Lothian) and their empathy and compassion helped us through this period.

When you lose a child in the way we did, it is often hard for people to understand or comprehend. The charity gave us counselling from people who had been through similar experiences and helped integrate us into support groups who showed that we weren't alone. After this, we weren't ashamed to say our son's name anymore and we were/are proud of Reuben and the profound effect he has had on our life."

You can support him here - [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/reubenrun](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/reubenrun)

Nicola Welsh, Chief Executive Officer spoke of the impact of Iain's fundraising; "We truly cannot thank Iain enough for raising such an amazing amount of money for our work. His

"The charity gave us counselling from people who had been through similar experiences and helped integrate us into support groups who showed that we weren't alone."



challenge is such a touching tribute to the memory of his precious son Reuben. It has also been so heart-warming to see how much sharing his story has moved people through the huge level of support for his fundraising. In the current climate, like many other charities, we have seen a large decrease in our fundraising income, so we are even more grateful for incredible individuals like Iain to choose to support us in this way.

In a recent survey we did, 67% of families stated the lockdown has had a big impact on the care they have received. As an organisation, we are really only beginning to see the levels of trauma that families have experienced through lockdown and bereavement support for families is never more needed. We want to do all we can to support them and ensure that they are never alone and fundraisers like Iain's can help ensure we continue to be there for families today and in the future."

# Circular Economy – 5 Top Tips for Key Sectors

A Circular Economy is one which focuses on continuously using products and materials. Through designing and manufacturing as well as refurbishing, remanufacturing, leasing and providing products and materials as a service, businesses maintain and maximise their value.

Implementing circular economy practices can bring many benefits to businesses and can offer new ways to grow and diversify. Some of these benefits include;

- Improve resilience to changes in the supply and price of resources
- Reduce spend by using fewer resources and materials
- Generate business by developing and creating new income streams
- Increase customer loyalty by developing new services that enhance customer relationships
- Reduce waste by continuously using resources and materials instead of sending for disposal

Each of the key sectors of the Circular Edinburgh project; Construction, Food and Drink, Festivals and Events, Tourism and Hospitality, IT, Creative Industry and Facilities Management, bring different opportunities for implementing circular economy practices. However, businesses often want to know and understand what circular actions or practices they can adopt and implement.

Through engaging with and supporting local businesses and circular economy projects as well as investigating circular opportunities, the Circular Edinburgh team have developed Circular Economy Top Tip information sheets which are focused on each of the key sectors for the project. The information sheets aim to help businesses understand what a circular economy is and the different aspects of the economic model as well as highlighting the multiple benefits adopting a circular approach can bring to a business. The Circular Edinburgh team have developed 5 simple top tips specific for each of the key sectors to help businesses understand and see the simple steps they can adopt and implement within their individual business.

You can find out more about the Circular Economy Top Tip information sheets for the



key sectors and download them from the Circular Edinburgh website - [www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh/](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh/)

The Circular Edinburgh project is supported as part of Zero Waste Scotland's Resource Efficient Circular Economy Accelerator Programme, which will invest £73m in circular economy and resource efficiency projects, thanks to support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This programme provides funding and support for small and medium sized businesses in Scotland to be

more resource efficient and create a more circular economy.

For further information please visit [www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh/](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/circular-edinburgh/) or contact Mayan Grace or Lauren Ridgley on 01312212999 (option 5) or email [circulareconomy@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:circulareconomy@edinburghchamber.co.uk)



# The A to Z of investing: From Alternatives to ZDPs

Ross Middleton provides the next instalment in the series demystifying some stock market jargon

**S** ... is for Stagging

In the heady days of the 1980s, the Thatcher administration seized with enthusiasm the financial and political opportunities to sell off many national assets – the experiment with British Aerospace in 1979 was deemed a success and the following years saw a steady stream of shares in public assets being issued for sale to the general public. In general, these flotations went so well that many private investors felt that they couldn't lose by participating, and would participate heavily on the first day of trading in order to sell quickly aiming to secure a quick profit. 'Stagging' a new issue – selling out as soon as possible – may have been popular with some, but as issues became more keenly priced, the opportunity for a fast sale soon began to disappear.

**T** ... is for Two, and also Twenty

At one end of the spectrum are Exchange Traded Funds, which generally use a computer algorithm to deliver a return as close as possible to that of a selected index, often referred to as 'passive' investing; and at the other are the 'active' fund managers, some of whom not only levy an annual fixed percentage charge, but also take a share of any outperformance against their chosen benchmark. Two percentage points in charges can feel like a lot; the overall charges figure for a fund whose manager has also taken twenty percent of a performance surplus can look eye-wateringly expensive, and the new regulations are leading to tough questions being asked by Regulators and investors about value for money.

**U** ... is for Underweight.

If an investment manager is being measured against a given index benchmark, one of the factors to take into account is the extent to which his selections reflect the contents of the index. In the US, for example, the S&P 500 index is famously dominated by a very few, very large companies – Microsoft, Apple and Amazon between them make up more than 15% of the index. Failing to match the index weighting in a share – being 'underweight' in that share – where the share is rising sharply could mean that the overall fund performance falls short of the index, or beats the index if the share is falling sharply.

**MAM** MURRAY ASSET MANAGEMENT

3 Glenfinlas Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6AQ  
 T 0131 220 8888 | F 0131 225 7307 | E [ross.middleton@murrayasset.co.uk](mailto:ross.middleton@murrayasset.co.uk)  
[www.murrayasset.co.uk](http://www.murrayasset.co.uk)

**MA** MILL ARCHITECTS

Architecture that will change your world



Braemore Estates, 7 holiday let cottages

We are a design-led, architectural practice; passionate about bringing your vision and project to life.

We have considerable experience across a wide range of sectors.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Retail
- Rural
- Conservation

Combining creativity and enthusiasm with resourceful and practical construction knowledge, projects are managed successfully from concept to completion.

Create a new working environment to allow for social distancing or simply extend, develop or build new premises. We can help.



Get in touch today  
 0131 629 1466  
[hello@millarchitects.co.uk](mailto:hello@millarchitects.co.uk)  
[www.millarchitects.co.uk](http://www.millarchitects.co.uk)





## Push to improve Scotland's cycle touring offer, as country emerges from lockdown

Three new cycle touring routes and 15 day trips are being promoted by Sustrans Scotland and VisitScotland as part of a nationwide campaign to get people to explore Scotland by bike, as the country emerges from lockdown.

The move finds the Lochs and Glens Way (Glasgow-Inverness), Union and Forth & Clyde Canals (Edinburgh-Glasgow), and the Loch Ness 360 touring routes featuring on an interactive, online journey planner hosted by VisitScotland.

Created in partnership with Sustrans Scotland, the planner aims at encouraging visitors to the Highlands, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, Perthshire and the central belt through cycling day trips or longer challenges.

The journey planner will also feature 15 new

day-trips throughout Scotland, and will be available in a German language format as part of a push by the two organisations to promote cycle tourism as a key, sustainable activity as the country re-opens to visitors.

Sustrans Deputy Chief Executive John Lauder said: "The impact of coronavirus means that many people will be choosing to holiday in Scotland this summer.

"That's why we have teamed up with VisitScotland for the creation of this planner, which makes it easier than ever for people to

find the information they need to plan gentle leisure trips or longer adventures by bike in Scotland."

Malcolm Roughead, Chief Executive of VisitScotland, said: "We're delighted to partner with Sustrans to host new routes on the [VisitScotland.com](http://VisitScotland.com) journey planner and hope this helps people plan future trips by bike, particularly now tourism businesses across the country are beginning to re-open.

"The tourism industry has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic so we're

encouraging everyone to explore what's on their doorstep, supporting businesses and enjoying all our beautiful country has to offer in a responsible way.

"Our own insights show that cycling is a popular activity particularly for domestic holidaymakers and day-trippers seeking a sense of wellbeing and the opportunity to take in some incredible sights along the way.

"The economic contribution of adventure tourism is vitally important too and has a key role to play as we look ahead to the recovery of Scotland's visitor economy."

The journey planner is part of a shake-up of the National Cycle Network (NCN) in Scotland by custodians, Sustrans, in their work to make

"The tourism industry has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic so we're encouraging everyone to explore what's on their doorstep, supporting businesses and enjoying all our beautiful country has to offer in a responsible way."

the Network more accessible for everyone and provide a more consistent user experience.

Through their online mapping, the charity now promotes information for on-road 'Named Routes' best suited for an experienced, adult cycle-touring audience. These routes make use of the NCN but do not run wholly on the Network.

Sustrans say the changes, which see development of individual route identities and leisure-focussed promotional campaigns for Scotland's key long-distance cycling routes, will also build on the country's growing reputation as a leisure cycling destination.

Speaking about the changes, Sustrans Scotland Head of Network Development Tom Bishop said: "By making changes in how we promote and display our routes in Scotland we will help to better promote cycle tourism in Scotland and allow people to make an informed choice when using different cycle routes on and off the Network.



"The changes to the way we map and promote cycle routes in Scotland will help manage user expectations and provide a more consistent user experience when cycling in Scotland. This will help us to build on Scotland's huge potential as a world-class destination for cycle tourism.

"We have already seen success in our promotion of the Caledonia Way (Campbeltown-Oban-Inverness), and highlighting even more of Scotland's best leisure cycling journeys to a worldwide audience through our partnership with VisitScotland is a key part of our plans to encourage many more people to spend their time and money along these unique and beautiful routes."

Cycle tourism, estimated to be worth up to £345million to the Scottish Economy (Sustrans Scotland (2017) Leisure Cycle Tourism Guide),

is already a key part of many rural economies throughout the country.

Along the Caledonia Way, one of Scotland's best-known routes, figures suggests that cycle tourists each spend nearly £107 per day in towns, villages and hamlets along the west-coast route, and Sustrans say that this new, targeted approach to promotion will give more of Scotland's communities the opportunity to capitalise on the rapid growth of green and sustainable tourism.

Detailed information about the new cycling daytrips and the Lochs and Glens Way, the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals and the Loch Ness 360 routes will be available at [www.visitscotland.com/cyclingroutes](http://www.visitscotland.com/cyclingroutes).

Changes to the labelling of some National Cycle Network sections in Scotland will also be available to view at [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

TOP TIPS ON: PLANNING YOUR WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

**Name:** Alasdair Murray  
**Business:** Eden Scott  
**Title:** Associate Director

Surely the phrase, 'always fix the roof while the sun shines' has never been more appropriate as businesses face up to a post COVID19 reality and the skills they need in their business.

Unfortunately, it has taken a global pandemic, where many business owners were forced to adopt remote working and cloud-based platforms, for them to embrace the benefit of a digital-first workplace.

This change in working practices, along with the unfortunate increase in unemployment, has shone a light on the need for businesses to focus on training to re-skill and up-skill their teams.

Here are a few suggestions to help you grow the workforce your business will need in this new era.

**Do a skills audit**

Even before the pandemic hit, many businesses were facing a skills gap as they grappled with the onset of technological disruption. In a recent survey, 87% of business leaders admitted they were facing a skills gap over the next decade, but nearly half of them weren't sure how to address it.

So take this opportunity to assess where the gaps are, at every level of your business. Then put in place a talent strategy that will not only address your business's digital shortcomings but that provides training on social, emotional and adaptability skills which will be critical to success.

**Invest in your training budget**

As always in times of financial hardship, there are difficult decisions to be made around the appropriation of budget. Every team needs money to grow and regain market share.

However, this new norm isn't going away, and many of the practices introduced as part of remote working rely on sound digital knowledge. Invest in your training now. Your skills audit will reveal where there are gaps, so an investment now will give you a competitive advantage going forward.

**Adapting for distance**

While the social distancing enforced through lockdown will eventually dissipate, some of the fantastic timesaving initiatives introduced as a result are bound to stay. However, they will require the right training.

Before lockdown, only one per cent of NHS appointments took place by video link. Now nearly all patients are assessed by phone, and less than 10% lead to face to face consultations.

Organisations will need to provide further training for people to successfully deal with business conducted remotely and provide the right tools for the job.

**Support managers to lead remotely**

Nothing will quite replace the value of a face to face meeting with your team, whether it is a weekly team meeting or a creative problem-solving session.

However, managers and business leaders will have to learn to inspire and lead their team remotely. For many, it will require training on project management software and a range of different communication channels.

They will need to embrace the digital tools on offer. Learning to accept the data from these tools is vital if they are to get over the potential trust issues that have plagued their adoption in the past.



Alasdair Murray

**A local supply chain**

COVID19 brought our global supply chains into sharp focus as transportation of goods became increasingly difficult, and the 'Just In Time' model became impractical.

Going forward, it will be prudent for businesses to seek local suppliers or start the process of up-skilling their workforce to manage the production of vital parts. This is a huge shift in mindset and business practice, but one that will future proof your business.

**Test and adapt quickly**

The digital transformation of workplaces is going to evolve continually. It is not going to be easy to stay ahead of the curve in terms of up-skilling. However, you need to test and adapt your training quickly as the market moves to retain a competitive advantage.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

<p><b>AbilityNet</b></p> <p>www.abilitynet.org.uk</p>	<p><b>Accenture</b></p> <p>www.accenture.com/gb-en</p>	<p><b>Better Me</b></p> <p>www.betterme.life</p>
<p><b>Core Coaching Ltd</b></p> <p>www.core-coaching.co.uk</p>	<p><b>Hampton by Hilton</b> Edinburgh Airport</p> <p>www.hilton.com/en/hotels/edihxhx-hampton-edinburgh-airport/</p>	<p><b>Jacobs</b></p> <p>www.jacobs.com</p>
<p><b>OES Construction &amp; Energy Ltd</b></p>	<p><b>Shopworks</b></p> <p>www.theshopworks.com</p>	<p><b>T L Dallas &amp; CO</b></p> <p>www.tldallas.com</p>

Would you like more information on joining the Chamber?

Membership prices start at only £25.80 per month. Please contact us for more information.

Richard Ellis Head of Membership,  
 richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk



Richard Ellis

# Post COVID-19 – is Digital Transformation the answer?



Steve Black

Across the public and private sectors, the speed of decision making has accelerated to cope with the disruption of COVID-19 and its impact on customer experience and working practices. Many businesses have had to build new digital capabilities in weeks instead of months. Questions are being asked across the business world on how to adapt and thrive in the 'new normal', whatever that will look like in the future workplace.

At Agenor, we believe the answer to those questions is digital transformation.

**By Steve Black**  
Head of Public Sector & European Delivery Services

## The challenge

The mass evacuation of our offices has undoubtedly been disruptive to businesses, and agile decisions have been required to support the new mode of working remotely from home. In doing so, key challenges have emerged around how to maintain effective contact with the workforce, sustain productivity and minimise disruption to customers; all equally important.

Investment in any digital transformation journey must be able to demonstrate tangible benefits to justify the spend. The deployment of digital solutions is fundamental to both success and survival.

Investment in IT infrastructure, application systems and platforms, training and skills, smart enabled processes such as automation etc. delivered by trusted IT service delivery experts is and will continue to be the answer for many businesses in the 'new normal'.

## Adapting to change

Charles Darwin once said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change". This quote rings very true in the current digital landscape that we now operate in.

Effective change that is delivered at pace is a requirement that Agenor has repeatedly and consistently responded to for our clients. We have a long and demonstrable track record of successfully delivering critical change on time and on budget. This is our business as usual.

Over the period of Covid-19 we have continued to work closely and in partnership with our



clients to deliver transformation programmes. This has been possible because our own business model has been designed to harness the benefits of digital technology. As a result, our highly skilled delivery consultants have remained productive and continued to deliver our managed services remotely, thereby by maintaining close contact with our clients to ensure they benefit from successful outcomes.

## Demonstrating Leadership

One good example of how Agenor is helping a client to digitally improve its business is Borders College. By advancing their Digital Transformation Programme they have ensured that their professional services and curriculum delivery staff will be supported with a robust infrastructure platform, and empowered with

new desktop technology using collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams to enable ongoing delivery of key College services.

If ever there was a good example of a 'can do' organisation, then I would look no further than Borders College. They understand the value of the Digital Transformation journey they have embarked upon and are committed to organisational change with productivity benefits that will be achieved with their investment in both people and skills.

## A final thought.

It is my view that above all else, successful organisational change is best achieved through 'Leadership with Vision', however a clear view of what good looks like for our future workplace is not as simple as it may appear.

# Are you talking to your audiences in the right way?



**By Heather Astbury**  
MD & Co-Founder of The Reputation People

It is really important to focus on what your audience wants to hear, read or see, not on what you want to tell them. This can be a difficult mindshift for businesses and it is easy to understand why. You spend so much time in your business, working on making it the best it can possibly be, you are proud of it and you want to share your excitement with the world. The trouble is, so does everyone else. What can seem exciting to you, might not be exciting to your potential customers, suppliers, partners or investors. When you are competing in an increasingly crowded online space, you can't afford to waste time talking about things your audience isn't interested in.

Let me give you an example. Let's say you've moved to a new way of manufacturing a product. You've made a big investment in the new process and you want to make an announcement. But will it be of interest to anyone else? Unless you can find a way of translating it into something meaningful to your audience, chances are it won't be. And what will make it interesting varies on the type of audience. Consumers want to hear very different things from potential investors, partners or suppliers. The simple guide is to think about

'what's in it for me' and then put yourself in the position of the different audiences.

In this case a consumer audience will need to know how the new process affects the price, the functionality or the design of the product before they will be interested. They probably won't be interested in the process itself, but if it means they can buy a favourite product at a cheaper price, the product will have new functionality that they really want, the new process supports the environment or another cause they are passionate about or there is a new design element that makes the product more sought after, there's a good chance they will want to read your news.

An investor audience will want to know why you are making the investment in a new process. Is it part of a wider strategy that will bring growth to the business? Is it a well-thought-out move or something that could put your business in financial trouble? You need to tailor communications meant for this audience with these facts in mind and you need to send it to the publications and social media platforms that are relevant to them.

If you take the same story from a different angle, you could find a whole new audience to talk to. Your investment in a new process could be great news for a local business that you are buying equipment or skills from. In that case

you want a specific story to focus on this angle which you send to media and social media that focuses on telling stories relevant to that location. Your ultimate aim might not be to talk about the specific location but by doing so you are making the story relevant to a new audience who will then learn more about your business. They may even end up becoming customers, partners, suppliers or investors.

It can seem almost impossible to know where to start when it comes to getting yourself talked about. My advice is to start with the basics and always try to look at your communications from the point of view of your audience. Are you telling them something they will find interesting? Or are you talking about what is interesting to you?

Heather Astbury is the MD & Co-Founder of The Reputation People. If you would like a no obligation chat about how your business can communicate better you can contact her on [heather@thereputationpeople.com](mailto:heather@thereputationpeople.com)





Gopalan Rajagopalan

## New Business Beginnings: TCS Secure Borderless Workspaces show the way

At Tata Consultancy Services we employ around 448,000 people around the world, of which 19,000 work across the UK and Ireland and around 2,500 work in Scotland. Within three weeks of the pandemic outbreak, almost 95% of our global workforce were able to work from home using our Secure Borderless Workspaces™ model (SBWS).

### By Gopalan Rajagopalan Head of TCS Scotland

SBWS provides TCS employees and customers with a digital workspace with all the connectivity, tools and security required to work remotely. It means that employees can work as normal, collaborate digitally with colleagues and deliver the same services to clients without having to be on-site.

At the start of the pandemic, our employees were understandably concerned, and we have all faced challenges as we've adjusted to remote working and balancing additional responsibilities. Supporting our staff's health and wellbeing is our number one priority. We have introduced a range of benefits including virtual events for children to give their parents a break, medical healthcare services – providing 24/7 access to counselling

services – and a virtual engagement team set up by the HR department to promote wellbeing and help keep employees connected.

Our business has adapted with impressive resilience and we are finding that people are collaborating more with increased productivity. Overall, they are happy with working flexible hours and saving daily commuting time that can now be spent working, learning, keeping fit and pursuing hobbies. Our clients are comfortable with the changes we have put in place and want us to take on more work to support with their own challenges.

While the uptick in remote working has been accelerated by the pandemic, TCS was already working in a location independent, agile model. The experiences we have gained during this period are now shaping

strategic vision. Our 25x25 strategy, puts agility and flexible workspaces at the heart of our operating model. By 2025 we will only need 25% of our employees in the office at any one time to ensure 100% are productive. Employees will only need to spend 25% of their time at the office, only 25% of a project team will need to physically to be in one location and, based on what we have seen over the last several months, we expect a 25% improvement in productivity and outputs.

This strategy will enable TCS to continue to increase productivity and customer satisfaction by streamlining processes, whilst enabling our staff to work more flexibly. By making the physical location of our staff far less critical to our output, we can facilitate a more dynamic, agile and efficient way of working.

## After weathering the COVID-19 storm with pride, Lindsay & Gilmour look forward to calmer seas for their resilient pharmacy teams

There is no doubt that the world has changed dramatically since 2019 and, from the helm of Scotland's oldest independent pharmacy group, I've not witnessed a time when the specialist skills of our dedicated work force have been more under pressure and in urgent demand.



Philip Galt



### By Philip Galt MD and Superintendent Pharmacist, Lindsay & Gilmour

It is no exaggeration to say that pharmacy teams across the country have been at the frontline of keeping our health service running and our communities supported during the greatest health crisis of our lifetimes.

As an employer of over 300 dedicated pharmacists, technicians, and other key professionals, I have been overwhelmed with admiration for my colleagues as they stepped up to play a greater role than ever as the accessible face of primary health care on our doorstep.

During the peak of the crisis, our prescription volumes were 30% up on previous years (some individual pharmacies saw increases of over 50%) because of concerned patients panic ordering medicines. We saw an increase of over 100,000 inbound calls in March alone.

Demand for our delivery service also increased exponentially with an extra 8,500 deliveries in one month alone.

But somehow, we and many others across the country found reserves to rise to the

challenge and demonstrate the skills and resources defining those who are drawn to a role in community health care: an unwavering commitment to patient safety and care coupled with resilience and team spirit.

So, as the dust settles and our pharmacists and their teams take their place in this 'new normal' we all face, what lasting legacy will the post COVID-19 shockwaves leave for our industry and what does the future workplace look like for those who are considering a career in community pharmacy?

Recent events have served to expedite advances in many customer centric technologies that could have long term advantages for how we deliver community care. These include:

- The introduction of NHS Near Me, NHS Scotland's video consulting service which enables patients and clinicians to consult remotely. As well as being used widely in GP practice settings, it is also being trialled in some pharmacies with a view to rolling it out to all Scottish pharmacies soon.
- More people than ever are signing up to free online prescription ordering and delivery

services – in our case many thousands over the past few months, making the management of your medicines easier and more efficient.

Both of these key developments are already freeing up our pharmacists and their teams from labour intensive 'behind-the-scenes' tasks, allowing those working in our community pharmacies to make greater use of their core skills: offering face-to-face expert advice and support to our patients and improve their health outcomes.

Advancements in automation to replace labour intensive repetitive tasks has allowed staff greater freedom to have more meaningful conversations with patients which is, ultimately, where we as pharmacists make a real difference.

I believe that the irreplaceable human face of community pharmacy can be seamlessly married with innovative technologies for the benefit of both pharmacy businesses and patients.

So, while crisis will come and go, these steadfast objectives remain the beating heart of our world.

# The final frontier?

Space exploration is happening much closer to home as businesses investigate how best to bring their offices back to life as we continue to emerge from the coronavirus lockdown.

And that journey into space should prompt some fundamental questions and radical thinking as organisations re-evaluate not only what is possible, but what is fundamentally best for their business and their staff as they look ahead to a new, more flexible working world.

You don't need to be a NASA boffin to understand that the Covid 19 pandemic has changed the way we go about our lives, with the need for increased flexibility and resilience in our workplaces clearly demonstrated.

One of the UK's leading workplace consultancy, design and fit out companies has been working with Edinburgh Chamber to keep businesses aware of how they can engage in the process in a way that will best suit them in the short-term – and provide greater benefits in the longer-term also.

Space Solutions worked with the Chamber to create a webinar to help organisations better understand the challenges of reopening their offices in a safe, compliant and productive way, and that is available at the Chamber's You Tube channel [www.youtube.com/watch?v=28cHoHlrFac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28cHoHlrFac)

One of the key messages is that businesses don't only need to look at Preparing the Place for the People, they also need to look at Preparing the People for the Place – and that will involve HR, internal communications, technology and facilities management.

A whole raft of planning and considerations exist, from single entry and access points, one-way systems, physical distancing, lift access restrictions, sanitation points, to no touch

surfaces, ventilation, commute journeys and a host of others.

With capacities likely to be significantly reduced for the foreseeable future – the webinar shows some examples where usable desks are reduced to 26% of previous capacity and meeting room spaces to 22% - companies face the need to rethink how their office spaces work for them.

Working with clients, Space have been able to show that careful planning can help maximise the potential capacity in a safer way. But there are other ways to consider the issue.

Mo Gillespie, Head of Move and Change Management at Space, said: "One thing that the pandemic has definitely shown us is that people can work productively from home, sometimes more productively than they can in an office, and many businesses have invested heavily in ensuring staff are set up to work from home. We have been forced to move away from presenteeism.

"However, while some people have enjoyed the flexibility and freedom of home-working we also know that one of the key things others have missed about their workplace is that sense of community, of belonging. Too much isolation can endanger the mental well-being and health of some people.

"There is no 'one-size fits-all' solution. But in a way we have a unique opportunity to think carefully and creatively about how they best use their space."

Chris Carr, Senior Workplace Consultant, added: "The genie is definitely out of the bottle. We



now know that people can and have worked very productively from home. We have seen that during the pandemic, and companies should now know that, in general, they can trust their people to work from home if that is best and most productive for them. If you can't trust an individual to work from home, how do you know you can trust them to work in an office?

"Reduced capacity in their office space is undeniably an issue businesses will face, but over the years we have conducted many surveys of office space and we've found, on average, around 50% of desk spaces are not being used at any point in time. So, it is an issue, but one that better space planning can certainly help resolve in a positive way.

"That sense of community, of belonging, that Mo spoke about can be created through using the space differently, and by looking at protocols around communications, access to space, and the kind of space that the office provides.

"For example, if there is a need for less desk space, perhaps even less physical meeting space, is there a need for more digital meeting space? Is there a need for rooms that can either be where staff can create noise – for example taking part in a virtual conference – or where staff can enjoy peace and quiet? What kind of communal space is going to work best, help productivity, stimulate creativity?

"So while there is a pressure to ensure that businesses are compliant in managing their space re-opening safely and well, there is also that opportunity to think much more out of the box about the way ahead."

Mo believes the way ahead lies through the creation of workplaces that are more data driven. Companies should start now, if they are

not already engaged in the process, of working with their leadership and teams to find out what has worked, what hasn't worked so well, what tasks or processes simply cannot be done from home, to capture a fuller picture. "They need to get as much information as they can, to capture innovation, and then be prepared to be creative in their thinking to ensure that their future office is the best place it can be."

"One thing that the pandemic has definitely shown us is that people can work productively from home, sometimes more productively than they can in an office, and many businesses have invested heavily in ensuring staff are set up to work from home. We have been forced to move away from presenteeism."



## Maintaining skilled people key to recovery

The global coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown has had a significant and well-documented impact on our economy. Scotland's capital – with its major tourism and hospitality sector – has been particularly affected.

In response to Economic Advisory Group and the Enterprise & Skills Strategic Board reports on the economic recovery, this week the Scottish Government has set out measures to address the challenges facing these and other key sectors.

They include investment in youth employment and training, protection for apprenticeships and enhanced support for those facing redundancy.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scotland's national skills body, has contributed much to the development of these steps – with an emphasis on helping businesses and individuals upskill and adapt in the new economy.

Throughout the crisis, they have been in close contact with business organisations and hundreds of businesses to gather real time information and insight, designed to assist both employers and help shape government response.

Their labour market insights and accompanying real-time dashboard provide a clear idea of the



Marion Beattie



Phil Ford

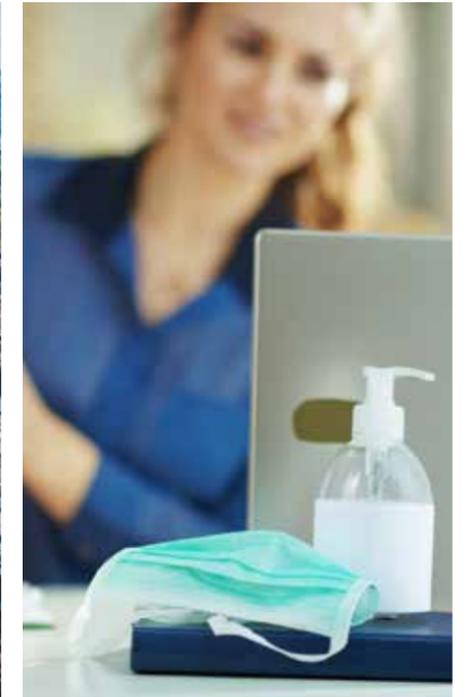
scale of the challenge facing our economy as it seeks to recover. For example, it identifies that more than 100,000 jobs within Edinburgh and the Lothians could be at risk,

But SDS is also deeply involved in the work to help put the recovery back on track, working across a range of activities including business support, training and learning, employment and redundancy advice, and apprenticeships. A range of portals including OurSkillsforce, Apprenticeships.scot and FindBusinessSupport provide instant access to information and support.

Marion Beattie, Head of Growth and Inward Investment at SDS, is under no illusions about the scale of the challenge but she is also aware that many businesses have demonstrated great resilience. "There has been a lot of innovation amongst businesses across a range of sectors, with many trying things they have never tried before, finding new products and new ways to develop their business.

"But inevitably many have found themselves simply fighting to survive. That means cutting back on costs as much as possible. It is understandable, and we also saw this to a lesser extent in the financial crash of 2008. But one of the things that emerged from that time was that it was those businesses who found a way to continue to invest in their business, who took the opportunity to reskill and upskill their people, who kept their talent, who were best placed to come out of the depression quickest and strongest."

Around 30% of Scotland's workforce, 736,500 people, have been furloughed in Scotland. In Edinburgh, more than 50,000 were still furloughed at the time of writing. Already, the



number of people claiming Universal Credit in Edinburgh have increased by 10,600 and there are real concerns that number will rise still further as the Government job support schemes wind down.

Phil Ford, SDS Regional Skills Planning Lead for Edinburgh and South East Scotland, is acutely aware of the damage wrought to our local economy. "We've seen a massive rise in those claiming benefit, even impacting in affluent areas such as North Berwick.

"We also know that because of the sectors worst hit – such as non-food retail and hospitality and tourism – certain parts of our community are more affected. Young people under 25, women, lower-skilled workers on low wages, minority ethnic communities – all are being hit hard. SDS is working with partners to ensure existing and emerging employability measures tackle increasing youth unemployment" The significant support offered to businesses by both the Scottish

and UK Governments has been of real help to businesses who might otherwise have been forced to cut workforces by now, and new schemes such as "Kickstart" – which will fund six month work placements for younger adults – are also designed to help encourage employers to prevent the younger generation being left behind.

Phil added: "We are also working with employers to do everything we can to protect Modern Apprenticeships, for example. We need to keep working with employers to encourage them to continue investing in skills."

Key to success will be persuading as many businesses as possible to fight the urge to go into "survival mode" and to look to the future, said Marion.

"Our efforts must be collaborative. Businesses must see that the help that Government can provide is joined up, that all agencies are working together."

And she is also convinced that the future is certainly not all doom and gloom. "I know it is hard to consider, but some sectors have continued to do well and grow through the pandemic. We need to focus on those areas of real growth potential, such as digital, renewables, life sciences, health and social care, finance.

"Sectors, local authorities, and Government are also working together to encourage the return of other sectors. Some, such as tourism, may take time but we will see growth return. We may not be optimistic of the quick V-shaped recovery that was hoped for, but we will see recovery.

"The question that businesses need to consider is what they need to do in order to be in good shape for that recovery."

"We are also working with employers to do everything we can to protect Modern Apprenticeships, for example. We need to keep working with employers to encourage them to continue investing in skills."

Phil Ford, SDS Regional Skills Planning Lead for Edinburgh and South East Scotland

**Name:** Carrie Campbell

**Job Title:** Partner

**Company:** Thomson Cooper



Carrie Campbell

**1. Tell us about Thomson Cooper and its role in the City?**

Thomson Cooper are forward thinking trusted business advisors offering not just compliance services like Accounts, Audit, Payroll, Bookkeeping, VAT and Tax but also added value areas such as Outsourced FD and Business Strategy, Wealth Management, Tax Planning, Cloud Accounting Solutions and Training and Corporate Recovery and Insolvency. Formed over 70 years ago in Dunfermline we expanded into the West End of Edinburgh 6 years ago. In that time, we have worked with Edinburgh Chamber to offer members the opportunity to be part of our very successful Business Development Programme.

**2. What does your role at the company involve?**

As well as being the Partner in charge of the Edinburgh office, I support a diverse client base on the more high-level strategic services such as meeting with the business owners to discuss performance, providing commentary on management accounts and discussing the future with scenario forecasting. This service is tailored to the clients' needs and is part of the outsourced FD offering. I have also recently been involved with our Employee Engagement Programme to help ensure that our employees are an integral part of our journey.

**3. How have you supported business in these unprecedented times?**

This has been highly challenging. In the early days it focussed very much on speaking to clients and providing information to them around the funding and support available (which changed regularly). Working with our clients on different cashflow scenarios, loan applications, providing direction around the SEISS claims and not forgetting the biggest challenge which was the calculation and submission of Job Retention Scheme Claims.

**4. What have you and your team learned over the course of the last few months?**

Prior to Covid-19 our employee engagement programme had identified a desire by some of the team to work flexibly at home. The partners had embarked on a process to explore how this could work

and how we could ensure that this was not to the detriment of client service or the wellbeing of our team. This period has shown us that communication and digital tools lie at the heart of this, we are now more connected than ever both with clients and as a firm. Platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Cloud Accounting Software and Business Analysis, Forecasting and Support apps have played a vital role in this journey and will continue to do so. It has also identified that working from home is not for everyone and it is about achieving the right balance.

**5. Are there any exciting projects on the horizon at Thomson Cooper?**

Historically our successful Business Development Programme offered networking/educational events throughout the year to the business community. Given that it will be some time before these events will return, we are working on bringing these to the business community digitally to ensure we stay connected and provide the same offering but using a different platform.

**6. Other than your current position, what would be your dream job?**

Book reading always draws me to Crime Fiction and my strongest subjects at school were all Science related, so the ideal would have to be a Forensic Scientist

**7. Outside of business, what is most important in your life?**

My family and spending quality time together.

We have worked with Edinburgh Chamber to offer members the opportunity to be part of our very successful Business Development Programme.

**Name:** Heidi Carroll

**Company Name:** MEERKATworks Ltd

**Title:** Founder

**Q In five words or less, what does your organisation do?**

**A** Create, plan, buy advertising campaigns

**Q How long have you been in your current role?**

**A** 15 years

**Q What does a week in your job look like?**

**A** Eclectic and varied. Always building relationships, often planning and negotiating campaigns, and regularly managing creative projects.

**Q Your proudest moment with your organisation, or biggest 'win'?**

**A** We've won awards and big accounts, but helping clients survive and thrive during Lockdown has made me prouder.

**Q Your favourite top tip or quote in business?**

**A** Employ integrity and decency in all you do. "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching."

**Q How long have you been a member of the Chamber for and why did you join?**

**A** One year. I joined to connect to, share with, and learn from, people in businesses of all shapes and sizes.

**Q Where do you read your copy of Business Comment?**

**A** Before Lockdown – travelling on trains etc between meetings, currently - on the move in my campervan, SandyBurrows.



Heidi Carroll



Generation Alphas all but rule the networked world. It won't be the first time you've heard this but harnessing their digital talents, as a matter of urgency, is absolutely vital. Especially now as we work our way out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Labelled "Millennials on steroids" and categorised as born between 2010 and 2025 they are increasingly renowned for integrating tech skills as second nature into their young lives.

Just think of those grandkids, some still in nappies, crawling around tightly clutching their favourite tablet. Woe betide any attempts to prise it out of their sticky mitts as they casually switch apps.

US-headquartered Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams staged its global conference in Edinburgh before



lockdown. Delegates heard that in order to commercially tap into such fledgling tech skills, a "digital divide" must be overcome.

Adults and adolescents each display a very different online understanding and experience. Grown-ups have known a world before the net but children grow up with a range of technologies used to educate them, build friendships and with which they learn about their identities.

The trick is how to balance all this with GenAlphas' relentless immersion involving innumerable smart IT devices that's very much at odds with everyday face-to-face contact.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) advises the way forward is by nurturing what are undoubted extra-special digital green shoots, whilst helping youngsters avoid/overcome the dangers of sensory overload and ultra-short attention spans.

So that not only GenAlphas but also the economy and society in general benefits in the long term. The work of the chamber and its extensive network, together with Young Scot, ePlacement Scotland and Young Enterprise Scotland are going to become even more essential over the next few uncertain years..



With increased demand for cyber security awareness metrics that highlight both knowledge and risk within an organisation, Intqual-pro has developed the new Cyber Stars 365 platform.

Since 2015, the Cyber Stars Initiative has been an imbedded part of cyber security strategies for organisations across the globe - with over 200,000 Cyber Stars worldwide. As a result of client demand and a proven need for clear and improved metrics in knowledge and risk, Intqual-pro has officially launched Cyber Stars 365.

A sustainable cyber security awareness solution that provides a 24/7, 365 day insight across a business, the Cyber Stars 365 platform provides detailed metrics on knowledge and engagement over time and allows for detailed insight into specific user groups, job functions and locations. In turn, these metrics provide evidence for regulators and inform effective awareness strategies.

Future awareness and education activities can also be developed based upon an analytical understanding of training needs and targeted

for the correct user groups, eliminating the requirement for unnecessary re-training.

The questions are based on specific areas of threat type and include understanding of threat, mitigation and response, with an opportunity to tailor questions to specific organisational needs. System users are assigned to knowledge categories based on their level of access, risk or function and can then see their engagement and individual knowledge retention across all categories for which they are enrolled.

Once learners provide a satisfactory level of understanding for a specific category, the platform will go dormant and focus more on areas where knowledge and retention requires more focus. This ensures that the learning experience and associated assessment is individually tailored across the entire organisation.

The management dashboards of Cyber Stars 365 allow for comparison of all users based on engagement and knowledge. The platforms filters can be applied to analyse data based upon job function, region or a number of other demographics.

Acceptable levels of knowledge can be defined and monitored for each user group and in cases where users fall below certain levels of knowledge, specific and targeted training can be provided at an individual level using built in platform training materials.

For more information on Cyber Stars 365 or to arrange a trial, contact [cyber@intqual-pro.com](mailto:cyber@intqual-pro.com).

**INTQUAL  
PRO**



**be everywhere**

# Find your digital voice!

Engaging your brand with audiences that matter.



[www.be-everywhere.co.uk](http://www.be-everywhere.co.uk)

E: [info@be-everywhere.co.uk](mailto:info@be-everywhere.co.uk)

T: 0191 580 5990



## On a mission to support the Scottish Government's export growth plan

Our team have continued to encourage Scottish businesses to explore new international markets, to assist international business growth and to promote the strength of Scotland's business community overseas.

We have hosted "Explore Market" events for China, France, USA and Canada. Some of these sessions have been in collaboration with the Consular Core representation in the City as well as Scottish Development International, British Chambers of Commerce and the International Chamber of Commerce network.

Having carried out extensive research on our members' priority markets, we set up a programme of inward and outward missions to support the Scottish Government's export growth plan. We have welcomed 3 inward delegations from China, USA and Ireland and we are continuing to follow-up on some exciting international connections that have been made. Our team have introduced 32 Scottish businesses into new markets on outward trade missions to Paris, Shenzhen, Dublin and Philadelphia.

The Edinburgh Chamber is now acting as Secretariat for the Cross Party Group USA and is involved in setting up quarterly meetings to promote relations between Scotland and the United States, which

continues to be Scotland's top export destination country. The group seeks to work with organisations to increase cultural, educational and economic exchange between the two countries, to engage with the U.S. Consulate General in Edinburgh and the American community in Scotland.

Our international documentation team have continued to provide export documents with a 10% increase on overall documentation since last financial year end. There has also been a 30% increase on customs documents (preferential trade documents), mainly for shipments to Turkey, due to a new requirement for Turkish customs in response to Brexit.

The team reports that Scottish exports continue to be concentrated within the food and drink industry, predominantly for whisky and salmon. The largest proportion of exports continue to go to China and the Arab States. ATA Carnets, which allow goods to be imported to overseas countries on a temporary basis for exhibitions and trade fairs, have increased by 18% since last year.

Demand for international trade training has continued to grow in popularity over the last financial year, and we now deliver 5 international trade courses regularly throughout the year. In Q2 and Q3, we worked in partnership with Shepherd and Wedderburn to create and deliver sector specific Brexit Readiness workshops for business. 141 individuals received training and support as part of the Brexit readiness programme of business support. Over 50 businesses also accessed one-to-one training support on WTO rules in the event of a No-Deal Brexit.

As UK-EU trade negotiations continue, we have been using our international network of Chambers and business relationships to inform local businesses on trade opportunities, to support them with their international growth strategies and to connect them with global markets.

For any enquiries contact the international team on **0131 221 2999 (option 5)** or email [international@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:international@edinburghchamber.co.uk)

## What's stopping SMEs from going digital?

According to a recent report by The Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) and Xero, not enough UK small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are adopting digital tools.

By rejecting these newer business management systems, SMEs are missing an opportunity to increase their productivity. Because there are so many of them, this missed opportunity is having a negative impact across the whole of the UK economy.

And in this new post-Covid19 world, any benefit to the economy, no matter how small, must be encouraged.

### Does software make that much of a difference?

As the Managing Director of a software company, my answer is of course going to be a resounding YES!

But you won't want to just take my word for it.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) have found a strong correlation between productivity and use of digital technologies. Specifically, they found that companies that used digital tools had more sales per employee than those who didn't.

A clear indicator that properly implemented software can really boost a business' productivity.

### How does software boost productivity?

Each system or piece of software is different, but in general, using digital tools makes people more productive by taking over repetitive tasks, streamlining where information is found, reducing the need to re-enter information or formatting, etc.

The ERC found, for example, that using a CRM system boosted sales per employee by 18.4%... wow!

But businesses in the UK are just not taking advantage of these productivity boosting tools.

In the UK only about 12% of business were using more than 6 of the key digital technologies outlined by the EU Digital Density Index...the EU average is around 26%.

This means that 88% of businesses are just plain missing out on these productivity boosting systems.

### How do we fix this?

There isn't a simple solution to this digital divide.

The way I see it, there are three things that have to be done if the UK is going to become a world leader in the adoption of all things digital in their businesses.

#### 1. Improvements to infrastructure

If businesses are going to rely on digital tools to get their day-to-day tasks done, they need to be



able to access them. It's as simple as that.

Too many rural businesses are being left behind because of a lack of high speed internet.

This means there is a huge need for real, tangible investment from government and internet service providers in improving the UK's infrastructure.

And it is happening...slowly...meaning a slower increase in productivity.

#### 2. Skill Building

We need to improve the digital skills of the people who will be using these tools. I speak to so many businesses every day who worry about implementing a CRM system because of the levels of tech literacy in their business.

Schools are doing their part. More young people are coming out of school with a solid grasp of how computers work and how to use them (and code for them!).

But for those people already in employment, it's the responsibility of the business and the software provider to help educate them.

The training sessions we run with new system users is just the first step. We've also got a library of how to articles and regularly post videos to help get our users feeling confident in using the system.

Because if they don't feel confident, they won't use it. And if they don't use it, they'll never get that 18% boost in productivity.

#### 3. A Change in Outlook

Too often conversations about technology and software revolve around the idea that they will only be relevant to the younger members of the team. This is in part because of the need for education, but also because of the way people view technology.

This idea that only young people can use digital tools is completely untrue. More than that, it's damaging to businesses, stopping their adoption of tools that will benefit them.

When it comes to adopting new software, there needs to be buy in from SME business owners. They need to be willing to (or better yet enthusiastic to) change the way they do things.

I don't mean completely changing business processes to fit new software, that's not how business systems should work in my opinion.

But having a clear understand of where a business isn't being as productive as it could be and going out in search of software that can help. And then having an open mind about what other areas of the business could benefit from it.

We have to end this trend of avoiding new technologies because a business has "always done things this way". It's time to explore new ideas and technologies.

Read more about the research behind this article here: [www.tenentrepreneurs.org/s/Upgrade.pdf](http://www.tenentrepreneurs.org/s/Upgrade.pdf)

And if you'd like to talk to me or a member of the OpenCRM team about your CRM software can benefit your business, call **01748 473000** or visit us at [www.opencrm.co.uk](http://www.opencrm.co.uk).



**Graham Anderson, is the CEO and founder of OpenCRM, one of the UK's leading customer relationship management systems.**

openCRM

## Activity continues apace on the policy front here at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

As the immediate health impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic start to thankfully largely abate, attention has now firmly turned to the economic recovery and how businesses can emerge from lockdown and be supported to safely restart and survive.



Whilst we're still using our links with local, national and UK Government to feedback the experience of businesses on the ground, helping to ensure support mechanisms are fit for purpose and remain in place for as long as is necessary, our activity in recent weeks has been very much focussed on restart and rebuild efforts, specifically:

**Keeping members informed.** In addition to continuing to deliver our regular events programme online, including our CEO Briefings and Roundtables, we have been regularly updating the Covid-19 Hub on our website with relevant sector guidance notes and Government updates as these have been announced. We have also continued to issue a weekly member update, highlighting key developments which have taken place each week, and signposting members to where they can access further support.

**Communicating member issues.** From the outset, we have worked very closely with both British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) to feedback member issues to the most senior levels of Government in Holyrood and Westminster. Working in partnership with other membership organisations, the Chamber network was instrumental in lobbying for support measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Bounce

Back Loans and VAT and PAYE payment holidays, amongst others. This work continues as support schemes evolve, and we have been working closely with Government on the design and delivery of new initiatives such as the Kickstarter Scheme (announced in the Chancellor's Summer Statement), specific support for the worst affected sectors such as tourism, hospitality and aviation, and engagement with the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.

Closer to home, we have continued to work closely with the City of Edinburgh Council and other key city stakeholders to ensure localised support measures are reaching businesses effectively. Our Chief Executive is a member of the city resilience group which is chaired by Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive of the City Council, and we have also been very engaged in specific plans to support our vital tourism and hospitality sector, through engagement with the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG) and the Strategic Implementation Group.

**Providing member support.** Where possible, we have been providing guidance and support to individual members since the start of the crisis, both by signposting them to sources of help based on specific circumstances, and by acting on their behalf to ensure they can access the support measures available. This



has enabled us to help a number of members access the business support grants on offer, and helped others claim discounts on business rates.

Over the next few weeks and months, we'll continue to work hard on your behalf to ensure your issues, concerns and experiences are heard across Government at all levels. We'll also continue to ensure that you have access to the latest information, and that any gaps, issues or lack of clarity with any guidance being produced is addressed.

As ever, please contact the Policy team at [policy@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:policy@edinburghchamber.co.uk) if you'd like to get involved.

**Joanne Davidson**  
Head of Policy and Innovation, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

## After a turbulent few months, it's great to see businesses gradually reopening and moving in to the "new normal"

**By Roxanne Nicol**  
Business Support Executive

Like many organisations, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has had to rethink its way of working and make changes to reflect the current needs of our members. I am delighted to move into my new role as Business Support Executive to lead on some new projects – I thoroughly enjoyed delivering the Events programme for 5 years, however now it is time for a new challenge.

I'm looking forward to working with our existing and new trainers to deliver an exciting training programme to our members and non-members. We will also be looking to focus more on our bespoke training, where we work with our expert training partners to

deliver specialist and tailored programmes to organisations and teams.

I will also manage our Mentoring Programme which will be launched over the coming months – so please keep your eyes peeled for more information on this.

As well as doing the above I have been supporting Developing the Young Workforce Edinburgh, Midlothian & East Lothian Regional Group on delivering their Skills Academy virtual workshops which is aimed at summer school leavers and will take place w/c 24th August.

I'm looking forward to working with existing and new members at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, and if any of my contacts would like to virtually catch up please get in touch.

[roxanne.nicol@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:roxanne.nicol@edinburghchamber.co.uk)



## TRAINING COURSES

### AUGUST

**Tuesday 23rd**  
Documentary Letters of Credit

**Wednesday 26th**  
Blogging for Business

**Wednesday 26th**  
Digital Marketing Strategy

**Thursday 27th**  
Dealing with Difficult Situations

### SEPTEMBER

**Tuesday 1st**  
Essential Management Skills

**Wednesday 2nd**  
Incoterms 2020 Update

**Thursday 3rd**  
Finance the Basics

**Tuesday 8th**  
The Fundamentals of Supervision

**Wednesday 9th**  
Developing your Business Brand

**Thursday 10th**  
Introductions to Google Display Ads

**Friday 11th**  
Instagram for B2B & B2C – How to Build a Range of Sales

**Tuesday 15th**  
Understanding Promotion in Business

**Wednesday 16th**  
Marketing your Business

**Thursday 17th**  
Networking Skills

**Friday 18th**  
Advanced Facebook Strategies to Increase Sales – Creating more Dynamic Facebook Ads, Groups Messenger & Live

**Wednesday 23rd**  
ICC – Incoterms 2020 Rules – Full Day Workshop

**Wednesday 23rd**  
Developing Video Content for your Business

**Thursday 24th**  
How to Complete Custom Export Entries

**Thursday 24th**  
Time Management

**Tuesday 29th**  
Finance for non-Financial Managers

**Wednesday 30th**  
Introductions to Google Analytics



## Success story for Graduate Apprenticeships

Graduate Apprenticeships are an education success story. Designed to allow people to gain a degree-level qualification in the same time as any other student without leaving full-time work, they are fully funded by Skills Development Scotland. Students apply their learning every day in the workplace and bring their workplace examples to the classroom.



**By Dr Lyn Batchelor**  
Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship at Edinburgh Napier University's Business School

At Edinburgh Napier University, Graduate Apprentices are studying Business Management, Civil Engineering, Construction & the Built Environment, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Engineering Design and Manufacture, IT Management for Business, Software Development, either on a day release basis or on block release programmes.

As we progress applications with employers wanting to upskill existing employees through completing a BA (Hons) Business Management (Graduate Apprenticeship) degree programme

in the Business School, as well as from those who will start in September, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the benefits of applied education to businesses and individuals. The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery's (Higgins) report released in June identifies both education and employability as central to Scotland's economic recovery. Graduate Apprenticeships are an illustration of how education and employability can be directly applied to business outcomes.

It is helpful to understand what a Graduate Apprentice "looks" like in the Business School at Edinburgh Napier. Now recruiting for our third cohort, we can confidently say that a Graduate Apprentice looks like the person in the mirror. Ages range from school leaver to 50+, years of employment range from new starters to twenty-year veterans of organisations, while industry sectors are diverse. Apprentices bring experiences from logistics, banking, the NHS, information technology, energy and government to bring theory to life in their studies.

Employers say there is a "fantastic buzz when (Graduate Apprentice) returns on Mondays. (The Graduate Apprentice) is early in (their) career, and shadows executive roles bringing us a new language each week" ... Graduate Apprentice is a new employee., and

"There is such a buzz when they return to

their roles each week, all want to do well, and they are like kids with new toys with their new knowledge. We've set a training zone to give them space to study" ... Graduate Apprentices are existing employees.

Overall, employers typically remark on the difference in the confidence of their employees as Graduate Apprentices even after a single semester of study. The design of the degree programme includes a workplace project module every summer which links the university concepts to day-to-day work.

This project work gives rise to the second common feedback theme of the change in perspective from self and team, to a business wide view of operations and their own impact on the organisation. The current projects are revealing the complexities of work in key occupations during the pandemic. Students are sitting for assessment after coming off a string of night shifts, meetings with the First Minister, managing remote international teams, and juggling home schooling, partners, pets and working on a shared surface. And thriving.

Whether you want to reskill your existing employees for the new way of working, or "grow your own graduate" who will gain four years work experience with you as they earn a degree, now is the right time to talk to us about the fully-funded Graduate Apprenticeship programmes.



Audrey Cumberford

## Supporting the skills needs of the region

As the nation's focus slowly begins to shift from suppressing the pandemic while averting an economic catastrophe to kick-starting an economic recovery, Edinburgh College stands ready to play its part.

**By Audrey Cumberford MBE FRSE**  
Principal and Chief Executive Edinburgh College

The recent report from the Scottish Government's Economic Advisory Group provides a sound starting point for appreciating the scale of the challenges ahead, and understanding the steps needed to address those challenges. Experimental data shows Scotland's GDP may have fallen by 18.9% in April, with modelling for 2020 as a whole also painting a grim picture of the impact of the crisis. While the furlough scheme is providing effective temporary support to the economy, on the horizon there now looms the spectre of a sharp rise in unemployment that will hit the young the hardest, and exacerbate already deeply entrenched inequalities in our society.

With that in mind, the assertion in the Advisory Group's report that "three themes have emerged as even more dominant than before; inequality, education, and unemployment" strikes a chord, both as an accurate assessment of the situation, and as an immediate call to action for me as Edinburgh College Principal – we have a crucial role to play in addressing the challenges that face us under these themes.

To ensure the most vulnerable do not bear the brunt of the economic fallout from this pandemic, we must provide opportunities for our vulnerable young people leaving school, college or university who now face employment challenges. We know there are likely to be young and adult people in work who now may not have the opportunity to go into an apprenticeship, so we are committed to developing opportunities for 'pathways' to an apprenticeship.

Current levels of unemployment indicate there are likely to be many individuals, with significant work experience, facing redundancy and our key focus will be to offer bespoke training opportunities to support those individuals to rapidly return to work.

The upskilling and reskilling of staff employed by our business partners remains a critical priority for the College. Many of the businesses operating within our region have capitalised on the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and the expertise within our College and we will build and expand on this vital business support.

Prior to the pandemic, I co-authored a report offering a perspective on the place of colleges in Scotland's future economic landscape. Reflecting on the above, I believe the vision set out in that report has become

even more pertinent. It is incumbent on colleges to adapt quickly and step up in their role as civic anchors and economic facilitators for their region. As a College we were already taking steps to become more flexible, agile, and facilitative with regards skills development for the local economy – this crisis presents us with an opportunity to be even more ambitious in that regard.

Like many organisations, this spring we had to do overnight, what business planning would tell you takes years; our teaching, learning and student support moved entirely online within a matter of days – including Professional Training which has seen many of our business clients receive training through online platforms – ensuring our clients continued to upskill and reskill their people through the pandemic. This mammoth effort was testament to the professionalism of our staff, and serves as evidence of the College's ability to be agile and innovative. Now our focus is shifting towards ensuring we are ready for what comes next.

I am in no doubt that in partnership with the Scottish Government, local and national industry and the wider tertiary skills system we can ensure Scotland succeeds in a skills-led recovery.



## The importance of resilience

Following the acquisition of Standard Life Assurance by Phoenix Group nearly two years ago the company has been on a journey to evolve the cultures of the organisations. Now more than ever in a post-Covid economy, it's important that much of the good work done, especially in the diversity and inclusion space, isn't lost. Here Sara Thompson, Group HR Director at Phoenix Group explains how a resilient business can thrive in these challenging times.

### Two companies have come together

Standard Life Assurance Limited was welcomed into the Phoenix Group in September 2018. This acquisition was a significant day in the history of Phoenix Group which can trace its beginning back to 1792. The strategic opportunity for Phoenix as a leading employer is significant, as the distinct heritage and positive cultures of the two strong organisations come together, learning from each other and ensuring the diversity and inclusion agenda remains central at all times.

### The diversity and inclusion agenda

Often when companies come together, an area that can be overlooked is diversity and inclusion credentials. Phoenix Group's commitment to D&I is ongoing. For example, we recently signed the Social Mobility Pledge and would encourage other organisations who haven't already done so to consider doing so too. The Pledge demonstrates a real commitment to delivering societal purpose by making a positive impact in the communities where we operate and in playing a leading role in tackling the opportunity gap presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made this agenda all the more important, with us seeing first-hand how this outbreak has increased the social



Sara Thompson

divide in financial terms – the affluent are able to save more and the less affluent needing to borrow more. This is coupled with some companies starting to make redundancies as the economy and businesses contract.

In this environment it is more important than ever for companies to increase their focus on diversity and inclusion, to ensure they build on their resilience.

### A sustainable company can thrive in challenging times

Our business resilience can be developed in many ways that aren't just limited to economic issues. One way in particular is to ensure a

diversity of views. It is proven that diversity leads to better diversity in decision making and better outcomes. A sustainable business that is clear on its purpose and has a diverse workforce will have the ability to anticipate, adapt and make good decisions, and focus on the issues that really matter. This is particularly important in challenging times

This is true at every level. So, at a time when many businesses are facing decisions about who to retain and what roles are necessary, it is imperative for the resilience of an organisation to focus on that diversity of views. It is the responsibility of every HR professional to help prioritise diversity in any selection and decision making criteria to ensure their business remains resilient and prospers.

### Time to pause and grow

A workplace that is inclusive and reflects the diverse range of customers and the communities where we operate makes a business more agile, responsive, stronger, and sustainable

The Covid-19 pandemic has given all businesses the time to take stock. It would be a great shame if businesses didn't use this time to reflect wisely. It is imperative, that we don't fall back from the slow but steady progress that we have been making in the diversity agenda over recent years. It's imperative because diversity is a business imperative for success.

## Universities critical for oil and gas post Covid-19

The damaging impact of Covid-19 on the UK's oil and gas industry and the vital role of universities to stabilise its future has been highlighted by a prominent scientist.

Professor John Underhill, Chair of Exploration Geoscience at Heriot-Watt University, warns there is a real threat to the sustainability of the sector if companies are unable to recruit the next generation of skilled workers as a consequence of the recent rapid downturn brought on by the pandemic. This, he adds, would also harm any plans to transition away from carbon-heavy energy sources towards green alternatives as the knowledge, skillset and infrastructure required will not be available.

He delivered the warning whilst giving evidence before the UK Parliament's Scottish Affairs Select Committee in Westminster as part of an esteemed panel of experts. During the session, it emerged that around 7500 oil and gas workers had lost their jobs since the onset of Covid-19 with tens of thousands more at risk.

We need the throughput of talent flowing through the academic pipeline in order to meet our future energy needs, particularly as we transition away from traditional oil and gas towards greener alternatives that face the Low-Carbon Energy Transition and challenge to meet Net Zero emission targets.

Professor Underhill said the direct impact of the pandemic means a number of companies are no longer supporting student internships, which are either being postponed or, in worse cases, cancelled.

He continued: "We have seen the number of direct employment opportunities for graduates drop-off, oil and gas projects are reducing, research and development is coming under increasing threat and there have been widespread job losses in the sector.

"We need the throughput of talent flowing through the academic pipeline in order to meet our future energy needs, particularly as we transition away from traditional oil and gas towards greener alternatives that face the Low-Carbon Energy Transition and challenge to meet Net Zero emission targets.



John Underhill

"Gas demand, as we wean ourselves off traditional carbon energy sources, is absolutely crucial to the future of prosperity and in safeguarding jobs. What is worth remembering is oil and gas is still expected to have a 45% role to play in the world energy mix come 2050. We cannot get away from the fact that oil and gas will continue to be hugely important to fuel the global economy and the UK's heat and transport needs."

As well as outlining the immediate impacts the pandemic has had for internships, research and development and training, Professor Underhill stressed the importance of delivering suitable training in order to deliver energy transition and meeting net zero carbon emissions.

He called on the UK Government to increase its efforts to bring about a 'sector deal' that focuses on extending the life of the North Sea industry and boost the UK's research and training capabilities and subsurface solutions around the safe geological storage of carbon dioxide and hydrogen, transformational technology, decommissioning and underwater engineering.

He said: "Covid-19 has underlined the need for a sector deal but to expand this beyond oil and gas into Low-Carbon Energy Transition and Net Zero technologies. I would encourage the UK Government to redouble its efforts to get a sector deal but with an expanded remit that faces the low-carbon energy needs aligned with Net Zero emission targets. Doing so would extend the life of the mature North Sea Basin through use and re-purposing of existing field and infrastructure. It would also see the UK play a significant role in the Decarbonisation of the Industrial Clusters located around the basin. There is an opportunity and this is the time to do it."

Professor John Underhill is the Academic Director of the pan-UK Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT). Entitled GeoNetZero (GNZ) the program will see around 50 postgraduate students undertake PhD research and training in Geoscience that faces the Low-Carbon Energy Transition and Challenge to meet Net Zero emission targets. The first students will join the program later this year.

We thank our Partners for their continued support of the Chamber.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



ENTERPRISE PARTNERS



Cllr Lesley MacInnes



Karen McGregor



Lee Craigie

## Edinburgh Chamber continue to deliver a diverse digital events programme throughout the pandemic

Our recent annual report announced that Chamber events have seen over 3,700 attendees across 2019/20, and we're delighted to see this continue with a high volume delegates registering to participate in our digital events programme over the past three months.

Chamber members Parabola and Scottish charity, Health in Mind teamed up to deliver a series of Mental Health webinars focusing on a range of topics aimed at supporting personal wellbeing. Each session has provided a great space for members to share experiences and suggestions of how you can support and promote mental health and wellbeing.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that many organisations have transitioned and adapted quickly to home working, and the prospect of returning to the office may seem daunting for many. In June, we heard from Space Solutions, the experts in transforming working environments, as they discussed how to manage change in your workplace, ensuring your new ways of working remain sustainable when you decide it's time to bring your workforce back to the office.

With an increase in grants, funding and loans available to businesses, Anne Farr of Rothera Group led a session on how to write effective funding applications, covering common pitfalls and how to improve your likelihood of success when applying.

We've been delighted to work with The City of Edinburgh Council to deliver a weekly update to our members during the recovery phase. Each update is led by a senior representative of the council to share the developments, decisions and plans currently underway to shape the future of our city. We look forward to continuing this partnership over the months to come.

We recently introduced a new panel series – 'Restart, Rebuild and Renew' with the aim of helping organisations look to the future and explore what economic recovery may look like.

The third event in this series was held in July and focussed on active travel and the return to work. We were delighted to be joined by Councillor Lesley MacInnes, Transport and Environment Convener for The City of Edinburgh Council, Karen McGregor, Director of Sustrans Scotland and Lee Craigie, Active Nation Commissioner who led this discussion.

We explored the benefits active travel can bring businesses as well as the benefits to staff wellbeing and the environment.

Keep up to date with the range of business support webinars and virtual networking events we have coming up with our events calendar on our website. We hope you see you (virtually) at an event soon!



**Iona MacArthur**

## Local knowledge and expertise for iconic Edinburgh hotel

Iona MacArthur is the recently appointed Assistant Director of Sales at Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian; a role focused on the corporate and incentive travel markets, both locally and at an international level for US. Iona has a wealth of experience from her roles as Regional Sales Manager for Crieff Hydro hotels, and IHG before that.

Commenting on her appointment, Iona said: "I am thrilled to be representing and promoting such a landmark hotel in the heart of Scotland's spectacular capital city."

Commenting on Iona's appointment, Director of Sales, Andrea Bullen said: "We are delighted to have Iona join our team to represent our iconic property and world-renowned brand. Iona's local knowledge and expertise are a great asset to our team and her professional yet, personable demeanour perfectly reflects our hotel's reputation as the city's most hospitable hotel."

## Edinburgh return not a risk for Martin Purbrick



**Martin Purbrick**

Martin Purbrick has returned to Scotland after 32 years in Asia and is now operating Purbrick & Associates Ltd, a risk advisory firm specialising in business intelligence, due diligence of people and companies, corporate integrity management advice, as well as sports integrity advice.

He has a network of global contacts built up during over 32 years in the corporate risk management, with the Hong Kong Jockey Club, McKinsey & Company, Intel Corporation, and the Royal Hong Kong Police.

Martin told the Chamber that "I am happy to be back in Scotland after 32 years away and hope to contribute to Edinburgh, in

particular with relationships in Asia that may benefit business in the city. This is a complex time in Asia as the geo-political situation evolves, and explanations of how business should navigate the risks should help us to continue to grow business with that region." He is advising several clients on money laundering and financial crime risks in Asia, as well as geo-political risk which is currently heightened with the focus on relationships with China.

"I am thrilled to be representing and promoting such a landmark hotel in the heart of Scotland's spectacular capital city."

### BUSINESS COMMENT IS AN EDINBURGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PUBLICATION

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Business Centre, 2nd Floor, 40 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LE  
[www.edinburghchamber.co.uk](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk)

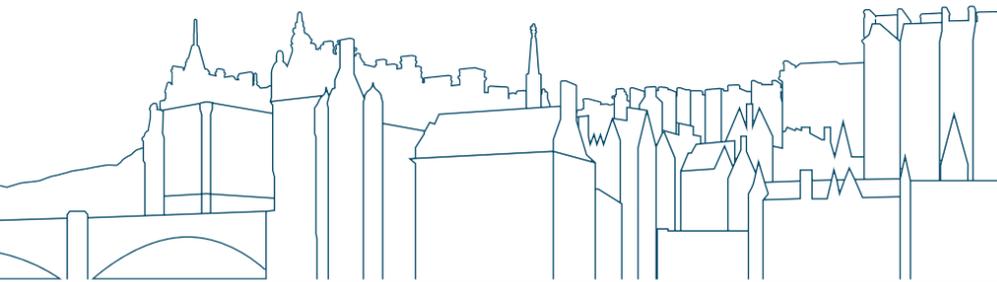
President: **Jane Clark-Hutchison**  
 Chief Executive: **Liz McAreavey**

**EDITOR:**  
 Emma Reid, Tel: **0131 221 2999**  
 Email: [emma.reid@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:emma.reid@edinburghchamber.co.uk)

**FEATURES EDITOR**  
 David Forsyth, Tel: **07887 955778**  
 Email: [david@benchmarkpr.co.uk](mailto:david@benchmarkpr.co.uk)

**PRODUCTION & DESIGN**  
 Distinctive Group, 3rd Floor, Tru Knit House, 9-11 Carlisle Square Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6UF  
 Tel: **0191 5805990**  
 Email: [production@distinctivegroup.co.uk](mailto:production@distinctivegroup.co.uk)  
[www.distinctivepublishing.co.uk](http://www.distinctivepublishing.co.uk)

**ADVERTISING**  
 Contact: **Lisa Miller**  
 Business Development Manager, Distinctive Group  
 Tel: **0191 5805990**  
 Email: [lisa.miller@distinctivegroup.co.uk](mailto:lisa.miller@distinctivegroup.co.uk)  
 Distinctive Group, 3rd Floor, Tru Knit House, 9-11 Carlisle Square Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6UF



Proud to Serve  
the key workers

Together... anything is possible

Are you using your current  
investment in Office 365 to its full  
potential?

Talk to us about what it can really do  
to help your business take off.



#### SERVICES & SOLUTIONS WE OFFER:

- IT Support & Maintenance
- Specialists in Microsoft Teams & SharePoint
- Office 365 Migration, Adoption & Support
- Bespoke Software Development
- Document Management & Collaboration
- IT Consultancy
- IT Strategy Development & Implementation
- Information Security & Compliance
- Website & Portal Solutions
- Cloud Migration Services

#### Endeavour Information Solutions

9-10 St Andrew Square  
Edinburgh, EH2 2AF  
telephone: 0131 376 0090

Microsoft  
Partner



Gold Application Development  
Gold Data Analytics  
Gold Cloud Productivity  
Silver Cloud Platform  
Silver Small and Midmarket Cloud Solutions