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Impression

NEWSLETTER

CHORLEY
& SOUTH
RIBBLE
BUSINESS
CLUB

March 2006

THE NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 7th March

7.45pm for 8pm @ Lancashire College,
Southport Road, Chorley



Steve Brewer & AGM

Steve Brewer, a speaker of repute, will be talking to us about, "Marketing for Small Businesses" with topics like: Marketing your business - who are you selling to? Added value - what are you selling? Posture - what does your company image say about your

company? "The first fence in the National" - making initial first personal contact with prospective clients. Mind set - the thing that glues it all together. As a consultant and a trainer he has helped many companies, both Blue Chip and SME's unlock their potential via a successful, well trained and highly motivated sales operation.

Agenda for the Meeting on 7th March 2006

Speaker - Steven Brewer

Fellow of the Institute of Sales and Marketing

Management and a Member of the Professional Speakers Association

INTERVAL

A.G.M.

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the last AGM

Chairman's Report

Treasurers Report

Election of Officers (Nominations)

Honorary Chairman (David Kevill)

Honorary Vice-Chairman (Steve Ward)

Honorary Treasurer (Mark Howarth)

Honorary secretary (Jon Neal)

Committee Members

(Lisa Thomason, Phil Lancaster, Brian Wilding,

John Thompson, Lynda White, Mark Collins,

Keith Ellison)

Topic Survey for Future Meetings

A.O.B.

Date of Next AGM

Trading Standards NEW CALL CENTRE FOR CONSUMER HELP

PEOPLE will find it easier to get advice from Lancashire Trading Standards with the launch of a new telephone advice service today.

Consumer Direct is a government backed initiative set up to handle all calls to Trading Standards across the North West. From Wednesday 25 January calls from Lancashire customers will go through to Consumer Direct allowing thousands more consumer problems to be dealt with each year.

Lancashire Trading Standards currently deal with more than 50,000 enquiries a year but increasing demand for the service means that almost one in three calls go unanswered during busy periods. A highly trained team of advisers at Consumer Direct will now handle all complaints about consumer issues while referring urgent matters or calls about crime, underage sales and public safety to staff at the Lancashire office.

Consumer Direct is a government backed initiative, funded by the Department of Trade, aimed at supporting Trading Standards advice services by providing first line consumer advice from regional call centres. Consumer Direct is being rolled out throughout the UK following national research which estimated that the unmet demand for consumer advice could be as high as 1.5 million calls per year. Consumers are estimated to lose over £8 billion each year due to faulty goods and services.

The Consumer Direct centre for the North West is based in Barrow-in-Furness and is staffed by advisers who have been trained by Lancashire Trading Standards to ensure current standards of service are maintained.

Consumer Direct can be contacted on 08454 04 05 06 as well as the Trading Standards numbers already in use 01772 533573 and 0845 600 13 52. People who call the existing Trading Standards consumer helpline will be put through to Consumer Direct at no extra cost. The number for Textphone/Minicom users is 08451 28 13 84.

Consumer Direct North West opening times are Monday to Friday 0800 to 1830 and, 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays, excluding bank holidays and public holidays.

Club Bowling Challenge 2006

Over 30 members and friends of the business club gathered at MegaBowl on Tuesday 17th January to contest the annual Ten Pin Bowling Competition, expertly organised again by Phil Lancaster of Euxton Lock Services and Signs.

Tony Harrison and colleagues from South Ribble Business Venture entered two full lanes of six and last years winners BusinessGiftUK.com brought a team of six lead by Club Vice-Chairman Steve Ward. Committee members Graham Archer, Phil Lancaster, Keith Ellison, Jon Neal and John Thomson organised the rest into two further team lanes.

After a short warm up in the bar, the teams played two games of ten frames each to see which side could generate the highest aggregate score. All sides did well for occasional bowlers, no team had less than 1100 points and the winners were, once again, BusinessGiftUK.com.

Steve said afterwards "We had three of last years team absent without leave so Team BusinessGiftUK.com drafted in the expert skills of Ann (three times Mega Flop) Ward, Nicola (I've only bowled with bumpers) Derbyshire and Pete (I can't see that far) Worden to defend the Chorley & South Ribble Business Club bowling trophy. What with son Ben texting with one hand and bowling with the other, plus the reliable Peter Rackham managing to bowl straight while clutching his back, I am delighted with the result".

The MegaStar award for the highest individual game went to Steve "Turkey" Ward with a 161, whilst John Thompson deservedly claimed the MegaFlop certificate with a "Zimmer Fame" assisted 28.



The annual bowling night has struck again!

Left: John Thompson - getting the hang of it - and being awarded his mega flop certificate (below)



Left: Nicola Derbyshire is showing them how its really done.



Right: The two South Ribble Business Venture teams.

Below: Steve Ward of the highest score



Right: The winning team



'Sleeper bugs' used to steal £1m in France

Kim Willsher in Paris for The Guardian newspaper reported an internet crime that we should all be aware of. See full story at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/france/story/0,,1703777,00.html>

Russian thieves have stolen more than £1m (£680,000) from personal bank accounts in France using "sleeper bugs" to infect computers. French authorities claim the thieves can take control of and empty a bank account in seconds. In one hit, a bank customer lost £40,000.

Police say the virus is embedded in emails or websites and remains dormant until the user contacts their bank online. When that happens, the bug becomes active and records passwords and bank codes which are then forwarded to the thieves. They then use the information to check the victim has money in the bank before transferring funds to the accounts of third parties, known as mules, who may have agreed to allow money to pass through their accounts in return for a commission of between 5% and 10%. Police claim this is set up through fictitious companies, including one American firm named World Transfer, although the mules could be unaware that their computers are being used for theft.

A dozen Russian thieves, described by police as being typically aged between 20 and 30, and several Ukrainian masterminds of the scam have been arrested in Moscow and St Petersburg.

The authorities were alerted in November 2004, when a bank customer noticed a large sum missing from his account. This was followed by other reports of theft all over France. In 11 months, the thieves had stolen £1m. Nicolas Woirhaye, a security expert, said the French authorities were alerted to scams every three weeks. He said the best way to beat pirates was to use up-to-date anti-virus software.

"All the French victims were trapped because they didn't have any (computer) protection," he said. This highlights the importance for all computer users to have current anti-virus and firewall software in place. If you are in any doubt as to the level you may be at risk, contact one of our IT member companies such as Jon Neal of Totalscope 01772 721622 or Martin Tyrer of BBTV 01772 334338 and get the protection you need, today.

The Write Stuff for New Promotions

The humble pen has long been a favourite product to support all types of incentives, sales, events and marketing promotions. It is a universally useful tool, lightweight, easily carried or posted and can have a very long advertising life. Careful distribution also ensures every pen reaches an appropriate target, creating goodwill, dialogue and acting as a catalyst to networking. This is great for the keen small business owner, expert in his own trade but who finds it difficult to start a sales conversation. Handing over a pen can break the ice and "buy" a few minutes of a potential customer's time and leaving a lasting reminder of his product, trade or service and contact details. To keep pen ideas and designs fresh, the promotions industry is regularly coming up with new styles, innovations and blatant gimmicks. Recent trends have seen the introduction of colourful translucent chunky barrels, soft rubberised grips and smooth flowing gel inks. The new VERONA pen for 2006 brings these features together as one of the first gel ink, retractable ball pens on the UK market. Available in cerise, blue and black barrels with a long life gel ink refill, individually cello-wrapped, the VERONA can make a big impact from as little as 60p each. There is generous print area of 43x8 mm and you can get a free sample from www.BusinessGiftUK.com, telephone 01772 435010. The pen is being launched with a 10% DISCOUNT off standard prices, which the company will double to a massive 20% for Chorley & South Ribble Business Club members, plus a *FREE SPORTS BAG with every 500 bought, until the end of March.

As a basic promotional item, millions of simple stick pens are sold each each year. Another innovation from BusinessGiftUK.com for 2006 is the TWINCO two colour ball pen. A novel variation on a simple theme, the TWINCO is a stick pen with a different colour refill at each end, twice as useful, twice the life and a tiny price. Available in a white barrel, with a large 50x17mm print area and a choice of red and blue or red and black refill inks with matching end caps. This great value item is also being launched with a 10% DISCOUNT, again doubled to 20% for Business Club members until the end of March. Call BusinessGiftUK.com for a sample and price list and get the TWINCO to carry your message in 2006.

*Free TC225 Travel Class Sport Bag worth £20 with every 500 Verona pens ordered



Did you know about Lancashire's Online Reference Library and the Business Information that is available on it?

You can use the link below for our Online Reference Library which outlines some of the services for business and where access is possible from. The most important service is probably the FAMEDatabase which contains details of UK and Irish registered companies. There are also quite a few business directories and business advice web sites listed on the Web Sites Gateway under Recommended Sites. http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries/online_reference/reference_index.asp

The Harris Reference Library in Preston, along with the other main reference libraries in the county, also holds printed business directories



Dates for the Dairy

March 7th AGM

April 5th Rivca Rubin

Committee contacts

Membership Secretary & Club Contact

- Lynda White

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Secretary

- John Thompson

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- Lisa Thomason

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February Meeting

Vivienne Mee at the flipchart during her inspiring talk on business and personal development for small business entrepreneurs.

February prize winners Hilary Cox and David Kevill. David was lucky enough to win both a bottle of wine in the raffle and a £25 voucher in the members draw. Remember you can win a £25 voucher, to spend with a fellow member, at most regular meetings.



Final meeting picture shows full room as visitor Howard Ashworth introduces himself to the other members and visitors.

Door Step Selling

Trading Standards have received information regarding business representatives of Besafe Security making telephone calls and visits to consumers at their homes in Lancashire.

It has been alleged that a variety of claims have been made over the telephone to consumers, including that the call is from the consumer's insurance company, that Besafe is working on behalf of 50 insurance companies, and that the householder's insurance would be invalid if the caller was not permitted access to security mark valuables.

They would also like to bring to your attention the Consumer Protection (Cancellation of Contracts Concluded Away from Business Premises) Regulations 1987 which apply to contracts for goods or services entered into following an unsolicited visit to a consumer's home. An unsolicited visit includes a visit by a trader which takes place after he, or a person acting on his behalf telephones the consumer and indicates that he is willing to visit the consumer.

It also includes a situation where the trader is visiting after being invited to discuss one type of goods or service, but then unexpectedly discusses another type and a contract for the other good or service is made there and then. Written information about a consumer's right of cancellation of the contract within 7 days beginning on the day after the contract was made must be provided for contracts which exceed £35.

Lancashire Trading Standards Service have been working with Lancashire constabulary and other partners across Lancashire to increase consumer awareness in relation to doorstep crime, in particular distraction burglary, property repairers who cold call, and unscrupulous sellers of goods. Since April 2005 Trading Standards have received over 200 complaints relating to doorstep crime incidents in Lancashire and together with the police are working to try to change the behaviour of consumers in order to deter them from dealing with doorstep callers. If at all possible they would urge businesses who do cold call to try to introduce other methods of obtaining business.

As a service, Trading Standards are proposing to adopt the National Cold Calling Protocol which gives guidelines to callers in relation to making cold calls. In brief, it requires a large ID visible to the ageing eye, with a publicly advertised number to be available for consumers to verify the caller is bona fide. The caller should also give the option of returning when the householder can have someone, of their choosing, with them. No cold caller stickers are available from Margaret Rushton 01257-246384

If you wish to discuss this further, or require information regarding property marking, please do not hesitate to contact Margaret Rushton, Community Crime Prevention Officer, Chorley Police.