

Focus on Progress

Autumn 2007



Year of the Golden Pig

As many of you will know, this is the auspicious Chinese Year of the Golden Pig, which only comes around every 60 years. Hailed as a time of great opportunities and dangers in equal measure, the key for any successful business enterprise is seeing both as challenges worth rising to. Here is a snapshot of some of our challenges this year.



Creative Projects for Students

A crucial element for young people on the road to their career is to embed academic learning through on-the-job working. Work placement has long been an embedded part of some college or university courses, developing both soft and hard skills to complement theoretical knowledge. This year, Chandler Associates responded to two Universities searching for worthwhile projects for their students.

The University of Chester has a national reputation for work-based learning, and this spring we offered a 6 week creative project for an undergraduate student. Their challenge was to get under the skin of our business, and interpret our business ethos, ethics and services by creating a conceptual piece of artwork.

Daniel Price, a graphic design student, worked with Di both here at Colleys Lane and at the University's main campus. He had to be very self-motivated and disciplined, particularly as

we two were out of the country for several weeks, part-way through the project.

The outcome was a maquette of Daniel's fascinating concept piece, which for him depicted the holistic, knowledgeable and supportive way in which we develop our clients' businesses for them. The photo shows Daniel presenting the piece to Diane at the Chester Campus.



Daniel Price presents Di with his concept maquette



Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Crewe Campus provided a student to undertake a marketing project for Mike's EAT charity.

A better understanding of organisations in the music world was needed (see EAT article below) to take an element of the project forward.

A young Belgian graduate who was at MMU on a post-grad course, Vince Erckens, spent 6 weeks on this project.

He researched aspects of the music world and then created a valuable database that EAT will use for a part of the project now funded by Comic Relief.

Mike said that it was a real pleasure to have the opportunity of working with Vince and getting to know a young person from another country, visiting the UK to help develop his skills.



EAT—the Comic Relief project

Readers may be aware that Mike chairs Environment Africa Trust. EAT's latest success has been to win a grant of £25k from Comic Relief, to undertake more research in Tanzania and the UK to fill some knowledge gaps in progressing the Mpingo Conservation Project.

MCP's work in Tanzania is creating a sustainable trade and a chain of custody for Mpingo, the blackwood timber used to make quality woodwind instruments. The first such harvest should be completed late in 2007.

The grant is for researching the supply chain and

obtaining a pre-assessment by Woodmark as part of establishing a certificated supply. The intention is that the very small premium on an instrument's price will, by this means, find its way into the local economy of the villages in Tanzania, for them to invest in their communities.

EAT under Mike's lead, continues to strengthen its governance with plans to recruit a further Trustee.

To learn more about EAT visit:
www.environmentafricatrust.org.uk





Business Continuity Workshop

Early this year, Diane delivered a workshop to Chartered Management Institute members from Cheshire and North Wales, which focused on the crucial importance of planning for business continuity. This is relevant for every business, from the self-employed person through the spectrum to large multi-national corporations. Big businesses do (mostly) take this seriously, but it can so easily be overlooked by SME's.

The whole subject is not rocket science, but regular scenario planning and applied common sense can go a long way, even if some issues may require more specialist advice: feedback by delegates confirmed that an outside eye to review the planning can be invaluable.

Quotes of the Issue



"A leader can be judged by what they leave behind"

Gail Kelly, head of Australia's Westpac Bank

"Not all risks are threats—there may be some opportunities amongst them and if you don't get out of your comfort zone, you won't see them. The real risk is doing nothing at all."

Beverly La Ferla

"Common wisdom sees that a preparedness to lose is a necessary condition of gain."

A C Grayling, philosopher, *The Reason of Things*



Mid Cheshire Hospitals Trust

In his role as a Non-Exec Director at MCHT, Mike has been involved this year in their work to become a Foundation Trust: this is a public benefit corporation, and the future NHS model for acute hospital trusts. He was delighted to be reappointed for a further four year term at the beginning of August, and continues as Chair of the Audit and Assurance Committee.

Please contact us with your feedback!

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World Skills Competitions

World Skills Competitions are held every two years in a different country. This November, Japan is the venue for highly skilled young people from about 40 countries and employed in a wide range of sectors, to compete at the skills equivalent of the Olympics. In 2009, the world will compete in Canada.

In 2011 World Skills comes to London, and all eyes will be upon the skills of the UK's young people. UK Skills is the organisation which leads the Sector Skills Councils' work to enter successful competitors.

This year, Diane has been working with UK Skills in their development of competitions in the engineering sector as we

move towards 2011. The drive is now on to identify and coach young engineers in competitions ranging across Industrial Control, Manufacturing Team Challenge, CNC machining skills, Welding, CADD and Mobile Robotics (a new category) to name but a few.

We are also keen to identify companies who may wish to support this as an innovative opportunity.

For further information, contact Di or visit

www.worldskillslondon2011.com

www.skillschallengecompetitions.org.uk

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