

Dates for your Diary

## July This month

2nd: Club meeting - Members displays

### Future Events

6th Aug: Club meeting - Quiz

3rd Sept: Club meeting - Customer care

1st Oct: Club meeting - Planning Retirement

5th Nov: Club meeting - Wine Tasting

Welcome to our New Members

### Majority Computer Services Ltd

Martin Fisher

### Ten Consulting

Chris Barnes

### L.A. Style Interiors

Lynn Awang



Last months prize winners

FOR SALE

Hewlett Packard Colour Laserjet 4500 printer. With duplex attachment, 64 Mb memory, parallel & network interfaces. Fully working £250.00 (sold as seen).

Hewlett Packard Laserjet IIID mono printer. With duplex & two paper bins, parallel interface. Fully working £75.00 (sold as seen)

Gary Taylor - Taylormade Computer Services 01257 793251 - 07887 814959 Taylormade@talkgas.net

## Committee contacts

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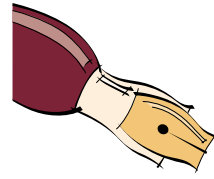
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## The Chairman writes...

We enjoyed a lively and interesting meeting last month following Dea Parkin's excellent PR presentation. Many useful ideas were proposed by Dea, of The Competitive Edge, and further experiences and tips were enthusiastically debated in the second half open forum. I was asked afterwards how to measure the results from PR and advertising.

For a small business, without a marketing department to undertake extensive research and analysis, there are still some cost effective ways to gauge what is working for you. The principal rule is to always make a point of asking new contacts where they heard about you. Do not be shy. Asking someone confidently "where did you hear about us?" sounds professional, shows initiative and quickly builds an impression of where your enquiries are coming from.

The next stage is to start recording the results. Most businesses now run client databases on computer. Try and find an unused field or notes box to start logging your sources. Add them to a drop down menu or option list if possible to make entry quick and easy and be sure to include all your advert media (Yellow Pages, Evening Post, Mailshots etc) plus recommendations, PR, Business Club, website, cold call, networking and any other methods of contact peculiar to your business. After six months you can begin to really analyse which ads are cost effective and which should be dropped and which activities deserve more of your time and which less. I know that I do business through the Business Club so, see you at Lancashire College. I'm making an exhibition of myself in July, are you?

Steve Ward, Hon. Chairman



Chairman Steve Ward with Dea Parkin

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# Newsletter

July 2002

www.businessclub.uk.com

CHORLEY & SOUTH RIBBLE BUSINESS CLUB

## PR for my business? But I can't afford Max Clifford!

### THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

For those of you who didn't make the last meeting, presented by Dea Parkin of The Competitive Edge, here's a resume of what it included. The main points Dea covered were:

What PR is, its pros and cons and whether it works or not. To illustrate that last point, Dea looked at the amazing response Club member Brian Wilding had to a piece about his Bells Decanter Register in the Today newspaper (remember that?) 8 years ago...the phone never stopped ringing for two days, he doubled the Register's membership taking hundreds of pounds in income, and he still receives enquiries today. This proves the power of the national newspapers, with their circulations in the millions.

More usually though, Dea explained, PR is a cumulative process, gradually building up credibility and reputation. At the end of the day, it means if someone has your business recommended to them, they are much more likely to act on that recommendation if they've seen good things written about you in the press, than if they've never heard of you.

Identifying your target audience, and matching the media to that, whether it's your trade press, local press, regional business press, consumer titles or the nationals. Dea explained how you can take the time to do this research yourself, or pay a PR professional to do it for you, quickly and efficiently, using directories that are a tool of their trade.

What sort of news interests the press? Examples were: creating new jobs, new contracts, winning an award, personal angles, staff initiatives and charity work. We looked at the huge PR value of quirky stories, such as the mouse Club member Gary Taylor found in the computer he was fixing, or the unexpected, like the warehouseman who told his MD he was bored with his job and got the promotion to sales that he'd secretly hankered for.

How to present press releases: remember who, when and where, what and why, and don't forget to include facts and figures. Write in the third person and don't use flowery adjectives: just tell the

story simply and concisely. As Graham Archer pointed out, journalists also like releases typed in double spacing as it makes it easy for them to re-write to their requirements.

Keep an eye on the media you've identified for regular features and slots as well as news opportunities, and if possible, supply finished text for those features.

Keep a weather eye for news affecting your industry, or surveys or similar, then ring up your media contacts with a quick quote. Dea emphasised how important it is to make good contacts with editors or influential reporters and writers, to gain more coverage and to have them calling and asking you for quotes!

Dea finished off by saying that, while many owners of small businesses would like to take advantage of PR opportunities, they often don't have the time. She advocates getting someone in to look after this, as a full- or part-time employee. If that's not possible, she recommends getting a consultant or agency, to work either on an ad hoc basis or a few days per month. She suggested what questions to ask as a way of choosing a consultant, and advised on current rates.

After her presentation, members raised a number of questions, and competitions, in particular, were advocated as a way of getting a product or service into the press.

One or two members said even while they recognised PR could have big benefits, they still weren't convinced it was worth spending money they could ill afford on it. In reply, a new member made the telling point that one thing was guaranteed with PR: if you do nothing, that's exactly what you'll get in return.

Dea produced a detailed hand-out containing all of the information included in the presentation and more: if you would like one please contact Dea on 01257 233614 or ask a committee member.

# THE NEXT MEETING

T U E S D A Y

## 2nd July

## Members Exhibitions

7.45 for 8pm

This month's meeting is an open event, our annual members exhibition evening. Everyone is welcome. Come and have a browse round, do some business and try for a prize in the raffle. There are still tables left if you want to show your wares. Contact Keith Ellison at Springboard Events for more details on 01254 832123.