

Business Comment

DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022

**People, Skills & the
Future Workforce**



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People, Skills & the Future Workforce

Welcome to the latest issue of Business Comment, the Chamber's magazine, which this month is focusing on skills and training.

In recent months, a vital topic for businesses of all shapes and sizes to focus on has been skills and the development of our most important asset - people.

A cliché, I know, but only because there is little doubt that most companies would list their staff as top of their priorities. Good people generally equal successful businesses. And in these post-Brexit, Covid 19 hit days then the need to attract, develop and retain good people has never been more acute, or presented greater potential challenges.

From the lack of HGV and van delivery drivers to keep our supply chains moving through to the ever increasing demand for data analysts to provide the insights we need to gain competitive edge, the need to make sure we employ and develop people has never been stronger.

Recent Labour Market Insights provided by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) have highlighted the continued concerns of business regarding labour market shortages caused largely by reduced migration post Brexit and increased economic inactivity. SDS maintain addressing labour supply will "require a concerted effort across talent attraction, upskilling and reskilling, and reducing economic inactivity."

In this issue of the magazine, we look at what some businesses are doing to play their part. In particular, the collaboration highlighted between aerospace engineering company Leonardo and Heriot-Watt University to create a new software graduate apprenticeship which has proven hugely valuable. The programme couples academic learning with on the job experience. The company

employs 2000 people at its Crew Toll site in Edinburgh.

The magazine also highlights the work of Edinburgh Chamber's Inspiring Talent Group, set up to support members in the area of skills and development, and just to show that talent is not confined to the young, Mary Bright, Head of Social Affairs and Age Special Adviser at Phoenix Group, reminds us that over 50s will be stars of the future workplace – perhaps with the help of some reskilling and upskilling – through bringing qualities like work ethic, experience and confidence. There is also an informative piece on the City Region Deal's Data-Driven Innovation Skills Gateway and its Data Skills for Work programme. With predictions that 175,000 new digital jobs will have been generated in Scotland by 2030, limited supply of talent remains a challenge and an opportunity.

Elsewhere in the magazine, Balfour Beatty provide an update on their roadmap towards net zero construction – with a focus on their innovations at the Edinburgh Biomes project at the Royal Botanic Garden. Challenges remain, but the company is determined the construction site will be net zero.

Enjoy the magazine



Liz McAreavey
Chief Executive,
Edinburgh Chamber
of Commerce

18

Success for first students to embark on Leonardo's new software graduate



20

The start of something new: Roadmap towards the zero-carbon construction site of the future

Chamber News	03 05
Opinion	06
COP26: Edinburgh Summit	08
Mentoring	10
New Members	12 13
Ask The Expert	14
International Report	16
Corporate View	17
Special Report	18 21
Policy Update	22 23
In Conversation With	24 25
60 Seconds Get with IT	26
Chamber Partners	27 33
Chamber Training & Development	34 35
New Comers	36

35 Years of The Yard

Disabled children's play charity The Yard is celebrating 35 years of adventure, fun and friendship.

Opening its first location at Eyre Place Lane, Edinburgh in 1986, The Yard supports disabled children, young people and their families through child-centred and child-led adventure play. Welcoming children from birth to the age of 25, The Yard also supports countless families through its centres in Dundee and Kirkcaldy. Crucially, The Yard exists for the whole family, with parents, carers and siblings also welcome to attend play sessions, generating endless benefits for the wider family.

Celine Sinclair, CEO, The Yard said, "We are absolutely thrilled to be marking this milestone, especially after two of the most challenging years we could ever have anticipated. If someone had said we would approach the anniversary with months of lockdowns and restrictions, we would never have believed them.

"I'd personally like to thank each and every member of The Yard team for getting us through this period. Without their dedication, commitment and sheer love for what they do, we'd be nothing. However, the challenges we faced as a charity were nothing compared to the challenges facing families with a disabled child at home.

"We have been working harder than ever to ensure we are there for our families, even when they couldn't physically be here. And, in addition to the families themselves, we have also continued, in fact accelerated, the level of support we provide to the wider community from schools and nurseries to community groups, whether that's offering Signalong training online to providing emergency sessions for those who needed it most."

One of the Edinburgh families to benefit from The Yard is Sharon Walters and her sons Craig (14) and Andrew (11). Craig has autism, dyspraxia and specific language impairment. Before discovering The Yard, Craig struggled to engage with other children and, similarly, they struggled to interact with him.

Sharon said, "The Yard has been life-changing for Craig. It's an environment



where he can be himself and completely relax rather than acting the way others want or expect him to.

Everything they do is tailored to the child and, because he feels safe there and not judged, he's also tried lots of activities he would never consider doing at school or at home from cooking, going to the supermarket and playing table tennis to riding a scooter at a scooter park!

"He's also learning valuable life skills which will help with his independence as he grows. The Yard has become part of his routine and a safe place for him to be with his peers, so he's really missing it during lockdown. We can't wait for it to re-open and continue to be part of his life as he grows up. Ultimately, we hope he'll stay until he's 25, and make friends for life."

So what next for The Yard?

Celine added, "Over these 35 years, we have shared so many adventures with our families. We have also created lots of fun and friendships within our The Yard community



but, in many ways, we've just scratched the surface. Yes, we have achieved a lot but there is so much more to do and so many families we have yet to reach.

"With ambitious plans for the future which will affect all three of The Yard's locations, we rely on donations and are exceptionally grateful to the many businesses and Chamber members who support us year after year. To those who are looking to team up with a local charity as we welcome a new year, rest assured that every pound you commit or hour you offer as a volunteer will make a lifelong difference to a local family."

To support The Yard's 35th anniversary campaign, please visit:
www.theyardscotland.org.uk

Three Scottish independent schools join forces with Edinburgh charity to tackle digital poverty



Three top Scottish independent schools are playing their part in the fight against digital poverty by working with their ICT Support Provider, Mother Technologies who is leading a project to donate surplus IT equipment to a national charity involved in digital reuse.

Mother Technologies is supporting International School Aberdeen (ISA), Albyn School, and St Margaret's School for Girls to take part in the initiative driven by The Edinburgh Remakery, to reuse old electronics in a bid to tackle rising levels of digital poverty in Scotland and social isolation among disadvantaged communities.

The Social Enterprise's free IT Disposal Service for Businesses was officially established in 2020 in response to the growing need for convenient and secure IT disposal avenues. The project offers businesses and individuals the means to pass on a host of unwanted electronics such as smart phones, laptops, PCs and tablets, in an environmentally friendly way which prevents these items from going to waste.

The schools' initiative is a joint enterprise with Edinburgh and Aberdeen based IT specialists Mother Technologies, which is the ICT support service company for all three independent schools. Mother Technologies Head of Business Development, Alex Ferguson, explains why it's more important than ever to close the digital poverty gap: "There is much more of an awareness of digital poverty in a post-pandemic Scotland.

"Digital skills are essential in most lines of work and changes in the way we live and work post lockdown means that access to technology is increasingly important.

"Mother Technologies is committed to helping address the digital divide and we are proud to be supporting this fantastic initiative by the Edinburgh Remakery, who have done a wonderful job of launching this scheme to ensure every person in Scotland has adequate digital access." Between the three independent schools, more than 280 pieces of IT equipment have been donated to The Edinburgh Remakery over the last month to repair, refurbish and offer back to the community.

Nick Little, Head of School, ISA, said: "We are proud to be involved with The Edinburgh Remakery's initiative to tackle digital poverty in Scotland. The Social Enterprise is built on the principles of sustainability and learning, matching our school's vision for a greener future by pushing us towards a zero-waste approach.

"ISA believes in every child, every opportunity, and we are delighted to continue our collaboration with The Edinburgh Remakery as we strive to create a more sustainable community for all." Anna Tomlinson, Head Teacher for St Margaret's School for Girls, said: "St Margaret's School for Girls is thrilled to be taking part in such a fantastic initiative to help provide a better and fairer education to children, whilst setting an example of sustainable practice. "At St Margaret's School for Girls we

are strong believers that every child should have access to the appropriate educational tools in order to maximise their potential and broaden their minds. We hope that other schools, places of work and individuals are able to donate where they can and help support the young minds of the future."

Stefan Horsman, Headmaster at Albyn School, commented: "I'm delighted that Albyn School is involved in this sustainable and community-based initiative. The upcoming COP26 Conference reminds us that we live on a finite planet and that by repurposing our unused electronics in this way we are making a clear contribution to a more sustainable world.

"I would urge everyone here at Albyn and in the wider community to get involved as so many of us have unwanted electronics lying around at home."

The Edinburgh Remakery uses government-approved software that securely wipes any data from donated equipment to ensure it is all non-retrievable and allows items to be easily reused. According to a recent report by innovation agency Nesta, one in seven adults in Scotland are experiencing digital poverty. The research revealed that more than 620,000 adults in Scotland, or 14% of the adult population, do not have access to sufficient mobile or broadband data to meet their essential needs.

Elaine Brown, CEO of The Edinburgh Remakery: "Our free IT Disposal Service and IT donation drop-off points continue to grow and offer a much needed secure and sustainable way for old electronics to be passed on and reused.

"We are hugely grateful to International School Aberdeen, Albyn School, and St Margaret's School for Girls, who have each donated a range of surplus IT equipment to us, for supporting our mission to end digital poverty in Scotland while keeping old and unused electronics out of landfill. "We thank them for lending their loyal and generous support to us, and hope this is the start of many more educational bodies taking action to support their communities and embed sustainable practices within their institutions in this way."

For more information visit
www.edinburghremakery.org.uk



Why businesses need to talk about the menopause

Despite menopause being a natural and inevitable part of a woman's life, it is still a subject shrouded in mystery and taboo in the workplace.

By Alison Weatherhead
Employment partner
at Dentons law firm



Perimenopause and menopause typically occur between the ages of 45 to 55 when a woman's oestrogen levels begin to decline. This often coincides with a time when many women are at the top of their careers and have accumulated lots of valuable experience. It is therefore vital, not only for women, but for the entire workplace and the wider economy, that businesses change their mindset on menopause.

While such initiatives as Menopause Awareness Month and Day should be welcomed, as they encourage more people to talk about this subject, I know from both my professional role and personal experiences that we still have a long way to go. Other topics that

were once avoided in the workplace, such as mental health, are now openly discussed – as they should be. The same approach should be taken with menopause.

Unfortunately, many firms still overlook or choose to ignore what women are going through. With about one million women in the UK having left their jobs because of menopausal symptoms, this cannot be allowed to continue.

For a lot of women, it can take time to understand exactly what is happening to them during perimenopause and menopause, from the brain fog to anxiety and hot flushes. I know first-hand how difficult this time can be, and there is no one-size-fits-all way to dealing with the impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

Employers should be in a position to offer female staff all the information and support required. A good starting point is just to take time to listen to a woman's situation and how she is feeling, and make the workplace a more comfortable place to discuss any challenges. This support could begin with mentoring and

coaching to give people confidence to discuss menopause with colleagues. There should also be an element of educating the wider workforce and coaching management on how best to have what can be seen as sensitive conversations.

In legal terms, discrimination against menopausal women must be tackled. Employers should be drawing up fair policies for women during this time of their lives. There are large skills gaps in Scotland and this is one way that employers can attract highly-qualified women who currently feel left out of the workplace.

It is 2021 and workplaces have generally changed for the better in recent decades. The extent to which flexible working and homeworking has become accepted is an exciting development. Now is the time to reset how businesses approach perimenopause and menopause, rather than seeing them as something to avoid. Unfortunately, the experience of many women when it comes to menopause is that a long and troubled road lies ahead. We need to take action to show this does not have to be the case.

How to avoid conflict in challenging conversations and reach positive outcomes

As the Operational Lead for the Police Scotland Negotiation Unit, I had responsibility for a large team of negotiators across the country. The Unit would respond to hundreds of incidents annually. The types of incidents the negotiators deployed to were diverse; from engaging with people in crisis, to crimes involving kidnap and abduction.

On reviewing the circumstances of each engagement, I noted that certain teams appeared to resolve incidents more quickly than others and upon further investigation, I found there was a common theme. In incidents where negotiators tried to rush the process, the negotiations took longer to resolve, whereas teams that proceeded more slowly resolved the incidents quicker. The reasons for this included the higher performing teams focussing on applying a recognised structure to build trust, increase influence, and create collaboration.

This recognised structure is known as the Behaviour Bridge. The FBI introduced a similar model many years ago and is still used today by elite negotiation units across the globe as a strategy to assist in reaching positive outcomes.

The first step is Introduction. We all form an opinion when we meet people for the first time. This is where the primeval part of our brain kicks in. We all inevitably fall into 'fight, flight or make friends' mode. We subconsciously think 'is this person likely to prevent me getting what I want? should I just get out of here? or are they likely to be an ally?'

The key is to tailor your approach to make a good first impression. That could simply be turning up on time to a meeting or letting the other person do most of the talking and don't make it all about you.

The second step is Empathy. We all understand what the definition of empathy may be but what does it mean in a discussion? In my experience, the other party is likely to be thinking two things – 'how can you help me get what I want?' and 'can you see things from my perspective?' Taking the time to prepare and consider appropriate answers to these questions will ensure you establish empathy quickly.

The third step is Rapport, often defined as 'harmony and accord'. How can you fast track rapport? My advice is to look for early opportunities to problem solve together. Discuss challenges, see it from the other side's perspective, and work collaboratively on a solution.



Then create Trust. It's unlikely that a resolution can be reached unless there's some form of trust. So how can you build trust quickly? People like patterns of behaviour. We like consistency and predictability. Being consistent in your demeanour and tone builds trust. Be honest - telling your counterpart what the next steps are likely to be and delivering on them is a great way to create a trusting environment.

Next comes Influence. It is time to bring your demands to the table. The key to success is always articulate your position first, then your concession. For example, "if you do this, then we can give you that". In my experience, if you highlight the concession first, that's all the other party will focus on.

The common mistake for those involved in negotiations is to force their demands too early. Pushing your demands before you've established empathy, rapport and trust only prolongs the discussion and damages any chance of co-operation.

The final step is Behavioural Change. Negotiations break down on many occasions because the other party no longer feels listened to or valued. Successful influencers understand that it's not about being clever or forceful; it's

about convincing the other party that they have control, feel valued and have been listened to.

The Behaviour Bridge is a tried and tested strategy to establish strong working relationships and create a culture where people will want to work with you to resolve issues or confrontation.

Colin Harper is an internationally recognised speaker on influencing and negotiation strategies. He is a partner with Ogilvie Ross LLP and was the former Operation Lead of the Police Scotland Negotiation Unit, a graduate of the FBI Hostage Negotiation Program and lead protester liaison for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

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COP26: EDINBURGH SUMMIT



Edinburgh Summit Provides Capital Focus on Greener Future

The vital role being played by businesses in meeting Edinburgh's ambitious Net Zero target of 2030 was the central theme of a two-day conference held in the Capital to coincide with the start of COP26, the UN Climate Conference.

Both days saw a sell-out 150 delegates attend the event in Dovecot Studios, with more than 180 each day tuning in to view the livestreaming of the event, to hear from a range of local and international speakers share their thoughts and insight on the transition to net zero.

The Edinburgh Summit was organised by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce as the culmination of several months of COP26 activity held over the past few months in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council in the run up to the main event in Glasgow.

The two-day summit continued to focus on the four key pillars that have been discussed throughout the activity – Green Finance, Green Tourism, Greening the Built Environment, and Green Food and Drink. It brought together corporate directors, entrepreneurs, political leaders, influencers, young people and the

media. Important strands of discussion were to the policy environment needed to achieve a just transition to a greener, fairer economy, and the vital importance of making evidence-based decisions based on data to avoid potential unintended consequences.

The conference also focused on the need to tackle scope 3 carbon emissions - all of those indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain – as opposed to those directly controlled or owned (scope 1) or indirectly emitted through the purchase of energy or cooling (scope 2). Scope 3 emissions include waste disposal, business travel, purchased goods and services and transportation and distribution.

The event allowed businesses to showcase work already ongoing, look at innovation, highlight and share best practice, and discuss potential hurdles and solutions to meeting the city's ambition.

Liz McAreavey, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Chamber, said:

"Increasingly we are beginning to understand

the scale and complexity of the challenge that we all face. However, it is really heartening to see that Edinburgh is playing a leading role. So much is being done across all sectors of the city but we need more visibility and sharing of best practice. Our universities are leading research, our financial sector is helping drive environmental change by targeting "green finance." There are some stark statistics coming out of our construction and built environment sectors, but reassuring to hear that change is very much on the agenda – though much to do. Scotland's farmers are moving to more sustainable practices and buying local will play a vital role in reducing the carbon footprint of our daily lives, thought there are many myths to debunk to help us make the right choices.

"COP26 provides all of us in Scotland with an opportunity to show our collective determination to take a real lead in protecting the planet, and to do it in a way that shares knowledge and innovation across the globe."

Book your next business trip with Surgeons Quarter travel – you're in good hands!

Surgeons Quarter is the commercial arm of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCSEd). In addition to Ten Hill Place Hotel and the events and conference business which it operates, Surgeons Quarter's newest venture is management of Surgeons Quarter Travel (SQ Travel), a Hays Travel affiliated agency.

Founded weeks prior to the pandemic and operated from within the college, SQ Travel was instrumental in arranging travel and accommodation for medics around the country during lockdown, as well as facilitating bookings at Ten Hill Place – which provided 2137 free nights to frontline workers.

While SQ Travel was established with the initial intention of streamlining travel for surgeons and fellows of the College, it now expertly arranges business travel and holidays for all. Its independence is key to impartial advice and the best offers available.

If you are looking to redesign your corporate travel programme in order to control travel spend, monitor traveller wellbeing and reduce travel risks, you are assured of being in good hands with the SQ Travel team.

Caring for people is fundamental to what we've been doing since 1505 when The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh was established. Over those years we've been pushing the boundaries of surgical care and medical excellence for the benefit of everyone, and that passion for precision and innovation is reflected in our proficient travel team. As part of Surgeons Quarter, profits generated go back to the College which trains surgeons worldwide. By travelling the globe with SQ Travel, you are helping to improve patient outcomes internationally.

To find out how SQ Travel can assist with your corporate travel arrangements or provide help in booking your next holiday please contact travel@surgeonsquarter.com or call 0131 527 1737.

Surgeons Quarter promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the RCSEd campus, with profits made going towards the College's charitable objectives of improving surgical standards and patient outcomes worldwide.

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The Role of Mentoring in a Post Pandemic World

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the workplace has undergone a quiet revolution in terms of the way people now want to work and it has been proven that new ways of working can be implemented.

For many, home working or partial homeworking has become the norm and is likely to remain that way. While this brings many advantages it also brings its own challenges.

According to Buffers 2019 State of Remote Work report the biggest challenges faced by remote workers were:

- 22% unplugging after work,
- 19% loneliness,
- 7% collaboration
- 8% staying motivated

Of course, these are challenges that can still be faced even if you are going to a place of work.

Throughout the pandemic we found that mentoring can play a key role in overcoming many of these challenges.

Career development is another important area that mentoring can play a key role. Career development takes constant work, and when you work remotely, you may need to find additional support to ensure that your career doesn't stall.

Mentoring can play a vital role in helping in career development, whether you are back in your workplace or working from home. Here are just a few of the areas where mentoring can help.

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and skills form the bedrock of any career, and it is important that you continue to hone and develop your knowledge and skills throughout your career, pursuing your interests which in turn will inspire your curiosity and keep you engaged and motivated.

A rapidly changing workplace means that it is now more important than ever to ensure that you develop new skills to keep your skill set and working practices relevant. This may mean that you need to participate in some reverse mentoring, working with a younger person. Reverse mentoring relationships can be very valuable in enabling both parties to develop different skills, knowledge and experience – it certainly won't be a one-way exchange.



Networking and Visibility

One of the big dangers of remote working is that you can lose touch with your colleagues. Networking is an essential way for professionals to stay connected, relevant and up to date with their industries. By working with a mentor you will be expanding your network and improving your visibility either within your organisation or your profession and your mentor may be willing to help you make important connections within their network.

Career Vision and Planning

In today's fast paced work environment, it is easy to get so bogged down in day-to-day activities, that your career just drifts, and you don't take the time to stand back and look at where your career is, where you would like it to be and what you need to do to get there. By working with a mentor, you can ensure that you will make the time to work on your career

vision and by working with another professional it may throw up new options and directions you hadn't even considered. It may give you the confidence to set your goals even higher and be extremely motivating.

Opportunities

Opportunities are the key to any successful career development but may not always be obvious or come knocking on your door. Working with a mentor could help you to uncover some important opportunities that may otherwise have passed you by.

If you would be willing to share your skills and experience with others or think you could benefit from a mentor then why not take a look at our mentoring programme.

Find out more here:

www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/business-mentoring

Collaboration is key to SQA's environmental strategy

This approach is helping SQA contribute to the national endeavour of achieving net zero emissions by 2045.

Whilst COP26 focused on the need for international collaboration to tackle the climate crisis, it also highlighted the need for action at a local level. This included a rallying call for businesses to play their part.

As an employer of over 300 people based at its office near Dalkeith, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) takes its responsibility to limit its impact on the environment seriously. This has been reaffirmed in its recently published Environmental Strategy 2021-24.

SQA will maximise its environmental performance by enhancing existing practices, for example by increasing recycling, reducing consumption of natural resources, and adopting digital processes where possible.

It will also build on successful initiatives which have engaged and empowered SQA staff to take steps to protect the environment whilst at work, at home, and in their communities.

Many of these initiatives are co-ordinated by SQA's Environmental Working Group, which sees staff from across the organisation use national campaigns and awareness days to help colleagues make environmentally friendly choices in their everyday lives.

Recently, this has provided SQA staff the opportunity to attend workshops where they received advice on reducing food waste and has led to SQA's Dalkeith office receiving a Cycle Friendly Employer award from Cycling Scotland.

SQA's environmental activities extend into the capital and beyond, thanks to employee volunteering opportunities. Prior to the pandemic, this enabled staff to take positive action in their communities, through activities like tree planting at The Royal High School in Edinburgh, litter picking along Musselburgh beach, and tending to the garden at the Cyrenians Midlothian Community Hospital.

Regular monitoring has shown that this organisation-wide approach is helping SQA contribute to the national endeavour of achieving net zero emissions by 2045.

SQA is helping people across the country contribute to this target in its role as Scotland's national awarding and accreditation body, by providing them with the necessary skills to



Litter picking on Musselburgh beach

work within the Land Based and Environment sector.

These skills are delivered through SQA qualifications covering a wide variety of disciplines, including Environmental Management and Forestry, and which are designed in partnership with SQA stakeholders.

For example, SQA's Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs), which provide a way for those employed in the sector to have their skills formally recognised, are developed in collaboration with Lantra, the Sector Skills Council, and are based on National Occupational Standards.

In addition, SQA is working alongside Education Scotland and industry to embed environmental skills into all new and revised National Courses and Skills for Work Courses. This Learning for Sustainability (LfS) approach is providing school pupils with the tools to take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society.

The fundamentals of LfS can be seen within SQA's National 5 Environmental Science course. The course allows candidates to investigate the world in an engaging way, including through fieldwork activity, and equips them with the confidence and skills to take a



Tree planting at Royal High School

problem-solving approach to environmental issues.

By working collaboratively, SQA is ensuring that the skills and knowledge acquired by learners at all levels, remain relevant in what is a continually evolving industry.

For information on SQA's Land Based and Environmental qualifications, visit www.sqa.org.uk/environmentalqualifications

Find information on Learning for Sustainability at www.sqa.org.uk/learningforsustainability



NEW MEMBERS

Welcome

AND Digital



Welcome

Muckle Media



Welcome

Officers



Welcome

Bonnie & Wilde



Welcome

Matt
Middler



Welcome

Fairbros



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



The future workforce and workplace

The first question to ask is where will your future workforce be working. At home, in the office, or some kind of hybrid model?

By Michael Hart
Creative Director, The Union

Over the last 19 months we've all settled into new routines and new habits. We don't have to get up as early, pay for travel, sit on a bus for two hours, make sandwiches the night before, iron clothes, or even wear anything other than joggy bottoms, hoodies and slippers. There are fewer interruptions, it's easier to concentrate, we can go out for walks, drop off and pick up the kids, and all in all, eke out a better work / life balance. And if we can achieve that, then we'll all be happier, which means we'll be more

Culture has a huge say in making a company one that people want to work for and keep working for.

productive, the work will be better and we'll all make more money.

But not everyone lives in a house with enough space to genuinely separate life from work. There's little balance to be found in a one-bed flat seven days a week. Some of our people live alone and feel the need for human contact for their mental health just as much as the person who needs to walk a dog at lunchtime. Having separation is, for many, vital. But perhaps the reason for going back to the office is the very reason we decided to work at an advertising agency like The Union in the first place.

We're a company that thrives on the energy, creativity and buzz of our people. That buzz happens when you walk in the office every morning and it's alive with ideas, personalities, possibilities. That buzz doesn't happen on a Zoom call. Point of fact, it's noticeably absent. Which means it's noticeably absent for our clients. And for anyone we'd like to hire. And if we can't replicate it at home we're in danger of losing a significant part of who we are. That buzz

is what we feed off. It fuels collaboration, cements the bonds between us, and shapes our culture. What kind of culture will we foster if we rarely meet in person? What kind of values will we share? If there's nothing to bind us together, there's nothing to keep us from leaving. And if we can't pull off that trick, our present workforce won't be our future one.

The future workplace will, of course, be a blend of postcodes. But being in the office, in our case, is more important than we think. Culture has a huge say in making a company one that people want to work for and keep working for. Yes, we all need to feel trusted, valued and empowered, and there needs to be clear career paths and opportunities to upskill. And that is built on the promise that The Union is a fun and stimulating place to work and learn, where people, of all ages and backgrounds, feel they are part of something special because they make it special.

Our most valuable assets start at 9am and finish at 5.30pm, give or take.

www.union.co.uk



The Brunton – The place to be inspired!

With fantastic state of the art conference facilities and a purpose built venue, The Brunton in Musselburgh, is the leading choice for corporate and private hire.

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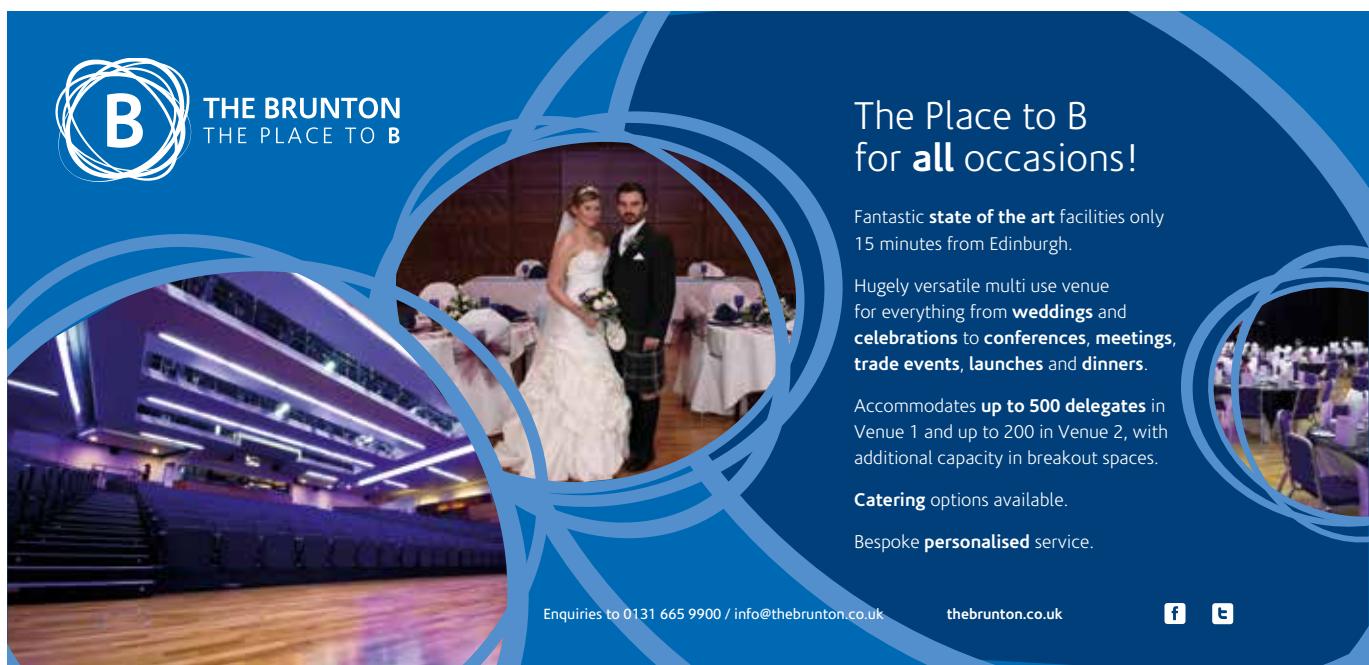
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Go International with the Edinburgh Chamber

Our Trade Mission Activity

We hosted a virtual trade mission to Denmark, focusing on sustainability and our delegation received a presentation from the City of Copenhagen, State of Green, British Chamber of Commerce in Denmark and Scottish Development International. Our delegation received an overview on the key opportunities in market and how Copenhagen plans to be a net zero City by 2025. Our delegation included Robop, Sisaltech, Almaborealis , Midton, Topolytics , Hibernian Football Club , Recycl8 Limited and Belltree Limited.

The Chamber has also hosted a trade mission to Poland with participation from the Life Sciences, Engineering, Drinks, Technology and Creative sector. We look forward to hearing the outcome of the many discussions that have taken place during the B2B meetings.

We look forward to hosting our next virtual missions to Massachusetts 15th-17th March 22 and Quebec 29th-31st March and will be firming up on dates shortly for our forthcoming missions to the Netherlands, Germany, China and Spain.

For further information, please email international@edinburghchamber.co.uk

Documentation and Certification

In our Documentation and Certification team, Export documents continue to rise across the board with Arab and Consulate documents increasing. There has been an increase in demand for Carnets to Europe due to Brexit, this is expected to rise as Trade Shows open up again. The Food and Drink industry has been particularly busy, with whisky exports to China in high demand. We are however, still hearing of the issues with delays due to the ongoing issue of getting cargo booked on containers.

Chamber Customs

As we have completed our first full year of our Chamber Customs service, we can take time to reflect on the many challenges businesses have faced trading internationally. Starting this new service, post Brexit, in unchartered waters where suppliers, importers/exporters and freight companies took the first steps into

a new era where knowledge (and paperwork) would be key to continued trading. Throw into the mix a global pandemic and latterly the lack of HGV drivers and containers and we can see very quickly that it has been a difficult year. Despite the adversity, our Chamber Customs service has continued advising and sign posting all enquiries, which have come our way. We continue to build a reputation of providing a high quality service and on behalf of our customers and continue to look for new ways to grow the service for 2022 and beyond.

BCC International Trade Survey

Thank you for those who have taken part in the British Chambers of Commerce 2021 International Trade Survey, which covered areas including barriers to trade, your investment plans, and priorities for the net zero agenda. The survey data will be shared directly with the most senior policy makers in UK government and will help feed into policymaking to create better trading conditions for your business.



"Did you have a good COVID?"

Everyone knows the last 18-months have been difficult, but I was asked a question recently which slightly threw me. Someone I haven't seen for several years asked, "Did you have a good COVID?". My initial reaction was a mix of shock and surprise, but it caused me to think through what has happened to Ogilvie Ross during the pandemic.

The first time we realised COVID was going to be an issue was a Friday evening at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. A colleague and I were returning from a week-long joint Frankfurt & Amsterdam business trip. Schiphol was completely empty! The following Monday was the planned opening of our new purpose-built offices, and the UK went into the first lockdown. Within 48 hours, 95% of our long-term client work was cancelled. That certainly focussed the mind!

As part of the new office build, we invested in our own video conference room for up to eight people. At the time none of our clients were using video as a communication mode but we felt it was something we might need in the future. Sometimes you just land lucky!

Over the following couple of weeks, we were in constant contact with our major UK and European clients. None of us really knew what we should be doing but we agreed that video conferencing and the new-to-us "Zoom" facility might mean some of the work could

be rescheduled and we would keep projects running in some form. Within the first month of lockdown, we created a range of new services aimed at improving how people could pitch and close business over Zoom. We completely revised how we delivered consultancy services to clients and almost all the planned work was back on the books.

Prior to the lockdown 90% of our work was carried out in the client's offices. Often this meant many people traveling to a central location for several days with all the associated flights and hotel costs. As our new model didn't require travel or accommodation the clients had far more of their budget to spend on delivering services. As a result, our billable time increased, there was no travel disruption, and our consultants had an improved work/life balance. Additionally, clients asked us to work in new geographical areas which could not normally be achieved with conventional travel plans. Now we can work with the Australian management team for a global

engineering business in the morning, switch to briefing sessions with the board of a Finnish investmentbank over lunch with the end of a day spent preparing the CEO of a French pharmaceutical business ahead of a major shareholder event. The increased workload and new market areas meant we had to increase staff numbers.

The COVID pandemic continues to cause massive harm and disruption, but it's also brought opportunities we would never have thought of. Did we have a good COVID? It's not an easy question to ask but the reality is, it forced people to rethink how they do business, and, for Ogilvie Ross, it has brought significant upsides. Welcome to the new global business models.

John Ross is managing partner of Ogilvie Ross LLP a specialist consultancy firm providing performance coaching and mentoring to global businesses, governments, charities, and sports bodies.

Success for first students to embark on Leonardo's new software graduate apprenticeship

Edinburgh aerospace engineering company Leonardo, which employs over 2000 people at their site at Crewe Toll, has just seen its first generation of software graduate apprentices receive the highest honours for their degrees, thanks to a dynamic collaboration with Heriot-Watt University and the apprentices themselves.

Even though they had never studied software engineering in the past, Leonardo's first cohort of software graduate apprentices have excelled in their degrees for Software Development for Business BSc (Hons) at Heriot-Watt University.

Michael Coleman, Bradley Yates, Gavin Davis and Jamie Jack were the first to embark on a new software graduate apprenticeship offered by aerospace engineering company Leonardo based at Crewe Toll in Edinburgh.

Their outstanding academic achievement follows years of pioneering work performed between Leonardo, Heriot-Watt University and the graduate apprentices themselves, to forge a brand new path of academic learning coupled with 'on the job' experience in industry. Michael Coleman, 22, Bradley Yates, 22 and Gavin Davis, 23 received firsts for their degrees while Jamie, 23 received a 2:1 for the course.

To receive a first in a degree, you have to demonstrate exceptional command of your subject, showing you have not only mastered its concepts, but you can put them into practice with excellence.

Deborah Soley, Head of Apprenticeship Management UK

Deborah Soley, Head of Apprenticeship Management UK said: "This was a first for us – so we could not be prouder of the way Michael, Bradley, Gavin and Jamie immersed themselves in their studies. To receive a first in a degree, you have to demonstrate exceptional command of your subject, showing you have not only mastered its concepts, but you can put them into practice with excellence. They have managed to do just that, against the odds presented by the pandemic and the fact that none of them were familiar with software to begin with makes their achievement even more striking."

Heriot-Watt's Software Development for Business Graduate Apprenticeship builds core skills needed by business, including object-oriented web programming, the writing of algorithms and the development of an



understanding around fundamental database programming and management, as well as network security.

Speaking about their course success, Bradley Yates, who attended Inverurie Academy said: "This was my first time working away from home as I grew up in Aberdeenshire. It feels great that the three of us have come out of it with a first. We were a bit anxious going into it as guinea pigs but it has worked out really well."

What makes the graduate apprenticeship different to a traditional degree is that students split their time between lectures and tutorials and their day job.

Students are given intensive learning support for the first two years of the degree, followed by two further years of studying where they are given much more freedom to design and lead their own learning. This freedom meant the software graduate apprentices could shape their learning in a proactive way so that their



hands on experience in industry supported their studies.

Michael Coleman, who previously attended Ross High in Tranent said: "When it came to object oriented design, I just couldn't get my head around it and so I approached my mentors at Leonardo and our apprentice team and in the end, we created an in-house course together. Object oriented design is important, as you use it to solve software problems. The in-house course we created together rapidly improved my understanding. At the end of the year we had to select a topic and I decided I wanted mine to be entirely focused on object oriented design. I got 83%, something I wouldn't have believed was possible at the beginning of the year."

Michael also found his learning accelerated due to the fact that he was creating software for live programmes, where he would create software for a subsystem of a radar, rather than a purely theoretical piece of coursework. This added to the sense of pride he took in

his programming, as it was to be used for real world engineering. An additional benefit to the software graduate apprenticeship at Leonardo was being able to apply theory the very next day in the live business, rather than having to wait for labs at the university. This reduced the risk of forgetting specific code in the days that would lapse between the lecture and the lab on a traditional course.

Gavin Davis, 23, who studied at Knox Academy in Haddington, originally started working at Leonardo in 2015 as a technical apprentice, then transferred over to the Graduate Apprentice software scheme after taking an interest in software. He believes the course hasn't just equipped him with skills, it has also given him a greater sense of confidence in his problem solving skills.

Gavin said: "Once you have learned the basics of coding, those concepts are applicable to most programming languages. I enjoy coding as you can write the code, push a button and see if your idea works. The most exciting thing

is when you realise you've solved a problem you've had for weeks by cracking the code - one day you just get it and it works. You are constantly able to build something from scratch with code to solve problems."

Dr Gillian Murray, Deputy Principal (Business and Enterprise) at Heriot-Watt University said: "We're delighted to have reached this significant milestone with Leonardo, who are one of our key employer partners. Leonardo has been a strong supporter of our Graduate Apprenticeship programme since it began in 2017. The academic achievements of Bradley, Gavin, Michael and Jamie are a testimony to how the Graduate Apprenticeship model can make industry-university collaboration a success. By working together, we have created a learning experience that has enabled the graduate apprentices to achieve their full potential. We wish them well on the next stage of their career journey and we're sure they'll go on to make a significant contribution at Leonardo."

The start of something new: Roadmap towards the zero-carbon construction site of the future

Hector MacAulay MBE, Balfour Beatty Regional Managing Director of Scotland, reflects on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, and how the company is turbocharging its carbon reduction efforts at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Hector MacAulay MBE
Balfour Beatty Regional Managing
Director of Scotland



We will share our learnings and findings to take our customers and supply chain partners along with us – we know that we must lead from the front if we are to move the dial across the construction and infrastructure industry in its entirety.

I have no doubt that the electric buzz that rippled across Scotland during the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, will be felt for many years to come. A pivotal moment in time, over those two critical weeks, world leaders pulled together to put in place new solutions and to shape the ambitions that will drive change and help to tackle the biggest societal challenge we've ever faced.

Despite the positive momentum that COP26 has inevitably promoted, we know that the conversation doesn't and shouldn't end there. Whilst it has catapulted us into an era, one in which climate change and the carbon we produce has become a primary focus for governments, businesses, and people alike – collectively, we still have a long way to go.

At Balfour Beatty, sustainability is at the heart of what we do. We have been on our sustainability journey since 2010 during which time we have reduced our carbon emissions by 55% and have launched our refreshed sustainability strategy, Building New Futures. It's a journey that continues to revolutionise how we operate, making us reconsider the tools and systems we use, and develop the innovative new solutions that will ensure that we can build back smarter, faster, and greener.

Last month, we went one step further to explore the art of the possible and harness the spirit of innovation at our Edinburgh Biomes project at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, paving the course towards the zero carbon construction site of the future.

Over the next year, we will be focusing on our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, and in doing so, will



Credit - RBGE/Nicoll Russell Studios

be monitoring our own emissions as well as the emissions associated with our supply chains on-site activities, the embodied carbon of materials used, emissions generated from transport to and from site, as well as waste generated.

It is through the decisive action we are taking at Balfour Beatty, that we will support the UK in becoming a world leader in carbon reduction.

We will share our learnings and findings to take our customers and supply chain partners along with us – we know that we must lead from the front if we are to move the dial across the construction and infrastructure industry in its entirety.

With the wheels now in motion, we have already highlighted the progress we have made to date as well as the obstacles we have faced in the first of our online diary entries as we look afresh

at our processes, consider how and what we procure and what we are measuring.

As we implement our roadmap towards a zero carbon construction site at our Edinburgh Biomes project, we have created a new body to help coordinate the resource and experience we have across our global business. We have introduced additional Procurement resource, a Net Zero Champion and Carbon Manager, to help us accurately calculate and record our carbon impact and support our teams to make better, more carbon friendly decisions.

Whilst work on site continues, we are also actively encouraging our teams to improve their overall understanding of carbon through our carbon conscious training programme which we launched in September. In addition, we signed up our full Senior Leadership Team in Scotland to participate in the Climate Solutions Accelerator course, where our leaders have learnt direct from world leading experts in the practical solutions they can implement to help tackle climate change.

However, as with any 'first-of-its-kind project', we have faced our fair share of challenges, particularly when it comes to procuring electric plant and machinery. The fully electric excavators available to the construction and infrastructure industry at the moment are simply not big enough for the job and hybrid models are in short supply and high demand.

Despite these difficulties, our spirits have not been dampened and we are lining up a host of new, exciting innovations and systems which we will introduce over the next few months. Next in line is our own state-of-the-art EcoNet system, developed in partnership with Sunbelt Rentals and Invisible Systems, that autonomously manages power demand by automatically turning appliances and equipment off when not in active use.

Our journey towards the construction site of the future comes at a time when governments are really beginning to concentrate on our industry and our associated environmental footprint. In Scotland it is not just about doing the right thing anymore. As a leader in the climate change movement, new legislation has recently been introduced requiring construction companies to demonstrate how they will support the transition to a net zero future - whether that is through the tools and systems we use, the materials we procure or how we dispose of our waste.

It is through the decisive action we are taking at Balfour Beatty, that we will support the UK in becoming a world leader in carbon reduction. We hope that our Edinburgh Biomes project will become a beacon of possibility for our industry. A project that will inspire our industry to take action, now.



Upskilling talent and skills for Scottish companies

The Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Inspiring Talent Group was set up to support Chamber members in the area of talent and skills development and retention. The committee is comprised of representatives from both education and a wide range of business sectors. The role of the committee is to consult on long term skills and talent needs, understand the changing skills and talent picture through COVID, Brexit, and the City Region deal, as well as understanding the challenges for different sectors.

It's obvious that the last 20 months has challenged everyone and there are some inspiring stories that have emerged from the difficulties of the lockdown period. In January of 2020 we ran an on-line "Inspiring Stories" event with the Inspiring Communities group, where we heard how different organisations, including businesses and charities, had adapted their working models to support their colleagues, individuals and other

organisations during the lockdown period. Over the last few months we have been working towards building an agenda based on the collective experiences of those Chamber members represented on the Inspiring Talent committee. Some of the subjects being discussed are longstanding issues affecting talent recruitment (e.g. equality and diversity), others are solutions developed during the pandemic to make common activities more

efficient and effective during the pandemic, but can still be used during and after the recovery (e.g. virtual work placements).

Recent data from Skills Development Scotland indicate that employment in Edinburgh has been significantly affected during the pandemic. For example, despite an average annual increase of over 1,300 over the last decade, the accommodation

and food sector saw an average annual decline in employment of 3000 over the last two years. However, other sectors have seen employment increase over the same period, especially in health and social care. Additionally, job postings in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian for the year to 31st May 2021 were only down 0.5% on the previous year, with the most common postings in software development, IT and nursing and care. The biggest demand for jobs over the next three years will be in human health and social work, accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail, arts and entertainment, education, and administrative and support services.

In Scotland nearly 60% of organisations said they find it more difficult to recruit in the last six months compared to the same period last year, and in the latest Open University Business Barometer 30% of decision makers reported spending more on recruitment in the last 12 months. 33% of Scottish employers agree they have not been able to fill existing vacancies because of Brexit, and 63% say there is a skills shortage in their organisation. Particular skills that seemed to be lacking range from industry-specific skills to data analysis, leadership and management, and soft skills including team working.

We are also aware that "conscious consumerism" is spreading to the world of work. Not only are individuals looking more at the consumer habits around environmental impact, sustainability and social justice, they are looking for these credentials in future employers. This is unlikely to be a passing trend.

The Scottish Government, through the Scottish Funding Council, are providing Upskilling Funding and National Transition Training Funding to Scotland's universities to support short course (CPD, standalone short courses and modules) to address the skills shortages experienced by companies in Scotland. Information is available through the universities and you can find links to more details from various providers in the information box on this page.

Over the coming months we will publish a series of blogs to raise awareness, to invite comment and discussion in some of the areas that we feel would interest Chamber members. We would be happy to hear from members on other issues.

Upskilling Scotland: Module & Course Information

Abertay University	Upskilling Short Courses Abertay University
Edinburgh Napier University	Skills for workforce development (napier.ac.uk)
Glasgow Caledonian University	Data science scholarship GCU Software development scholarship GCU
Glasgow School of Art	The Glasgow School of Art (gsa.ac.uk)
Heriot-Watt University	Upskilling Scotland Scholarship - Heriot-Watt University Online (hw.ac.uk)
Open University in Scotland	Upskilling Scotland Open University in Scotland
Queen Margaret University	Queen Margaret University Edinburgh (qmu.ac.uk)
Robert Gordon University	Upskill with our online short courses RGU
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland - Like Nowhere Else (rcs.ac.uk)
SRUC	Home SRUC
University of Aberdeen	Free online courses Scotland University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)
University of Dundee	CPD Upskilling : University of Dundee
University of Glasgow	University of Glasgow - Study - SFC Funded courses at the University of Glasgow
University of St Andrews	Upskill - Subjects - University of St Andrews (st-andrews.ac.uk)
University of Stirling	Upskill with a free short course Study University of Stirling
University of Strathclyde	Upskilling at Strathclyde University of Strathclyde
University of the West of Scotland	Upskilling Fund - UWS Centre for Continuing Professional Development

Name: Tomas Maunier
Job Title: Managing Director
Company: Fazenda, Edinburgh

1. Tell us about Fazenda and its business journey?

Fazenda brings the tradition of the Pampas to the UK. We created Fazenda to ensure our guests can enjoy the top-end dining experience they would should they visit South America and a friend took them out to their favourite local restaurant.

It was never about a themed restaurant for us, it was always about sharing the feeling. We started in 2010 in Leeds and slowly grew to have 5 locations across the UK. Liverpool opened in 2013, then Manchester in 2014, followed by Edinburgh and Birmingham in 2018.

2. What does your role at the company involve?

When we started my role was very much a bit of everything. Robert, who gave birth to the project but is no longer in the business, and I used to do it all in one way or another. We were there all day, every day, for probably the first 3 or 4 years. It was really hard, because when you are creating something from scratch it requires so much dedication that many times people who join an existing successful business do not realise. Creating a culture, a brand, a team. Setting standards, systems, procedures. Building relationships, foundations, quality. It all requires a big level of dedication, passion, vision and effort.

I came from no experience in the hospitality industry to having to immerse myself in this world pretty much overnight.

Despite the challenges we grew individually and as a brand as time went by. However, nothing ever prepared us for what the Pandemic had planned for us.

The last 18 months were the most draining times we have ever faced. We always knew the brand was strong enough to survive, but we were so concerned about the impact it would all have on the people that have helped us build this, the team on the ground.

Thankfully we have come through this storm with a stronger core, and even more clarity of mind.

"We believe that if we focus on our people, then they will make sure our guests feel special."

3. The saying 'People Buy from People' is a much-used phrase in business. How would you describe the ethos of Fazenda to new and potential customers?

We always understood that in hospitality, even more so than other industries, the key is in the experience. People choose to go out for a meal because they want to have a human, social interaction. It is not about the food itself. It is much bigger than that. And because of that, we had it clear in our minds that it is all about the people. It has always been and it will always be, regardless of how much technology we throw at it. We believe that if we focus on our people, then they will make sure our guests feel special. It's the ultimate example of 'people buy from people'. We are not selling anything tangible, just a human experience.

4. In your opinion and as an employer, what skills are underestimated and undervalued but highly sought after in the workplace?

I strongly believe that a great team is a team that has a wide range of skills. Whatever your industry, whatever your goal. But it saddens me that in the UK, people don't see hospitality as the career that will ultimately give everyone the key skills you will need whatever path you choose to walk. Hospitality, like no other, gives you people skills, teamwork skills and a profound understanding of the consequences of your actions.

Whatever you do has an immediate impact on your guest's experience and therefore the business, be it for bad or for good. And in hospitality there is no room to change or manage the result of your actions. If you make a mistake with one of your orders in a B2B, you can always recall, rectify, and then you take your client out for a meal and you are best of friends again. But in Hospitality, you gave a guest a bad night, and you might have lost them forever. There are no second chances. That is why learning how to work as a team and the impact your mistakes or good deeds have on the direct and immediate result. The importance of people skills both with guests and teammates in order to read expectations and how to manage behaviour. The mostly unnoticeable but ever so important role of communication and processes. All little things that Hospitality give people, the best people, for a better future. And somehow, this government and most people in the world, just feel that our industry is a low skilled industry, despite all it can and does give to society.

5. Given the dynamic changes we are currently seeing in the labour market, what does the future workforce at Fazenda look like?

It has been an immense challenge coming out of these lockdowns for us as a business but mainly so as an industry. We don't even know how or when or why it happened but we lost about 50% of our workforce after the last lockdown. We had many people changing careers as they needed money to survive whilst restaurants were closed, because furlough was not enough as they all earn a decent percentage of their wages on tronc/tips, and now are just getting on with their lives. We lost a very large number of our team as they returned to their EU countries as soon as the last lockdown

"It has been an immense challenge coming out of these lockdowns for us as a business but mainly so as an industry"



Tomas Maunier

struck in November to make sure they could spend the time surrounded by family, and now cannot come back or will not come back. We lost a full generation of students who returned home with their parents as they were finishing their studies online so they could save the cost of rent. You name it, any reason you can think of. But the reason is not what really matters today, but what the future will look like to our business and industry.

The biggest problem is that hospitality is seen as an undesirable job in the UK. As if serving others is not for the great. Having the doors to Europe closed is putting a huge pressure on the recruitment market. We believe that until the workforce adapts to the vacancies and also the employers adapt to the market we will continue seeing a below par level of candidates coming through the door. The problem is never the actual level of experience, we always believed in training and developing, the issues at the moment are mainly down to the amount of people that need training and developing, as well as the lack of passion, interest and dedication we have seen. The reality is guests will have to understand that all this comes at a cost, a cost that will have to be passed on to them in some way. Because to make our industry more appealing wages must go up, but also with more and more training and effort required as well as more people on site at the same time due to lack of experience, the wages bills have gone up considerably.

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

Well, over the years I had many dream jobs, and I must say I am a lucky man with what I do for a living as I feel that leading the amazing team we have is a privilege, but I do know that once I move on from where I am today, I will have a 9 to 5 job, with no responsibilities attached, next to a nice beach with good waves and will just relax. Not sure what, but wouldn't mind it as long as my lovely wife, kids and dogs are around.

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

The cliché but honest answer that the vast majority probably says is family. So if I move that aside, I think the most important thing really is to live life to the fullest by making this place a better place however we can. We are the lucky ones who were born in a position of privilege, even if we were not from a well off family, or had to work super hard to get to where we are now, trust me there are people out there who would have loved to have the opportunities or life we had. So every day I tell myself that I don't live my life for me but for all the other people out there that weren't lucky enough to be born where I was.

Name:
Daniel Holler & Henry Sabin
Company Name:
Thirlestane Media
Web:
www.thirlestanemedia.com

Q In five words or less, what do you do?

A Digital solutions to business problems.

Q How long have you been a Chamber member?

A We have been members of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce for 2 months now.

Q Why did you join?

A We joined the chamber for the networking opportunities as well as for the mentorship program.

Q What services do you use?

A We use many of the services, but the legal templates and mentorship program have been particularly helpful.

Q What's the best business/benefit you have won through the Chamber?

A The greatest benefit for us has been a large increase in local clients we met through networking events.

Q Are there any additional services or information you'd be particularly interested in?

A We're already beyond satisfied with the services currently available!

Q If you were telling another business person about the Chamber, what's the first thing you would say?

A We would say that the Chamber of commerce is the best way to get in touch with other businesses and build real connections.



Daniel & Henry

Q Where do you read your copy of Business Comment?

A We read our copy on the Chamber of Commerce website.



The 5-year Smart City partnership between Edinburgh Council and CGI signals a new technological era for the Capital.

One centred on delivering a digitally-enabled - read super-connected - proactive service improving the wellbeing of business and the wider society.

Otherwise known as "intelligent" or "wired" cities, smart means using a wide range of information and communications technology (ICT) applications to promote both the working and living environments while reducing costs and overuse of resources generally.

From a commercial perspective, cities need to constantly innovate or else they will fail to attract new workers and companies and a

smart city also enables local organisations to thrive.

Business districts are better managed through co-ordinating services and deliveries, retail is optimised to increase shoppers' footfall producing more revenues in the process plus the logistics behind increasingly popular home deliveries are more efficient.

This latest agreement follows CGI extending its work with the council last September to facilitate online transactions and significantly improve bandwidth speeds available to schools.

Timing is everything and a smart city with green buildings and climate change solutions is the way to go. Scottish Development International points to the Scottish Cities Alliance, where millions of pounds is being invested to make the design and architecture smarter as part of an ambitious programme for decarbonisation.



Edinburgh is experiencing both an acceleration and transformation of the delivery of city services and urban spaces by utilising data, apps and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies.

This is in harmony with Scotland introducing new building performance standards plus supporting substantial investments in low carbon heat and energy efficiency to decarbonise the nation's building stock.

The end product is Edinburgh a smart and environmentally focused city. A Capital fit for the 21st Century and beyond.

So, Edinburgh is now a Living Wage City. What does this mean? And how can businesses across the city get involved?

At the council we know there's lots to be done to support economic recovery as we move through the pandemic and deal with the additional pressures from Brexit.

One of the big, emerging challenges is workforce, underlined by the loss of so many of our valued EU nationals who contributed so much to our economy. You'd have to be permanently self-isolating not to see the real-world impacts of this. Many hospitality businesses are only open part of the week, or only doing dinner service, or limiting menus – and it's not due to a lack of demand – it's due to staff shortages.

It's going to take some time for workforce capacity to recover. And employers will need to work hard in a competitive market to attract and retain staff.

So how can being a Living Wage Accredited Employer help?

It's true that from April 2022 the minimum wage will go up to the level of the current real living wage, but that's the date that the real living wage will increase further. And the increase is only for people aged 23 and over. And you don't get a discount on your rent, or energy bills or food just because you're 22.

The real living wage is reviewed every year to make sure it reflects the cost of living. So, employees in accredited workplaces can have confidence their wages will go up as their costs do – a level of security that people need more than ever in these uncertain times.

"We've all had to deal with the challenges of the pandemic together, it's important that we recover together as well."

And being an accredited living wage employer is about so much more than paying a living wage. It's about making it clear that fair work is embedded in your workplace culture



Councillor Kate Campbell, The City of Edinburgh Council's Fair Work Convener and Co-Chair Edinburgh Living Wage City Action Group.

and showing your staff that you value them and the contribution they make. It's about recognising the importance of job security, or flexible working for people with caring or other responsibilities.

For employers struggling to recruit, these are valuable ways to make your organisation attractive to potential staff.

The evidence shows that more and more businesses are making the decision to get accredited not just based on 'doing the right thing' – but based on the benefits to their organisation.

Employers are finding that accreditation is leading to better staff retention, helping them to keep skilled staff. They report reduced sickness and absence levels and increased productivity.

Staff are more committed to the business and feel more invested in their work.

Boards that had to be gently persuaded by eager chief execs are now enthusiastically championing the benefits.

And we know too that ethical consumerism is growing - especially in a city like Edinburgh. People want to know that the people providing them with services, the front-line staff they interact with, are treated well.

We've all had to deal with the challenges of the pandemic together, it's important that we recover together as well. So a call to all Edinburgh businesses: be part of this living wage city movement so we can ensure that everyone can share in our recovery - by putting fair work at its heart.

Why over-50s will be the stars of the future workplace

The past is another country in workplace terms. Concepts such as apprenticeships being only for school leavers, jobs for life, and fixed retirement ages clearly belong there.

By Mary Bright
Head of Social Affairs
and Age Special Adviser
at Phoenix Group



The future workplace is also another country but one to which we are transitioning rapidly. It's a place where our received ideas about careers, skills, and especially age, will be challenged and transformed.

As we make the great transition to the green economy, the world of industry 4.0 and experience a hugely shifting workforce demographic, we need new approaches. Our 20th century ideas no longer hold.

As recently as 1984 there were just 1,000 internet devices on the whole of Planet Earth. Today the members of the Edinburgh Chamber alone own far more than that and there are another 30 billion plus across the planet.

This revolution has ushered in a new skills, training and work landscape. At the start of the 20th century, the half-life of engineering knowledge was 35 years – it took 35 years for half of current engineering knowledge to out-of-date and to require renewal.

Today the half-life of engineering knowledge is four years. That has huge implications for continual learning. Whether you're Generation Z or a Baby Boomer, you must constantly update your knowledge – it's a level playing field.

Impact of green recovery

The green recovery and energy transition to net zero are playing a huge part in this. Our new era will be defined by a multi-skilled workforce that is flexible, dynamic and technology-enabled. It is estimated that 20% of jobs in the next five years don't exist yet and that two-thirds of today's school children will work in roles that have yet to be created.

This coincides with another huge systemic



change. Our workforce is ageing: a third of all workers are now aged 50 or over. By 2025, there will be 300,000 fewer UK workers under the age of 30 compared with one million more workers over the age of 50.

It doesn't take a genius to see that our over-50 workforce, the fastest growing segment of the employment market, is our greatest underexploited resources: one that we should make better use of.

Debunking the myth of the older worker

People over 50 are attractive to employers for several compelling reasons: their enviable experience, strong work ethics, efficiency and confidence. They also tend to remain in their jobs for longer than younger employees, and as a result, retain vital corporate knowledge.

Yet prejudices can still remain against older workers in the form of myths that they are less adaptable, less productive, more resistant to change, less digitally savvy and more likely to be ill. However, authoritative workplace research from august institutions ranging from Harvard Business School to the CIPD has effectively debunked every single one of these myths.

Retraining, re-skilling and upskilling are key

So, given the huge advantages of keeping over-50s actively engaged, how do we best deliver this for the benefit of employers, employees, and society? Clearly, it is through retaining and retraining.

The UK Government is spending £3 billion over the next five years, on a National Skills Fund to retrain and upskill the adult workforce. It is also offering employer incentives of £3,000 per apprentice for apprentices of any age although currently the 45-59 age group account for fewer than 10% of apprenticeships.

The rapid and accelerating pace of change in the modern economy means that investing in retraining, re-skilling and upskilling is vital to improve the participation and employability of all workers throughout their lives. But harnessing the economic potential of the over-50s through age-friendly workplaces and lifelong learning will be the game-changer.



PHOENIX GROUP



Go for it with data skills

The City Region Deal's Data-Driven Innovation Skills Gateway and its Data Skills for Work programme are providing workers with the data skills to progress their careers.

The growth of Scotland's technology ecosystem has led to a rapid increase in demand for workers with appropriate data skills. The Scottish Futures Institute estimates that 175,000 new digital jobs will have been generated in Scotland by 2030, with 37,000 of those based in Edinburgh. Yet, 61% of digital organisations in Southeast Scotland say limited supply of talent is their biggest challenge.

The City Region Deal's DDI Skills Gateway is providing a solution to that problem by growing the data skills of the region's citizens and providing progression routes into data careers.

Its Data Skills for Work programme is helping adults to upskill or reskill with data. The programme offers initiatives such as Data Skills Credits, which provides learners with a £500 grant towards a data related training course and provides employers with grants of up to £5,000 to upskill workers.

Esther Wells is a recipient of Data Skills Credits and a recent university graduate. When job hunting, Esther noticed that her basic programming skills were not in the programmes and languages listed in job advertisements.

This lack of appropriately skilled workers is compounded by the underrepresentation of women. The Office for National Statistics' Annual Population Survey found that 23.5% of jobs in the Scottish digital and technology sectors are held by women. This underrepresentation equates to a huge potential loss of talent in a sector for a growing sector.

Looking to improve her data skills, Esther turned to the Data Skills Credits initiative. Esther picked up the basics needed to get started with SQL – a tool for data analysis that was referenced in many job advertisements. Recognising the ever-growing importance of data skills, Esther now plans to take more courses to further boost her data skills.

"Data science and skills in data [are] an essential part of expertise in the future job market" Esther said, adding that "new programmes and tools have made it so much easier for non-technical people to get involved in these areas."

Neurodiversity in the digital sector

The Data Skills Credits initiative is available to employers too and Auticon – an IT consultancy exclusively employing

consultants with autism – is one of many employers making use of the funding to upskill their employees.

According to Skills Development Scotland, 69% of autistic adults are unemployed. As with the underrepresentation of women, the underrepresentation of neuro-diverse people is another a potential loss of talent.

Emma Walker, regional manager in Scotland, explains how Auticon approaches its core mission:

"By placing our consultants into client teams, the client sees the benefit that consultant brings in terms of their different way of thinking. This then shifts their perception about autism, which acts as a catalyst for organisations to improve neurodiversity in the wider workforce. And this is how we make a bigger impact."

These stories are some of the reasons why the DDI Skills Gateway was shortlisted in this year's Digital Leaders Digital skills or talent Initiative award. Out of 400 entries from across the UK, the skills gateway made the final three by developing an innovative and cross-sector approach to improving data skills of the population of Edinburgh and South East Scotland region.

ddi.ac.uk



Flexibile Working in a post-pandemic world

According to data from the Office of National Statistics, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, only around 5% of the workforce worked from home regularly.

By Mandy Armstrong
Senior Associate & Employment Law Specialist, Anderson Strathern



When it was announced in March 2020 that the UK was going into lockdown, many employers and employees alike found themselves working entirely from home and doing so for a significant period of time. Now that restrictions have almost entirely eased and vaccines and booster jabs continue to be rolled out, many businesses are questioning what our working world will look like going forward. It appears that flexible working will have a key part to play.

The statutory right to request flexible working has been in place now for several years, as a result of the Flexible Working Regulations 2014. These Regulations set out the statutory framework within which

requests can be made and determined, including that an employee must have 26 weeks' continuous service in order to make a request and that the employer can only refuse the request on one or more proscribed grounds. So what looks set to change, in the post pandemic world?

Firstly, under Government proposals designed to modernise the way we work, a consultation "Making flexible working the default" has been launched with the aim of giving every employee in the UK a day one right to request flexible working. The Government estimates that the proposals, if enacted, would give a further 2.2 million people the right to request flexible working.

The nature of the requests being made may also change. For many, the pandemic has put into stark focus the benefits which can be derived from home working. While some people are desperate for a return to "normality" and to spending their full working time in the office, for most employees there is a desire to seek hybrid working, which involves splitting working

time between the office and home. Some are also seeking agile working, where there is a shift away from traditional 9am to 5pm working hours. Other commonly requested changes include compressed hours, staggered start and finish times, flexitime and job sharing.

Many employers are now reviewing their working models, to ascertain how their organisation has adapted and changed over the past 18 months and to determine whether any of those changes ought to be implemented on a more long term basis. For some, flexible working is to become the norm and flexible, and agile working policies are also becoming more commonplace.

What is clear is that many employees now expect some form of flexibility in their working arrangements and the legal mechanism is there for them to request it. The Government's proposals make clear that flexible working has a key part to play in the modern working environment, and it is now up to employers to determine where the balance should be struck.

Changing the conversation – one word at a time

Openreach has taken a hard look at how to challenge engineering stereotypes on its journey to an inclusive workforce.

Digital network business Openreach has seen a dramatic improvement in female recruits across Scotland this year – after putting the language it uses to recruit employees under the microscope.

Earlier this year, the company undertook research with linguistic specialists Linguistic Landscapes and gender bias expert Dr Chris Begeny from Exeter University which revealed that women were 50 per cent less likely to consider roles that had a coded gender bias.

Since then it's made significant changes to the way it advertises jobs, which has helped to drive big improvements in the number of women coming into new roles in 2021.

Engineering is a varied, stimulating and valuable career and it's really important that we present it in ways that encourages as diverse a workforce as possible.

Robert Thorburn, Scotland Partnership Director

The company is recruiting some 275 people into field and desk-based roles in Scotland in the current financial year, and to date 17 per cent of the intake is female – a statistic that in previous years stood in single digits.

Scotland partnership director Robert Thorburn said: "Male-dominated industries like engineering have traditionally been challenging for women. Research into the language barriers that impact female job applicants has shown that it plays a fundamental role in the recruitment process.

"Engineering is a varied, stimulating and valuable career and it's really important that we present it in ways that encourages as diverse a workforce as possible.

"We've been amazed to see just how much of a difference subtle changes in language can



make. Despite four in five women admitting they wouldn't consider working in engineering, more than half were interested in an entry-level engineering role once it had been rewritten in a consciously-unbiased way.

"This is just one way we're driving change to put our values at the heart of what we do. While we're tackling the challenge on a number of fronts, we've been encouraged to see a significantly higher percentage of women joining our Scottish workforce this year."

Robert added: "We made a decision to be transparent about where we are and what we want to achieve. We set ambitious targets and plans that support our journey, and regularly share the progress we're making. We want everyone who works here to feel fully accepted for who they are and valued for their contribution."

To that end, Openreach recently published its Diversity and Inclusion Commitments, which include that by 2025, 20 per cent of trainee engineer recruits and 50 per cent of external hires into management will be women.

As levels of ethnic diversity vary across the UK, the company is setting targets based on regional variations in ethnicity which reflect the local population and, at a minimum, match regional ethnic minority representation.

Openreach also has people networks in place in areas such as gender equality, neurodiversity, ethnic diversity and the Pride network,



alongside a network of allies who want to create an inclusive workplace for everyone. These communities are growing fast - with 4,000 people now actively working to make a difference.

Robert added: "We're passionate about change and hope the work we're doing will be of interest to other businesses – and that we can learn from each other collectively."

For more information on Openreach's approach to Diversity and Inclusion and to download its commitments report, visit:

www.openreach.com/careers/diversity-and-inclusion

openreach



Edinburgh College opens new digital care hub for students

Edinburgh College has launched a new digital care hub, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, designed to provide greater skills and opportunities to health and social care students in the Lothians.

The Edinburgh College Digital Care Hub, located at the College's Sighthill Campus, will equip students with the transferrable skills required to fulfil a successful career in areas including Health and Social Care, Dental and Pharmacy with a particular emphasis on technology enabled care.

The hub will focus on building students' digital and practical skills through its state-of-the-art equipment, supporting experiential learning in a purpose-built setting.

It contains a replica medical ward with patient room, toilet and wet room facilities; an infection control and decontamination area; a reflection room; a care at home room; as well as a virtual reality room designed to give students an immersive experience which demonstrates how a patient with dementia experiences day-to-day life.

Within the care hub students have access to realistic patient simulators with true-to-life responsiveness, in a variety of care settings, enabling them to develop patient testing and care skills.

Also key to the role of the digital care hub is embedding the principles of professionalism

amongst students and fostering the meta skills required to work in a care environment including communication, nurture, resilience, initiative and leadership.

The new facility hosts the Edinburgh College and University of Edinburgh Social Care Academy which provides an agile pathway to a career in health and social care specifically for school pupils. As part of the programme, pupils study units in digital skills for health and social care, mental health, the human body, infection prevention and control and safe beginners for health and social care. After successfully completing the programme, pupils are able to progress on to further studies with the College or university or advance into employment.

The digital care hub was launched during an event attended by representatives from key institutions connected to the College and the new hub, and brought together those with a collective interest in supporting the future of the health and care sector.

Audrey Cumberford, Edinburgh College Principal and CEO, said: "We are delighted to be launching our Digital Care Hub in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. The facility will

provide practical learning experiences for pupils and students as well as exposing them to many sector specialisms which they ordinarily might miss out on without having access to specialist equipment in a health and care setting.

"The COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of our health and care workers across the country and through addressing the national skills gaps in digital enabled care, the Digital Care Hub, through partnership working with industry, is ready to provide a pipeline of future workers equipped with the skills and knowledge required to meet the demands of the sector and population."

Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Edinburgh, said: "We are delighted to work with Edinburgh College on the Digital Care Hub, which will be an excellent resource for those considering a career within health and social care. Harnessing technology to support learning in this way and simulate real-life scenarios in the workplace will enable students to make informed choices about their future, built on their own ambitions and potential."

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

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



CHAMBER TRAINING



JANUARY	FEBRURY	MARCH
Monday 10th Finance, Budgeting, and Cashflow Forecasting (for non-Finance Managers)	Tuesday 1st Project Management Fundamentals	Tuesday 1st Job Searching techniques Masterclass – Kickstart Scheme
Tuesday 11th Introduction to Google Analytics	Wednesday 2nd Customs Procedures and Documentation	Wednesday 2nd LinkedIn Masterclass: The Complete Guide to Personal and Business Development
Wednesday 12th Introduction to Managing your Time at Work – Kickstart Scheme	Thursday 3rd Report writing masterclass Introduction to Business Presentation Skills – Kickstart Scheme	Thursday 3rd Methods of Payment & Letters of Credit
Thursday 13th Dealing with difficult situations	Tuesday 8th How to Complete Export Customs Entries	Wednesday 9th Job Interview Skills and Techniques – Kickstart Scheme
Tuesday 18th Google Ads - Introduction	Wednesday 9th Google Ads - Introduction	Thursday 10th Digital Writing Skills
Wednesday 19th Introduction to Business Presentation Skills – Kickstart Scheme	Thursday 10th Essential Management Skills	Thursday 17th Introduction to Google Display Ads
Thursday 20th Imports: Inward & Outward Processing	Monday 21st Imports: Inward & Outward Processing	Wednesday 23rd Finance, Budgeting, and Cashflow Forecasting (for non-Finance Managers)
Tuesday 25th How to Complete Customs Import Entries	Tuesday 22nd Video Creation for Business	Thursday 24th Bidding to Win: How to Write Tenders & Proposals That Beat The Competition (Without Cutting Prices)
Wednesday 26th Networking Skills – Kickstart Scheme	Wednesday 23rd Employability Skills - Kickstart Scheme	Tuesday 29th Digital Marketing Strategy
Thursday 27th Charity Fundraising for Fundraising Managers	Dealing with difficult situations	Thursday 31st Negotiating and Influencing skills
ICC – INCOTERMS ® 2020 RULES - Half Day Workshop	Monday 28th Advanced Facebook Strategies to Increase Sales	

If in doubt blame Brexit, Covid-19 or the lack of HGV drivers....

Great leaders and managers look for the cause of problems rather than default to blame. When we look for someone to blame, we create a culture where people hide and lie. The more we focus on looking for the cause, the more open and forthcoming people are.

Looking for a scapegoat or pointing the finger at an individual solves nothing; the managers or colleagues say 'It was Mark, he's incompetent' and move on but the organisational problems still exist. Nothing has been solved and more often than not, Mark did not have the proper training, experience, resources or information to do the job correctly and competently.

Pointing the finger of blame is often a way of deflecting it from ourselves to others. Aside from not really solving the problem, it's an abdication of responsibility. If we never take responsibility for our actions, we do not have to change or do anything different.

It can happen frequently in both our business and private lives. The product is out of stock; the store assistant blames the delivery team, they blame the warehouse who in turn blame the buyer who then blames the supplier who blames Brexit, Covid-19 or even the lack of HGV drivers.

The umpire/ referee made a bad call and subsequently we lost the game because of the umpire/ referee, contrasted with we should have trained harder, employed different tactics or paid more attention. In reality the event that occurred should lead us to question why it happened, as the root cause is the key issue to focus on.

It is only when we address this that we should hopefully mitigate the same thing happening in the future, so that when the umpire or referee makes a poor decision we are already 2 points ahead or have anticipated or prepared for the potential bad decision being made.

It is a sign of personal resilience and self-belief to focus on the cause of the problem rather than defaulting to blame. Great leaders and managers don't get distracted by time wasting exercises, instead they focus their time and effort on creating a culture of openness and learning, where mistakes happen once and once only, where people feel trusted, able to speak up and therefore take personal responsibility and accountability for their work.

Living your life focused on finding cause instead of blame destresses everyone around you. Building your leadership and management skills destresses you. To be able to lead and manage others you first need to be able to lead and manage yourself.

"It is a sign of personal resilience and self-belief to focus on the cause of the problem rather than defaulting to blame. Great leaders and managers don't get distracted by time wasting exercises, instead they focus their time and effort on creating a culture of openness and learning, where mistakes happen once and once only, where people feel trusted, able to speak up and therefore take personal responsibility and accountability for their work."





Kim
Kjaerside



Sarah
Whitelaw



Jack
Morris

Kim Kjaerside joins team at Dovecot Studios

Kim joined our Commercial team as Business Development and Sales Manager in July 2021. He has over 20 years of experience in the hospitality and tourism industry across the UK. Kim says, "I am really excited to have joined the team here at Dovecot Studios and I look forward to telling you our story and showcasing both the venue and the incredible artwork created within the impressive Weaving Floor, especially to those who have yet to visit or never used our venue as an event space. Come along to see our Weavers and Tufters at work creating Scottish sustainably created tapestries and rugs" Make sure you check out our exciting program of events and exhibitions.

To schedule a call with Kim and the team
email events@dovecotstudios.com
or call **0131 550 3660**.

We look forward to welcoming you to
Dovecot soon!

Sarah Whitelaw, Operations Officer

Redmill Group appointed Sarah Whitelaw, to lead and support on the business's operational outputs, business strategy and marketing efforts earlier this year. Before this, Sarah spent five years in Australia where she was Project Manager for the Association of Financial Advisers, and before that she was Heading up the HR team for a specialist lending firm. Since returning to the UK, Sarah joined Redmill as the business growth plans were appealing to her, and since, has been instrumental in launching the new group structure, which she now looks after the recruitment, HR and L&D operations and marketing outputs.

Jack Morris, Client Services Executive

Jack came on board in early 2021, to help support our student community and corporate client queries. Before Redmill, Jack was on a scholarship playing football in the States and before that, Jack worked with Lloyds and HSBC in mortgages and PPI roles. 'I feel absolutely privileged to be a part of this team, not only have I been able to secure the position of Client Services Executive, but Redmill is also putting me through my Level 4 Diploma in Financial Planning with their market-leading proposition. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for this business and my position within it.'

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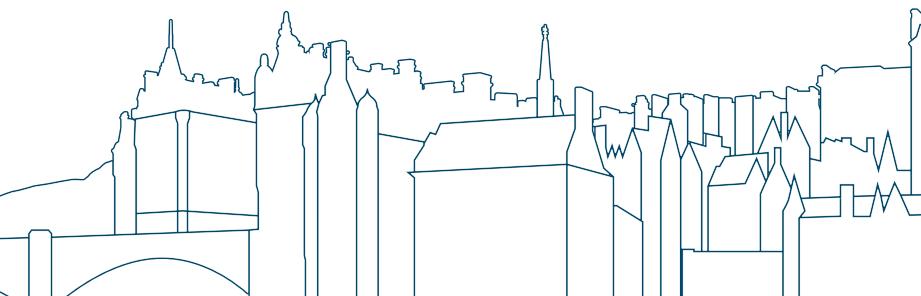
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