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Business Matters

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Inside

Dealing with the tariff war

Crime in the City

Decarbonising aviation

Women empowering women

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The Office. Reimagined.

Experience the office like never before with our collection of over 70 unique workspaces across London, Cambridge and Germany.

A modern office interior featuring a large green wall, a man working at a desk, and two people sitting on a red sofa. The space is bright and airy, with a blue and orange patterned rug and a small table with a plant and a bottle. The overall atmosphere is professional yet relaxed.

FORA

Front cover image: Kate Garroway and Juanita Ingram at the Power of Women awards.
Photo by Joseph Ajibade Photography



Letter from the editor

There are currently two arresting issues in our (and much of the world's) economy – growth and the potential trade war. Mayor Sadiq Khan's London Growth Plan (page 6) has been welcomed by LCCI for its ambition to “maximise the capital's economic potential and maintain its position as the best city in the world to do business.”

LBM can't report on the Trump tariffs with any certainty as the situation is constantly changing. It can though (p 32) give tips from an expert on how to navigate fluctuating trade prices and provide details of a support package for such occasions from UK Export Finance.

Women power

Equality is crucial in our society and we have used the peg of March's International Women's Day on which to hang a number of relevant stories. Our front cover celebrates a Power of Women event featuring the charity *Dress for Success* while we also report some encouraging new on the record number of female leaders in the UK (p 52).

Sustainability in business is a regular theme and the section devoted to it in this issue covers two important topics. The Public Switched Telephone Network (p 42) is part of a nationwide shift in how telecommunication systems will operate in the UK.

It is essential that businesses are prepared ahead of the switch to avoid disruptions in devices such as security systems, landlines and fax machines. The decarbonisation of the aviation industry is clearly a priority. On page 44, International Airlines Group report on a new factory which, once complete, will turn used car tyres into fuel to power planes. The plant is the first of its kind in the UK, and part of a brand-new industry in the Northeast.

High-performance

Our 'Big Read' this issue (p 53) is based on data revealing that an estimated 1.7 million workers were suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their work. Some encouragement perhaps can be gained from the topics in *LBM's* book reviews (p 38) on negotiating difficult conversations in the office, and building high-performance teams.

The Governor of the Bank of England is an historic and important appointment and in this issue of *LBM* we feature photo articles of the incumbent and a previous holder of the position. Andrew Bailey was a guest at an LCCI Patron breakfast (p 11) while Mark Carney, who has just been elected as Prime Minister of Canada, is shown demonstrating his good taste in reading materials on page 31!

Peter Bishop

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LONDON CHAMBER
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Official Publication of
London Chamber of Commerce

33 Queen Street, London EC4R 1AP
Tel: 020 7248 4444

www.londonchamber.co.uk

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London Business Matters is published on
behalf of London Chamber of Commerce
and Industry by



Crosby Associates Media Limited

632 / 634 Birchwood Boulevard
Birchwood, WA3 7QU

Tel: 0330 124 3780

www.crosbyassociates.co.uk

ISSN 1469-5162(Print)
ISSN 2051-9524(Online)

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Going for growth

The Mayor of London and London Councils, with local leaders from business, education and the voluntary sector, have launched a plan to turbocharge economic growth and increase prosperity across the capital

Developed together with London & Partners – in collaboration with businesses, trade unions and London's communities – the London Growth Plan sets out a blueprint to kickstart the capital's productivity, which has flatlined since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Revenues

The plan aims to restore productivity growth to an average of two per cent a year in the next decade, which would

make London's economy £107 billion larger by 2035 and put an extra £11,000 on average in the pockets of the near-nine million Londoners. This would also mean the capital contributing an extra £27.5 billion in taxes to the Treasury in 2035, providing vital revenues for investment in public services.

London's productivity grew by an average of 3.16 per cent each year between 1998 and 2007, but between

2008 and 2022, average productivity growth was just 0.12 per cent a year. Growing productivity is the key to higher wages, higher living standards and increased investment in public services in London and across the UK.

Success

The new plan focuses on inclusive economic growth to make sure that more Londoners can contribute to and benefit from the capital's success. Helping more

Plan priorities

- **Backing business:** London government will help to power 'industrial innovation corridors' around the capital - supporting new space, facilities and infrastructure to ensure innovation can thrive. This will build on the potential of the WestTech Corridor (anchored in White City going through Old Oak and Park Royal), the UK Innovation Corridor (anchored in the Knowledge Quarter going towards Cambridge) and the Thames Estuary (anchored in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park going out to Essex and Kent). A new proposed London Tech and Inclusive Growth Fund could provide up to £100m loan and equity funding for high-growth small and midsize enterprises.
- **Talent and skills:** an *Inclusive Talent Strategy* will build the capital's skilled workforce to unleash the potential of Londoners and - in turn - London's economy. This will help create at least 150,000 high quality jobs, with a focus on fair pay and good work, to deliver Mayoral manifesto commitments. As well as supporting more people into work and ensuring all Londoners can get the skills or training needed to progress their careers, the strategy will

help attract world-class talent to study and work in the capital.

- **Housing and infrastructure:** local leaders will work with UK government to extend and upgrade London's public transport network, prioritising transformational projects to unlock new affordable homes and growth - including the Docklands Light Railway extension to Thamesmead, the Bakerloo line extension and the West London Orbital. The plan also calls for more devolution of London's suburban rail services. This will be reinforced by the next London Plan, which will prioritise growth, increase housing delivery and ensure better digital connectivity.
- **Inward investment and promotion:** London will take the lead in implementing national reforms to the *Local Government Pension Scheme*, exploring the development of a major joint fund to invest in places that encourage innovation, including venture capital. The plan will also support London's goal to be a net-zero city by 2030, attracting significant institutional capital for green infrastructure. There will be support to

set up a new quantum tech incubator, London Life Sciences Week will be backed to become a key global event for the sector, and London leaders will explore a new business visitor centre to promote the capital's world-leading offer by bringing companies together with agencies and developers.

- **High streets and local economies:** £21 million additional funding this year will support boroughs with town centre regeneration, including potentially creating a publicly owned *High Street Estate Agency* to bring empty properties back into use. The plan also reiterates a commitment to revitalising neighbourhood policing so that the capital's high streets always feel welcoming and safe.



SPONSORED COLUMN

How to prepare for mandatory payrolling of benefits in kind

By Gail Swinburn,
Director



In a significant move towards modernising tax processes, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has announced that, from April 2026, the payrolling of benefits in kind (BIKs) will become mandatory for employers. This change aims to streamline the reporting and taxation of non-cash benefits provided to employees, such as company cars, private medical insurance, and personal bills.

Understanding the shift

Currently, many employers report BIKs annually using forms P11D and P11D(b). With the new mandate, employers will need to process these benefits through payroll in real-time, ensuring that the associated Income Tax and Class 1A National Insurance Contributions (NICs) are deducted as the benefits are provided.

This approach eliminates the need for annual P11D submissions, providing employees with clearer visibility of their taxable benefits.

Exemptions and voluntary options

Initially, certain benefits are exempt from mandatory payrolling. However, employers have the option to voluntarily payroll these benefits if they choose. It's essential for businesses to assess which benefits they provide and determine the appropriate reporting method for each.

Preparing for the transition

To ensure a smooth transition to mandatory payrolling of BIKs, employers should consider the following steps:

1. Assess Current Benefits:

Compile a comprehensive list of all BIKs offered to understand which will need to be payrolled.

2. Update Payroll Systems:

Ensure

that payroll software can handle real-time reporting of BIKs and is compliant with HMRC.

3. Train Relevant Staff:

Educate HR and payroll teams about the changes.

4. Communicate with Employees:

Inform employees about how the changes will affect their payslips and tax deductions to prevent confusion.

Potential challenges

Transitioning to payrolling BIKs may present challenges:

- **Data Management:** Accurate and timely data collection is crucial to ensure correct tax deductions.

- **System Integration:** Aligning benefit providers with payroll systems to facilitate real-time reporting.

- **Employee Impact:** Employees may experience changes in their net pay due to the immediate taxation of benefits, necessitating clear communication to manage expectations.

How can we help

The move to mandatory payrolling of benefits in kind represents a significant shift in employer obligations and payroll processing. By preparing in advance and considering early adoption, businesses can navigate this transition effectively.

Whether you need guidance on updating your payroll processes, understanding tax implications, or registering for early adoption, we can help. Get in touch with our Director, Gail Swinburn (gailswinburn@lubbockfine.co.uk) to discuss your specific needs and how we can assist you.

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Londoners into work, bringing down housing costs and improving public transport are all vital to reducing poverty in London, improving living standards and driving growth. The plan aims to achieve a 20 per cent rise in the household weekly income (after housing costs) of the lowest earning 20 per cent of Londoners – which would mean more than a million London households would have an extra £50 to spend each week, on average, after paying for housing costs.

Opportunities

The London Growth Plan outlines huge opportunities for turbocharging the capital's economy and harnessing the growth potential of sectors such as AI, life sciences, robotics, clean tech, quantum computing and the creative industries. Key drivers to deliver the plan's growth ambitions for the capital include a renewed focus on nurturing world-class talent, helping Londoners get the skills they need for productive careers, backing business innovation with new investment and technology, taking a bolder approach to housing and infrastructure, and reinvigorating London's

local high streets.

National support

A long-term strategic relationship between London and the UK government will be a crucial part of delivering the plan. London is the engine of the UK economy and, with national support, this plan can harness its economic power and potential for the benefit of all Londoners and the whole country, helping to fund investment in public services across Britain.



LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE welcomed the plan to maximise London's economic potential and maintain its position as the best city in the world to do business. "Businesses of all sizes are the lifeblood of the London economy, and measures such as the London Tech and Inclusive Growth fund will help them grow and attract investment.

Inclusive

"We especially welcome the Growth Plan's focus on skills – giving Londoners access to industry-relevant training, employment and careers support. This inclusive strategy will ensure London's economic success means prosperity for all Londoners."

www.growthplan.london.

The national picture – business doubts

A survey of 150 LCCI business leaders has revealed major fears over the triple shock of the government's Autumn Budget measures, lower than expected growth, and the Employment Rights Bill. In a snap survey of business owners, 86 per cent of them SMEs, 85 per cent of businesses polled revealed that they think economic growth won't happen under this government and 86 per cent reported feeling that the government isn't currently listening to the concerns of the business community.

Negative

This combination of damaging measures has led to 70 per cent stating that they lack confidence in their own business



Pause

growth when compared to last year. In particular, 74 per cent stated that the rise in Capital Gains Tax was going to have a negative or very negative impact on their business.

Commenting on the survey, Karim Fatehi OBE, said: "Businesses support the government's drive for economic growth, but you don't achieve growth by hammering employers with tax increases and regulation that makes it harder to hire people. Businesses, especially SMEs, have no choice but to pause investment plans, freeze hiring, and reduce planned pay rises if they want to survive. Unless the government

provides support to the business community, London will be unable to provide the productivity and investment that will help to grow our economy and benefit us all."



Spring Statement – LCCI reaction

Reacting to the Chancellor's Spring Statement in March, LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE was broadly welcoming but expressed caution about the government's ambitions for economic growth and called for more support for the great British businesses that create jobs.

Drive growth

"The government's determination to help young people into work is welcome and we remain supportive

of the Chancellor's commitment to back builders, not blockers across our economy through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and support for airport expansion. The government must now commit to supporting Luton Airport's DCO submission to urgently drive growth in the region.

"Despite the government's recent commitments, London businesses are grappling with challenging business

"Despite the government's recent commitments, London businesses are grappling with challenging business conditions due to geopolitical instability and tax rises in the recent Budget."

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conditions due to geopolitical instability and tax rises in the recent Budget."

Stability

He said that stability was vital for business and investor confidence. "However we need to see more ambitious pro-business policies to drive investment, job-creation, and growth."

It was, Fatehi said, "critical that the government takes a proactive and collaborative approach, in particular at the spending review later this year, working closely with London businesses to achieve our shared goal of economic growth. London is in the engine room of economic growth across the UK, and what's good for London is good for growth across the entire UK."



Technology roadmaps: The path to success

Rising software and maintenance costs, the financial impact of new national insurance rules, and intensifying competitive pressures are some of the challenges currently faced by UK businesses, and navigating them requires more than reactive measures, but also a proactive approach.

Technology offers powerful solutions to streamline operations, reduce costs, and maintain a competitive edge, but to fully harness its potential, you need a well-defined map of where you're going and how you're getting there.

Often mistakenly considered a luxury, a technology roadmap is an essential tool to align your IT, technology and digital investments with your business goals. Without a clear strategy, organisations risk overspending, duplicating efforts, and missing critical opportunities to optimise resources, instead of ensuring investments deliver maximum value.

A map is essential to get you where you want to be

Every organisation depends on technology, but many operate without a clear plan to guide their digital transformation efforts. By establishing a cohesive technology map and destination, businesses can navigate complex challenges, seize opportunities, and position themselves for sustained growth.

• Maximising ROI:

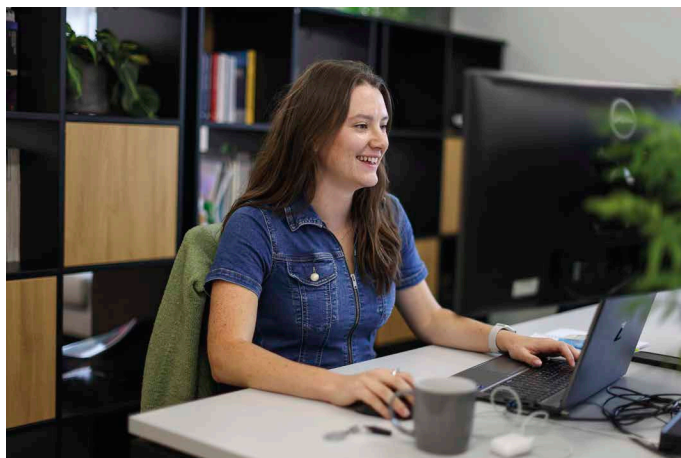
Technology investments are substantial, and a roadmap ensures every pound spent aligns with your organisation's goals, driving measurable outcomes.

• Avoiding duplication:

Without planning, businesses often pay for overlapping systems or services, planning your route eliminates redundancies, saving money and reducing complexity.

• Risk mitigation:

A roadmap helps anticipate and address risks related to security, scalability, and compliance, safeguarding



your operations in an ever-evolving landscape.

• Improved decision-making:

Providing a framework for evaluating future technology investments, ensuring decisions are aligned with both current needs and long-term objectives.

• Resource optimisation: It highlights underutilised tools or processes that can be consolidated, repurposed, or eliminated, improving efficiency and reducing waste.

• Enhanced collaboration:

By aligning technology initiatives with business goals across departments, a roadmap breaks down silos and fosters a culture of teamwork.

In an era where technology is central to competitiveness and cost-efficiency, a technology roadmap provides the clarity and direction needed to make the most of your resources and prepare for the future.

Understanding where your journey starts

In challenging times, investing in a full-scale strategy can feel daunting, so a technology roadmap session is a cost-effective way to establish a solid foundation without committing to a significant

expenditure upfront. The goal is to provide clarity, organise your thinking, align your technology with your business goals, and set you on a path toward achieving your strategic objectives.

The technology mapping session is more than just an evaluation of your current IT setup; it's a collaborative and interactive workshop tailored to your unique needs to establish business context, planned activities, future exploration and ideas, and problem solving.

A map can save you money

One of the most compelling reasons to invest in a technology roadmap is its ability to identify cost-saving opportunities.

• Eliminating waste:

Redundancy in tools or underutilised systems often leads to unnecessary costs that a roadmap can help you identify and eliminate.

• Streamlining processes:

Technology should simplify, not complicate. Mapping out your operations can uncover inefficiencies that digital solutions can address, reducing overheads and improving productivity.

• Better vendor

management: Without a roadmap, organisations often fall prey to vendor

lock-in or overpriced contracts, meaning they don't always leverage the best deals, or make informed decisions about suppliers.

• Targeted innovation:

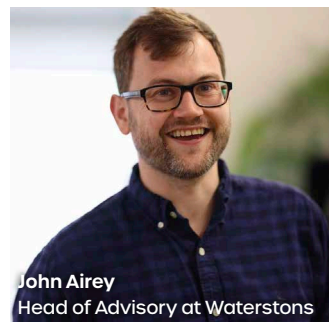
Investing in the right technology at the right time can provide a competitive edge. A roadmap ensures your innovation efforts are focused and impactful, avoiding speculative or unproductive spending.

The destination

In the same way you wouldn't plan a road trip without a map, you shouldn't take on technology without a route in mind. A well-executed technology roadmap doesn't just set your organisation on the path to digital success - it ensures you're maximising every investment and uncovering hidden opportunities to save money and unleash business potential. In today's fast-paced environment, a technology roadmap is not a luxury; it's a critical tool for staying competitive, efficient, and future-ready.

Are you ready to take control of your tech investments? Let's get planning - get in touch directly at

john.airey@waterstons.com



John Airey
Head of Advisory at Waterstons

Celebrating the best of business



by Maddy Dixon



LCCI's SME London Business Awards returned earlier this year to showcase the hard work, ingenuity and innovation of small and medium enterprises in London in an ever-changing economic and political landscape. With over 300 guests in attendance, the black-tie awards at Leonardo Royal Hotel London Tower Bridge were a night of celebration and inspiration.

Crowned

Firms of up to 250 employees had been invited to enter 22 different categories, ranging from best website to best young business leader, businesswomen of the year and service excellence, with the chance of winning gold or silver in their chosen category and the potential to be crowned as overall winner of the SME London Business Awards 2025.

The finalists, sponsors and guests

enjoyed a flowing drinks reception, red carpet interviews, a three-course meal and a musical medley from Encore Entertainment before the awards ceremony commenced, hosted by TV presenter and sports reporter James Green.

Prosperity

LCCI chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE opened the proceedings, remarking on the great contribution SMEs provide to the UK's growth and prosperity, showing determination and innovation during the pandemic, rising business costs and global uncertainty.

Technology services provider Penta Consulting were crowned the overall winner and will now proceed to the national finals at QEII Centre, Westminster in November with the chance of gaining the title of Britain's best small business.

Mutual support

Beyond the awards themselves, the event served as a vital networking opportunity. Entrepreneurs exchanged ideas, formed potential partnerships and explored collaborations. The sense of community among attendees was palpable, reinforcing the notion that SMEs, often operating in isolation, can thrive through mutual support and shared knowledge.

Maddy Dixon is social media and content executive at LCCI

For the full list of Gold and Silver winners, see: www.londonchamber.co.uk/events/events/sme-london-business-awards

Thanks are due to the following without which the event could not have the success it undoubtedly was.

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Unlocking potential

The event raised money for The Diana Award as its Charity Sponsor this year. This award was set up in memory of the late Diana, Princess of Wales and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. Their mission is to empower young people

to lead that change through a range of initiatives that unlock their potential, inspire action, and create opportunities, ensuring that no young person is left out or left behind.

www.diana-award.org.uk





St Paul's in the spring

It's easy to take the grandeur and beauty of some London landmarks for granted. Familiarity, you might say, breeds indifference or maybe just failure to notice.

Hats off then to LCCI Board member Richard Moir who clearly knows an arresting image when he sees one. He took this photograph on a cold bright day in the City in March.



Governor Andrew Bailey (left) with Karim Fatehi OBE

The governor

Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of England since 2020, was guest speaker at a recent LCCI Patron breakfast hosted by South Place Hotel in the City.

Held in the Purdy & Steed room, the event took place in the week of the Chancellor's spring statement and attracted huge interest. The Chatham House rule applied.

Prudential regulation

A history graduate of Cambridge University, Bailey became a research officer at the London School of Economics before joining the Bank of England in 1985. He rose to chief cashier under Governor Mervyn King and was appointed deputy governor for prudential regulation under Governor Mark Carney (see page 31) whom he eventually succeeded.

SPONSORED COLUMN

TOP TRUMPS – A SHUFFLE OF THE PACKS



What feels to most like an attack on the global economy, President Trump's 'Liberation Day' full of increases to tariffs has caused turmoil across the world and leaves us wondering what could be next. Are more trade wars on the way? Could this lead to a global recession? We certainly hope not. Comparing it to a game of Football Top Trumps, the US certainly believes they hold a Lionel Messi whilst everyone else is stuck with Harry Maguire (sorry Harry).

The UK was hit with 10% tariffs which, when compared to other nations, looks as though we came off lightly. However, with other nations suffering more, this will still affect the UK. Cheaper imports from other countries intended for the US may be diverted to the UK, increasing competition and squeezing profit margins. UK businesses that rely on exports to the US will of course be most affected by these tariffs and will need to be adaptable to how they deal with the additional costs.

For UK businesses, the tariffs are adding yet more uncertainty at a time when Autumn Budget tax changes are coming into effect. National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage hikes along with increases in National Insurance Contributions will be starting to take their toll

on cashflows. Businesses need to determine whether to suffer the cost, share it across their supply chain or instead pass it onto their customers.

For some, there will be good news. The UK economy grew 0.5% in February and interest rates are expected to be cut by the Bank of England further during the year. This should be positive for households as mortgage rates should fall. Although, should inflation be fuelled from higher prices following the recent global economic uncertainty, the high rates may stay around for longer.

It will be interesting to see how businesses react to what has been a tumultuous start to 2025. It shows that financial planning and forecasting is always key to try and prepare you for whatever is around the corner.

So, after his day of reckoning, has Trump and the US come out on top? We will have to wait and see. The only certainty is more uncertainty for the UK and its businesses.

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BRIGHTER THINKING

Women empowering women

When women support each other, incredible things can happen. Nowhere was that more evident than at the 2025 Power of Women event, hosted by *Dress for Success* Greater London earlier this spring

Held at Blue Orchid Hospitality's The Skyline London, the event marked a decade of empowering women and advancing resilience, leadership, and progress. It was night of awards and also a call to action, echoing this year's International Women's Day theme: #AccelerateAction.

Power of the collective

Women have historically faced systemic obstacles in business, leadership, and the workplace. Despite being the backbone of countless industries, they've often been under-represented in decision-making roles and undervalued for their contributions. But the tide is turning.

At the heart of this shift is women empowering women, a force that was palpable during the awards. In her opening remarks, Juanita Ingram, founder and chair of *Dress for Success* Greater London, reminded the audience that empowering women isn't just about opening doors – it's about walking through them together. "This is more than a celebration. It's a movement," Ingram declared. "Progress doesn't just happen – we make it happen. And when women succeed, communities, businesses and economies succeed."

Ingram's words resonated with the room, filled with trailblazers like Lord Simon Woolley, who has spent his career advocating for equality, and Kate Garraway, whose work has shone a spotlight on the challenges faced by carers.



Nadia Perrier



Kate Garraway with Juanita Ingram

Breaking barriers

Women in business were at the forefront of the evening. Hannah Colman, chief executive of Jimmy Choo, was honoured for her leadership in luxury fashion. As one of the brand's founding members, her journey from assistant store manager to company boss is a testament to perseverance, vision, and the power of representation.

The efforts of Esi Eggleston Bracey, Unilever's chief growth and marketing officer, to champion diversity and inclusivity in the beauty industry have altered the way we think about representation.

Visionary

Her visionary approach to corporate leadership and healthcare innovation was celebrated as she pursues new technologies and innovations within healthcare, focusing on making healthcare accessible to all.

These women's leadership exemplifies the confidence, skills, and opportunity

that *Dress for Success* has been championing for the past decade.

"These women's leadership exemplifies the confidence, skills, and opportunity that *Dress for Success* has been championing for the past decade."

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Women supporting women

One of the most moving moments of the night came when Toni-Ann Gurdon, a former client of *Dress for Success*, took the stage. Recognised as a Global Ambassador for *Dress for Success* Worldwide, Toni-Ann's journey from seeking support to advocating for women globally encapsulates the power of the collective. "When women are empowered, they lift others with



Tony Matharu
and Samantha
Latouche
of Dress for
Success

them,” she
said. “It’s not

about competition;

it’s about collaboration.

It’s about knowing that
every woman’s success
is a win for all of us.”

Corporate and community champions

The evening also celebrated organisations driving progress and creating lasting change. Blue Orchid Hospitality, the host of the event and recipient of the Corporate Partner of the Year Award, has been instrumental in helping *Dress for Success* empower women across Greater London. Through their support of vital initiatives, they’ve demonstrated that businesses can be a force for good, creating opportunities that have a lasting impact.

At the helm of Blue Orchid Hospitality is Tony Matharu, a distinguished entrepreneur and philanthropist (and LCCI Board member and Asian Business Association chair) whose contributions extend far beyond the hospitality industry, creating better futures for those most in need.

Equally inspiring was the recognition of the Central London Alliance (CLA), winner of the Community Impact Award. Under the leadership of director Nadia Perrier, CLA has driven London’s economic recovery through initiatives including the *London Love Affair* campaign, which generated a £10.1 million boost to the capital’s economy, to a city-wide sports festival that engaged over 10,000 participants.

Mandate for change

The message of the evening was clear: the fight for equality is far from over, but progress is accelerating. Women are not just demanding a seat at the table – they are building their own.

Just as *Dress for Success* has spent the last decade equipping women with the skills, tools, and confidence to thrive, this year’s International Women’s Day theme reminds us that there is still work to be done. #AccelerateAction is not just a call – it could be considered a responsibility.

www.dressforsuccessgl.org



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The tariff war – robust negotiations needed

Karim Fatehi OBE, LCCI chief executive and a businessman steeped in the complexities of cross border trade, reacted calmly and knowledgeably to the imposition of higher tariffs announced by President Trump.

Significant challenge

He pointed out the UK and US have long enjoyed a strong bilateral trading relationship, and that it was vital that we only build on its success. The tariffs, he said, presented a significant challenge for businesses already facing rising costs and economic pressures on numerous fronts.

Economic strain

The decision to impose a 10 per cent tariff on all UK exports to the

US, alongside a 25 per cent tariff on UK car imports was, he said, “deeply concerning for the business community, in London, across the UK and more widely in Europe. These measures risk undermining the competitiveness of London businesses in the US market, potentially leading to reduced exports and further economic strain.

Trade deals

“The UK government must prioritise securing favourable trade deals to shield businesses from these damaging effects. We recognise its efforts to engage with US counterparts on this issue, and we urge the government to continue robust negotiations to protect UK businesses

and maintain our historic trade ties.

“London businesses are resilient, but sustaining open trade with the US is essential for our future prosperity. The government must act decisively to safeguard our economic interests and ensure a stable environment in which businesses can thrive.



Ripple effect

“It is essential to support the London business community in maintaining and enhancing London’s status as a global city. London accounts for a significant portion of the UK economy. Bolstering its business environment will create a positive ripple effect throughout the entire country.”

Marathon, not a sprint

Shevaun Haviland, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, echoed Fatehi’s assessment. She believes that the government has been right to keep a cool head so far and must continue to negotiate. “This is a marathon not a sprint, and getting the best deal for the UK is what matters most.

Fall-out

“But no-one will escape the fallout from these decisions; there will be an increased risk of trade diversion – and it will wreak havoc on businesses communities across the world.

“Orders will drop, prices will rise,

and global economic demand will be weaker as a result. This is a lose-lose situation for everyone.

Influence

The BCC boss pointed out that the UK was not without influence. “Our bilateral trade with the US is worth £300 billion; we have £500 billion invested there and it has £700 billion tied up in our economy. There is a high-level of co-dependency and we are speaking to businesses across the UK on options for government to consider.”

Negotiations

Advice was given to businesses to immediately start negotiations with

their US customers on managing the impact of the tariffs “Depending on individual contracts, there may be deals to be done. In the long-term, exploring replacement markets, especially the EU, CPTPP countries or other trade deals, due to be made later this year, will be options.

“Support may also be available from the British Business Bank’s Growth Guarantee scheme which can offer financial support to firms with cashflow issues.”

www.britishchambers.org.uk

See page 32 for an expert’s tips on how to combat the tariffs



Mayor Khan at MIPIM

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, together with local authority leaders and industry partners, was banging the drum for investment in the capital at MIPIM in Cannes in March. At what is widely agreed to be the world's most influential property event, he was seeking investment to help build thousands of affordable homes for Londoners and to unlock new infrastructure and jobs in London.

Unlocked

The event also provided an opportunity to launch the Opportunity London, London Investment Prospectus detailing 20 live opportunities for investment. These include developments in Bow Goods Yard and Liverpool Street. The former is the last parcel of land to be unlocked as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games legacy, with planning consent already in place for three million square feet of development, including logistics, warehousing/industrial, a leisure

“Network Rail, working with Transport for London, plans to ensure the transport hub is fit for London's future demand, alongside creating a new landmark office and retail.

district and public realm, alongside the opportunity for a data centre.

Landmark

At London Liverpool Street, Britain's busiest station, Network Rail, working with Transport for London, plans to ensure the transport hub is fit for London's future demand, alongside creating a new landmark office and retail development. Investment partners are also sought for future projects at Waterloo and Victoria.

www.opportunity.london



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The Cost of Avoiding Difficult Conversations

In the evolving landscape of Employment Law, one of the most overlooked risk management tools remains having timely, honest and evidence-based conversations. Employers and their managers who shy away from addressing performance issues, interpersonal conflicts, or inappropriate behaviour may find themselves not only presiding over a dysfunctional workplace - but also facing costly employment tribunal claims.

At the heart of many legal disputes lies a missed opportunity: the chance to address an issue when it first emerged. Whether it's concerns around an employee's capability, conduct, or fit within a team, early intervention - when handled correctly - can defuse tension, provide clarity, and create a constructive path forward. Crucially, it can also demonstrate that an employer acted reasonably, a central test in many legal claims.

Delaying these conversations, often out of discomfort or fear of confrontation, can send the wrong message. Employees may feel blindsided by sudden disciplinary action or formal procedures, particularly if they were never made aware of concerns informally. This perceived unfairness can become the seed of future grievances, claims of discrimination, or unfair dismissal cases.

From a legal perspective, employers may be able to prove they have a *fair reason* for any formal action however, tribunals will also examine whether the employer followed a *fair process*, and the employee treated fairly and reasonably. Was there open communication? Was the employee given a chance to improve or respond? Early, documented conversations—rooted in professionalism rather than blame—can become vital evidence that the employer acted appropriately.

So why do managers avoid difficult conversations?

Having practised Employment Law for over 25 years, I've

supported countless businesses with costly tribunal claims many of which may have been avoided if managers had embraced having those initial difficult conversations.

Below are some of the most common reasons managers avoid difficult conversations:

- Fear of conflict or damaging relationships
- Not knowing where to start after they have let concerns slide
- Lack of time and capacity
- Fear of creating a legal claim
- A culture of blame creating a fear of finger pointing

Training managers in conversation frameworks, emotional intelligence techniques, and a working understanding of employment law principles is essential if they are to feel empowered to manage situations fairly and confidently. It is well worth the investment and may just save your business a costly tribunal claim further down the line.



Dipti Shah is Partner and Head of Employment Law at Quastels LLP. She can be reached at dshah@quastels.com or telephone: +44 (0)20 7908 2595 or <https://www.linkedin.com/in/diptishah-lawyer/>

Visit: <https://quastels.com/>

This information in this article is for general guidance only and should not be construed as specific legal advice.

QUASTELS

LEGAL ADVISERS

Supporting London business through economic uncertainty



by Vittoria Zerbini

LCCI has been busy championing businesses in the national media in recent months, challenging government policies and calling for more support in the face of damaging national insurance hikes and changes to employment laws which will impact businesses' ability to hire, invest and grow.

Concerns

Following a recent survey of over 150 of its members, LCCI released key findings highlighting business concerns which showed that:

- Over 80 per cent of London businesses respectively believe that the National Insurance hikes will negatively impact their business
- Those surveyed don't believe the government will reach its economic growth ambitions with the current taxation and fiscal policy.

The survey featured prominently in national newspapers including *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and *City AM* as well as on *BBC News*.



Growth

Earlier in the year LCCI welcomed the Mayor of London's ambitious London Growth Plan, launched in February which has the potential to drive productivity in the capital.

More recently, following the Chancellor's Spring Statement,

comments from chief executive Karim Fatehi OBE were quoted in *City AM* and *The i*. Fatehi urged the government to consider further pro-business policies, support Luton Airport's expansion, and collaborate more closely with London businesses in order to drive economic growth amid economic challenges.



Negative impact

Following the release of statistics which showed that over 80 per cent of London businesses believe that the National Insurance hikes will negatively impact their business, Karim Fatehi OBE spoke to the BBC about the mounting pressures small businesses face owing to the tax increases due to come into effect in April. His insights led to appearances on BBC Radio London and coverage on the BBC website. Julia Onslow-Cole, LCCI chair also appeared on BBC News to discuss the survey findings, touching on additional difficult trading conditions for London businesses due to international energy prices and potential future tariffs.

Caution

Fatehi expressed cautious support for the Chancellor's Spring Statement in March while at the same time urging more support from the government for British businesses. He welcomed the government's focus on helping young people into work and backing the

construction industry through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and airport expansion, particularly advocating for support for Luton Airport's DCO submission to foster regional growth. However, he also noted the challenges faced by London businesses, including geopolitical instability and tax hikes in last year's budget.

As covered by *City AM* and *The i*, Karim acknowledged the government's efforts to stabilise national finances but stressed the need for more pro-business policies to stimulate investment, job creation, and growth.



Unlocking London's potential

Mayor Sadiq Khan's London Growth Plan aims to boost productivity, increase household incomes, and generate over £100 billion in economic growth by 2035. LCCI was featured on *london.gov* welcoming the plan, particularly its focus on business support and skills development. Karim Fatehi OBE praised the plan's initiatives including the London Tech and Inclusive Growth Fund, which will aid small and medium enterprises. Fatehi also highlighted the importance of industry-relevant training and employment support to ensure London's prosperity benefits all residents.

Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI



Best in class

The Goring was named the London hotel of the year in the *Sunday Times* Best Places to Stay 2025 awards

“No hotel epitomises eccentric English charm better than this Belgravia beauty” was the verdict of the paper’s evaluators. They had special praise too for the service provided by Jeremy Goring’s team which “helps create a place that really does feel family run”.

Superlative

LBM agrees wholeheartedly and has visited the hotel, an LCCI member, on numerous

occasions, notably to conduct a *Working Lunch* interview in its superlative restaurant and as the venue for a Staying in Town feature.

The hotels on the shortlist in the London region included Broadwick Soho, The Beaumont Mayfair, The Buxton, Batty Langley’s, The Hoxton, The Laslett, The Kensington, The Emory, and Ruby Stella.

www.thegoring.com

The business of books

Billed as ‘the world’s largest spring book trade event’, the London Book Fair packed out Olympia in March with industry professionals getting to grips with the sector’s fast-changing world. It is certainly big business with the UK publishing sector estimated to be worth £11 billion to the economy – a global leader and major exporter too.

Speakers at the event included James Daunt (“the man who saved Waterstones”) and best-selling authors Monica Ali and Lucy Clarke.

Marketplace

The fair is the global marketplace for rights negotiation of books, film and TV with commissioners and producers looking for their next Oscar-worthy project. This year most of the BAFTA-nominated movies derived from books, including *Conclave*, *The Brutalist*, *A Complete Unknown* and *Nickel Boys*.

The selected charity of the year for the event was The Reading Agency which champions the power of reading by providing activities for all ages, working with public libraries, schools, prisons and deprived community settings.

www.londonbookfair.co.uk

www.readingagency.org.uk



SPONSORED COLUMN

Sensible Cyber Security- Prevention is Better than Cure

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face unique challenges in maintaining cybersecurity resilience due to limited resources and budgets. That said, many Large Enterprises also face these challenges, often buying an assortment of unconnected security solutions which may or may not be working effectively. It can be a daunting and complex journey to establish an advanced program. Often, however, businesses are failing to patch systems and manage risk across technologies. These issues can often be (relatively) easily addressed, in an affordable and ongoing manner. good practices in these areas are invaluable in making your business more secure.

The old adage, ‘prevention is better than cure’, holds true for cyber security in many ways. The cost (in resource, time and money) of a basic risk assessment and activities to ‘close the open doors’ is achievable. The comparative costs in detecting intrusions and indeed incident response are far greater.

Good cyber hygiene includes regular updates to software, operating systems, and applications. Automated patch management tools can help ensure that updates are applied consistently, reducing the risk of exploitation from known vulnerabilities. The traditional ‘penetration test’ (where a consultant probes for vulnerabilities and weaknesses in applications and networks) is still useful but does only present a snapshot in time. Thankfully there are now highly cost effective ‘continuous threat exposure management’ (CTEM) approaches to

ensure this can be done on going, all year round.

For SMEs with limited in-house cybersecurity expertise, partnering with external professionals can provide affordable advice and oversight. These experts can help identify vulnerabilities and implement cost-effective security measures tailored to the company’s specific needs, working as a true extension of existing teams and providing key skills which are out of reach for many businesses.

At OSec, we are fully focused on cost effective approaches which prove that in cyber security, prevention is indeed so much better than cure. As an independent, creative and established firm we are always ready to listen and advise in the right way. We are a trusted advisor to many huge brands, and plenty of smaller ones too. Get in touch and open the discussion, which may just save the day.



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OSec
 Formerly OccamSec

Look up, look out

Paul Betts, Deputy Commissioner, City of London Police on how the problem of mobile phone theft is being tackled

The City of London is one of the safest business districts in the world. We have low rates of serious crimes, fast response times and some of the best positive outcomes from investigations in the country.

To keep people in the City safe and feeling safe takes strong police and partnership working. One of the crimes we see too often is mobile phone theft, and we know if not tackled effectively it will continue to rise, not just in the City, but across the whole of London.

Sensitive data

The problem isn't just the impact of having your phone stolen, or the cost and inconvenience of having to replace it. If sensitive data or apps are not protected, criminal activity could still be going on after your phone has been taken, with access to banking or through purchases using the apps installed.

At the City of London Police, we are out on the streets daily, tackling the problem and locking up offenders – highly visible in uniform or covertly in plain clothes. Our tactics to catch prolific phone thief Sunny Stringer, who stole 24 mobile phones in a single morning, generated widespread public interest, and we've just launched a new initiative, painting temporary blue

plaques across the City, where real mobile phones have been snatched. Our message is simple, 'a member of the public had their phone stolen here so look up and look out.'

Preventative

And we are just getting started. This year, as part of our new three-year Policing Plan, we are increasing our preventative approach to tackling theft while continuing an effective police response.

We are working with partners, who in the City of London include the Safer City Partnership, retailers, licensed premises, and our residential communities. Our joint initiative to literally paint the streets of the Square Mile with public warnings, demonstrates how well we operate with the Corporation of London to protect the public.

Tech industry

But we also need to work with the tech industry – Apple, Samsung, and Google – asking them to play their part too, because stolen mobile phones are so frequently being taken overseas, and the second-hand stolen market is growing.

Policing and government are working together, calling on the tech industry to improve anti-theft measures which make



smartphones worthless to criminals. Outcomes we want to see include stolen mobile devices prevented from re-connecting to cloud services and to make every mobile phone's 'international mobile equipment identity number' viewable on its lockscreen.

Effective investigations

In 2025 we'll be ramping up our operational activity with a more holistic approach to the different types of phone theft, using all the resources we have available, including the Cycle Team we successfully introduced

in 2024, our dedicated Proactive Acquisitive Crime Team, our Dedicated Ward Officers and our Response Teams. All supported by effective investigations from our Forensics Team, Criminal Investigation Department and Volume Crime Unit.

Our officers and staff are dedicated to going the extra mile in the square mile to keep people safe and feeling safe. It is a very safe place to live, work or visit, and we need to work together to keep it that way.

www.cityoflondon.police.uk



Working in the City? Follow this advice

- To make stolen phones traceable, the force is offering phone marking that allows devices to be uniquely marked, helping police quickly identify and return stolen phones to victims when recovered.
- Protect sensitive data and apps with unique and different passcodes or facial recognition.
- Set up 2-Step Verification on all devices and ensure personal details like passwords are not kept in unencrypted notes.
- Tell your network provider immediately if your phone is stolen. They can blacklist and deactivate it remotely.
- Look up and look out.

The Knowledge

LBM's test of what readers know about London

- 1 At which London art gallery can you see *A view of Walton Bridge* by Canaletto?
- 2 Which London-based sitcom's theme tune begins: "Stick a pony in me pocket"?
- 3 Who wrote this: "London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained"?
- 4 Which queen led the sacking of London (then Londinium) in AD 60?
- 5 Which London entertainment venue, opened in 1873, was named after the then Princess of Wales?
- 6 *White Diamonds* is a perfume created by which London-born actress?
- 7 Which London men's football club is nicknamed 'The Addicks'?
- 8 In what year was the final section of the M25 completed?
- 9 Who is the current Lord Mayor of London?
- 10 Which London hotel in Piccadilly did Jackie Onassis describe as being "like paradise"?



Find the answers on page 65

SPONSORED COLUMN

Smart travel: Protecting your digital privacy when entering the US

By Christi Hufford Jackson at Laura Devine Immigration



Since the start of the second Trump administration, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has intensified its scrutiny of travellers' digital devices. CBP officers may search electronic devices at the border without a warrant, regardless of immigration status or whether there is suspicion of wrongdoing. You may state that you do not consent, but this is unlikely to prevent a search.

Recent reports have highlighted cases where foreign visitors and green card holders were detained over critical political messages on their devices. CBP conducts both 'basic' manual and 'advanced' forensic searches. Basic searches require no cause whereas advanced ones require 'reasonable suspicion.' Devices may be held for weeks or even months.

Some federal courts have challenged the legality of these searches, but no consistent national standard exists. A recent federal ruling found that phone searches without a warrant are unconstitutional, but this currently applies only within New York's Eastern District, which includes JFK International Airport. For now, CBP's authority remains broad.

The consequences of refusing access vary. US citizens

cannot be denied entry but may be detained and have devices seized. Green card holders may face removal proceedings, whereas visa holders risk being denied entry outright.

Recommendations for business travellers

- travel without personal devices to eliminate risk;
- power down devices before customs – encryption is most effective when devices are off;
- use 'clean' travel devices with minimal data and unique, temporary accounts;
- disable FaceID and use PIN unlock by pressing volume up, volume down and power button before entering;
- hide sensitive apps in folders with extra authentication; and
- avoid fake social media personas – false disclosures may lead to inadmissibility.

Although border policies continue to evolve, these steps may reduce the risk of your data being accessed. Finally, inform someone before entering the US and provide your legal representative's contact details in case you are not admitted.

Christi Hufford Jackson is a Partner and Head of the US Practice at Laura Devine Immigration, a transatlantic boutique immigration firm with offices in London and New York.

www.lauradevine.com

LAURA DEVINE
IMMIGRATION

Cyprus becomes a British Crown Colony

On 1 May 1925, the island of Cyprus was proclaimed a British Crown Colony by the British Government headed by the Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin

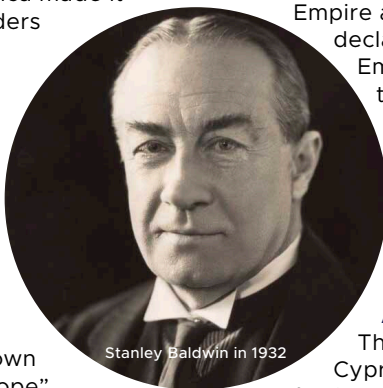
Influence

British – and foreign – involvement in Cyprus was nothing new. The island's strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa made it very attractive for invaders from various foreign powers for centuries, including the Ottoman Empire from 1591. By the late nineteenth century, Russia was looking to gain influence in the Eastern Mediterranean when the Ottoman Empire went into sharp decline – becoming known as “the sick man of Europe”.

On 4 June 1878, the British leased Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire under the terms of the Cyprus Convention. This was a secret agreement which gave Britain administrative control of the island. In exchange, Britain agreed to use Cyprus as a base to protect the Ottomans against potential Russian aggression.

Jewel in the crown

Despite some British opposition, especially from Liberal leader William Gladstone, Cyprus became a vital military base on the sea route to India, then “the jewel in the crown” of the British Empire.



Stanley Baldwin in 1932

However, the First World War quickly saw the Ottomans side with the Central Powers (the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria) against the British Empire and her allies. Britain declared that the Ottoman Empire's decision to back the Central Powers contravened the Cyprus Convention. She formally annexed Cyprus as a Crown Colony on 5 November 1914.

Annexation

The decision to annexe Cyprus provoked strong feelings among the island's

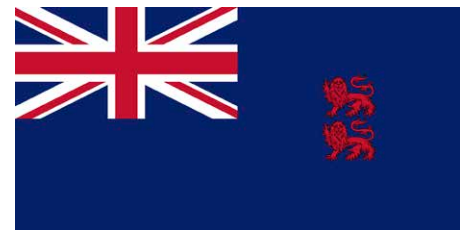
population of Greek Cypriot Orthodox Christians and Turkish Cypriot Muslims. The Greek Cypriot majority saw the annexation as a step towards ‘enosis’, the eventual unification with Greece, an aim strongly supported by senior Greek Orthodox clergy. Meanwhile, many Turkish Cypriots, fearful of the reprisals taken against Turks when Crete became part of Greece in 1908, backed taksim, the partition of Cyprus along ethnic and religious lines.

Britain proceeded to administer the island directly for the next 11 years, although questions remained about the legality of the annexation. These were resolved when the modern nation state of Turkey was created in 1924 following the break-up of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War.

Formality

The 1925 act to make Cyprus a Crown Colony was largely a formality to regularise British rule. Sir Malcolm Stevenson was appointed governor, while the number of legislative assembly members increased from 21 to 24. As previously, the seats

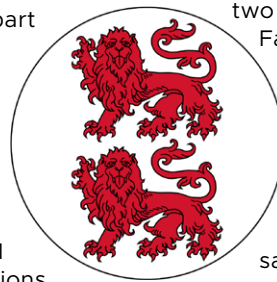
were divided among Greeks, Turks and other appointees (such as civil servants) in such a way that votes were often tied. The governor then cast the deciding vote (exactly the same power he wielded as high commissioner). Essentially things remained much as they had been under the leasing arrangement.



British Cyprus Flag 1922 - 1960

Tensions

Cyprus' legal change to Crown Colony status did not bring in political or economic reforms, although there were some improvements in health, education and public services. A 37-mile stretch of narrow-gauge railway had been constructed between the two largest towns of Nicosia and Famagusta and operated for 46 years but closed in 1951. However, no further autonomy was granted to the island's inhabitants. Governance was seen as weak and tensions between Greeks and Turks were not addressed. Many Cypriots from both groups saw the change as ineffective.



Independent

Real change did not occur until after the Second World War. The early 1950s saw a Greek Cypriot revolt to achieve enosis. The rebellion failed but Cyprus became an independent republic in 1960 following years of conflict to end British rule. The 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus saw the island divided in two and a United Nations peacekeeping force remains in place to this day.

100 years ago in London is researched and written by Alexa Michael



Monument of Freedom in Nicosia

London Daily@ Fleet Street

London's first daily digital evening newspaper with a monthly print edition



London's historic Fleet Street is getting a new title after three decades. The capital's newest media venture, *London Daily*, was launched at New City Hall, marking a significant milestone in British journalism with its innovative dual-format approach as a daily digital evening newspaper with a monthly print publication.

The new publication – a daily digital evening newspaper with a monthly print edition – is also planning to organise several business-related events including London Economic Forum in September.

Changes

At the launch, former BBC sports editor Mihir Bose, editor-

at-large of *London Daily*, gave a keynote address on the role of local media in strengthening democracy. Describing the aim of *London Daily*, he said: "This publication will demonstrate how London changes."

Anasudhin Azeez, executive editor of the title, described the publication's vision. "*London Daily* is on a mission to revive Fleet Street's legacy and uphold the principles of the media giants who once walked this storied path," he said. "Through a digital daily and a monthly print edition, we aim to rekindle its age-old legacy and restore the missionary values of journalism."

New chapter

The launch of *London Daily* represents a new chapter in British journalism, blending digital innovation with Fleet Street's historic traditions. With a focus on local news and contemporary storytelling, the publication aims to provide Londoners with insightful and reliable journalism from the heart of the city.

www.idd.news

www.epaper.idd.news



People Mistakes That Cost Scaling Businesses More Than They Think

SPONSORED COLUMN



Reyhana Jano

Scaling is messy. You are hiring fast, building systems as you go and trying to protect your culture. Most founders expect operational and financial challenges but it's the people issues that slows things down and cost more than they should.

Here are the mistakes I see most often and why they matter:

1. Hiring without clarity

When you are under pressure, you hire to plug gaps. But if the role isn't clearly defined and expectations aren't set, even a capable hire can underperform. That's a six-month mistake you'll pay for twice.

2. Treating freelancers like employees

You want flexibility, but if contractors follow your instructions, work regular hours and rely on your business, HMRC may classify them as employees. That opens you up to tax liabilities, legal claims and other risk.

3. Avoiding tough conversations

You let things slide - missed deadlines, poor behaviour, a hire who no longer fits. But what you avoid now often becomes tomorrow's HR issue. Without a paper trail, you're exposed.

4. Promoting without preparing

Loyal employees are often promoted into leadership, but many haven't managed people before. Without training or support, they struggle and so do their teams. Leadership gaps quietly drive disengagement, conflict and turnover.

5. No plan for absence

When someone is off repeatedly or long-term, an unclear response can damage trust, overwhelm others or breach employment law. You need a fair, consistent approach.

6. Ignoring your culture

Culture evolves as you scale. If values aren't reinforced, small issues snowball leading to misalignment, toxicity or even legal claims. Culture needs active shaping.

These aren't just HR problems. They are people risks that affect your growth, your margins and your momentum. None of these issues are unsolvable but they cost more to fix after the fact. Investing in the right HR foundations early not only protects your business but creates a healthier, more scalable workplace.

If your business is growing and you are unsure where to start, outsourced HR offers a flexible, expert-led solution without the cost of a full-time hire.



CONSTANTIA CONSULTING
Performance through people

For more information contact Reyhana Jano

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Ramadan lights up London

Marble Arch London Business Improvement District brought back its illuminated crescent moon Ramadan display to celebrate Ramadan for the local community, as thousands gathered along Edgware Road each evening to break their fast or come together for Eid al-Fitr.

Unity

Edgware Road, a vibrant hub of cafés, shops

and restaurants, has long been a gathering place during Ramadan. Offering a variety of traditional dishes, from Lebanese and Turkish cuisine to Iraqi, Egyptian and Indian fare, it's a favourite destination for breaking fast at iftar or celebrating Eid al-Fitr.

As families and friends share Ramadan's rich culinary traditions along Edgware Road, they were welcomed by the illuminated crescent moon, a striking symbol of celebration and unity.

www.marble-arch.london





Dance meets drama in Westminster

by Christina Lyon

With Chelsea in bloom, Centre Court calling, and the Ascot enclosures brimming with colour, London's summer calendar is synonymous with pageantry. But this June, a bold new contender enters the fray – one that swaps horses for pirouettes and tennis whites for tutus – as *Gala de Danza* brings its genre-defying celebration of global dance, music and visual spectacle to Central Hall Westminster for its London debut.

Electric fusion

Since being set up in 2013, *Gala de Danza* has earned a cult-like following in Los Cabos, Mexico for its eclectic fusion of disciplines. Think ballet meets Latin ballroom, opera fused with breakdancing, geometric choreography, and immersive musical installations – all under one roof.

Now, in its first edition outside Mexico, the festival brings this kaleidoscopic vision to Central Hall Westminster, a landmark known as much for its acoustics and soaring dome as its history of transformative moments.

London is recognised as a global dance centre so it feels natural to introduce a

groundbreaking mix of disciplines and artists to a new audience.

Accomplished

The line-up is as ambitious as it is accomplished.

Highlights include Polish countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński – who has become something of a Gen Z opera icon for his vocal virtuosity and breakdancing prowess – and Brazilian choreographer Juliano Nunes, whose commissions have marked him as one of the most exciting contemporary voices in movement.

There's also Royal Ballet principals Melissa Hamilton, Francesca Hayward and Cesar Corrales, French geometric choreographer Sadeck Berrabah (of *Murmuration* fame), and Earth Harp creator William Close, whose architectural instrument turns entire venues into vibrating sculptures.

Cultural exchange

If that reads like a who's who of the international performance scene – it is. But *Gala de Danza* isn't simply about star power – it will also bring together young performers from Youth America Grand Prix and London's Trinity Laban. At its heart, the festival is a platform for discovery and creative collision. Mexican-born Andres Zuniga, who will perform in London, was discovered by Lyon in a dance school in Los Cabos and went on to join New York City Ballet. It's these moments of cultural exchange and career-defining opportunity that underscore Gala's ethos.

Spectacle with substance

The timing of its London arrival couldn't be better. In an arts landscape still recalibrating post-pandemic, there's a growing appetite for performances that blend spectacle with substance, crossing genre and geography in search of something new.

It's easy to see why this event is being talked about as a future fixture on the UK's cultural calendar. Sitting neatly between Royal Ascot and Wimbledon, *Gala de Danza* appeals as much to aesthetes and business leaders as to seasoned dance lovers. It's an event that rewards curiosity and celebrates the power of collaboration – mirroring London itself.

Groundbreaking talent

For Central Hall Westminster, the venue hosting the festival, the partnership is a natural fit. Known for its domed splendour and civic gravitas, the hall has played host to global summits and some of the UK's most historic cultural moments. Sarah Franczak, director of operations, said: "This event aligns perfectly with our venue's legacy of showcasing groundbreaking talent."

Former American ballet theatre dancer Christina Lyon founded Gala de Danza in 2013 and is the company's artistic director.

The *Gala de Danza* London spectacular takes place on 25 and 26 June (three performances over two days at Westminster Central Hall).

galadedanza.com



Doubling up

Early afternoon starts – it's all down to the tide – and a lovely spring day bought out even bigger crowds than usual for the annual Boat Race. An estimated 250,000 people lined up from Putney to Chiswick to see the women and men of Cambridge do the double over their Oxford rivals for the third year in a row.



Bacon at lunch

Gareth Bacon MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, was guest speaker at a recent LCCI patron lunch held at Mosimann's in Belgravia. Conducted under the Chatham House Rule, guests from a wide range of businesses discussed the infrastructural and transport funding challenges facing the UK, as well as the opportunities for progress in this important sector.



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The Role of Enterprise Risk Management: From Business Resilience to Societal Impact

The next decade is expected to be defined by a more fragmented geopolitical order, bringing both risks and opportunities to the forefront. Organisations are facing a rapidly shifting landscape shaped by accelerating technological advancements, the global transition to renewable energy, geopolitical tensions, and tightening regulations on sustainability and governance. At the same time, longstanding risks, including climate change, cyber threats, economic instability, conflict, and public health vulnerabilities continue to evolve, demanding a proactive and strategic response.

In this environment, Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is not just a safeguard but a strategic enabler, equipping organisations with the ability to anticipate disruption, build resilience, and uncover competitive advantages. Risk professionals, particularly those with IRM qualifications, play a pivotal role in this transformation. Their expertise helps organisations move beyond risk mitigation to harness uncertainty as a driver of long-term value.

Download our risk trends: <https://www.theirm.org/news/irm-risktrends-2025-report/>

About the Institute of Risk Management (IRM)

The IRM is the leading professional body for ERM. We provide globally recognised qualifications and training, publish thought leadership, and run insightful events open to both our members and the wider public, all which are underpinned by our professional standards, defining the requirements risk managers (and those with a responsibility for risk in their business) need to meet.

By these means, we help organisations and individuals build excellence in risk management and raise awareness of risk across society so that they protect value and take advantage of opportunity.

Get Risk Ready with Our Professional Qualifications & Training Programmes

Our qualifications are globally recognised and OFQUAL regulated, designed to meet the needs of risk professionals at all levels. Whether you're new to risk or already operating in a leadership role, our flexible learning pathways combine real-world scenarios with expert insight—helping you build the skills needed to manage risk in today's fast-moving world.

For details on qualifications, please visit: <https://www.theirm.org/qualifications>

For details on training, please visit: <https://www.theirm.org/training>

Risk Advisory Services

The IRM's boutique Advisory service will enable your business to thrive by enhancing resilience and creating long-term value. With over 40 years of expertise across multiple industries, the IRM delivers bespoke solutions tailored to your needs.

We understand your business, diagnose your risk maturity and processes, and will guide you to implement strategies to boost business resilience.

For more information, please visit: <https://irm-advisory.com/>

Events, Webinars and Professional Community

The IRM runs regular webinars, roundtables and events focused on the latest risk developments—ranging from AI and data privacy to sustainability, culture, and regulatory change. We also facilitate sector-specific networks and special interest groups, where professionals share experiences and explore practical solutions to emerging challenges.

These forums offer valuable peer learning, promote knowledge exchange, and keep professionals ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing environment.

To view our upcoming events, please visit: <https://www.theirm.org/events>



Institute of Risk Management
Developing Risk Professionals

Industrial development's critical role as a catalyst for economic growth and employment



The UK's industrial and logistics sectors continue to play a vital role in driving regional economic growth, job creation, and long-term prosperity. As the government sharpens its focus on a modern industrial strategy - one that champions high-growth industries and supports the development of a skilled workforce – it is clear that targeted investment in new industrial developments has never been more important.

The government's Invest 2035 vision outlines how the UK must evolve to remain globally competitive, placing particular emphasis on the role of infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and net-zero industries in reshaping the economic landscape. At the heart of this ambition lies the development of industrial and logistics space that not only supports existing demand but actively shapes the future of employment and regional opportunity.

Across the country, a new generation of industrial developments are emerging – designed not simply to meet demand for high-quality logistics space but to stimulate local economies through the creation of long-term, skilled employment.

As this emergence continues to gather momentum, it is supported by the ongoing work of FI Real Estate Management, whose projects are delivering tangible economic value and supporting the growth of high-value workforces in key locations.

Creating opportunity in North Wales

In Wrexham, FIREM is bringing forward transformative industrial developments set to deliver long-term economic benefit for the city and wider region and create skilled employment opportunities for local people.

Since establishing a presence on Wrexham Industrial Estate in 2006, FIREM has invested more than £136 million into the business park. The impact of this sustained investment is significant. The current pipeline of development, which includes the



game-changing schemes Wrexham 1M and Wrexham 152, is projected to generate an estimated economic value of £1.2 billion over the next ten years, while creating and sustaining over 3,000 full-time jobs and supporting more than 1,000 construction roles.

These figures highlight the huge importance of strategic industrial development in driving regional regeneration and providing communities with access to meaningful, long-term employment. These projects are not only delivering critical infrastructure for advanced manufacturing and logistics businesses but also form part of a wider strategy to increase the scale of industry and upskill the local workforce in North Wales.

A proven model at Botany Bay

The impact of FIREM's approach can also be seen through their completed work at Botany Bay Business Park in Chorley. Like Wrexham, this project reflects a wider trend - that high-quality, sustainable industrial schemes can act as anchors for regional growth.

The success of Botany Bay is illustrative of how unlocking underutilised or strategically located land for logistics and industrial use can support the delivery of modern employment opportunities, particularly as businesses across the UK adapt to increasingly complex supply chains, new technologies, and evolving market demands.



In turn, this creates a ripple effect – boosting local services, attracting further investment, and enhancing the long-term prosperity of surrounding communities.

National priorities with local impact

The role of industrial development in driving employment opportunity aligns with the UK's modern industrial strategy, which identifies infrastructure and placemaking as critical pillars for economic transformation.

It is clear that high-growth industries, such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy and smart logistics, will continue to underpin the UK's competitiveness on the global stage, provided there is adequate investment in the built environment to support their expansion.

As a result of this, new job creation must also focus on building a high-value workforce – one that is equipped with the skills required to adapt to, and

thrive within, a fast-changing economic market. The delivery of new industrial space, particularly in regions outside of London and the South East, is a central component of achieving this ambition.

By bringing forward employment-led developments that prioritise long-term impact, ambitious developers like FIREM are enabling places such as Wrexham and Chorley to build stronger, more resilient local economies. These projects provide the foundations for businesses to grow and for people to access careers in sectors with real, long-term potential – from logistics and automation to engineering and sustainable construction.

The next steps for industry

As policymakers look to the future of British industry, it is clear that the role of industrial development in supporting jobs, training and growth must remain a central consideration. With the right partnerships and a sustained commitment to place-based investment, industrial schemes can deliver more than buildings – they can become powerful engines of economic renewal.

FIREM's projects up and down the country show what is possible when development is approached with strategic intent and long-term vision. In doing so, they reinforce the wider importance of industrial development in helping to deliver the UK's goals for a high-value, high-skill economy.

Find out more about FI Real Estate Management and its portfolio of pipeline and completed industrial developments across the UK by visiting www.fi-rem.com



FI REAL ESTATE
MANAGEMENT

London Gateway expansion under way

Construction work to expand London Gateway and establish the facility as the UK's largest container port is now beginning, following approval given for the £1 billion project being given to DP World

All-electric

The global logistics giant said it would take just four years to complete the expansion, adding two further 400m-long all-electric berths and a second rail terminal in a major infrastructure project that boosts the UK's trading capability. The expanded container port, part of the Thames Freeport, will be able to accommodate six of the world's largest container ships, which will be served by Europe's tallest quay cranes.

DP World has worked at pace to gain regulatory approval for the investment, which was first announced by chief executive and group chair Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem (interviewed by LBM earlier this year) at the government's International Investment Summit in London last autumn.

Open for business

In March, the chair hosted Baroness Poppy Gustafsson, UK Minister for Investment, at London Gateway to discuss the investment, growth plans, and 400 new permanent jobs that will be created



at the logistics hub. She commented: "The UK is open for business and DP World's major investment is the latest vote of confidence in our economy." She added that the expansion would "turbocharge the UK's logistics sector and help deliver the long-term, stable growth that supports skilled jobs and raises living standards across the UK."

Resilience

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem said that his company had invested more than £5 billion in its UK operations, providing more than 5,500 jobs, and was proud to be supporting national economic growth by enabling businesses to thrive and increasing resilience in the supply chain.

www.dpworld.com

Lower Thames Crossing

The benefits of DP World's investment will have been boosted by the recent government 'go-ahead' for the Lower Thames

Crossing which will link Tilbury, Essex and Gravesend in Kent by two tunnels running



underneath the River Thames.

The £9 billion project will be the largest road tunnel in the UK and is expected to be operational by 2032. The concept of such a crossing has been around for a while, first mooted in 2009, and has cost over a billion pounds in planning to date. However, it is forecast to reduce traffic at the Dartford Crossing and make a worthwhile environmental contribution. Funding for the project is likely to be through a public-private partnership.

Connectivity

Government consent for the project has been welcomed by the Port of Tilbury (owned by Forth Ports) whose

400-acre development area will gain improved connectivity. A spokesperson for the port commented: "Boosted by Thames Freeport Tax Site status, this land will now benefit from fast access to the strategic highways network through a dedicated connection." The port plans to bring forward its planning application for the first phase of their development this spring, a new 100-acre port terminal – Tilbury3 – as they continue to grow their low carbon distribution network for Greater London and the South East of England. The site will also benefit from a connection to the strategic rail network and marine access.

www.forthports.co.uk

UK must transform infrastructure



The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) have called on the government to tackle the problems of the UK's worn-out infrastructure to fire up growth.

Among the recommendations in a new report, the BCC is urging ministers to:

- Improve road and rail capacity and electrify key sections of the rail network
- Deliver regional transport projects and grid connectivity
- Listen to business on its national and regional infrastructure needs and provide long-term policy stability and improved planning capacity.

The report has been produced by the BCC's *Local Economy of the Future* challenge group, drawing on expertise from chambers – including LCCI – and businesses of all sizes and sectors.

Confidence

It advises that the Infrastructure and Planning Bill must have the interests of business at its heart. It also calls for government to introduce long-term policy stability to help restore business confidence that was hit by the cancellation of the latter stages of HS2.

The report also sets out a pathway to improve capacity in the planning system, through a joint initiative with business to get 100 more trained planners into local authorities. The BCC has set up the programme to address the bottlenecks in decision-making due to a lack of resources.

Skills

BCC research has found that more than



three-fifths of business leaders say they just don't have the right skills in their workforce, rising to nearly three-quarters in the manufacturing and construction sectors.

Two-thirds of business leaders say their views aren't taken into account when it comes to local infrastructure decisions – on everything from digital to road improvements. This rises sharply to more than eight in ten when it comes to national infrastructure decisions.

Transport is a major challenge that needs fixing. For low-paid workers, buses are key. Yet more than six in ten company leaders say their local bus and tram networks are poor.

www.britishchambers.org.uk

Dancing up a storm for the NHS

TV presenter and *Strictly Come Dancing* star Angela Rippon CBE, along with her *Strictly* dance partner Kai Widdrington, recently visited Chelsea and Westminster Hospital as part of 'Let's Dance!', a new campaign to get the nation fit and help the NHS.

They joined a special dance workout led by Khadija N'diaye of Cheri Coco, a community interest company that supports women, families, the elderly, and new residents in the borough of Chelsea and Kensington.



was one of many classes and events taking place across the country for the first National Dance Day, bringing together dance organisations, companies, clubs, studios and 55,000 teachers to promote the benefits of dance.

The 'Let's Dance!' initiative, founded by Rippon, aims to inspire people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to embrace dance as a way of improving their health, connecting with others and having fun. It is backed by the NHS, major health charities, medical experts and government departments.

Positive impact

Wes Streeter, Health and Social Care Secretary, praised Rippon for "dancing up a storm to support this government's

mission to rebuild the NHS and shift care from sickness to prevention.

"Through our 10 Year Health Plan we will build a healthy society. And even if you've got two left feet, brilliant initiatives like Angela's are a great way to keep fit, kick up your heels and meet others – having a positive impact on your health and wellbeing while reducing your risk of developing serious illnesses."

www.cwplus.org.uk



Benefits

The session was organised by the CW+ Arts for All team and was attended by outpatients, staff, volunteers and members of the local community. It



Germany back on track

Peter Bishop's Berlin diary

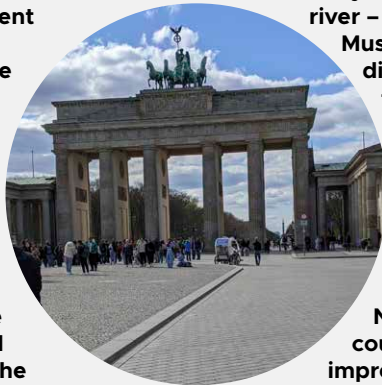
Trump's tariffs could not be ignored at the World ATA Carnet Council (WATAC) held in Berlin in April. Would the trade facilitation document backed by the World Customs Organisation be negatively impacted by the draconian charges on imports being whacked on by the US administration? "Not especially" was the conclusion reached by the document experts from around the world who had gathered in Germany's capital in the first of their biannual meetings. Temporary imports of, for example, cars for the Grand Prix F1 circuit would continue to take place, though security levels would rise in line with duty rates.

Competitiveness

I was in town in my capacity as chair of the advisory board of UKNATACO – see page 37 – and had been taking an interest in the country's economic and political situation. It seemed pretty clear that Friedrich Merz, leader of Germany's conservatives, would be elected Chancellor after the horse trading had run its course. His message to President Trump was that Germany was back on track with twin aims of increasing defence spending and reviving the country's famed economic competitiveness.

Distinctive

Berlin is of course a noted cultural capital and my schedule allowed for a bike tour of the centre.



The itinerary included Museumsinsel – a museum district on an island formed by two arms of the Spree river – which rivals Vienna's MuseumsQuartier with a diverse array of places to visit. Two of them – the James-Simon-Galerie and the Neues Museum – were designed by British architect David Chipperfield. Another noted Brit – Sir Norman Foster – was of course responsible for the impressive Reichstag make-over in 1999 with its distinctive glass dome.

Music plays its part too. Plácido Domingo was in town putting in a guest performance in an opera gala at the Philharmonie Berlin. Basically he was due to present his 'best of' selection with famous arias for tenor and baritone. Not bad for an 84-year old.

Divided city

Unfortunately David Bowie didn't live that long. He is still warmly remembered in Berlin though, a place he drifted in and out of in his career. His

concert in summer 1987 at the Reichstag was a major event and his last appearance in the divided city. Just before his death in 2016, his last recording paid homage to the city.



Previously, to celebrate the unification of East and West Germany, Pink Floyd played their album *The Wall* to a crowd of 200,000 in Potsdamer Platz, a landmark name checked by Bowie in his song *Where are we now?*

When he died, fans gathered in front of his former home in Schöneberg and placed flowers, photos and candles on his doorstep. Bowie's songs played from loudspeakers for an impromptu and emotional singalong. The following year his song *Heroes* was voted by a radio jury in the city as the most iconic Berlin anthem of all time.

Symbolic

Reminders of the Berlin Wall days are everywhere. Our cycling tour took us past a Trabant museum – Trabiworld – paying tribute to the East German cars which were famously stumpy, functional and not noted for their efficiency. They remain, however, hugely symbolic for the mile-long parades they formed as the two Berlins came together.

DIHK – the equivalent of British Chambers of Commerce in Germany – were the hosts of the WATAC meeting and invited members to bring a digital Carnet with them. Customs at Berlin-Brandenburg airport had been briefed, and all went smoothly. Conscious of carbon footprints I travelled by train, arriving at the monumental Berlin Hbf which brimmed with retail outlets but not a customs officer in sight!



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The **Blackfort Global Markets Master Fund** is a hedge fund strategy focused on navigating the dynamic landscape of financial markets. Through rigorous fundamental research, we take high-conviction positions in companies primed to outperform their sectors and indices over the long run while managing risk through dynamic market hedging and implementing short positions in overvalued or structurally challenged names. This approach is designed to capture the upside while limiting drawdowns with the aim of generating stable, long-term returns regardless of market conditions. This fund provides a compelling solution for investors seeking equity exposure within a disciplined risk framework.

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Together, **these two strategies offer powerful diversification** – bridging the liquidity and agility of public markets with the tangible, income-generating strength of real assets. This dual approach enables investors to navigate changing economic cycles with confidence. At Blackfort Group we build long-term partnerships grounded in trust, transparency, and performance.

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London top global destination for GCC investment

London remains the top global destination for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) investment, with planned long-term spending in the property market set to rise significantly, according to a new report from Al Rayan Bank

Uplift

The 2024 GCC Investment Barometer, which surveyed 150 investors from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE with an average net worth of \$13 million, found in the last 12 months alone respondents invested an average \$112.45 million in London property, compared with \$90.79 million in the previous year, an uplift of almost a quarter.

During this time, London has been the most popular property investment target of all the international cities surveyed, ahead of Miami, New York, Paris and Los Angeles.

New investments

Looking ahead, all respondents are planning to make new investments or increase their investments in UK property over the next five years.

The research shows investors have already committed to spending an average of \$92 million, up a third from 2023 when the same research was conducted, with the most common reason for choosing to invest being the desire to relocate to the UK or to have the option of living there. Experts anticipate respondents have erred on the side of caution and the planned spending value is likely to be higher in reality.

Attractive

Almost all say the UK property market is attractive, up from 89 per cent in 2023 with 95 per cent confident that the market represents a strong investment opportunity for the next five years. Key factors driving this interest include the capital's strong pipeline of diverse developments, favourable terms of purchase and how investing also provides an opportunity to live in the city.

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”

Despite London being the most popular major city to invest in globally for the last 12 months, Hong Kong comes top for the year ahead, followed by Monaco, Tokyo, New York and Paris.



Short-term uncertainty

Maisam Fazal, chief commercial officer at Al Rayan Bank, said: “The special relationship between the UK and the GCC remains as strong as ever. This year we’ve seen the introduction of visa-free travel for GCC nationals which will further enhance this link, and the UK property markets appeal.

“However, the new UK government and revenue-raising policies impacting GCC property investors such as Capital Gains Tax and Stamp Duty have no-doubt informed investors’ decision making which is why we’re expecting to see some short-term uncertainty, hence London’s position dropping.

The Gulf Cooperation Council is made up of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

www.alrayanbank.co.uk

Honoured in Abu Dhabi

LCCI were proud winners of the International Market Entry Firm of the Year Award at the Gulf Franchise Expo in Abu Dhabi earlier this year

Presented with the prize, the Chamber’s Ash Balakrishnan emphasised London’s strategic importance and urged homegrown Gulf franchise brands to explore the UK capital as a gateway to global expansion.

Pro-business

It was, he said, known for its diverse consumer base, robust economy, and pro-business environment, and presented opportunities in a range of sectors including food and beverages, retail, wellness, and education. Balakrishnan

highlighted the growing demand for unique, high-quality concepts that reflect cultural authenticity. The presence of a thriving Arab diaspora and a global clientele in London further enhances the market potential for Gulf-based businesses.

LCCI is actively facilitating international franchise expansion, offering business advisory services, market entry support, and networking opportunities to Gulf brands looking to enter the UK market.



British Chambers overseas

Foreign Secretary David Lammy has announced that all Ambassadors and High Commissioners who have a British Chamber of Commerce in their jurisdiction will become honorary Presidents of their host country's chamber.

Intelligence sharing

The news broke at the recent



BCC Driving International Trade Conference which was also boosted by announcements on a closer working relationship between government and UK business. This will include the creation of a Diplomatic Advisory Hub, quarterly meetings, trade roadshows, better intelligence sharing, and a fresh

approach to economic diplomacy which puts business and politics on an equal footing.

Choppy waters

BCC director general Shevaun Haviland commented: "There will undoubtedly be choppy waters ahead as we navigate a new era of global protectionism, but I firmly believe that this much closer working relationship will help the UK thrive."

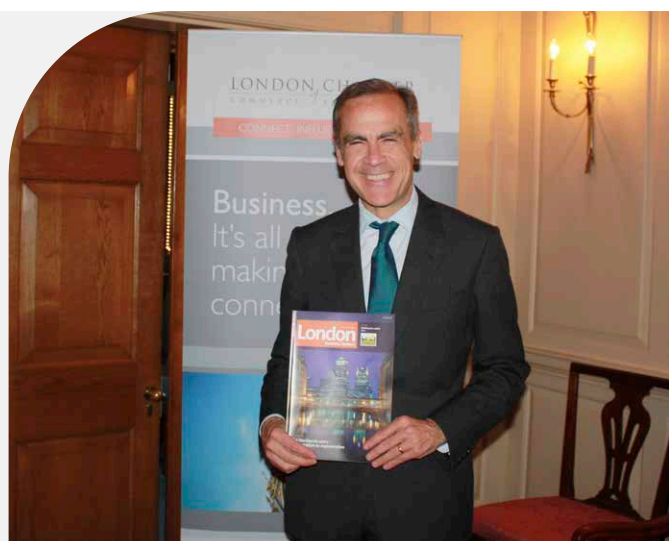
Foreign Secretary David Lammy By Lauren Hurley / No 10 Downing Street - Number 10 Flickr page, OGL 3, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=150044145>

Reading material for top bankers

Mark Carney, the former Bank of England boss, one time-guest at a memorable LCCI event at Innholders Hall in the City, and clearly a discerning reader of business publications had just been elected as Canada's Prime Minister as *LBM* went to print. He had previously been sworn in as PM

before calling a snap election.

Carney became the first non-Brit to become governor of the UK national bank when he took up the position in 2013. Previously he had successfully steered his country through a period of recession as governor of the Bank of Canada.



Going global

Global reach

Pomeroy set the scene for the discussion – which was conducted under the Chatham House Rule – with take on current global macroeconomics and a look at the issues affecting the economy over the medium term. Trenchard was able to brief the

audience on DP World's extensive global reach through London Gateway and their commitment to sustainability through a carbon reduction initiatives and carbon inset programme.

LCCI's programme partners for the event were DP World and HSBC



Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariffs

| Ciaran Bollard gives his tips for businesses navigating fluctuating trade prices

During his 'Liberation Day' announcement, President Trump revealed aggressive measures that will have consequences for trade on an international scale. Any country charging tariffs on US exports will see tariffs rise for products they send in the opposite direction, while Canada and Mexico will be hit with sweeping duties.



allow businesses to forecast new measures to incorporate in their planning.

The tariff stand-offs are part of a larger political realignment, where traditional friendships become strained and money speaks louder than political principles. Trade policies are shifting daily, and boards need real-time intelligence to keep track of them all, not just periodic updates. Why? If trade policies shift daily, the same can be said for the best strategic decisions. What made sense last week might be a bad call this week, and vice versa.

The only way directors will be sure about all this is to stay updated with all new developments. Set up new alerts, take half an hour to monitor major news each morning and evening, whatever it takes.

Trump has also targeted a number of goods with increased tariffs in an effort to drive growth in the US, including cars, computer processing chips and drugs. This series of policies is already rocking global financial markets, with stock prices falling heavily in the days preceding the declaration.

In response, business leaders can increase the resilience of their organisations and minimise the impacts of the tariffs, as well as any future changes to trade prices.

1. The importance of risk-savvy directors

A bold approach to managing tariff changes is essential, making them both a leadership and a financial issue.

One of the first ways companies will take on tariffs is to analyse the risk involved. So, if boards aren't fluent in risk management, supply chain strategy, and global trade, then there's a serious problem. Fast-track upskilling or bring in external advisors who can spot risks before they become crises to get ahead of the problem.

2. Stay glued to trade news

Remaining up to date with the latest developments will bolster flexibility and

3. Challenge the status quo

Reviewing existing policies can identify potential vulnerabilities and strengthen organisations in the long run.

Use one of your core powers – and responsibilities – as a director, and ensure you are always asking questions about your strategy because when tariffs disrupt global norms, complacency will kill your margins.

Are you too reliant on one country for sourcing? Can you diversify your supply chain before it's too late? Can you adjust pricing strategies to absorb new costs? Considering all of these points will help business leaders pinpoint the right approach for the future.



4. Fill the expertise gaps

Ensuring leadership teams can call on the expertise of personnel with specific experience in similar scenarios is crucial.

If no one on your board has experience navigating trade wars, fix it now. This could include bringing in an expert on global trade and economic policy, creating a trade risk committee within the board or working with external consultants to get ahead of risks. These are all viable strategies that will reduce the impacts of tariff increases.

5. Get serious about scenario planning

Preparing for an array of different outcomes will equip companies to manage challenging situations.

Trump's unpredictability may be frustrating to follow in the news, but organisations can still plan – it just might take a little more work. Scenario planning is the answer. Boards should run drills for as many outcomes as realistically possible, mapping out potential risks and responses, so that once things settle down, the company can adapt quickly to a new norm and won't be completely undone by tariffs.

The tariff war isn't going away anytime soon, and companies that treat it as background noise will pay the price. Boards need to take charge, ask tough questions, and never allow hope to take the place of careful planning.

Ciaran Bollard is chief executive of the Corporate Governance Institute

www.thecorporategovernanceinstitute.com

Export support package

UK Export Finance have increased credit capacity by up to £20 billion and loan facilities of up to £2million through the British Business Bank Growth Guarantee Scheme. This is intended to provide much needed cashflow support for exporting firms affected by the impact of new tariffs on goods going to the USA.

www.ukexportfinance.gov.uk

Overseas business opportunities

A selection of business co-operation offers made by companies wishing to work with UK firms taken from the Enterprise Europe Network Partnership Opportunities Database. To find out more about these and similar opportunities contact Innovate UK Business Growth at <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/business-growth-contact/> or call on 0300 123 3066



Hungary

Manufacturer with 20 years experience and 50 employees specialises in contract sewing of outerwear, protective, military, and hunting clothing, as well as home textiles and workwear. The company offers free production capacity for subcontracting and is open to new partnerships in the textile and garment industry.

REF: BOHU20250414007



Slovenia

Specialist in innovative and sustainable heating and energy production solutions is seeking new B2B partners. Their portfolio includes heat pumps, solar panels and battery systems. Their solutions are ideal for residential, commercial, and industrial properties, providing high energy efficiency, environmentally friendly operation, and reliable technical support.

REF: BOSI20250401003



Ukraine

With 25+ years of tech excellence and 700+ experts worldwide, company delivers cutting-edge fintech and banking solutions powered by AI, cloud, and secure infrastructure. Trusted by 150+ clients, we specialize in custom financial platforms, compliance automation, fraud prevention, and data intelligence—helping global vendors like Goldman Sachs and FIS accelerate innovation and growth.

REF: BOUA20250411020



Finland

Manufacturer of durable aluminum boats, available with electric, petrol, or diesel outboard engines. The boat is designed for professional use in demanding environments, particularly by defence and other public authorities. The company seeks distribution partners in NATO member countries, experienced in supplying equipment to governmental and defence sectors.

REF: BOFI20250411016



Romania

Specialist in producing handmade items from 100% natural Merino wool, offering quality, sustainable and authentic products. The company is a social enterprise dedicated to preserving traditional crafts and supporting the local community. They offer support to people from vulnerable groups, ensuring jobs and the continuity of a valuable tradition.

REF: BORO20250408007



Türkiye

A manufacturing and engineering technologies company, founded in 1995 by an expert in blow-moulding technology with over 30 years of experience, produces high-quality blow-moulded plastic parts for the medical, automotive, furniture and education sectors. The company produces plastic blow-moulded parts, mostly with Polypropilen.

REF: BOTR20250409008



Croatia

Specialist in the distribution of dental implants and related products would like to expand its portfolio of products. The company provides high-quality and innovative solutions for implantology and dental procedures, ensuring top-notch support and education for their clients.

REF: BRHR20250401008



Poland

An SME active in industrial automation offers tailored solutions including robotic workstations, vision systems and production line automation. The company is seeking manufacturing and sub-contracting agreements with industrial firms in EMEA and the USA to deliver innovative, scalable automation systems that enhance operational efficiency.

REF: BOPL20250410007



Spain

Shipyard with extensive experience in manufacturing processes using composites, including recycled or innovative materials such as biocomposites and circular solutions. It offers applied know-how in real production environments to validate new technologies, manufacture prototypes or components, and collaborate both in research projects and industrial developments within the marine sector.

REF: TOES20250411001



France

Company develops, produces and sells low environmental impact products to local authorities, farmers, companies and private consumers through national distributors. The company is looking for partners in the distribution of its herbicide products, R&D partners or EU consortium to improve efficiency of the herbicide composition based on organic acids from biomass or industrial sub-products.

REF: BOFR20250411008



Germany

A leading engineering company is focused on development, production and sales of machinery for the processing of timing belts and sleeves. It offers a broad range of machinery for the measurement, winding, cutting, grinding, coating, splitting, skiving and welding of timing belts and sleeves. It is looking for sales agents, dealers/wholesalers of machinery and companies which tailor belts for industrial needs.

REF: BODE20250414009



Italy

An organic factory and winery since 2011 seeks clients B2B/C to offer wine-experiences to their own clients. It is also looking for tour operators interested in organising wine tasting at the winery and old vineyards. Finally, it is looking for a school of sommeliers interested in organising wine tasting and courses at the winery and old vineyards.

REF: BOIT20250410001



Spotlight on Panama

Panama has always been a country defined by its geography. A bridge between two vast continents, a gateway where oceans meet, and a hub where global trade converges – its story is one of movement, connection, and opportunity

Today, as the country continues to evolve, it remains a dynamic destination for investment, trade, and tourism, offering strategic advantages for British businesses looking to expand into Latin America.

Resilience

Its macroeconomic landscape reflects a blend of resilience and strategic growth, positioning the nation as a focal point for investors. As of 2025, Panama's nominal GDP is projected to reach approximately \$91.7 billion, with a per capita income of \$20,092. The service sector dominates, emphasising Panama's role as a regional hub for finance, logistics, and commerce.

Investment

The country's dollarised economy provides stability, with inflation rates expected to remain around two per cent in 2025. There are labour market challenges which the government aims to address through targeted policies and investments. Foreign direct investment remains a key driver of economic growth, with 2023 inflows reaching \$2 billion, indicating sustained investors' confidence. Government efforts to attract and retain investment focus on logistics, energy, technology, and construction.

The financial services industry plays a major role in Panama's economy. British banks, FinTech firms, and trade finance institutions have opportunities to expand into Panama, particularly as the country

modernises its financial sector with digital banking solutions. With an increasingly globalised financial market, Panama's role as a regional financial hub continues to evolve, hosting 62 banks from 21 countries.

Hub

Logistics and maritime services remain central to Panama's economy. The expansion of the Panama Canal and free trade zones solidify its position as a transshipment hub for goods moving between Asia, the Americas, and Europe, with movements rising 15 per cent in 2024. Infrastructure projects, including highway and port facility upgrades, further enhance trade efficiency. UK firms specialising in port management, shipping insurance, and supply chain logistics may find opportunities in these sectors.

Infrastructure and engineering continue to attract investment. The expansion of the Panama Metro, particularly the construction of Line 3, is a major transport project aimed at improving connectivity in the capital. The proposed Río Indio reservoir project, designed to secure freshwater supplies for the Panama Canal, also presents opportunities for UK firms in water management and engineering.

Renewable

Panama's Energy Transition Agenda 2020-2030 supports diversification into solar, wind, and hydroelectric projects, along with growing interest in electric

mobility to reduce last-mile emissions. British companies with expertise in renewable energy and sustainability initiatives could contribute as Panama reduces its reliance on fossil fuels.

Tourism is another growing sector, with the government prioritising sustainable tourism and high-end hospitality investments. The country's landscapes, from rainforests to beaches, attract visitors interested in eco-tourism, cultural heritage, and adventure travel. Given the UK's experience in luxury tourism and conservation-focused hospitality, there are potential synergies for future investment in Panama's tourism industry.

Compelling

For businesses looking to expand into Latin America, Panama offers a strategic location, political and economic stability, and a strong commitment to infrastructure, sustainability, and digital transformation. Its role as a regional logistics and financial hub makes it a compelling option for investment and trade expansion.



Iconic canal

The history of Panama is closely tied to its most iconic asset — the Panama Canal. The isthmus has always been a vital trade route. The Spanish first envisioned an interoceanic passage in the 16th century but



it was not until 1914 that the United States completed the canal after earlier French efforts failed.

Pillar of trade

For over a century, the canal has been a pillar of global trade, facilitating the movement of goods across continents. Its expansion, finalised in 2016

allowed for the transit of larger vessels, reinforcing its role as a key maritime passage.

Today, the Panama Canal Authority is taking proactive steps to ensure sustainability. Facing climate change and water shortages, a proposed \$1.6 billion investment in the Río Indio reservoir aims to secure freshwater supply for operations.

Cleankill Pest Control signs up to Armed Forces Covenant



After discussions with ex-services employees, Cleankill Pest Control has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant - a promise to support the Armed Forces community.

Around 9 percent of Cleankill's staff once served in the UK's Armed Forces. This highlighted to the company that individuals who have trained and served their country share similar characteristics with the role of pest control technician.

Cleankill Director Clive Bury explains: "We considered what features the roles shared, how their training made them so compatible for a role in pest control and how we could best support current and future ex-services employees. We are delighted to have signed the pledge and hope it will encourage more ex-forces personnel to join us and start a new career in pest control.

"The Covenant is a pledge to support those who serve or have served, support their families and ensure they are fairly treated. It is a show of support not just to ex-service personnel and veterans but also to our customers, staff, contractors and the general public that we are serious about helping ex-service people."

The key qualities that both services share are: punctuality; the trust of the public; excellent training; problem solving; taking instructions and care over appearance; organisation; teamwork and planning. Someone who demonstrates all these qualities is Cleankill Service Team Leader Neil Parker. Neil is a shining example of someone who is excelling in his new career and finding it extremely rewarding.

Neil served for 12 years in the Royal Artillery as an Air Defence Gunner, operating and then commanding the Rapier short-range Air Defence missile system. He left with the rank of Bombardier - the equivalent of a Corporal. Neil entered pest control by accident while working in the wine trade.

He said: "I started as a technician which suited me as it gave me an opportunity to transfer skills from the military that I hadn't used for a while. I now manage a team of technicians after being promoted to team leader. I really love my job and find it incredibly rewarding.

"I believe that the role of pest control technician is ideal

for an ex-forces individual, particularly someone who likes to operate within a team and use their mental resources."

Neil Parker and Pest Control Technician Wayne Baron, Cleankill's Armed Forces Champion who also served in the Royal Artillery, joined Director Clive Bury and Lt Col Darren Johnston for the official signing on the Armed Forces Covenant in the Duke of Wellington's conference room inside Horse Guards Parade, London.

Cleankill Pest Control is currently recruiting for technicians in the South East. For more details go to this page. <https://www.cleankill.co.uk/vacancies>

Cleankill Pest Control specialises in providing commercial and residential pest control services across London, Surrey, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Bucks, Bristol and the rest of the country.

For further information go to www.cleankill.co.uk or call 0800 056 5477.


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AI and automation: key investment areas

by John Mc Loughlin

Chief information officers – CIOs – are placing their bets on artificial intelligence and automation to drive business transformation. These technologies have become essential for enhancing operational efficiency, improving customer experiences, and unlocking new revenue streams.

Priorities

However, as the scope of digital innovation expands, CIOs are also confronted with the growing challenge of ensuring robust cybersecurity amid these technological advancements.



AI and automation have taken centre stage as CIOs' top investment priorities. The ability to leverage AI to optimise decision-making, streamline processes, and offer personalised customer experiences is a key focus.

Agility

Automation plays a critical role in reducing costs and increasing the agility of operations, making it a fundamental part of driving business value in a digital-first world.

Despite these forward-looking initiatives, security remains a significant concern. As cybersecurity risks continue to escalate, many CIOs – especially in organisations without a dedicated chief information security officer (CISO) – are increasingly shouldering responsibility for securing their infrastructure. The pressure to innovate while safeguarding against cyber threats presents a delicate balancing act that requires continuous vigilance.

Challenges

While CIOs are focused on pushing technological boundaries, the CISO's role is equally critical in managing the risks these innovations introduce. The rapid adoption of cloud technologies and remote work has expanded the attack surface, exposing businesses to new and complex cyber threats.

AI itself, while providing immense benefits, also opens doors for AI-driven cyberattacks, demanding a more proactive and adaptive cybersecurity approach.

Holistic

The growing complexity of modern threats have pushed supply chain security into the spotlight. Recent high-profile cyberattacks have highlighted the vulnerabilities inherent in third-party partnerships.

As organisations depend more on external vendors, securing the supply chain has become a non-negotiable priority for CISOs. This shift reflects a broader trend toward a more integrated and holistic approach to cybersecurity.

Collaboration

The intersection of innovation and security has never been more critical. With the rise of AI, automation, IoT, and cloud computing, both CIOs and CISOs must work together to safeguard these technologies from emerging threats. Their collaboration is key to ensuring that security is embedded throughout the digital transformation journey, from the initial planning stages to implementation.

In particular, the convergence of AI and cybersecurity has driven the need for joint strategies to protect against both cybercriminals and the misuse of technologies. The roles of CIO and CISO are no longer siloed but are increasingly seen as complementary forces working to strike a balance between innovation and risk management.

Continuous investment

Looking to the future, CIOs will continue to prioritise investments in AI, automation, and IoT to enable organisations to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive market. These technologies will drive business outcomes, reduce operational costs, and enhance the customer experience, all while helping organisations scale.

At the same time, CISOs must adapt their strategies to keep pace with rapidly evolving threats, from advanced cyberattacks to the challenges posed by emerging technologies like quantum computing. The need for continuous investment in security technologies and employee awareness will remain a priority.

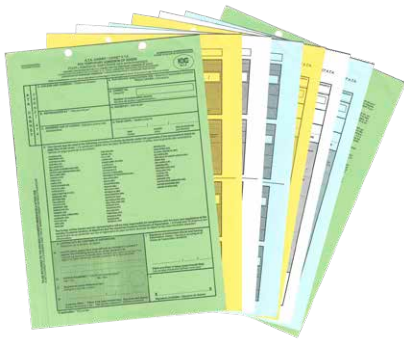
The collaboration between CIOs and CISOs is crucial. By aligning their goals and priorities, these leaders can navigate the complex intersection of technology and security, ensuring their organisations are both innovative and resilient.

John Mc Loughlin is chief executive of J2 Software

www.j2software.co.uk

Passports for goods

Global trade facilitation experts gathered in Berlin recently for a two-day session on ATA Carnets – the passports for goods needed for professional equipment, samples and materials for trade fairs to cross borders with the minimum of fuss.



Progress

The venue was DIHK's impressive building on the banks of the River Spree in the centre of the capital. The main topic on the agenda was progress on the transition to eCarnets with a forecast that full digitalisation will be achieved by the end of 2027.



UKNATACO oversees the ATA Carnet operation in the UK and were represented at the event by Davor McKinley, head of the secretariat, and Peter Bishop, chair of the organisation's advisory board. www.uknataco.co.uk

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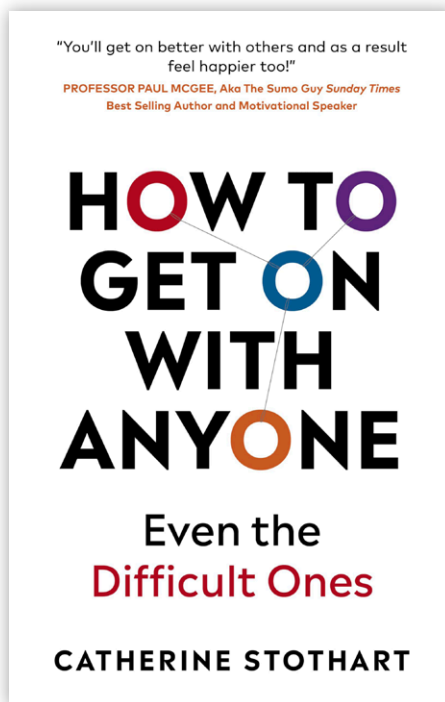
Negotiating those difficult conversations

The second edition of leadership coach Catherine Stothart's *How to get on with anyone* is timely to say the least. Who could not now observe world affairs and wonder at the difficult conversations that must be conducted between global leaders?

Subtitled *Communicating positively with any personality types – even the difficult ones*, it is, ostensibly, aimed at the business community but one feels its reach could apply further afield.

Telling

With chapters preceded by telling quotes – I particularly liked one from the visionary Robbie Burns: “O, wad some power the giftie gie us/To see oursels as others see us!” – the book acknowledges the changes since the first edition appeared over half a decade ago. Such things as the pandemic, the growth of working from home, the expectations of younger generations, diversity issues, and social media are taken into account



– their impact on how we feel about our world and how we relate to each other.

Impact

In three parts Stothart takes the reader, in a practical and digestible way, through understanding the four different personality styles and how they work, discovering how to flex your style to build rapport with others, and learning ways to improve your impact, influence, resilience and leadership skills.

One critic has opined that after reading the book: “You’ll get on better with others and as a result feel happier too!” Who could ask for more?

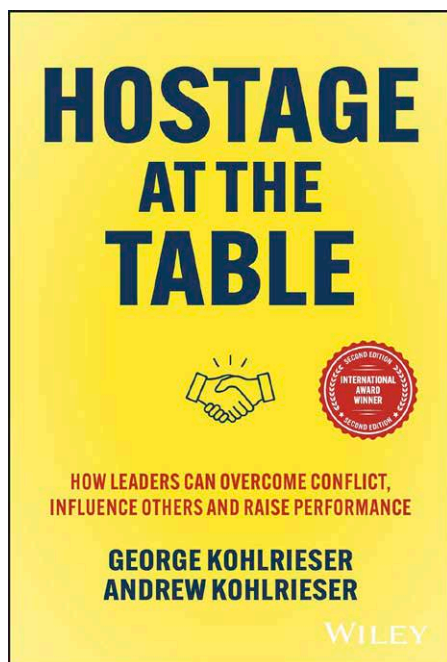
How to get on with anyone by Catherine Stothart

Published by Pearson

www.pearson.com



Building high-performance teams



the continued rise of remote-first workforces, economic uncertainty and geopolitical disruption, strong leadership has never been more critical. In order to be truly effective, leaders must develop the skills to master themselves, build trust and buy-in from their teams and act as a secure base – a source of comfort, security and protection – for those around them.

Conflict resolution

Hostage at the Table offers a new model for leadership, drawing on the combined expertise of George and Andrew Kohlrieser, who between them bring decades of experience in hostage negotiation, clinical psychology and conflict resolution, to offer invaluable insights to leaders.

High-pressure

Leveraging techniques shaped and refined over decades of high-stakes hostage negotiations and working with some of the world’s most successful businesses, *Hostage at the Table* explores what makes us effective

leaders and bonds teams together. It helps readers unlock the power to influence others and instigate positive change – even in the most high-pressure situations.

The book offers readers a step-by-step guide to:

- Hone your negotiation skills
- Resolve workplace conflicts
- Forge trust as a leader
- Form close bonds
- Build and successfully lead high-performance teams

Packed with practical, actionable advice to enhance personal and professional leadership skills, the book will appeal to managers, senior leaders and entrepreneurs.

Hostage at the Table: apply proven hostage negotiation skills in the workplace to build high-performance teams by George and Andrew Kohlrieser

Published by Wiley

www.wiley.com

Both the world of work and society more widely are currently shifting at an unprecedented rate. Between

Thriving in turbulence

Colin Johnson on strategic adaptability in a shifting business landscape

As businesses contend with an increasingly volatile and unpredictable external environment, the importance of strategic adaptability has never been more critical. Rising labour costs – exacerbated by broader economic pressures – are pushing operators to reassess traditional operating models and explore innovative solutions that reduce dependency on human labour.



costs. Beyond back-office functions, the adoption of artificial intelligence will expand into customer-facing roles – delivering personalised service, predictive recommendations, and seamless engagement, all while maintaining cost control.

Focus

Offshoring of non-core, back-office functions will accelerate, as companies seek to retain competitiveness in high-cost operating environments. Strategic outsourcing can offer both financial relief and operational flexibility, enabling leaders to redirect focus toward innovation and value creation.

Value proposition

Persistent inflationary pressures continue to drive up direct costs and overheads,

leaving little margin for inefficiency. To remain resilient, businesses must develop a more granular understanding of their target markets and the evolving needs of their customers. Success will hinge not only on pricing strategies but on a multidimensional value proposition that includes quality, sustainability, convenience, and personalisation.

Customer-centricity

Encouragingly, stabilising borrowing rates may offer a temporary reprieve from the relentless pressure of rising costs. This window allows operators to refocus on long-term planning, embedding strategies that balance innovation, efficiency, and customer-centricity. In doing so, they can position themselves to not just weather the storm – but thrive in it.

Colin Johnson is a partner at MHA

www.mha.co.uk

London – top ‘smart city’ status confirmed

London, New York and Paris topped the IESE Cities in Motion Index 2025 for a third year, reaffirming their status as the world’s smartest cities.

Global hub

The UK capital stands out as a global hub for innovation and development, ranking first worldwide for human capital and its international profile. It also ranks among the top five for urban planning, governance), economy, and mobility and transportation. However, the city faces

challenges in social cohesion, environment, and technology.

The index evaluates 183 cities in 92 countries on a range of factors that shape economic vibrancy and quality of life, among other criteria.

Urban communities

Now in its tenth edition, the study provides a tool for urban planners, politicians and citizens to track how various factors interact to forge vibrant, sustainable and liveable urban communities.

Five cities in the top 10 are European: London, Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen and Oslo. Three are in the United States: New York, Washington and San Francisco. Tokyo comes in fourth in the ranking and Singapore ninth.

By category, London ranks first for human capital and international profile, New York leads in economy, Edinburgh in

social cohesion, Reykjavik in environment, Bern in governance, Tokyo in urban planning, Hong Kong in technology, and Beijing in mobility and transportation.

Struggle

Developing countries continue to struggle to break into the top ranks. In Latin America, the highest-ranked city is Santiago (89th), followed by Buenos Aires and Mexico City. In Africa, Cape Town is the top-ranked city.

IESE is the University of Navarra Business School

www.iese.edu



The circular economy

Andrew Wright believes that we have been living in a linear economy for far too long. This standard economic model has been dominant throughout the 20th century and continues into the 21st. It is a poor name, as it does not highlight its problematic core. It is wasteful. It could, he says, just as easily be named the 'waste economy'

The Linear Economy



The linear economy is characterised by a 'take - make - waste' approach.

- **Take: resources** – e.g. mining, harvesting and deforestation
- **Make: products** – e.g. new clothes, computers, and trucks
- **Waste: dispose** – e.g. entire products with only one broken part, packaging, all landfilling.

The linear economy focuses on quick sales cycles to drive up profits – which means they've modelled their businesses to benefit from consumer and organisational waste.

It's the opposite vein of 'waste not; want not'. If people waste, people will want – and if people want, people will buy ... (more and more).

So, what is a solution?

Introducing the circular economy

In its most basic form, the idea of the circular economy is to maximise the use of resources and reduce material waste, pollution and emissions.

"The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.

According to a European Parliament document: in practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible thanks to recycling. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value.

The 3 Core Rs

- **Reduce** (reducing waste through better manufacturing practices and designing products with reparability and reusability built-in)
- **Reuse** (also repair and repurpose items)
- **Recycle** (last resort).

Recycling has been at the forefront of sustainable conversations for a long time now as we recycle so much personal home waste.

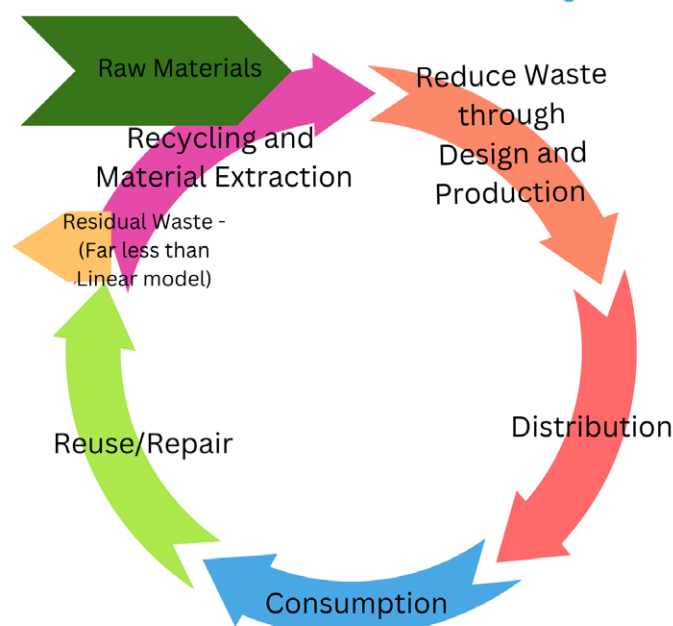
While recycling is certainly a better alternative to landfilling, it is not very often the optimal solution. There are more preferable options that should be prioritised. Recycling should be viewed as a last resort step – something that happens eventually – to extract as much utility as possible from the materials. Whenever possible, alternatives such as reuse and repair should be explored first. Directly using items or using their parts for repairs minimises environmental damage more effectively than recycling does.

Closing the loop

One of the central principles of the circular economy is the concept of closing the loop (making a circle). This involves designing systems where products and materials can be recovered and regenerated at the end of their life, either through recycling, remanufacturing, or composting. By creating closed-loop systems, we can minimise the extraction of finite resources, reduce environmental pollution, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The circular economy focuses on making use of the best practices outlined by the waste hierarchy: reduce/prevent, reuse/repair, recycle. The circular economy provides a framework on how to carry out these preferred methods of the waste hierarchy, e.g. a PC manufacturer focusing on reparability and ease for consumers to replace damaged parts means waste is minimised, as only the damaged part needs to be either sent off for repair or broken down for recycling – rather than the whole device being broken down or even landfilled as is unfortunately often the case.

The Circular Economy



Andrew Wright is account manager at ICEX Group

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From banking to banqueting

I Dovile Tamasauskaite on the repurposing of a City landmark for the modern hospitality market

In a city as steeped in history as London, many buildings tell stories of commerce, power, and tradition. But what happens when those stories reach their final chapter? Increasingly, the answer lies in adaptive reuse – breathing new life into old structures for modern purposes. One example of this transformation is the former British Linen Bank, now home to Piazza Italiana – a fine dining restaurant and event venue in the heart of the City.



restored banking hall, rich in detail and history, does just that.

By preserving the bank's original features – such as its central hall layout and vaulted ceilings – and complementing them with modern Italian design and luxury service, the space appeals to both local professionals and international guests seeking a distinctive experience.

Operational needs

One of the challenges in adapting historic commercial buildings is aligning the original function with modern operational needs. Banks and restaurants, for instance, differ significantly in layout, lighting, and acoustics. In this case, former managers' offices became private dining rooms, mezzanines were adapted for semi-private functions, and lighting was reimaged to create a warm, inviting atmosphere within the vast stone architecture.

Accessibility, fire safety, and service logistics also had to be upgraded – discreetly and sensitively – to meet modern standards without compromising aesthetics. These considerations often require creative solutions and close collaboration with heritage consultants,

architects, and licensing bodies.

Sustainability

Repurposing historic buildings isn't just about aesthetics; it's also about sustainability. Rather than demolishing and rebuilding, adaptive reuse significantly reduces construction waste and carbon impact. In addition, projects like these offer businesses the chance to become stewards of local history – preserving the past while meeting today's market needs.

The transformation of this City landmark into a restaurant and event space is more than a branding decision – it's a strategy that combines storytelling, sustainability, and smart space planning to create long-term value.

As the venue continues to evolve, it has introduced a PA rewards programme to recognise bookers, curated ticketed wine dinners in partnership with premium suppliers, and special discounts. These initiatives reflect the same ethos that guided the building's transformation: combining heritage with thoughtful innovation.

Dovile Tamasauskaite is sales and events manager at Piazza Italiana

www.piazzaitaliana.co.uk

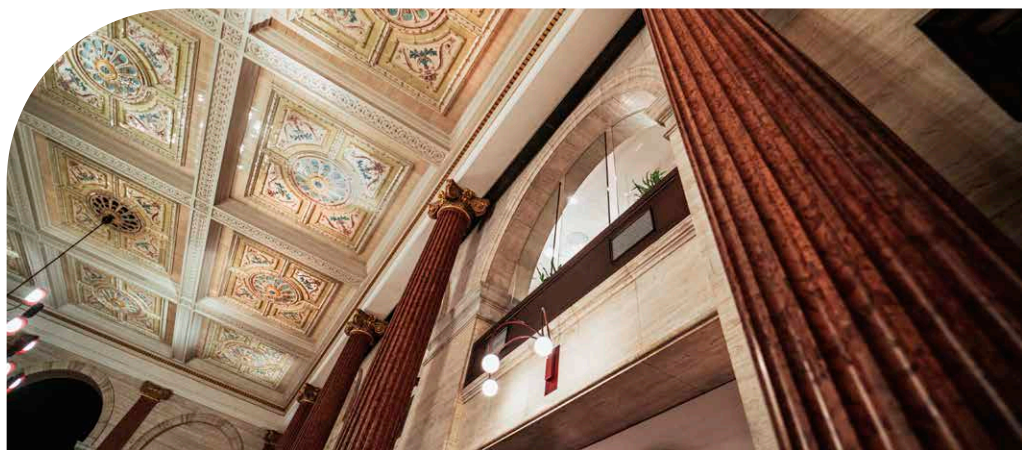
Delicate balance

Converting a Grade II listed building into a hospitality venue is no easy task. The process is a delicate balance between preservation and innovation. In the case of the British Linen Bank, originally designed in the early 20th century, the architectural elements – from the ornate ceiling to carved columns and classical banking hall layout – posed both opportunities and limitations.

Strict regulations protect heritage features, meaning any renovations must preserve the original character. But rather than seeing this as a constraint, the transformation team viewed it as a strength. The grandeur of the space became a core element of the venue's identity, offering a unique alternative to more contemporary venues across London.

Italian design

This transformation speaks to a broader trend in the hospitality sector: the demand for immersive, visually impactful venues that provide more than just a meal. In the age of digital experiences and Instagram moments, diners are drawn to places that offer atmosphere, story, and sensory engagement. A



The big PSTN switch-off

| Vittoria Zerbini on what it means for your business



The Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) switch-off is part of a nationwide shift in how telecommunications systems operate in the UK. In 2027, there will be a transition from the old telecommunication system, the PSTN, to the new, called Internet Protocol (IP) Technology. It is essential that businesses are prepared ahead of the switch to avoid disruptions in devices such as security systems, landlines, fax-machines and more.

To help business owners navigate this switch-off, LCCI has created a guide, in partnership with BT, explaining what is happening, why it matters, and how to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Why is the PSTN switch-off happening?

PSTN has been the foundation of the UK's telephone system for over 60 years. However, as it relies on ageing copper wire infrastructure, maintaining it has become increasingly difficult. Faults and service disruptions are becoming more frequent.

Like other countries such as Germany, Japan, and Sweden, the UK is upgrading to a more modern, reliable solution: Internet Protocol (IP) Technology. Some countries have already completed transitions, including Estonia and The Netherlands.

Key deadlines: when will PSTN be switched off?

While the final shutdown of the PSTN network is set for January 2027, businesses are strongly encouraged to migrate to IP Technology systems by the end of 2025 to ensure services remain uninterrupted during the switch-off. Any remaining connections on the PSTN network beyond 2027 will be permanently lost.

Importantly, the switch-off affects more than just landline phones. Devices such as payment terminals, alarm systems, door entry systems, CCTV, and fax machines will all need to be reviewed and potentially upgraded to be compatible with IP technology well ahead of the deadline.

“IP Technology is a modern digital communication system that routes calls and data over the internet rather than through traditional copper phone lines.

”

What Is IP technology and why should you switch?

IP Technology is a modern digital communication system that routes calls and data over the internet rather than through traditional copper phone lines. Benefits include:

Flexibility – not using physical copper wiring allows you to answer calls from any device, anywhere.

Scalability – operating via internet means that you can fully integrate communications with business applications like video conferencing and cloud storage.

Reliability – there will be fewer outages and maintenance issues compared to legacy systems.

Switching to IP opens new opportunities for efficiency, ensuring businesses remain connected and competitive in an increasingly digital landscape.

Vittoria Zerbini is media and policy assistant at LCCI



How to switch to IP technology: A step-by-step guide from BT

The transition process varies depending on the size and needs of each business. However, following these key steps can simplify the switch:

Assess your current infrastructure

Conduct an audit of your current systems, including phone lines, connected devices, and broadband services.

Define a clear strategy

Business leaders and IT managers should collaborate to plan the transition, ensuring alignment with long-term business goals.

Identify potential challenges

Determine which services will be affected and find alternative solutions to avoid disruptions.

Develop a migration roadmap

Set clear milestones for moving to IP-based solutions and communicate the plan across the organisation.

Engage with experts

Work with telecom providers like BT, who offer dedicated migration specialists to guide you through the process.

Test and implement

Once a suitable IP solution is chosen, test

the new system to ensure it meets your needs before full deployment.

Next steps: prepare for the transition

To stay ahead of the switch-off, businesses should begin their transition as soon as possible. BT and other telecom providers offer resources, webinars, and step-by-step guides to assist in the process.

For tailored support, you can explore BT's PSTN Switch-Off Hub and connect with migration experts to ensure a seamless move to digital telephony.

www.bt.com

Key terms

PSTN: Public Switched Telephone Network. An analogue, legacy platform using underground copper wires to enable communication.

ISDN: Integrated Services Digital Network. In 1986 it replaced some older analogue landlines improving the service. However, ISDN is now outdated and unable to compete with IP technology.

ADSL: Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. A broadband connection that works through the copper wires of existing phone lines and is mainly used for home broadband and within small businesses.

PSTN switch-off: The existing phone network, which comprises PSTN, ISDN, ADSL and all traditional broadband services, is being replaced with a newer version which relies on IP technology. This move is also being referred to as All-IP switch or Copper switch-off.

IP Technology: Internet Protocol Technology. A fully digital phone network set to replace PSTN, ISDN, ADSL and all traditional broadband services by 2027.

VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol. A way to make and receive calls over the internet using the new IP Technology.

Cloud telephony: or Cloud Voice, an application of VoIP technology that provides more advanced features and flexibility by leveraging cloud infrastructure.

SIP: Session Initiation Protocol. It unites infrastructures and uses data networks for voice calls.

Transitioning to a greener economy

Reset Connect London, the UK's leading sustainability and net-zero business event, returns to ExCeL London in June.

As the flagship event of London Climate Action Week, this year's show is set to be the largest yet, with over 7,500 attendees, 400 expert speakers, and 300 exhibitors coming together to accelerate the transition to a greener economy.



No Planet B

Speakers at the event include Kerry McCarthy, Minister for Climate at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and Professor Mike Berners-Lee, author of *There is No Planet B*.

The event provides an opportunity to position oneself and one's company at the heart of the sustainability

conversation, connect with decision makers, and be part of transformative change.

Reset Connect London 2025 takes place at ExCeL on 24-25 June

www.reset-connect.com



Decarbonising aviation



by Jonathon Counsell

Earlier this year saw the groundbreaking of a new factory which, once complete, will turn used car tyres into fuel to power planes. The plant is the first of its kind in the UK and part of a brand-new industry in the Northeast. The company behind the project, Wastefront, is one of a handful of Sustainable Aviation Fuel – or SAF – plants International Airlines Group (IAG) is investing in.

Energy security

The development of a UK SAF industry is vital to decarbonising aviation and its continued energy security and international competitiveness. SAF means we can keep flying for work, enjoy holidays, and distribute medicine and food, but with up to 80 per cent fewer life-cycle emissions than traditional jet fuel. Last year IAG was the largest global buyer and consumer of SAF and has committed more than \$3.5 billion in SAF purchases and investments through to the end of 2024.

Investment

However, the industry continues to face headwinds – particularly around scale and cost. SAF remains significantly more expensive than fossil-based jet fuel, largely due to its early-stage supply chain. Unlike fossil fuels, which benefit from decades of global infrastructure, SAF production requires new facilities, new technologies and long-term investment. To support, IAG is investing in a range of suppliers to get new facilities up and running. In the UK, this includes Wastefront in Sunderland, as

well as LanzaJet and Nova Pangaea Technologies in Teeside.

Price guarantees

To support the sector's growth, the government is developing a Revenue Certainty Mechanism (RCM). This policy would provide price guarantees for SAF, de-risking investment and encouraging the private sector to scale up supply. Modelled on mechanisms that have successfully driven investment in offshore wind, an RCM could give investors the confidence needed to back first-of-a-kind SAF projects.

While this is a welcome development, the success of the RCM will rest in the detail. It must balance investor certainty with affordability and ensure the UK remains a competitive place to produce and use SAF. IAG continues to work closely with policymakers to help shape an effective framework.

Complexity

Time is of the essence. The Department for Transport aims to finalise the RCM by the end of 2026, but with a 10 per cent SAF mandate coming into force in 2030, the UK will need several SAF production plants up and running within the next five years. Given the complexity of these projects, early clarity on the RCM is essential if suppliers are to move ahead with construction in time.

A further consideration is how the RCM will be funded. Under current proposals, a significant share of the cost

could fall on airlines and their suppliers. Given that fuel already accounts for a third of airline operating costs – and that UK-based carriers face additional burdens such as Air Passenger Duty, higher airport charges and carbon costs through the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) – additional levies could place further pressure on competitiveness.

Sustainable

A more sustainable option would be to fund the RCM using proceeds from the UK ETS. Introduced in 2021, the ETS requires high-emission industries – including aviation – to pay for their carbon output. Airlines UK estimates the scheme could raise £1 billion to £4 billion over the next decade. Directing a portion of these funds to support SAF would align with the ETS's purpose and help mitigate cost disparities with EU carriers, who already benefit from SAF-related support through the EU ETS.

Airlines will continue to pay for the SAF they use, just as they do for conventional fuels. But reinvesting ETS revenue into a price certainty mechanism would support those making early investments in SAF, without adding further cost layers to the sector.

With the right policy support, SAF could deliver £1.8 billion in annual GVA, over 10,000 UK jobs, and long-term energy resilience. The UK has an opportunity to lead – but to do so, the policy environment must be designed to unlock private capital, not constrain it.

Jonathon Counsell is group sustainability officer at International Airlines Group

www.iairgroup.com



Does your benefits package meet the needs of your employees?

The return on investment associated with a well-designed reward and benefits programme can be substantial, and the positives extend far beyond the financial, as **Kelly Gajjar** explains



Kelly Gajjar is senior manager at Isio which has created a 3D Benefits Review to help maximise value from employee benefits

www.isio.com

As the cost of doing business increases, budgets are under increasing scrutiny and finance directors are expected to justify every pound spent amidst significant and persistent economic headwinds. HR directors need to ensure that, despite these pressures, their reward and benefits programmes continue to deliver their intended outcomes for everyone across the business.

Most reward and benefits programmes evolve over time but many remain unfit for purpose. There are three reasons why they can underperform.

Inclusive

Firstly, one size does not fit all. As workforces become more diverse, the need for an inclusive set of benefits to represent all employees is essential. One key finding from employee benefits research, commissioned with YouGov, revealed that some benefits package designs might unintentionally differentiate against certain groups of employees.

Of those surveyed, just 23 per cent felt their current package meets all their needs, with levels of satisfaction highest amongst older, married homeowners of White ethnicity. Satisfaction levels dropped to 16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively for Asian and Black respondents.

Everybody's background is different, benefits programmes and policies must adequately serve all demographics to foster inclusion.

Understanding

Secondly, employers can face challenges with employees not valuing or understanding their benefits, even when a programme is designed to be market-leading, generous, and well-managed. Employees need to be empowered to confidently utilise what is on offer.

Pressures

Finally, most employers are managing cost pressures, limiting available budgets to enhance or refresh benefits

packages. Expectations naturally evolved, particularly post-Covid, adding complexity to creating a benefits package that is modern, competitive, and cost-effective.

Making an impact

Given these challenges, employers might feel there are no feasible options to enhance a benefits programme or support employees compellingly. However, recognising and addressing these issues can enable organisations to do much more with their existing employee benefits budget. An inclusive, wellbeing-focused scheme can help achieve strategic objectives, such as retaining and attracting a motivated and healthy workforce. A well-understood and valued benefits package may well be seen as equal to a pay rise.

Fundamental

Knowing your workforce and what they value is fundamental. This can be achieved using a range of tools from interactive workshops and interviews to strategic data gathering. Employers can then confidently analyse what is valued across each employee group and, most importantly, highlight what's missing. It's a helpful prompt to ensure third party providers are delivering an optimal service and maximising any potential value-adds.

Effective communication underpins the entire strategy. Employees must be aware of available benefits to utilise them effectively. For instance, a recent graduate can only benefit from financial support for a property deposit if they know it's available. Consistent and efficient engagement with employees and stakeholders is essential.

isio.

Building an investable business

| by Irina D'Amore

“In today’s dynamic business landscape, many founders are chasing investment before they’ve built something that truly attracts it. Yet the most successful entrepreneurs understand that attracting capital – or positioning for a strategic exit – requires more than ambition and enthusiasm. It demands a business that’s genuinely investable.

As an M&A expert and strategist, I specialise in preparing and positioning ambitious entrepreneurs for strategic exits. What’s often overlooked is that a strategic exit is an investment opportunity for the acquirer. Whether it’s a trade buyer, private equity fund, or institutional investor, they’re not just buying a business – they’re investing in its future potential. That’s why understanding what makes a business investable is critical, not just for raising capital, but for building long-term enterprise value.

What makes a business investable?

First and foremost, scalability matters. Investors and acquirers are drawn to models that can grow revenues without a proportional rise in costs. Whether through technology, recurring income, licensing, or operational efficiencies, scalability signals the potential for outsized returns.

Financial performance is equally important. While not every early-stage business is profitable, strong unit economics, disciplined cost management, and a credible path to profitability all help to de-risk the opportunity in the eyes of a buyer.

Beyond the numbers, fundamentals play a major role. A business with clear product-market fit, a distinctive value

proposition, and strong customer demand is inherently more attractive. Investors also look at team strength – they’re not just backing a product; they’re backing the people behind it. A capable, aligned, and accountable leadership team often makes the difference between an idea and an investable opportunity.



Customer concentration is another key factor. If the business is overly reliant on one or two clients, the perceived risk increases, and valuation tends to decrease. A diversified, loyal customer base, ideally backed by retention metrics or high satisfaction scores, reassures buyers that the revenue streams are sustainable.

Finally, governance and reporting can’t be overlooked. Clean financials, clear ownership of assets (especially intellectual property), and robust internal systems demonstrate operational maturity – and give acquirers confidence in the company’s ability to scale.

The investor’s lens

Whether seeking investment or planning for an exit, founders should consider how their business would be assessed. Investors are looking for predictable revenue, strong pipelines, and future growth potential. They’re weighing current valuation against expected upside and considering how easily the business could integrate with existing operations if acquired. Red flags such as weak documentation, unclear IP ownership, or dependence on a single founder can quickly derail interest. Critically, businesses must demonstrate not just promise, but performance – underscored by strong fundamentals and a clear path to long-term value.

Trends

Sectors of interest include sustainable consumer goods, which continue to gain traction as conscious consumption becomes the norm. Digital transformation and AI remain powerful themes, particularly in vertical SaaS and automation tools. Health and wellness – especially in the areas of preventative care, mental wellbeing, and personalised solutions – are attracting significant interest, as is the education and up-skilling sector in response to changing workforce demands.

Beyond sectors, investment strategies themselves are changing. There’s increasing appetite for minority investments in founder-led businesses, allowing entrepreneurs to retain control while accessing the capital they need to scale. We’re also seeing the rise of operator-investor and consulting-for-equity models, where investors contribute not just funding, but deep operational expertise. In fragmented markets, roll-up strategies continue to gain traction, particularly among acquirers seeking synergy and scale through the acquisition of niche, high-performing businesses.

Build for investment, exit with confidence

Ultimately, whether your goal is to attract investment or prepare for a strategic exit, the principles remain the same. Build a business that looks like a smart investment – not just in financial terms, but in structure, leadership, customer base, and long-term potential. Because in the end, passion and vision may get you noticed – but it’s the fundamentals that turn interest into opportunity. ”

Irina D'Amore is chief executive and founder of Primera Ventures Advisory

www.primeraventures.com

Responsible dental tourism

| **Francesco Mariola on finding quality care abroad without risking your health**

The rising costs of dental treatments in the UK have led many residents to seek more affordable options abroad. Countries such as Turkey, Thailand, and Mexico have become popular for cheap dental procedures. However, behind the glossy marketing campaigns and bargain prices, individuals have suffered severe complications, botched treatments, and, in extreme cases, life-threatening consequences and death.



specialist dentists exploit the high demand for cosmetic dentistry without adequate training. Some practitioners undergo short crash courses – far from the rigorous five to seven years of study, plus specialisation and decades of experience required in top-tier institutions.

Additionally, many of these clinics cut costs by using low-quality, untraceable materials instead of reputable brands. This results in failures UK dentists cannot fix – not due to lack of expertise, but because the materials are poor quality and incompatible with UK and EU dental systems.

Language barriers and lack of transparency

Clear communication between patient and practitioner is essential. In countries where English is not the official language, clinics typically rely on sales-driven translators rather than medically trained professionals, leaving patients misinformed and confused about procedures, expectations, and risks.

When complications arise, as they sometimes do – even in the best clinics – having direct access, detailed treatment reports and aftercare support in English is critical. Many UK patients have been left unable to trace or contact their foreign dentist to understand what went wrong.

Continuity of care

Dental treatments require ongoing maintenance and potential future replacement. Poor co-ordination between overseas clinics and UK dentists means that when issues arise, there is no safety net. Patients often

spend thousands more flying back and forth, hoping the same unregulated dentist who initially treated them will correct their mistakes. Unfortunately, many of these dentists lose interest and avoid liability after the initial sale.

Responsible dental tourism ensures proper support if complications arise, with a transparent, seamless link between UK and overseas practitioners, good continuity of care, and emergency assistance – something often missing in cheaper destinations.

Safety with savings

Seeking affordable dental care abroad is understandable, but UK residents must be aware of the risks. There is a fine line between saving money and gambling with your health. Uninformed decisions can lead to botched procedures, painful complications, and irreversible damage.

By selecting a destination with high dental standards, transparent processes, and a direct link to UK specialists, patients can enjoy affordable, high-quality treatment without compromising their well-being. With the right knowledge and precautions, responsible dental tourism is not just possible – it's essential.

Francesco Mariola is chief executive of Dental Spas and Safaris and a member of its medical and advisory board

www.dentalspasandsafaris.co.uk



Appeal

The appeal of cheap treatments can be tempting, but at what unspoken risk and cost to your health? How can UK residents ensure they are making safe, informed decisions when seeking dental care overseas? The answer lies in responsible dental tourism.

What to look for

High standards that meet or exceed the UK's

The UK has rigorous dental regulations ensuring patient safety, accountability, and continuity of care. When seeking treatment abroad, patients should choose a country and clinic that meet or exceed these standards.

Countries like South Africa, Singapore, Japan, Denmark, and Sweden uphold exceptionally high dental standards, sometimes surpassing those in the UK. For example, South African dentists who qualified before 2001 can practice in the UK without sitting a board exam, reflecting the quality of their education and training.

Regulated practitioners

Across the world and especially in many low-cost destinations, non-

London calling: wild and wonderful venues beyond the boardroom

London, a city brimming with history, innovation, and vibrant culture, offers a plethora of unique venues for corporate events. Forget stuffy boardrooms and predictable conference halls – businesses are increasingly seeking memorable experiences that inspire, engage, and leave a lasting impression. From mingling with tigers to hosting a soiree in a historic palace, the capital and its surrounding areas offer a surprising array of options for those looking to break the mould.

Juxtaposition

Imagine pitching a new business strategy while a majestic tiger prowls just feet away. This is the reality at the *Bamboo Kitchen*, Hertfordshire Zoo's latest addition to its corporate hospitality offerings. With a floor-to-ceiling panoramic window overlooking the tiger habitat, the venue provides an unparalleled setting for conferences, meetings, and corporate events. The juxtaposition of cutting-edge business discussions against the backdrop of the animal kingdom creates a unique and memorable experience.

Grandeur

Hertfordshire Zoo isn't the only venue offering a departure from the ordinary. London and its surrounding counties are dotted with hidden gems, each with its own unique charm and appeal. For those seeking a touch of history, consider the Tower of London. Imagine hosting a gala dinner within the walls that have witnessed centuries of royal intrigue. The Tower offers a variety of spaces, from the intimate Jewel House to the grand White Tower, each infused with a sense of history and grandeur. Or perhaps a reception amidst the masterpieces of the National Gallery? Surrounded by iconic artworks, guests



can enjoy a sophisticated evening while immersing themselves in the world of art and culture.

Panoramic

For a more contemporary vibe, London boasts a range of innovative spaces. The Shard, Western Europe's tallest building, offers breathtaking panoramic views of the city, providing a stunning backdrop for corporate events. Alternatively, consider hosting a product launch at the Science Museum, where interactive exhibits and cutting-edge technology can add a dynamic and engaging element to any event. For a truly immersive experience, several unique venues offer interactive activities; think about a team-building exercise at a recording studio, where colleagues can collaborate on creating their own music, or a culinary challenge in a professional kitchen, where you can learn to cook gourmet meals together.

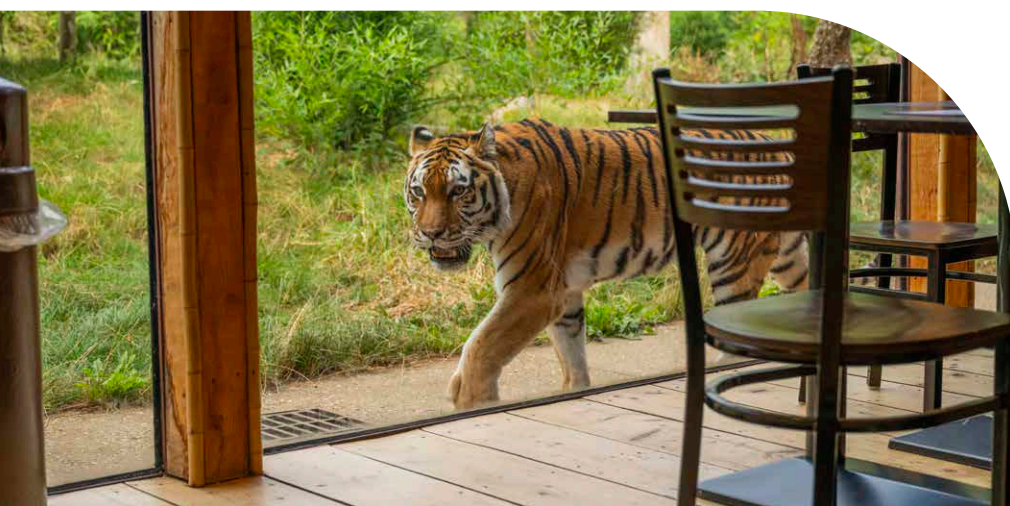
Inspiring

Beyond the city limits, a wealth of options awaits. Historic castles, stately homes, and charming country estates provide idyllic settings for corporate retreats and team-building activities. Many offer extensive grounds for outdoor events, from sports tournaments to family fun days. The Cotswolds, with its picturesque villages and rolling hills, is a popular destination for those seeking a tranquil and inspiring environment.

The trend towards unusual corporate venues reflects a shift in how businesses approach events. No longer are they simply about presentations and networking; they are about creating experiences that foster collaboration, inspire creativity, and leave a lasting impression.

Unforgettable

Whether it's the thrill of encountering tigers at Hertfordshire Zoo, the grandeur of a historic palace, or the cutting-edge atmosphere of a modern museum, the choice of venue can significantly impact the success of an event. As businesses increasingly prioritise engagement and experience, the demand for unique and memorable venues is only set to grow. For event planners and business owners alike, the message is clear: think outside the boardroom and embrace the weird and wonderful. The London area, with its diverse range of offerings, provides the perfect playground for creating truly unforgettable corporate events.



Turning workplace wellbeing into a competitive advantage

| by Mark Price



“Organisations are increasingly recognising that prioritising employee wellbeing, is not just a nice ‘to do’ for employees, but a strategic business advantage. Through extensive research and over 40 years of business experience, including my time as managing director at Waitrose and now as Founder of WorkL, I have seen how creating workplace happiness can lead to enhanced productivity, employee retention, and overall business success. So, what are smart companies doing for workplace wellbeing?”

Well, central to this is my philosophy – six steps to workplace happiness – a framework developed through insights from over one million employees across 100,000 organisations globally. These steps include:

- **Reward and recognition** – every member of an organisation should benefit from its success. A fair salary is essential – no amount of praise can compensate for underpayment. Your compensation structure should meet expectations and motivate employees to go above and beyond.
- **Information sharing** – withholding information can make employees feel undervalued and disconnected from the business. For a team to perform at its best, transparency is essential. Employees at all levels should have a clear understanding of the business, its strategy, performance, customers, and competitors.
- **Empowerment** – empowering employees means involving them in decision-making, valuing their ideas, and integrating their feedback into the company’s strategies. Everyone brings unique experiences and perspectives to the table, and only by considering all views can a team achieve the best possible outcome. While individuals may not be perfect, together, the team can be.
- **Wellbeing** – employee wellbeing

encompasses physical, emotional, and financial health. Addressing all three areas leads to improved engagement and productivity. A positive workplace culture can reduce absenteeism, as engaged employees tend to be healthier and more committed.

- **Instilling pride** – employees who take pride in their work and workplace naturally become advocates, sharing their positive experiences with colleagues, potential hires, customers, and the community. Their pride will be evident when they talk about where they work. Building this sense of pride goes beyond motivational talks or performance reviews – it’s about cultivating an environment where employees truly enjoy and take pride in their roles.
- **Job satisfaction** – a range of factors influence job satisfaction, but two stand out; opportunities for personal growth and the quality of the employee-manager relationship. Employees are an organisation’s greatest asset, and high engagement is essential for success. Research shows that respectful treatment and trust between employees and leadership are key drivers of satisfaction. Poor relationships with managers are often the top reason employees leave, regardless of the company’s brand strength.

Implementing these steps has tangible benefits; companies that prioritise employee happiness often experience lower ‘flight risk’, reduced absenteeism, and increased

discretionary effort from staff. This extra discretionary effort can significantly boost profitability, with some organisations seeing up to a 36 per cent increase.

WorkL’s Global Workplace Report 2024 highlights a growing demand among employees for better pay, flexibility, mental health support, and career development. Addressing these areas not only meets employee expectations but also positions companies as attractive employers in a competitive market.

Leadership

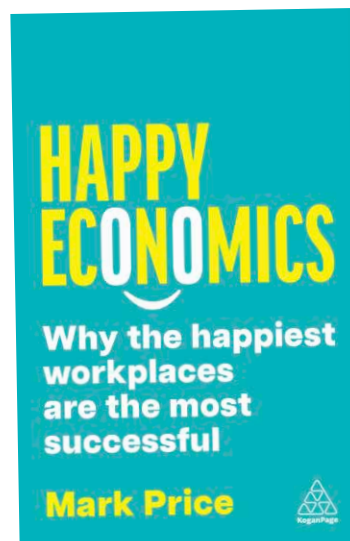
Leadership plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Effective managers who build trust, communicate openly, and support their teams are instrumental in creating a positive work culture. My number one sign for employee happiness is having a good relationship between employees and their managers.

Smart companies understand that investing in employee wellbeing is not just beneficial for staff but is a strategic move that drives performance and profitability. By embracing the principles above, organisations can create thriving workplaces that serve as a competitive advantage in business today. ”

Lord Mark Price is the founder of WorkL and WorkL for Business, and author of Happy Economics: why the happiest

workplaces are the most successful published by Kogan Page

www.koganpage.com





Turn up to scale up

SME XPO is back for 2025 – a dynamic two-day event in June dedicated to powering scale-up business success. This year's show promises a transformative experience for entrepreneurs and innovators.

The exhibition brings together a diverse range of businesses, investor community including early stage/ angel investors and VCs, as well as resources to foster growth, innovation, and collaboration.

With over 5,000 scale-up founders and owners and more than 100 best-in-class suppliers, the event provides a space for scale-up businesses to showcase their products and services and connect with potential clients and investors, as well as alternative

finance options, and gain valuable insights from industry leaders in curated workshops and networking sessions.

Agenda highlights

There are four key themes – starting out, scaling up, 'money talks' and future tech & AI – explored through over 50 workshops and talks. Topics range from 'The secrets to fast growth ... and the pitfalls' through to 'Launching into new territories across the world', featuring experiences from leading entrepreneurs.

Speakers at the show include Piers Linney, former investor on Dragon's Den, Theo Paphitis, entrepreneurial tycoon, and Jack Smith, chief executive of Love Finance.

Investors and networking

With the growth in business financing opportunities opening up across the UK, a key focus of the event this year is to provide attendees and exhibitors with access and education to the UK's top investors.

Exhibitors

SME XPO will showcase a diverse array of exhibitors, offering attendees the chance to explore innovative products and services, from, for example, Worldpay, Towergate, Octopus Energy and Guavapay.

SME XPO takes place at ExCeL London on 18-19 June. Be sure to visit the LCCI stand

<https://smexpo.co.uk>



Black business – expanding horizons

The UK Black Business Entrepreneurs Conference in June promises to be a thought-provoking and insightful experience for anyone looking to expand their

horizons. The conference seeks not only to

address tough questions but also to understand recommendations made by Dr Carlton Brown's *Race Paradox* as well as explore opportunities for change – both structural or personal – choices that might help marginalised groups succeed in the UK.

Navigating the obstacles

The conference aims to empower, engage, educate, and share stories of black businesses that have succeeded, as well as provide a space for audiences and policymakers to interact and learn how to find a way into the commercial world by

navigating the obstacles in their paths. The data shows that companies that connect with Black and minority businesses improve in performance, productivity, and profitability.

The conference is aimed at anyone who wants to grow their business, establish a new network, and discover how to get access to opportunities.

The conference takes place on 25 June at NatWest Conference Centre, 250 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4AA. Visit the LCCI stand

www.thebbec.com



Learning, lunch and laughter

Sonia McNamara, chief executive of At Cause, was guest speaker at an LCCI Women in Business networking event for this year's International Women's Day. One chilling forecast quoted states that it will take until 2158 to achieve gender parity in the workplace.

Nevertheless, the session was high energy



and interactive, with knowledge sharing and peer learning, as well as lunch, laughter and lots of new connections made.

LCCI's programme partner for Women in Business is Landmark Space Limited

www.landmarkspace.co.uk
www.soniamcnamara.com

Game on

Greenwich University recently hosted a partnership event at the Valley, the historic home of Charlton Athletic FC in south east London. The theme of the day – in line with International Women's Day – was the charity Her Game Too which is tackling sexism and championing women in sport.

Apprentices

Guests were also briefed on the university's degree apprenticeships and the benefits

that accrue to the apprentices themselves, as well as the companies that take them on.

The game itself? Charlton, riding high in League One, ran out 2-1 winners against Wigan Athletic in a high-quality match. Sam Bartram, legendary Charlton goalie of old, would have been proud.

www.hergametoo.co.uk
www.gre.ac.uk



Record numbers of female leaders in UK

A report has revealed that women now occupy 43 per cent of roles on company boards and 35 per cent of leadership roles at FTSE 350 companies. The FTSE Women Leaders Review report for 2025, backed by the government and sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group and KPMG LLP, shows significant progress towards the target of 40 per cent women's representation in boardrooms by the end of this year.

Gender equality

This achievement highlights a commitment to gender equality in leadership, which is expected to

unlock billions in economic growth and support the government's Plan for Change. Despite this progress, the government recognises the need for continued efforts to increase the number of women in executive roles and will work with businesses to ensure equal opportunities for all.

Barriers

Commenting on the report, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves



said: "The UK is leading the charge for gender equality in boardrooms, but we cannot rest on our laurels.

"We must break down the barriers that stop many women being represented in decision-making roles, so that top talent reaches the highest levels of leadership in businesses driving economic growth across Britain."

www.ftsewomenleaders.com/latest-reports

Unlocking employment opportunities for ex-offenders

Law firm Harbottle & Lewis recently collaborated with crime prevention charity Key4Life to challenge perceptions around hiring men with convictions

With 12 million people in the UK carrying a criminal conviction – and with only 17 per cent of prison leavers securing jobs – a panel discussion including London businesses and ex-offenders explored how businesses can tap into this overlooked pool of talent.

Transforming

Eva Hamilton MBE, chief executive of Key4Life, who set up the charity to reduce offending in response to the

2011 London riots, said: "Our experience of transforming ex-offenders' lives, including many from broken homes and who've suffered terrible starts in life, has consistently shown us that getting a job is what keeps these men from away crime."

Stigma

She added that studies showed that over 50 per cent of Britain's businesses would not employ an ex-offender. Her

organisation, together with partner businesses, had been "working hard to lift the stigma around employing ex-offenders and to create opportunities for their employment."

Results

While the odds of rehabilitation are stacked against ex-offenders, Key4Life – whose 7-Step rehabilitation programme includes equine therapy, football and music, in addition to employability training – has achieved extraordinary results:

- Just seven per cent have gone on to reoffend, against a government rate of 64 per cent
- 60 per cent have found employment or training opportunities, compared to a government rate of 15 per cent

The discussion featured powerful stories from young men who have been through the prison system, alongside insights from KPMG UK, who actively employ ex-offenders, and NBC Universal, who support Key4Life participants by offering work tasters. And in additional round table discussions, ex-offenders challenged business leaders to give them another chance.

www.key4life.org.uk



Key actions to refresh your health and safety policy

With data revealing an estimated 1.7 million workers were suffering from an illness they believed was caused or made worse by their work, **Liz Longman**, director of Terraforma 360, and **Virtual College** by Netex share the importance of reviewing health and safety policies to support the workforce

A health and safety policy is the important starting point to manage your company's potential workplace risks and hazards. It should be regularly reviewed, ensuring it is up to date and reflective of any business changes that were made in recent times.

Every business must have a policy for managing health and safety and it must be written down if you have more than five employees.

The document should set out your approach to health and safety and explain how employers will manage it in your business, clearly stating who does what, when and how.

Commitment

There are three clear areas the policy should cover: the general policy and the company's commitment to it; the names and positions of who is responsible for health and safety policies in the business; and the practical arrangements in place such as risk assessment, training and safety signs to enforce it.



The content of the policy will differ slightly depending on the industry you work in to accommodate for the risks associated in each sector.

When it comes to the sectors that report work-related sickness and non-fatal workplace injuries most, a report by the Health and Safety Executive revealed these as:

- Human health and social work (5,953)
- Public administration and defence (5,742)
- Education (4,832).

There are five key areas.

Prioritise preventative measures

It's much easier, and more cost-effective, to prevent sickness and injuries from happening in the first place, than dealing with an issue once it arises.

Of course, every industry and business is different. However, some of the most important preventative methods include: conducting risk assessments, providing the right equipment to

employees so they can carry out their job safely; ensuring all staff are trained on the necessary safe systems of work; and having pro-active management in place to support staff with Health and Safety efficiently.

“Ultimately, you want to create a culture where employees feel comfortable asking for help when they need it. You can do this by encouraging positive and open communication amongst staff, across all areas of the organisation.



Create a positive working culture

Ultimately, you want to create a culture where employees feel comfortable asking for help when they need it. You can do this by encouraging positive and open communication amongst staff, across all areas of the organisation.

Training in workplace health and safety and wellbeing is typically mandatory for all members of staff, so everyone is aware of what is expected of them and how they will be supported should any issues arise. It's also extremely important to maintain a level of professionalism across all areas of the business to build trust within your team.

Keep updated on workplace regulations

Businesses have a responsibility to stay updated on the latest health and safety laws and regulations so ignorance is not a defence. Websites

Continued on page 54...



Continued from page 53...

such as the Health and Safety Executive are useful resources that will help to keep you informed about any updates, specific to your industry.

It's also important to consider how these regulations apply to hybrid or remote working environments, such as ensuring that desk workers have the correct equipment and ergonomic set-up and mobile workers are following best practice safety methods.

It is therefore important that training for managers and employees alike is key to help you keep track of changing laws, technologies, and best practices.

Track workplace accidents and illness to inform future policies

If you have more than ten employees, you must keep an accident book by law to record the details of workplace accidents and ill-health. However, it is good practice to record and investigate all accidents and near-misses that your business incurs to prevent them from happening again, or becoming worse next time.

These records help you to identify any patterns in accidents and injuries, helping you to better assess and manage risk in your workplace.

Review your record log to ensure learnings are being taken forward to ensure your policy remains effective.

Manage workplace stress

It's just as important to protect your employees' mental health as it is their physical health and reducing stress in the workplace is one of the most effective ways to do this. Some of the most common contributing factors to

workplace stress are the demands of the job, workplace relationships, the role or position at work and changes to the working environment.

Organisational problems such as inefficient resources, uneven allocation of work or unclear responsibilities, plus many other factors can all lead to workplace stress. Ensure you have the right process and team in place to support and help to manage staff wellbeing.

www.terrafirma360.co.uk
www.virtual-college.co.uk





LCCI Member News



Mile Rainbow

LCCI members can now access preventative mental healthcare through the pioneering Mile Rainbow CIC (MR.CIC), which recently launched its innovative Emotional Vaccine Initiative and was selected for the WISE100 2025 Top 100 women in social enterprise.

It won the backing of the NHS North East Central Collaborative and Compass Wellbeing CIC to enhance emotional resilience in young people and their families and the programme is now being extended to workplaces to reduce sickness-related absences and enhance employees' and business owners' mental wellbeing.

Grants received from the London Health Accelerator Program, funded by Medcity and London & Partners, Groundwork, Sported, and the London Marathon Foundation has already helped MR.CIC engage nearly 2,800 attendees with its mission to provide preventive mental healthcare and its expansion into the corporate sphere will help employees – and their bosses – live healthier, happier lives.

For further information, please visit: www.mrcic.co.uk



Shell PANOLIN

OilMaxx Ltd

OilMaxx will now be providing Shell PANOLIN's high-performance environmentally friendly lubricants (ECLs) across various sectors. PANOLIN has been a pioneering innovator for over seven decades, consistently introducing biodegradable lubricants and continuously advancing technology. The addition of PANOLIN's environmentally friendly lubricants to our portfolio, will enhance our ability to assist customers in our key markets of marine, offshore, and construction in achieving their sustainability goals. ECLs, short for environmentally considerate lubricants, are biodegradable lubricants designed to minimize harm to the environment. They provide superior protection for wildlife and ecosystems in case of exposure to the environment, far outperforming conventional lubricants in this regard. Furthermore, they empower customers to confidently operate in sensitive environments, significantly reducing the potential risks associated with their operations.

For further information please visit <https://oilmaxx.co.uk/2024/09/27/oilmaxx-now-offering-shell-panolin-products> or to request a quote, please contact us on 0330 232 0101.



Anna Fiorentini Performing Arts School

Stage & the City Celebrates a Decade of Transformative Performing Arts for Adults

Stage & the City (SATC), a pioneer in after-work performing arts classes for adults, marks its 10th anniversary this year. Offering a unique blend of personal and career development opportunities, as well as corporate team-building events, SATC has earned recognition from *Metro* as one of the **Top 10 Brands to Transform Your Well-being in 2025** and was named **Best After-Work Adults Performing Arts Classes** by *LuxLife Magazine*.

All profits from SATC go to the Fiorentini Foundation, supporting bursaries for underprivileged children to access services at the multi-award winning Anna Fiorentini Theatre & Film School, helping build confidence, self-esteem, and valuable life skills.

To celebrate, SATC invites London Chamber of Commerce members and their friends / colleagues to take part in the **Charity Lip Sync Dance Challenge**. No experience necessary! Participants will learn a themed "Guilty Pleasures" routine over four hours on **Sunday 6th July**, culminating in a live performance in East London on **July 12**. Each performer will raise £100 to support the foundation's incredible work—an unforgettable opportunity to have fun while making a difference!

For further information, visit www.stageandthecity.com. If interested in the Lip Sync Dance Challenge go to Events on the website or e-mail events@afterperformingarts.com



RKY careers

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RKY Careers is a multi-award winning Edtech company, helping professionals transition into high-demand roles and supporting entrepreneurs in building successful businesses. Through our expert-led bootcamps in Data Analysis, Business Analysis, Project Management, Product Management, Scrum Master, Digital Marketing 2.0, and UK compliance (KYC, AML, GDPR), we equip individuals with in-demand skills for career growth. Our business coaching services empower founders to start and scale sustainable businesses in the UK, providing insights on legal compliance, PR, branding, marketing, and system integrations. With 1,500+ success stories, we are committed to bridging the skills gap, promoting diversity in tech, and fostering entrepreneurial success. Whether you're reskilling, upskilling, or launching a business, RKY Careers offers hands-on training, mentorship, and job application support to ensure success. Join us in creating a workforce and business ecosystem that is diverse, skilled, and future-ready.

Learn more at rkycareers.com



SAS Consultancy East African Asians (EAA) Golf Day Marks Historic Web Portal Launch

On Sunday, 6th April 2025, the East African Asians (EAA) Golf Day was successfully held at the serene Mill Green Golf Course in Hatfield. While the event featured a lively golf competition with 55 participants, the true highlight was the soft launch of a groundbreaking Web Portal documenting the migration, heritage, and present-day contributions of the East African Asian community. The initiative was conceived and led by Harshad Kothari, Committee Member of the Asian Business Association (ABA) and Ambassador of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

The afternoon networking and evening dinner attracted 180 guests, including several high-profile figures such as H.E. Nimisha Madhvani (Ugandan High Commissioner to the UK), Rt Hon Shailesh Vara (former MP and Cabinet Minister), CB Patel (Asian Voice Publisher), Tony Matharu (Entrepreneur and Chairman of ABA-LCCI), Dr Bhikhu Patel (Entrepreneur & Philanthropist), Sanjay Anand of Madhu's. LCCI was represented by Ash Balakrishnan.



Septimius Security

Septimius Security, a leading international security firm, has officially launched its new branch in London, marking a significant step in its global expansion. This strategic move strengthens the company's ability to provide seamless and bespoke security solutions to businesses across Europe and beyond. With a strong presence in North Africa and the Middle East, Septimius Security brings its extensive expertise to the UK market, offering tailored protection strategies that address today's evolving security challenges. The new London branch serves as a key hub, allowing the company to combine global insights with local knowledge to better serve its clients. By establishing operations in London, Septimius Security reinforces its commitment to providing high-quality, innovative security solutions that empower businesses to operate with confidence. The expansion not only enhances its service capabilities but also solidifies its position as a trusted security provider in the international market.

For more information, please visit septimiussecurity.com

ONSIDE |



Linda Lipkova
Head of Accounting



Sophie Hanks
Client Manager

Onside Accounting Limited

As Onside Accounting grows, we continue to strengthen our leadership team to support our ambitious plans. We believe in developing talent from within to retain the best people. At the end of last year, we promoted Molly Jenkins to Head of Client Services, playing a key role in ensuring exceptional service, growth, and client retention. We are pleased to announce two further promotions. Linda Lipkova to Head of Accounting. Linda has excelled as a Client Manager, demonstrating reliability, strong client relationships, and leading complex accounting projects. Linda says, "Stepping into this role is an exciting challenge, and I'm grateful for the support I've received." Sophie Hanks is promoted to Client Manager. With extensive experience, Sophie's leadership will continue to strengthen our client services. Sophie says, "I'm excited to contribute to Onside's growth and deliver exceptional service." Founder and CEO Martin Brennan adds: "These promotions reflect our commitment to nurturing talent."

For more information, please visit onsideaccounting.com

Coming up...



MAY

- **How to Sell to the Modern Buyer – Online**
Wednesday 7 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Unlocking Immigration Routes - Strategies for Businesses – Online**
Thursday 8 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Leveraging Data for Smarter Business and Marketing Decisions – Online**
Monday 12 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Free Trade Agreements, What and Where – Online**
Tuesday 13 May, 10.00am – 11.00am

- **Sustainability Made Easy for SMEs – Online**
Wednesday 14 May, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Horizon Europe: Insight into Funding and Collaboration Opportunities with EU Partners – Online**
Thursday 15 May, 10.00am – 11.00am

- **Maximise your Membership at LCCI**
Thursday 15 May, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

- **The King's Award for Enterprise: Briefing and Networking at LCCI**
Wednesday 21 May, 9.30am – 11.30am

Go Connect

Tuesday 27 May, 5.00pm – 7.00pm
Fairgame

Get in the competitive spirit with up to 60 LCCI Members at our next Go Connect event kindly hosted by Fairgame. Network whilst playing classic fairground games and enjoy complimentary drinks and nibbles. Open to Patron and Premier Plus members only.

‘Udder Disaster’ – Interactive Cyber Security Training Morning

Wednesday 28 May, 10.00am – 12.00pm
LCCI

Join us in interactive and engaging cyber security training session featuring ‘Udder Disaster’, an award-winning board game designed to simplify complex topics like business continuity, resilience, and risk management - all through the unexpected but effective theme of dairy farming. Guests will engage in strategic problem-solving while networking with fellow professionals. This session will provide valuable, up-to-date advice on safeguarding your organisation against cyber threats - one of the most pressing risks in today's business landscape. Free to attend for Patron and Premier Plus members.

Navigating the Future of Aviation Supply Chains – Working with and for Aviation

Thursday 29 May, 3.00pm – 5.00pm
LCCI

Hear from a panel of industry experts at LCCI HQ for a compelling discussion on the evolving landscape of aviation procurement and learn how London's businesses can build lasting partnerships within the aviation sector. Free to attend to all Members, Community Network and Non-members.

- **LCCI's Asian Business Association's Spring Reception, in collaboration with India Week**
Thursday 29 May, 6.30pm – 9.00pm
Programme Partner: University of Westminster

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

JUNE

- **Mastering Recruitment and Retention – Online**
Monday 2 June, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Classifying your Goods and Customs Procedure Codes – Online**
Tuesday 3 June, 10.00am – 11.00am

Grow Your Workforce, Not Your Payroll - Unlocking Business Growth with AI Agents

Tuesday 3 June, 4.00pm – 6.00pm
LCCI

Join us for an insightful session designed for business owners looking to boost productivity, streamline operations, and achieve growth by leveraging cutting-edge AI agents. Discover how businesses in London and beyond are scaling their teams digitally while reducing overhead costs. Free to attend to all Members, Community Network and Non-members.

- **Exploring Equity and Access to Finance - Unlock Your Business Potential at University of Westminster**
Thursday 5 June, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

- **10 Common Myths on Buying Business Travel – What is the truth? – Online**
Tuesday 10 June, 11.00am – 12.00pm

Business Owners Club Summer Reception

Tuesday 10 June, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
The Ivy

Taking place in the iconic The Ivy restaurant, nestled in the heart of Theatreland, this special event brings together up to 70 business owners in the Private Dining Room to connect, engage, and build valuable relationships. Open to LCCI Patron and Premier Plus members only at £27 inclusive of VAT per person.

- **Go Connect! Networking at Balls Brothers Austin Friars**
Wednesday 11 June, 12.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Emotional Recharge - Reconnect, Renew, and Revitalize – Online**
Thursday 12 June, 1.00pm – 2.00pm

- **Understanding Incoterms - Online**
Tuesday 17 June, 10.00am – 11.00am

Property and Construction Summer Reception

Tuesday 17 June, 6.30pm - 8.45pm
No. 4 Hamilton Place

We are pleased to welcome professionals from the property and construction industry to a reception at No. 4 Hamilton Place. Join up to 120 members and guests from the sector for an evening of networking, complemented by drinks and canapés. Tickets start at £126 inc VAT for Patron and Premier Plus members.

Programme Partners: Essential Land LLP, Forth Ports and Menzies

MENZIES
BRIGHTER THINKING



- **How to Do Business with the United Nations – Online**
Tuesday 24 June, 2.30pm – 3.30pm

JULY

- **Exploring Business Opportunities in Germany: Leipzig a Hidden Gem – Online**
Tuesday 1 July, 10.00am – 11.00am

- **LCCI Property and Construction Club Networking and Briefing with guest speaker Steve Eccles, Director, Socius at LCCI**
Tuesday 1 July, 12.00am – 2.00pm
Programme Partners: Essential Land LLP, Forth Ports and Menzies

MENZIES
BRIGHTER THINKING



- **Capital 500 with Vicky Pryce, Chief Economic Advisor and Board Member, Cebr, James Rentoul, Director at Savanta ComRes and Ian Daniels, Property Partner at HaysMac**
Wednesday 9 July, 10.00am – 12.00pm
Programme Partner: HaysMac

HaysMac

- **Maximise your Membership at LCCI**
Thursday 10 July, 3.00pm – 5.00pm



LCCI Annual Summer Party

Thursday 17 July, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
College Garden, Westminster Abbey

Join up to 150 members and guests at Westminster Abbey Gardens for the annual Summer Party. This prestigious event brings together key industry leaders, MPs and members for an evening of networking in this stunning venue boasting views of Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. Tickets start at £126 inc VAT for Patron and Premier Plus members.

AUGUST

- **Go Connect! Networking at LCCI**
Tuesday 5 August, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

- **LCCI Cricket Day: Surrey v Hampshire in the One Day Cup at the Kia Oval**
Monday 18 August, 10.30am – 6.00pm

Two minute interview

Dee Marquis of University College of Estate Management



Who are you?

I'm Dee Marquis, senior business development manager of UCEM – University College of Estate Management. I support businesses with the upskilling of existing employees or newly recruited by utilising UCEM's degrees, short courses and government funded apprenticeships.

UCEM is a leading university for supported online education in the built environment, with over 100 years of experience in property and construction degrees. Since 2017, we've been the top provider of chartered surveyor degree apprenticeships, serving 4,000 students from more than 100 countries. Our programmes, taught by faculty with extensive industry experience, are accredited by professional institutions like RICS, CIOB, and CABE, ensuring our apprenticeships meet industry standards and provide valuable qualifications. We are also committed to integrating sustainability into all aspects of our teaching and operations.

What was your first job in London?

I was a youth worker.

Which one business achievement over the

last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

It's not necessarily a business achievement – however, every time I support an individual or employer in accessing one of our qualifications, it feels like a significant achievement. The most rewarding aspect is knowing that someone is getting the opportunity to develop their skills and advance their career.

Seeing the positive impact on their lives and the growth in their confidence and abilities is incredibly fulfilling. It's not just about the qualification itself but about opening doors to new possibilities and helping them on the journey of realising their potential.

For employers, it's equally gratifying to see them benefit from having skilled, motivated individuals who can contribute effectively to their teams. Feels like a win-win, reinforcing my commitment to fostering development and supporting both individuals and organisations in achieving their goals.

If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

Dean Forbes, the chief

executive of Forterro, the software company. This year he was voted the most influential Black British person in the UK by the Powerlist.

How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

Making it more reliable and accessible.

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

My favourite is its food culture and how multi-cultural it is. My least favourite are its pollution, gentrification and poverty.

If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would you change?

I would review the provisions for young people, increase the budget for them and widen the scope for interventions.

Who would you consider an appropriate person to play you in a movie of your life?

Kano, because people say he looks like me.



Kano By Nicolas Völcker - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=60994069>

What is your favourite quotation?

"Treat others just as you want to be treated".

www.ucem.ac.uk



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Valid until 24th September 2025



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Offer valid until 24 June 2025

Two minute interview

Angela Hall of The Insight House

Who are you?

I am the founder and customer centricity director of The Insight House which helps clients maximise their customer value through retention and growth marketing strategies. My role is to find out what makes their customers tick – how they behave and what drives value. We 'translate' this insight into building clear customer strategies to propel a successful marketing campaign to get, keep and grow customer value.

Prior to setting up The Insight House, I worked client side in strategic marketing roles in Airmiles, Orange UK, British Gas, Barclays Business Bank and PPP Healthcare.

At The Insight House our clients include Hand Picked Hotels, HMV, Lumo Trains, Game Retail, and Arco Health.

What was your first job in London?

A marketing assistant for a shipping company – my first job after uni. Whilst studying for a degree in marketing, I spent my sandwich year in industry with CGM at their Liverpool office in a telesales role.

Having won an award for gaining the most freight on a new service, I was invited to work for them once I'd graduated.

Coming from Cheltenham I got some push back on my 'posh' accent, so they taught me Scouse – I'm officially bi-lingual!

Which one business achievement over

the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

The work we did with two clients in very different industries.

One is an accelerator for UK innovation that had data in many places, recorded in many ways, which meant none of it could be drawn together and used for in-depth insights for planning marketing and allocating resources.

Resourcing was large but needed to be efficient and our work with them meant opportunities were curated from data insights.

The second was a new train company. We revolutionised how customer data was used, from their booking experience, through their journey on the train and interaction with staff, to follow-up marketing.

If you were advising a young entrepreneur, which business person would you suggest as a model?

Bob Holder. I met him when I was in my early 30s working as a retention manager in the private healthcare sector. I'd recently embarked on my now career in customer strategy, having previously been in broader marketing roles.

Bob was the planner at CKBT when I met him. In his early career he had shown a real flair as an entrepreneur – from setting up a franchise-based furniture supplier, to owning and running the iconic Winter Gardens music venue.



He guided me with faultless direction. He was always there as a colleague, mentor, someone to admire and follow, and a great friend.

How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

Improved accessibility and safety for all commuters and travellers on our city networks.

Which piece of red tape causes most problems for your company and why?

The Insight House works as an external consultant, having been brought on-board by the senior leadership team. By the time we work with the teams and managers, we have spent a lot of time understanding the business from the SLT side, so building rapport and trust with them can be the biggest challenge.

We often suggest different ways of doing things – collecting data, processing data ... and no one really likes change! Our job is to communicate the purpose of the change, why we are doing it differently, the outcomes and the uplift it will create.

We sometimes start as the

big bad wolf but quickly instil confidence in teams that realise we are there to support them into understanding and using their data to competitive advantage.

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

I love London despite it being a large, commercial city with so much going on. It's full of green spaces, trees, parks and gardens galore. I just wish people would take a moment to stop and appreciate what's around them. Get off the phone, nose out of the laptop, then look around and enjoy.

If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would you change?

Protect and promote the green spaces – they're so important for our mental well-being.

What is your favourite quotation?

"Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things and no good thing ever dies."

Shawshank Redemption.

www.insighthouse.co.uk

Raising alternative capital to expand in the USA

| by Gavin Logan

“UK SMEs seeking growth beyond Europe face funding challenges when expanding internationally. Traditional financing methods can be restrictive, making alternative capital-raising in the US a strategic solution for significant growth.

The USA opportunity

The US offers exceptional market potential due to a robust economy, substantial capital availability, and extensive infrastructure investments. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2022) dedicates over \$1



trillion to improving roads, broadband, clean energy, and public services, creating substantial opportunities for UK SMEs in sectors like construction, technology, renewable energy, healthcare, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

The country's economic proposals include further deregulation, expanded tax cuts, and increased infrastructure spending, fostering a more business-friendly environment, especially beneficial to international entrants.

A prime example available now is

the Gateway Hudson Tunnel Project between New York and New Jersey. This multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project seeks UK SMEs skilled in construction, engineering, logistics, and innovative technologies, offering immediate revenue opportunities.

US capital markets, including NASDAQ and NYSE, provide unrivaled access to diverse sources such as venture capital, private equity, institutional and angel investors. Cities and states offer attractive incentives – tax reductions, subsidies, and streamlined regulatory processes – with states like Texas, Tennessee, and Florida proactively supporting foreign investments.

Continued on page 65...

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LCCI Partners and Patrons Noticeboard



Capital City College Group

Capital City College, are transforming lives, empowering communities, and helping businesses thrive. As London's largest and most diverse college group, we are proud to launch our "Social Value Scheme" a powerful opportunity to connect business with diverse and industry ready talent across the London community.

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Whether your strategy is to enhance your brand visibility, meet social value objectives, access skilled talent, we offer flexible and effective ways to partner.

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Let us build a future where education & industry thrive together. Capital City College would be delighted to hear from businesses across London and cross-sector to engage with this scheme contact

matt.harvey@capitalcct.ac.uk



Forth Ports Group

As part of the Port of Tilbury, the closest major port to London, the London Construction Hub is a premier facility for consolidation of construction cargoes, providing a 24/7 operation with full reverse logistics capabilities (including processing of construction waste on-site), making supply chains simple and sustainable. Facilities include a projects terminal with dedicated heavy lift quayside, making the Hub ideal for handling of project-specific heavy lift cargo.

Using seamless logistics solutions across barging, rail and road transport, the Hub has supported major construction projects including, London 2012 Olympics, Crossrail, and Thames Tideway – establishing themselves as a trusted partner for delivering large scale logistics solutions.

Recently, the Hub achieved a major sustainability milestone, generating 100% of its own electricity needs through on-site wind turbines, as part of its commitment to Net-Zero emissions by 2042.

For more information on how the London Construction Hub can assist your construction project, visit <https://www.londonconstructionhub.co.uk/>



Luton Rising

Luton Rising is pleased to confirm that the Secretary of State for Transport has approved its DCO application for the long-term sustainable growth of the airport. The decision enables Luton Rising to continue detailed planning for the next chapter in the success story of London Luton Airport.

Paul Kehoe CBE, Independent Chair of Luton Rising, the Luton Council company that owns London Luton Airport for community benefit, said:

"The benefits are clear. At a new capacity of 32 million passengers per year, our scheme will deliver up to 11,000 new jobs, additional annual economic activity of up to £1.5bn, and up to an additional £13m every year for communities and good causes."

You can read Paul's full statement here: <https://lutonrising.org.uk/dco-decision/>

Luton Rising thanks LCCI and the many businesses who gave their support in successfully making the case for growth.



Menzies

Menzies LLP is a leading UK firm of accountants and business advisers, with specialist expertise in the property and construction sector, as well as other key industries.

Join us for our Property Tax Update Webinar at 9:30am on Tuesday, 20th May, where we'll cover essential tax changes and compliance updates impacting the property and construction industry. This session is ideal for property owners, developers, investors, and professionals keen to stay informed.

Key topics include:

- The interaction of IR35 and CIS
- What property businesses need to know about off-payroll working
- VAT and supply chain compliance, and how recent changes affect transactions and strategy
- Updates on capital allowances, including structures and buildings relief
- Anti-avoidance rules affecting land transactions and property-rich companies
- Upcoming tax changes: ATED, SDLT, Residential Property Developer Tax, Land Remediation Relief, and Contaminated Land Relief

To register visit: Essential tax strategies for property & construction | Menzies LLP

Answers to The Knowledge

On page 19

- 1 Dulwich Picture Gallery in SE 21, between Brixton and Peckham.
- 2 *Only fools and horses*. BBC-produced, it first aired in 1981.
- 3 Arthur Conan Doyle. The quote is made by a character in one of his Sherlock Holmes' stories, *The Sign of Four* (1890)
- 4 Boudicca. The Roman rulers' response was to build an enclosing, defensive wall around the city.
- 5 Alexandra Palace. The princess was Alexandra of Denmark, the wife of the future King Edward VII.
- 6 Elizabeth Taylor. She was born in Hampstead Garden Suburb in 1932.
- 7 Charlton Athletic, currently in League 1. The nickname is said to come from the fishmonger who served haddock and chips to the players after their matches.
- 8 1986. The final section was the Dartford Crossing and was opened by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.
- 9 Alastair King. A financier by profession, he is the 696th person in that role.
- 10 The Ritz at 150 Piccadilly. It opened in 1906 and became the hotel of choice for many of the rich and famous.



By Tony Hisgett from Birmingham, UK - The Ritz
Uploaded by tm, CC BY 2.0

Continued from page 61...

Strategic advantages

Expanding into the US offers clear benefits:

- **Market scale:** deep and liquid capital markets offering larger funding at favorable valuations.
- **Unified regulatory environment:** despite initial complexity, the unified US system simplifies long-term compliance.
- **Enhanced credibility:** US operations increase global visibility and market credibility.

Practical steps to get started

1. **Market research:** identify high-growth sectors and regions with supportive business conditions.
2. **Build strategic relationships:** partner with advisory firms experienced in US regulations, and connect with local economic agencies offering incentives.
3. **Capital-raising methods:** evaluate Alternative IPOs, private placements, convertible bonds, structured finance, or hybrid solutions with professional guidance.
4. **Regulatory compliance:** prepare comprehensive financial and legal documentation to meet SEC requirements.
5. **Utilise incentives:** engage proactively with cities and states that align with your strategic goals.

Potential challenges

UK SMEs must consider:

- **Regulatory complexity:** meticulous planning for SEC filings and disclosures.
- **Competition:** need for distinctive value propositions and tailored market strategies.
- **Costs:** significant initial setup and compliance expenses, manageable with strategic planning.

Why the USA over Europe?

Europe's fragmented markets offer fewer dynamic funding opportunities compared to the US's unified market, abundant capital, and substantial incentives. For UK SMEs seeking exponential growth, the US is a clearer, faster, and more scalable pathway.

Leveraging alternative capital strategies to expand in the US can be transformative for ambitious UK SMEs. Comprehensive preparation, strategic partnerships, and robust market entry strategies enable businesses to successfully navigate complexities and unlock significant growth potential. ”

Gavin Logan is chief managing partner of Stock Raises

www.stockraises.com



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Published by:

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Penta Consulting:

Behind the people powering your technology

We ask Penta Consulting about their big awards win at the SME London Business Awards 2025, and how they want to keep this momentum going moving forwards.

1. What do you think was the key to your success at this year's awards?

The key to our success at this year's awards lies in our robust international presence and our unwavering commitment to delivering cross-border managed and professional services. At Penta Consulting, we pride ourselves on our innovative and dynamic approach, which was particularly recognised in the category of International Business of the Year.

By establishing a permanent presence in key global markets early in our 26-year history and significantly increasing our turnover and profitability through strategic international trade, we have demonstrated our ability to adapt and thrive in a competitive landscape. Our success is also attributed to our ability to create and deliver bespoke technology resource solutions that cater to the unique needs of our clients, ensuring they achieve their business objectives while focusing on consistency and quality.

2. What challenges did you have to overcome in the 12 months prior to being an award winner?

The global economic landscape was marked by heightened uncertainty, with escalating trade tensions, fluctuating currency values, and shifting regulatory environments.

Despite these external pressures, maintaining strong ESG practices both in the UK and in our hosting countries remained a major focus.

Ensuring compliance and sustainability in our operations required significant internal attention and effort. We had to

navigate complex regulatory requirements, adapt to new environmental standards, and address social responsibilities in diverse markets. Additionally, the economic slowdown and inflationary pressures demanded innovative strategies to manage costs and maintain profitability.

Overcoming these challenges was essential for our success and demonstrated our resilience and commitment to sustainable growth.

3. After celebrating your award, what are you looking to do over the next 12 months to replicate your success?

We are looking to continue our successful strategies and possibly expand our international presence even further; we have new offices planned to be opened in Italy and Qatar throughout 2025.

We aim to maintain our high standards while exploring new markets and opportunities for growth. This approach will help us replicate our success and stay competitive in the international business landscape.


4. Will you be entering again next year?

Given the enthusiasm and recognition we received from the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry SME London Business Awards, we are

certainly considering entering the awards again next year.

Our participation has been incredibly positive, providing us with valuable exposure and reinforcing our commitment to excellence. The recognition we received has not only boosted our team's morale but also strengthened our reputation in the industry. We look forward to continuing our involvement in such prestigious recognitions, as they align perfectly with our goals of innovation, growth, and industry leadership.

Aminash Patel is Group Managing Director at Penta Consulting

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Beany: capitalising on success

We spoke to *Beany* about their wins at the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's SME London Business Awards 2025, and how they're looking to capitalise on their success.

Q1 What do you think was the key to your success at this year's awards?

We're excited to have won two awards at the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's SME London Business Awards 2025 - Gold in Website of the Year and Silver in Online Business of the Year. These awards highlight our focus on innovation and using custom-built technology to help us provide a high-quality service to our clients.

Our Online Business of the Year win reflects the way we've used tech to remove friction from the accounting process. From seamless online onboarding to intuitive year-end questionnaires, we've made it easy for clients to share information at their convenience, eliminating the hassle of endless email chains. Combining smart systems with expert support allows us to deliver a high-quality service for a fixed monthly fee.

The Website of the Year award highlights the strength of our dual-platform approach. Our public-facing brochure site attracts and informs with guides, tax calculators and checklists that help business owners build financial literacy. On the client side, our custom-built portal improves service delivery and makes it easy for clients to manage their year-end compliance in one place.

We're always looking for ways to do better, whether it's refining the user experience or adopting new technologies. At Beany, we're more than accountants. We're a partner to business owners to help not only make their life easier but also help them make the best decisions for their business and lifestyle.

Q2 What challenges did you have to overcome

in the 12 months prior to being an award winner?

The past 12 months have been a period of significant growth. One of our key challenges was ensuring our website remained effective in both attracting and serving clients, especially as competition in Google search intensified.

To address this, we transformed our website into a hub for financial knowledge. We added practical tools like calculators and checklists, alongside blog content and guides.

These challenges pushed us to refine our approach, with a strong focus on improving SEO, user experience, and strategies to convert visitors into clients. At the core of our success is our commitment to delivering an exceptional service. We know that even the best marketing can't succeed without a strong product, and it's this combination that has driven our momentum.

Q3 After celebrating your award, what are you looking to do over the next 12 months to replicate your success?

While we're proud of the recognition, we treat every milestone as motivation to keep evolving and improving. We are committed to redefining accounting for ambitious businesses.

Continuous improvement is part of our DNA at Beany. Whether refining our accounting services, enhancing our client portal, or optimising marketing strategies, we strive to innovate and improve, regardless of awards.

Over the next 12 months, we're focused on building on this momentum. We'll be making

sure our full range of services is clearly showcased on the website so potential clients can easily understand how we can support them. We're also enhancing pages about the company and team to better reflect who we are, and the expertise of our accountants, bookkeepers and client support.

Our aim is not just to replicate success but to surpass it. We're dedicated to continuous improvement and delivering exceptional value, solidifying our position as a leader in online accounting.

Q4 Will you be entering again next year?

Absolutely! We're already looking forward to next year's awards. Being recognised for our hard work is incredibly motivating, and the awards evening is a fantastic opportunity to connect with other successful businesses and meet inspiring entrepreneurs.

After winning a Silver award in the Best New Business category in 2024, followed by our Gold and Silver wins in 2025, we're eager to keep this winning streak going!

For us the awards are a fantastic way to benchmark our progress and continue to push ourselves to excel. We're always striving to improve and innovate so we're excited to see what the next year brings and to hopefully celebrate with the London Chamber of Commerce again!

We're also pleased to support Chamber members with an exclusive offer - 10% off our accounting packages for the first year. It's our way of saying thanks and helping other businesses thrive. Get in touch for a free chat. We'd love to work with you.



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The benefits of technical training in an ageing workforce

Donald Doughty, Senior Project Manager at TRU East and T Level Ambassador

The UK is seeing skills shortages across numerous sectors and those in the engineering and construction industries will be all too aware of the challenges impacting recruitment at the moment. Skills shortages in construction and engineering are caused by various factors, including an ageing workforce and a lack of people applying for certain roles. Both industries are incredibly important to the country's growth and economic output, and having lack of applicants and workers with the required skills could prove a real problem. But there are opportunities out there for businesses to make the most of.

On the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) we've seen first-hand how technical education and training is a gateway to attracting young talent. TRU East is one of the alliances delivering the Transpennine Route Upgrade; a multi-billion-pound, transformative, long-term rail infrastructure project delivering more frequent, faster, greener trains on a better, cleaner, more reliable railway between York, Leeds and Manchester.

“As experienced engineers and construction professionals retire across the UK they take with them not only their invaluable insights, but also their skills and expertise.”

The skills shortage in the construction and engineering sectors has been an ongoing issue for many years. One major factor contributing to this is the aging workforce within these industries. As experienced engineers and construction professionals retire across the UK they take with them not only their invaluable insights, but also their skills and expertise. Unfortunately, there can be a lack of a strong new talent in the pipeline to replace them, creating a significant gap.

In fact, new research from the Skills Horizon Barometer by Skills for Life shows that nine in 10 SMEs (90%) are facing some kind of skills gap within their business, with the biggest at entry level

(32%). Thankfully though, there are lots of opportunities in the form of technical training that businesses can utilise to build a stronger workforce and attract new talent.

Apprenticeships are a brilliant programme that not only help young people gain a better insight into certain career paths but help us to meet bright young talent who can break into the sector - bridging the gap between the shortage of skills. TRU overall has had 364 apprentices to date and since the start of the main works in 2020 we have had 89 apprentices. This includes 17 in the period 2024/45. Some have now completed their apprentices and are helping us fill the shortage of skilled workers in the construction sector.

Apprentices can help businesses increase productivity by developing a skilled and motivated workforce and can lead to increased employee retention, as apprentices are often motivated to stay with the company that provided them with their training. The main benefit to businesses is that they can address skills shortages and ensure they have access to a skilled workforce.

T Levels are a newer qualification, introduced in 2020, and are broadly equivalent to three A levels. They enable young people to gain a qualification through 80 per cent classroom-based learning and 20 per cent industry placement with an employer, for a minimum of 45 days. The industry placements help students put into practice what they're learning in the classroom, supported by experienced employees within the business. Once they complete the course, they can arrive in the workplace equipped with hands on experience and first-hand knowledge of the skills needed.

At TRU East, we've hosted 28 students for their industry placement - and whilst this has great benefits for them, we reap the rewards too. Our first T Level student was offered a position by the business on completion of her T Level course and



she's now a civil engineering degree apprentice. By having access to eager talent so early on in their career, we're able to build their skills and build them into exceptional employees. We also find that lots of young people have misconceptions about the industry, even when they're set on pursuing a career within it. Many assume engineering and construction roles are purely manual, but in reality, there are opportunities within a wide variety of specialisms like planning, architecture, marketing, legal and technology.

As an employer, we also get to introduce them to current skillsets we need and look for in new talent. We can show them what they might work on across a range of jobs such as engineers, supervisors, planners, quality surveyors and project managers, on site and in office-based roles. This approach ensures their learning is both holistic and realistic.

I'm a strong advocate for technical education and training, so much so that I'm an ambassador for the T Level Network. The network brings together committed employers to showcase the benefits of technical education in the business community. My role as an ambassador is great for me and for TRU East as we can inspire young people joining the sector and aid in bridging the gap owing to the ageing workforce. The engineering and construction industries have been focused on the present because of the way that contracts and our world operate, but T Levels and apprenticeships offer early access to the talent pool.

As an employer, you have a responsibility to ensure that your recruitment pipeline is consistently attracting new talent and making the business more accessible to young talent via technical education and training in an effective way to do this.

If you're a business leader looking to future-proof your workforce, check out the **Skills for Life** website for all the information you need on how to make the most of the technical education schemes on offer.

Elevate Your Workforce with PlanBEE London Higher Apprenticeship

Unlock the Future of the Built Environment

As the built environment continues to evolve, the demand for skilled professionals who can navigate the complexities of modern construction and design is greater than ever.

What is PlanBEE?

Launched in London in 2023, PlanBEE is a higher apprenticeship programme that allows its apprentices to experience a diverse mix of roles within the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) sector. Developed by Ryder Architecture and Gateshead College in the North East of England in 2016, PlanBEE now operates in the North East, Manchester and London, with an affiliate programme in Vancouver, Canada.

This programme is unique, with apprentices rotating across 6 different companies in a diverse range of professional



roles and disciplines, including architecture, structural and building services engineering, project management, cost management and leadership. The aim being to challenge the 'silo-mentality' within the industry and to encourage a more collaborative approach to multidisciplinary team working.

The unique opportunity to try out different professional roles and gain a broad understanding of the construction industry is really attractive to young people seeking a career in the

built environment sector and is why the PlanBEE London consortium of employers is appealing to the wider industry and members of LCCI to join them in sponsoring an apprentice starting in September 2025.

Why Sponsor a PlanBEE Apprentice?

By sponsoring a PlanBEE apprentice, your organisation can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the industry and building a local talent pipeline, while benefiting

from the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that apprentices bring.

Join the Movement

Several leading London-based businesses including Ryder Architecture, Cundall, Fletcher Priest Architects, Desco, Bowmer & Kirkland, PlanA, and Morgan Sindall Infrastructure have already recognised the value of the PlanBEE London Higher Apprenticeship and are reaping the benefits of sponsoring apprentices.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to join them and make a lasting impact on the future of the built environment.

Contact Information

For more information on how to sponsor a PlanBEE apprentice, please visit www.gateshead.ac.uk/courses/planbee/ planbee-employers/planbee-sponsors/

PlanBEE

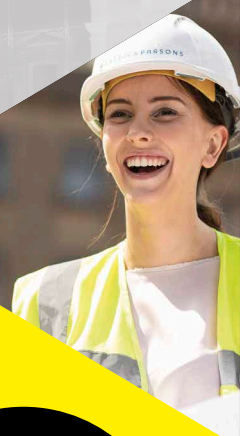
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in the sector.

91% OF EMPLOYERS
agreed that PlanBEE
apprentices had
made a valuable
contribution
to the business.



Why Oxford is the Ideal Destination for your Next Meeting or Event

“I wonder anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember, the place is so beautiful” – W.B. Yeats

Few sights are more evocative than Oxford, the ‘city of dreaming spires’. Bosting spectacular architecture and fascinating history, it’s no wonder the city has inspired some of the leading figures throughout history.



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Choose a venue in the heart of the city...

Located in the city centre, Oxford Town Hall allows easy access to hotels, transport links and famous landmarks and tourist attractions visited by millions from around the globe your delegates may wish to explore during their stay in the city.

Oxford Town Hall is ideally situated for public transport and close to car parks for convenient access for your guests.

Choose Oxford Town Hall... From grand ballrooms to intimate meeting rooms

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Just want a small meeting with some colleagues? No problem. With 10 meeting rooms to choose from and excellent facilities, Oxford Town Hall is the ideal space for meetings, training courses, and team away days.

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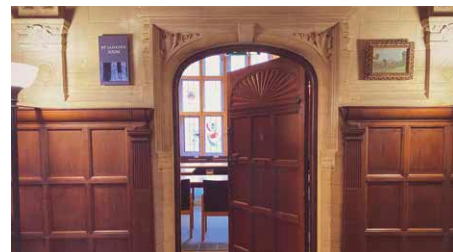
It prides itself on providing affordable and flexible solutions, with 13 rooms available to hire in any combination. The team treat all bookings individually and work with you to find solutions that fit your requirements.

A unique setting to impress your guests

With sweeping staircases, intimate wood panelled meeting rooms, and grand ballrooms, Oxford Town Hall will amaze your guests and provides a unique setting for any meeting or event. Whether dressed to impress or stripped back with little to no decoration, Oxford Town Hall provides a stunning backdrop for your meeting or event.

Fantastic food and drink

With their new sole caterer Elegant Cuisine, Oxford Town Hall have a range of food and drink options to suit your requirements. Whether you need a day delegate rate, a three course meal, or an informal break in our newly refurbished café, we guarantee that Elegant Cuisine can find a catering option to suit you.



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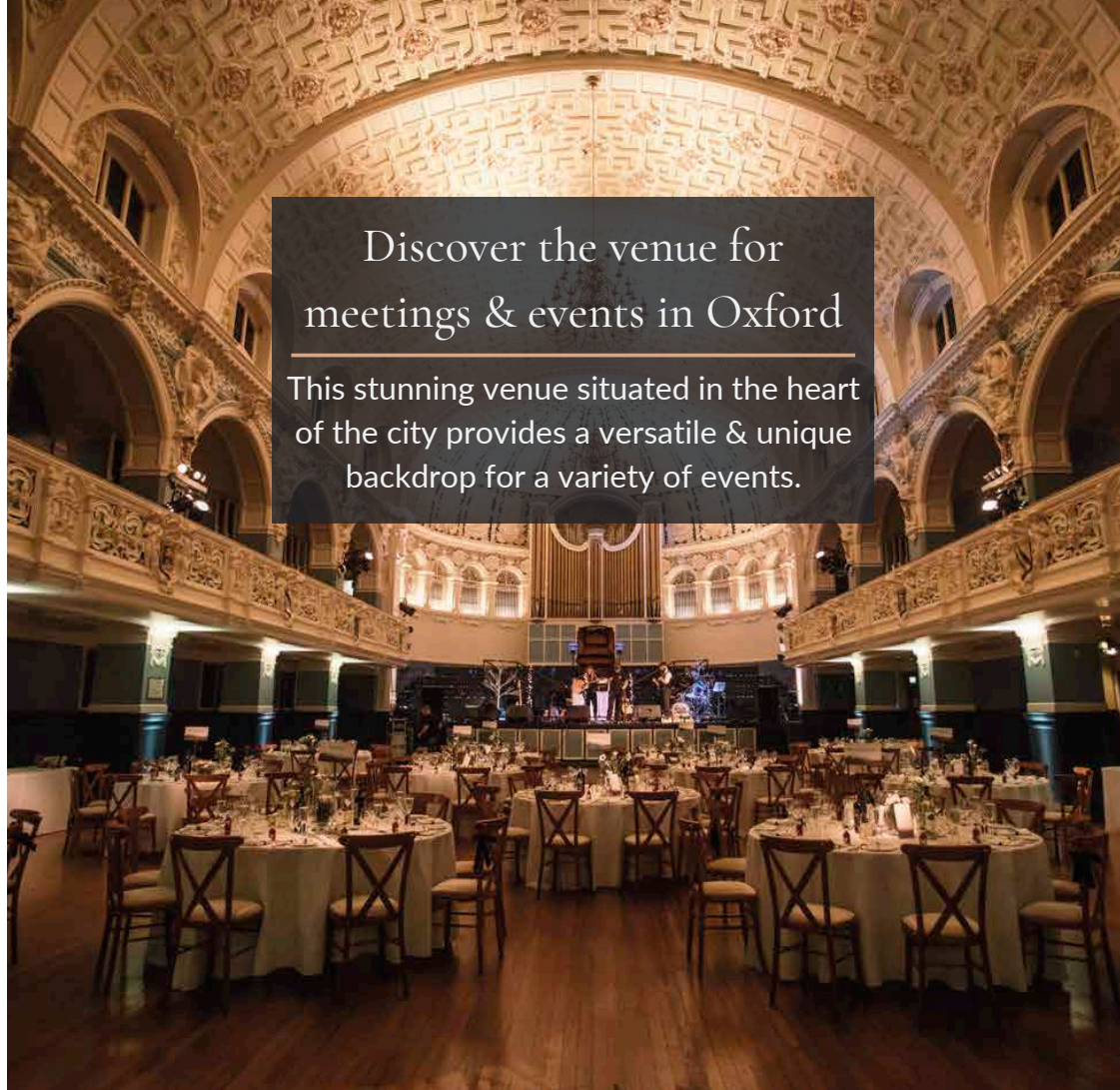


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OCN London – Business Innovation Award Winner



Written by Amarjit Dhanjal, Director (Business Development and Marketing), OCN London

1. What do you think was the key to your success at this year's SME London Business Awards?

The key to our success was our commitment to innovation in skills development—particularly our pioneering work in microcredentials. We recognised the growing need for flexible, employer-responsive learning that allows individuals to upskill quickly in fast-moving and emerging industries like AI, cybersecurity, digital productivity, and green technologies. Unlike traditional qualifications, microcredentials offer bite-sized, competency-based training that enables individuals to acquire specific skills efficiently without committing to a full-length course.

Our success stems from our deep engagement with industry—we work closely with employers, training providers, and sector experts to ensure our microcredentials are aligned with real workforce needs. Businesses today require agile, targeted training solutions that support continuous professional development (CPD) for staff; accrediting the development of skills, knowledge and professional behaviours without the need for the formal assessment associated with traditional qualifications. Our ability to respond rapidly to employer demands and deliver practical, accessible learning solutions is what made our entry stand out.

2. What challenges did you have to overcome in the 12 months prior to being an award winner?

One of the biggest challenges was securing sufficient funding and recognition for innovative learning models like microcredentials. Traditional funding structures prioritise longer, more established qualifications, making it difficult to allocate resources for short, high-impact courses that businesses urgently need. Through strategic partnerships, advocacy, and



pilot projects, we demonstrated the effectiveness of microcredentials in filling skills gaps, gaining traction with colleges, employers, and policymakers.

A pivotal moment in overcoming these challenges was our active participation in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). These plans provided us with a platform to bring innovative learning solutions to the table by working closely with the LCCI, London's sub-regional groups and our fantastic network of further education colleges. LSIPs allowed the unique value of microcredentials to be showcased by demonstrating their ability to rapidly address employer skills gaps, and working with key stakeholders to embed them into workforce development strategies. It was through this engagement that we were able to push forward new opportunities for microcredentials and ensure they are recognised as a viable skills solution. To date, over 10,000 microcredentials have been issued.

3. After celebrating your award, what are you looking to do over the next 12 months to replicate your success?

Winning this award has reinforced our mission to expand our

microcredential offering and deepen engagement with industry. Over the next 12 months, we will:

- Continue to develop new microcredentials in response to the needs of London's employers, helping to ensure that the aims of London's LSIPs are met and have a positive impact for employers and the communities that they serve.
- Strengthen partnerships with employers and London's anchor institutions to ensure our qualifications remain directly aligned with workforce needs. By working as an effective partner, we help shape training that is practical, cost-effective, and immediately beneficial to staff development.
- Promote microcredentials as a CPD solution for businesses, demonstrating how they can be used to support staff development, boost retention, and address skills shortages without the time and financial commitment of a full-length qualification.
- Advocate for funding reforms to make it easier for colleges, employers, and training providers to offer innovative, flexible learning.

- Enhance accessibility, ensuring our microcredentials reach the widest range of learners, in support of the Mayor of London's growth plan and inclusive talent strategy.

- Promote digital badging, allowing learners to showcase their new skills more effectively to employers, ensuring that microcredentials carry weight in recruitment and progression opportunities.

4. Will you be entering again next year?

Absolutely! This award has been a fantastic recognition of our team's dedication and impact. It has also opened up new opportunities to collaborate with businesses and training providers who are eager to explore microcredentials as a practical solution for workforce development.

We are excited to build on this success, expand our microcredential offerings, and enter again next year—hopefully with an even greater



portfolio of cutting-edge learning solutions to showcase. Our aim is to continue leading the way in skills innovation, demonstrating that short, targeted learning can have a transformative impact on both individuals and businesses.

For businesses looking to enhance

staff training, improve retention, and boost productivity, now is the time to explore microcredentials. If you'd like to learn more about how our award-winning approach to training can support your organisation, we'd love to hear from you! **Scan the QR code below for more information.**



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What are Microcredentials?

Microcredentials are short, industry-recognised courses that quickly equip employees with specific, in-demand skills. They offer a flexible, focused alternative to traditional qualifications.

More than 50 organisations have chosen us for their microcredential accreditation needs, with over 10,000 issued to date

Why Should Businesses Invest in Microcredentials?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Address Skill Gaps Quickly | ✓ Boost Staff Retention & Productivity |
| ✓ Cost Effective & Time Efficient | ✓ Industry-Aligned & Practical |
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