

Steer

Issue 34

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STEER YOUR BUSINESS | THE MAGAZINE

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

A USEFUL LIST OF
SPECIALIST BUSINESSES

Hybrid Working... Are you Ready?

Andy Page

Sell what they are buying:

Is your branding
doing its job?

Christine Hammacott



Editor's Review

As lockdown measures are lifted and life gets back to some sort of normal, we have some fabulous articles to help businesses get back on their feet and start trading again in a way which is sustainable.

Hybrid working is a phrase which has been bandied about a lot recently but what does it actually mean? Would it work for your business? Andy Page of MPH Accountants discusses how it works following the pandemic. It's not for everyone but for some, it's the way forward.

Have you thought about your business and what you want to achieve? Having a social enterprise is something which we often hear about but maybe don't understand exactly what it means. Read what Rebecca Smith, Deputy CEO of Social Enterprise Kent has to say about #buysocial and supporting social enterprises everywhere. They really do some amazing work and deserve our support.

Automation is something which will help make us more efficient, increase productivity and show customers that we are on top of everything but do you have a CRM? Check out Chris Lewry of Pincus Solutions to find out how having a CRM could change your business.

This is just a taste of what's to come in the rest of the magazine. Some great reading for your 10 minute breaks during the day.

Enjoy!



Sally

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News From the Beach!

So many businesses I've been talking to recently have taken the opportunities presented by lockdown to reassess where they are with their business.

For some, this means redressing the balance where things had gone slightly awry, for others it's meant moving courses and classes online. Taking stock once a year is not a bad habit to get into anyway, whether we are in lockdown or not. Revisiting your business plan is something we should all do but many don't. If you were to look at your business plan now, what would it say? Do you still want to achieve the same things? Are they all relevant still? Has life changed? Your customers may be looking for something different now. Has your business adapted? What will the remainder of 2021 look like for your business I wonder.

I know for mine it's a time to focus on what we've achieved so far and build on that foundation. We have a good business model that works but we can do more.

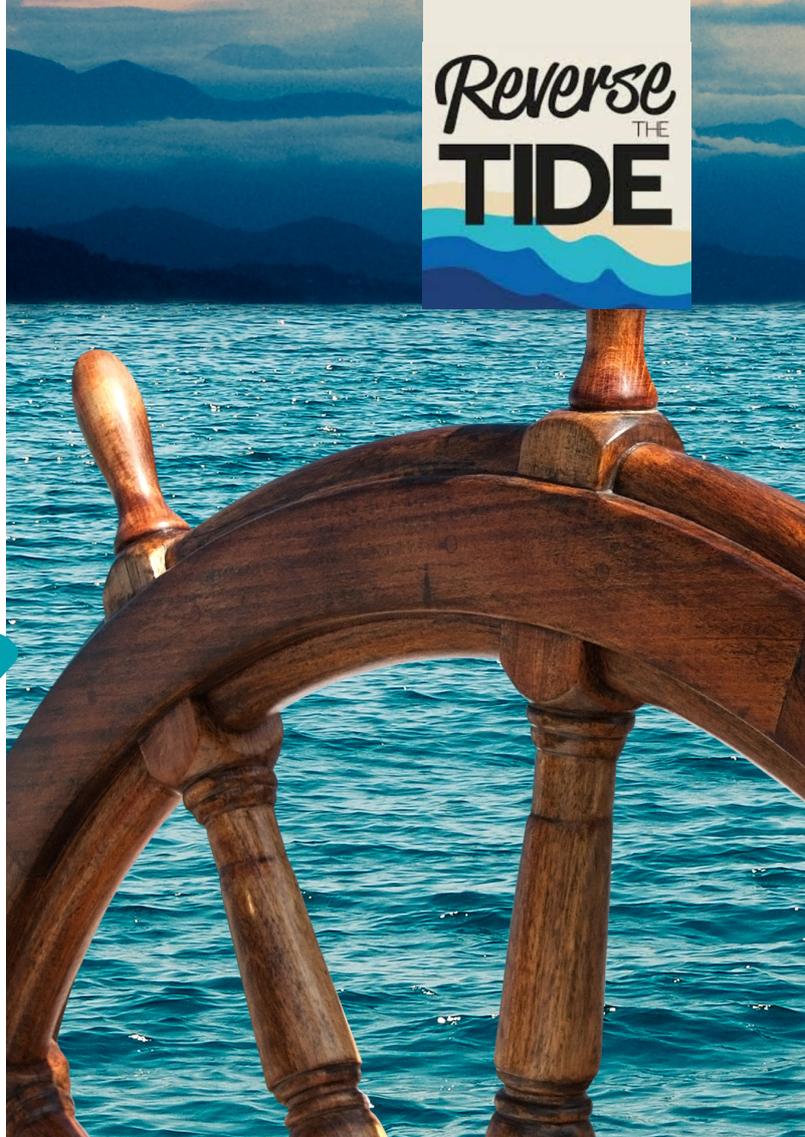
For many business owners, they took everything back in-house to save money, adapt to the changing conditions and stay afloat.

Now is the time to look at that again and start to delegate. There are some great schemes at the moment which enable you to take on staff in your business at very little cost such as the Kickstart scheme. If you had an extra pair of hands to work in your business, which tasks would you offload?

How could you make use of an extra resource to build your business over the next six months?

Taking the time to work ON your business rather than IN your business is time well spent.

Working with a business coach or consultant can bring a new perspective and fresh ideas. Sometimes it's just the simple things which someone else can see but you've missed. You can be too close to your business and not see where the opportunities lie. Having an



“Taking the time to work ON your business rather than IN your business is time well spent.”

external view can be so beneficial that it's worth the hour or two of your time just to sit back and listen. You don't have to take up all the suggestions but one simple tweak might make all the difference to your day.

Take time, work ON your business and enjoy whatever the remainder of 2021 has to bring.

If you'd like to book a call to discuss your business, please book time in my diary:

<https://calendly.com/sally-steeryourbusiness/30min>



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Hybrid Working...



Strategy



Calling



Standby



Video conference

The Covid pandemic has changed the way we work and ushered in a new era of hybrid working – but is your business ready and able to offer this mix of on-site, off-site and remote working?

When businesses were forced to close down their physical offices and workspaces, this brought technology to the fore. We've seen an increased use of remote working, video technologies and cloud-based business solutions – and people have got used to this 'working from home' ethic.

Hybrid working aims to take the best elements of remote working, and to mix these up with the undeniable advantages of working together as an in-person team. If your business is going to embrace this approach then it's likely that employees will be spending some time in the office, some time at home and some time out and about, or at client's worksite – but to do this, your company is going to need to provide the right environment for a hybrid approach.

The key question, then, is whether your business is ready to embrace hybrid working....

Any change in work patterns requires a certain amount of innovation from your business, plus the basic requirements of being able to deliver both remote and in-person working.

To get your business ready for hybrid working, it's crucial to set the right foundations, and this means planning ahead, and keeping an open mind to the benefits of this new approach.

To prepare for a hybrid approach, your business must:

Have the necessary cloud infrastructure – if your employees are going to work from home, or while out on the road, you need your key systems to be in the cloud. Old-school applications on an office-based server are just not going to cut it for hybrid working. Cloud-based accounting, project management, CRM and workflow tools give you the flexibility to work from any location, with one 'point of truth' in the cloud for all your customer information and business data.

Have clear systems and processes – when people are working in different locations, at different times, it's important to have some consistency around how the work is done. To achieve this you need well-defined operational systems, where each task has a pre-agreed process – so the whole team knows when, how and where to carry out their day-to-day work, record notes or raise expenses and bills etc.

Trust your employees to self-manage – when employees are no longer based in the office five days per week, it becomes more difficult to have management oversight. With some people home-working and some out at other locations, you need to place more trust in their ability to self-manage and work to a high standard. Increasing



Are you ready?



Updating



Communication



E-learning



Evaluating

trust and reducing micro-management is key to making a hybrid approach work for the team.

Have performance reporting in place – trusting people to work hard is a given, but you do also need to know if the business is remaining productive. Having some form of performance reporting in place is a good idea, so you can review areas like productivity, staff attendance, sales targets and revenues generated etc.

Empower people to get their jobs done – when you can't all be in the office for the traditional 'stand up team meeting' it can be hard to build team spirit and keep your employees motivated. Try having regular Zoom/Microsoft Teams huddles, where teams come together to talk through the work for the week, and can raise any issues. And also think about distance or in-person social events too, so people can let their hair down and enjoy being part of your business family.

The companies that fully grasp the hybrid working opportunity will be more flexible, more scalable and ready to react to new challenges and changing environments. So, there's real value in forging ahead with this new approach.

If you need any assistance with this please do not hesitate to contact me

“Any change in work patterns requires a certain amount of innovation from your business, plus the basic requirements of being able to deliver both remote and in-person working.”



Andy Page



If you would like to book up your complimentary session, please phone or email me and I will take care of the rest.

Andy Page can be contacted at a.page@mphaccountants.co.uk

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CRM: What do you need to do?

How many times have you tapped away at the computer and berated yourself for not being able to complete what you consider a simple task? I'm betting it's a lot.

Customer Relation Management systems are real 'buzz' products now and rightly so. If we are running a business, then we need a suitable and affordable solution to keep on top of our customers' journey and somewhere to hold their data safely. But just because you need one, that doesn't mean you should know how to use one.

Let me explain.

Recently I received a phone call. "I know I need a CRM system," came the voice, "but I have no idea where to start. I've downloaded a free tool but all I've ended up with is a large online address book." I nod in agreement. "And now," they continue, "I have a list of over 100 tasks. It's overwhelming and I feel stupid. I should know how to use this."

Before responding, I ask what it is they do. Now on safe ground, the caller speaks fluently and with great knowledge and passion and I am engaged. I have not encountered such a business before.

"I had no idea that was possible," I say, "what you do is incredible. I would have no idea where to begin."

The voice on the other end laughed. "Why would you? This is what I've done my whole career, I wouldn't expect you to know."

Boom.

And that's it right there. They wouldn't expect me to know. So why do we think we should be able to download systems and software and instantly make them work? Just because they're 'free' and 'easy to use' doesn't mean they actually are – that's just marketing

speaking. If your boiler sprung a leak you would call a plumber rather than try to plug the hole yourself. It's the same with systems and software.

I have spent my career working with software solutions across a variety of businesses and have been told I can translate 'geek to human', which is key. I take your 'human' IT challenge and convert it to 'geek' so that I can find the most appropriate solution. This I will then deliver, with all relevant resources, in an easy-to-understand way.

Helpdesk support, training of teams, extensive troubleshooting and project management roles throughout my career have all provided the knowledge and skills to bring the right solution to the right problem. This is my passion.

And now it's all about you.

I take time to learn your business and discover what you actually need rather than what you think you do, then find a solution to make your journey possible. This I convert to human, so you don't have to understand the geek. Let's go back to the leaking boiler. It's the same with software solutions. You're not stupid. You're not expected to know. And that's where I come in. Any system I don't know is one I'm excited to learn. For you and with you.



Contact **Chris Lewry** at
www.pincussolutions.co.uk



Chris Lewry

Sell what they're buying:

Is your branding doing its job?

In an increasingly brand conscious world, many business owners underestimate the real value of their branding.

First impressions count and in a crowded and sceptical market-place, it's important to create a positive first impression. Before your business can impart information about its product or service, you need to gain a prospective customer's attention and create a connection. Branding is all about showing that you are 'their kind of business'.

It's worth considering that potential customers will make decisions about your business — so, if you don't make every effort to show them what you want them to know, they will make their own assumptions. Branding is about shaping perceptions.

Unfortunately many business owners are often so caught up in the day-to-day running of their work that their brand gets neglected. Just look at the number of established companies that are struggling, simply because they haven't moved on and are still relying on outdated approaches. These companies are often overtaken by newer ones. Frequently the only real difference between their products or services is the perceptions around them. Branding is about making you stand out.

In the past your logo was key to your branding and with basic design software now readily available some business have gone down the DIY route or opted for a cheap online design that may or may not be appropriate. But a logo on its own isn't enough in today's marketplace. Brand strategy needs to be at the heart of your approach as it will steer your visual elements, key messaging and marketing approach. Understanding what you are supplying and what your target audience really needs is paramount. If you are a business owner who knows you should do marketing and social media but simply don't know where to start, an in-depth understanding of what your brand does, its ethos, mission, and positioning, will give you a much

Stand Out Be Proud



Branding is an important part of building a business reputation. Strong branding shows that you mean business.

For clarity on the brand strategy, brand elements or visual identity for your business, please give us a call.

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clearer approach and plenty to say in your marketing. Branding is ultimately about winning business.

Let's look at a quick example. A business sells widgets into the manufacturing industry. Who is the key decision maker buying the widgets? Is it the shopfloor manager who needs the fastest delivery, the procurement department who want the cheapest price, or the MD who wants to know it is the best product? Depending on who the target buyer is will determine how the business selling the widgets will want to be perceived and the messaging they will use.

Over the last couple of decades things have really changed around branding as customers have become more savvy and now have every opportunity to voice their opinions. These days your company must demonstrate to potential clients that it is a player in its industry, that it knows its business and knows about business, and that it cares about its customers. That it is positioned for a particular target audience and has credibility. That its product or service solves a problem or fulfils a desire, after all many products are purchased with emotion rather rationale. Your business needs to convince any contact (whether customer, supplier, employee, end-user, contractor, bank manager, etc..) that it knows what it is doing, where it is heading and exactly how it intends to get there. Your branding is the key to everything.



Christine Hammacott



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“Numbers is not my Strength” ...

Many business owners struggle with finance.

Perhaps you hated maths at school. But a great understanding of your numbers is critical for every business.

When your Accountant sends you the year end accounts, do you know your accruals from your provisions? Your trade debtors from your trade creditors? And what is deferred tax?

The year end Accounts are not much use to you right now because they are historic and you need to know the crucial numbers going forwards. Right?

Most businesses fail because of a lack of foresight on cashflow. The next most common reason is a lack of consistent sales. Many businesses have peaks and troughs of new customers and eventually an extended trough sees them run out of cash. These two factors are closely interlinked.

There are twelve key numbers in every business. All these numbers are directly linked together. So, when you change one of them, all the others change too. Due to space, I am going to focus on just one- leads.

So, this is step one of new customers. It is the number at the top of the sales funnel. Although never forget, that more sales to existing customers is 700% cheaper! So start with them first.

Leads could be the number of website visitors or number of homes that receive a flyer or number of visitors to your stand at a trade show etc. There are lots of variations depending on what business you are in and the type of marketing you are doing.

A client recently told me that his newspaper advert was working well as the number of leads had gone up. Great news! So, how often does he ask his potential customers where they have come from?

Errm- he doesn't. He has just assumed that the two were related. They might have been but it might have

been some enquiries from his website! Now based on his gut feel, he is going to carry on spending money in the local rag and potentially waste time and money in the wrong area.

Now, I have read many business books and “gut feel” has never appeared as best business practice!

So you and your team, must SYSTEMATICALLY ask every single time, when an enquiry arrives. And you must record it, so that you have an accurate record. Potential customers in my experience, will always tell you, if asked. But you must be as specific as possible, so that you can fine tune your resources.

For example, if someone says “internet”, then that is too vague. Was it from:

- A directory- if so, which one?
- A blog- if so direct from your website or which social media platform?
- A google search? What specific key words did they use?

Can you see how valuable this level of detail is in fine tuning your marketing activity and spend?



Malcolm Sackman



TEN Accountants specialise in helping business owners better understand, measure and improve their cash flow and key profit drivers. Visit our website www.tenaccountants.co.uk or email malcolm@tenaccountants.co.uk for more information.

Guest speaker at the forthcoming Great British Business Show <https://www.greatbritishbusinessshow.co.uk/>

How did that happen?



Robin sat with the latest financial reports staring into space after seeing another period of lackluster results. Even though the business was profitable and generating a good income for the family, Robin was confident the business could generate better results.

A familiar set of questions rolled through Robin's mind: How did that happen? How can I get better results? Reviewing some of the decisions that had been made in recent months, Robin realized that some less-than-optimal decisions had been made under pressure. The results of those decisions were showing up on the business results.

Robin's conversation occurs in the minds of many business owners. Results are directly connected to decisions made by leaders: decisions about what resources to acquire and how to employ them in achieving the business's mission. When under pressure, our brains make more emotional decisions (limbic lobe), and the much smarter and logical parts of our brain (parietal and frontal lobes) are silenced. There are strategies all leaders can use to improve their decision making by working with the brain!

Sleep

Adequate rest is critical to make decisions from a state of competency. Sleep deprivation incapacitates people - just ask a new parent! When business owners deprive themselves of 7 - 8 hours of nightly sleep, they are working in a sub-optimal state. Other factors that influence rest include the use of drugs and alcohol and shift work. Pairing enough sleep with good quality sleep supports cognitive performance. Leaders give themselves the capacity to make better decisions by getting enough high-quality sleep.

Time of Day

We make millions of decisions every day and many of them are automatic, subconscious decisions such as breathing. Fortunately, our brain has the capacity to make an infinite number of decisions like that. Many business decisions are not automatic, and the brain has a finite capacity to make these decisions each day. By the time the end of the day arrives, the capacity is diminished. Decision fatigue sets in and our brain starts making the easiest decision which may not be the most optimal decision. Often this decision is the least risky choice, generally a "no" decision rather than a "yes" one. To make better decisions, sleep on it! Instead of burning the midnight oil, rise early to make all the important decisions when your brain is well rested.

Process

A simple process can help eliminate or reduce bias in decision making and manage the emotional brain. Having a process to follow or rules established bring discipline to the situation ensuring risks are assessed, feasibility is investigated, and the unintended consequences are considered. Buy yourself time to manage the emotional brain allowing the logical brain to leverage facts, experiences and memories to make more optimal decisions. To make more optimal decisions, utilize decision making processes for strategic decisions in your company.

Robin took another look at the reports and decided to call it a night. Tomorrow morning, the work would begin on creating a decision-making process designed to make better resource allocation decisions. Lots of changes were on the way, starting with Robin's commitment to manage the emotional brain and improve habits to support better decision making.



Laura Bechard



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Social Enterprise: How business should be?

Social enterprises are businesses that are changing the world for the better.

Like traditional businesses they aim to make a profit but it is what they do with their profits that sets them apart – reinvesting or donating them to create positive social change... It is business for good and when they profit, society profits. However, all businesses regardless of their set up have a role to play in creating a fairer, more sustainable world.



Social enterprises are optimistic for the future. Research from Social Enterprise UK shows that social enterprises are much more positive than traditional SMEs about their growth prospects. Their January Social Enterprise Advisory Panel (200-300 respondents per month) found that 30% of social enterprises expected growth and 65% expected to grow or maintain their current position over the next 6 months. This compares to the FSB's Voice of Small Business Index Q4 which reported its second-lowest reading on report for SME business optimism.

Social enterprises exist in nearly every sector from consumer goods to healthcare, community energy to creative agencies, restaurants to facilities management. Well known examples include The Big Issue, Divine Chocolate and the Eden Project but there are over 100,000 social enterprises throughout the country contributing £60 billion to the economy and employing two million people.

Social Enterprise Kent (SEK) is one such example closer to home. SEK has been helping people, communities and businesses in Kent and Medway since the 80s. It successfully created an amazing social care company, All Seasons Community Support CIC, that delivers over 4000 hours of care to vulnerable people allowing them to remain living independently in their own home. Over the last 20 years, SEK has gone on to develop several community projects including Ageless Thanet which aims to reduce loneliness and social isolation in the over 50 population, social prescribing, wellbeing, and other projects aimed at reducing health inequalities. This year SEK was proud to receive a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of their exceptional volunteer team, and their CEO, Claudia Sykes, received an OBE in the New Year Honours list.



Through their employment support programmes, SEK has also helped over 700 people get into work or training opportunities in the last 12 months. They help social entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses and provide networking opportunities and peer support programmes.

SEK's commercial training company (www.sektraining.org.uk) delivers a wide range of training for all sectors from business compliance, digital skills, through to leadership training and sector specific support. This is delivered both face-to-face but also via Zoom or elearning, to over 4000 people every year.

Deputy CEO, Rebecca Smith, says "In the last 12 months, organisations like Social Enterprise Kent and our fellow social enterprises have been called upon more than ever to support people and communities from delivering food parcels and prescriptions to checking in with their neighbour to make sure they're ok. People have really stepped up to help give their community a helping hand. I hope this continues and all businesses think a little more about how they can be socially minded."



Rebecca Smith



For more information about social enterprise or SEK, please email info@sekgroup.org.uk, visit www.sekgroup.org.uk or phone 01227 469 970.

Who are you?

You have a couple of seconds to make a good impression on your prospective client with the way your company looks - what did it say?

Ask any graphic designer - branding is one of the most important investments you can make to your business's marketing, it gives your company a face. The question you need to ask yourself is what sort of face are you giving your business?

We all like and want beautiful things, from smart phones to fancy cars. They are all beautifully designed, unique and exude perfection.... so why not do the same for your business? Create a face for your business that is beautiful.

Branding is not just your logo. It's the entire package, from the colours you choose for your clothing, van or promotional items to the fonts you use on your letterhead. Making the decision to invest properly in a bespoke, logo and brand is well worth it. It says to your prospective client, that you know what you are doing and your company can be trusted and is a good choice.

Don't be tempted to choose a quick logo off a template site. They are a "dime-a-dozen" logos, they say nothing about your companies values and expertise. In fact that statement is not right, it does say something - the wrong thing! Not to mention it's probably been used hundreds of times before you.... how unique is your brand then?

Even if your business has been around a while, updating a tired, old logo can do wonders for a brand. It says to your clients that you are progressive, innovative and are changing with the times, and keep moving forward.

The latest trend is "Debranding" - companies are opting for the "less is more" approach. Simplifying their once over produced logos into friendlier and cleaner logos. Some have even been bold enough to take off the text on their logos entirely and go straight to a symbol - that is confidence in your brand! Nike, and Apple, are examples of this - Their logo is just a symbol, but seen and instantly you will know who they are. That is the power of a brand.

Invest in your own brand, use it, flaunt it, it's beautiful and customers and clients want to work with "beautiful".



Kathy Marchant



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Here is some very important information that you don't want or need.

I am literally desperate to tell you my story! Not because I think YOU need to hear it, but because I know that in the next 5 years everyone that reads this article WILL meet someone that needs to know what I didn't know and this article will ensure that you can help them to find it faster than I did!

In pursuit of this mission I have attended zoom networking meetings up and down the country and watched as my fellow business owners, rolled their eyes, started making calls or generally squirmed And that was just for my 60 second pitch!

I suppose I'm Zoom's equivalent of a street hawker, and like them I have persevered, because although everyone assumes they can tell what I do by my zoom title so they don't need to know what I'm talking about and I know no one wants to hear what I have to say I shall keep saying it because sooner or later someone will need to hear it.

Let me take you back to 2002, when my husband and I were expecting our second child. As I'm sure you can imagine, plenty of people asked us the standard question: what we were hoping for: a girl or a boy. And I imagine you also know exactly what our answer was! Yes the standard one! And I suspect that the next one was about names.

No one ever asked us what we would do if we didn't get a healthy one! No one ever does, nor should they; but sooner or later some of us need to know where to find help when things don't go to plan, and this is where you can help me.

Being told that your child is going to die is totally devastating and extremely bewildering. In addition to the shock and the reality of processing such news you are then also overwhelmed by the realization that you do not know anyone else that has ever been in this situation, who will guide you through this unexpected alien world. We'd had an incident during labour that starved our daughter of oxygen, left her profoundly disabled and we were told that she wouldn't make it through the night, the week or the month.

Although her progress was imperceptible her condition did start to stabilize and at 10 weeks old our daughter was finally "well" enough to come home. It was at this point that it was first suggested that we should seek the love, care and support of Demelza House Children's hospice.

Like most people when it was first mentioned all I could hear was the last word of that sentence, the word that confirmed what I already knew, that our daughter was dying. We declined their help and carried on on our own.

The hospitals continued to advise us on Elke's prognosis and train us on equipment she needed, exercises to give, along with administering medication and feeding her via a tube; but their job was to care just for the patient, there was no regard for the rest of the family whose world had become akin to a snow globe in a tumble drier. After 2 relentless years of being her nurse, physiotherapist, advocate, taxi driver, entertainer, chef, bottle washer, cheerleader and PA, with more than 300 days spent in or at hospitals I

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was burnt out and found myself bursting into tears telling one of the community nurses that I couldn't think straight & I definitely couldn't function anymore. Again they mentioned that I should seek the love, care and support of Demelza House Children's Hospice. My immediate response was, "Why do I need a hospice, Elke's not even unwell at the moment, let alone dying! This is just what our normal life looks like now and I can't see a way to cope. I was gobsmacked by the reply:

"Demelza is not just there to provide end of life care; they said, "it is also there to provide love care and support not just for the life limited child, but for the whole family."

WOW! Why hadn't I known this before ? What I had failed to understand was that No matter how long Elke remained with us, Demelza would support us from diagnosis through all her milestones; and whilst supporting us they would be getting to know us all so that when her short life came to a close they would know us well enough to better support us through that time too.

Perhaps I had been too hasty at the offset, or not open to hearing about what work Demelza does as I was put off by the "H" word , a mistake that so many families make.

So let me briefly tell you some of the amazing ways in which Demelza have supported. They initially offered a break for the four of us to stay at the Hospice in Sittingbourne. WOW ! It felt like we were on an all inclusive holiday; they had literally thought of everything: we played in the ball pit, the hydrotherapy pool , made music and I had time for my first bath in 2 years.

The house was full of the happy smiling faces of other families that understood exactly what we were going through and many of them have become friends. We refer to each other as Our Demelza Family.

We have now been a Demelza family for 16 years, and our daughter Elke recently celebrated her 18th birthday. We know she is increasingly frail but still inspirationally determined to get the most out of every day she has. Without Demelza's support we wouldn't have discovered how to cope with the snow globe moments we've experienced and we are grateful for the many memory making events, and activities we have been involved in over the years for Elke, my husband and I, our son, grandparents, aunts uncles and cousins. Elke has had 121 music therapy and we've also enjoyed family sessions, there has been plenty



of art therapy, time in the pool, gardens and enjoying picnics and seasonal parties. I'm so very glad that people continued to offer to tell us about Demelza even though we had initially said NO.

Whilst I sincerely hope that none of your family ever needs the support of a children's' hospice I trust that when you do meet a family that may you are able to offer them a well needed lifeline by suggesting they contact their local Children's hospice for the love, support and care that the family will need no matter how short their time as a whole family may be.

**Please do join me on Friday
25th June in wearing Shorts
for Short lives - I need to
see those knees!**



Glynnis
Wisbey



Contact **Glynnis Wisbey** on
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07986 252 558

Why is a *good diet* important for business owners?

In my career as a nutritionist, I have met many people who wish to lose weight. They believe that reducing or even cutting fat out of their diet is the answer. But it isn't.

We need fat in our diet in the correct balance to function every day. What this means essentially is that we should be trying to achieve the right ratio of Omega 3 fatty acids to Omega 6.

Omega 3 can be found in animal products such as fatty fish and eggs and helps with our vision, heart and brain health. Omega 6 can be found in vegetable oils, nuts and seeds and eaten in moderation can also be good for your heart.

But why are we focusing just on these two fatty acids?

Because these are the only two that our body is unable to produce by itself.

The recommended proportional intake for these two fats is 3:1 - three lots of Omega 6 to every one of Omega 3. These are the optimal levels for health, weight and wellbeing and can easily be checked by a simple dry bloodspot test. What is interesting though, is that those who we would consider to be 'healthy', often don't have the correct ratio of these two fatty acids, largely because it can be challenging to get the balance right through diet.

Globally, the picture isn't great. On average across Northern Europe the 6:3 ratio is 15:1 and in the USA can be as high as 25:1. Clearly something needs to change, and education is a huge part of that.

During the early 20th century our food sources and diets were very different. By necessity people grew their own produce, and supplies from overseas were not as readily available. Similarly, fast food was not around. Today our diet landscape has evolved and, whilst we are tending towards our own sustainability again, it can be argued that the quality of fresh ingredients such as meat, fish and vegetables are not as rich in nutrients as they once were. In addition, these nutrients have become more complex and harder for our bodies to digest due to additives and processing. We know that our gut is the origin of many health-related issues so it is perhaps unsurprising that a poor balance of (unabsorbed) fats can be detrimental.



Almost 2,000 years ago, Hippocrates observed the importance of our gut and the value of its role in our health and wellbeing. Now, with the changes to our food and diet, it is harder than ever to achieve the ideal ratio of nutrients, especially Omega 6 to Omega 3.

That's why my passion is to educate people.

I want to help you understand exactly what you are eating so that every food choice you make is guided and informed. That way, if you're looking to lose weight or just simply want a healthier diet, you will know what you are consuming and whether the fats are in the right proportion to achieve your goal.



Elnette Parsons



To find out more about Omega 3 and 6 and the overall balance of nutrients and their effects on your health, please contact me, **Elnette Parsons** on **07414 008 802** or **info@elnettoparsons.com**

Why occasionally it's good to sweat the small stuff!

In business, an awful lot of gurus speak about how you just need to think of that big idea or work out the big stuff, and the rest will fall into place. But there are some of us who do the complete opposite.

From our cooking lessons at school through to adulthood, the majority of us are taught to ensure we have enough protein, fats and carbohydrates to grow up healthy and strong. But what about the micronutrients that are needed to fuel the body to perform and sleep soundly?

What about going further? In each cell of our bodies, we house our DNA, the workhorse of our being. Our DNA replicates and creates different substrates that allow us to renew vital cells within our bodies to enable us to perform and produce important hormones that regulate our sleep-wake cycle.

We all know running our own business is tough—it requires lots of hours and a solid understanding of how to do certain tasks. So, why do we not personalise our nutrition, helping us to think outside of the box and perform optimally? Nutrigenomics is about how we fuel our bodies specifically to our own genomes, which means fuelling the body to keep it healthy so we can perform these complex tasks and maximise rest and restoration when asleep.

It's really interesting to learn that we produce a sleep hormone called melatonin, sufficient levels of which are needed to promote sleep. When the body senses darkness, either inside or outside, this is a signal that it's time to get ready to sleep.

There are many disruptors of melatonin production, such as too much light at night – in particular, blue light from electronic devices. Some experts believe all mobile phones, tablets and laptops should be banned from the bedroom to minimise blue light exposure!

There are very limited foods that contain melatonin in any great quantity that would have an effect on supporting sleep. But melatonin production has food at its root! An essential amino acid called tryptophan is the source of this process. Food sources of tryptophan include turkey, eggs, fish, sesame seeds, pumpkin and cheese.

Genetics can also play a vital role in melatonin production. For some, just understanding if they need to support their sleep cycle by adopting a healthier relationship with technology or increasing their tryptophan intake could make all the difference to a better night's sleep, while for others, genetics is the missing link.

Two genes, called TPH1 and TPH2, are involved in the first step of melatonin production, which converts



tryptophan into a molecule called 5-HTP. For some, this conversion is not as efficient as for others, and therefore, you may be able to support this vital step by including suitable amounts of tryptophan in your diet.

Understanding nutrigenomics for high performers such as businessowners, business leaders or athletes is your way of sweating the small stuff – totally personalised nutrition.

Team Gene

Nutrigenomics for athletes



Karen Harrison



Karen Harrison is one of fewer than 40 in the UK to gain an MSc in nutrigenomics. Her company, Team Gene, was set up during the pandemic and has gone from strength to strength, helping athletes to maximise energy production, enhance repair potential and improve sleep/lifestyle choices. She has come to realise her testing and information is not only suitable for sports but also for high-performing business leaders and owners and is therefore launching an easy-to-digest version of each report for you.

Karen can be reached at karen@teamgene.co.uk. Alternatively, if you are interested in any of the reports, please place an order via www.teamgene.co.uk/buy-reports.

Readers can gain a 15% discount by using **sally15** in the promo code area in the checkout page.

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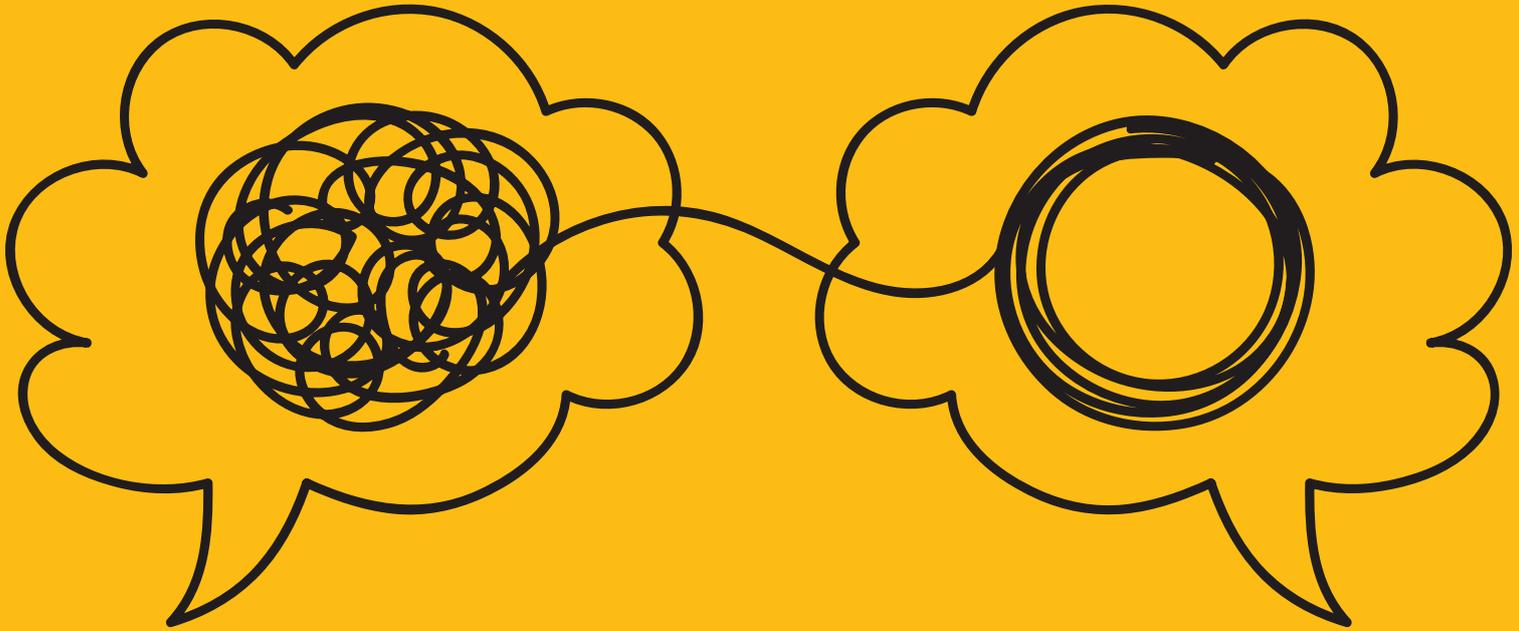
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