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Brand new

Making the most
of marketing and
communications

Press ahead

How the media has
moved with the times

Inner beauty

Putting people at the
heart of your business

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May's theme

Transport & Connectivity

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APRIL 2021

Focus on **Media & Communications**



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Chamber Talk

ABOUT a million years ago, certainly in another life when I was a young news reporter, I remember a former editor sitting me down and telling me the best way to write a news article was to approach it the same way I'd tell my friends a story in the pub – albeit with less booze and swearing.

News and media has changed radically in the years since I left newspapers, how it's delivered, how we consume it, how quickly we get it, who it comes from – so our features this month take a look at how the media, marketing and communications sectors have evolved and what that means for modern businesses.

From getting to grips with search engine optimisation to creating impactful digital content and understanding how a solid e-commerce strategy can transform your sales pipeline, we're talking smart marketing with a range of member companies who are helping businesses across the region and beyond.

We've also spoken to our local media outlets to see how they are responding and what technological advances have meant in terms of advertising and editorial opportunities for companies of all sizes, shapes and sectors in the North-east.

At the Chamber we understand how important it is for companies to raise their profile and drive sales. With some companies looking at decreased marketing budgets this year, as well as the advice being shared in our features, we've also developed a new series of 'How 2' workshops which launch this month and will provide practical insights and advice on a wide range of topics to help members boost their business.

By members, for members, the first two sessions will focus on marketing and communications and will include some of the companies who have contributed to this issue. So whether you are completely new to the world of marketing or looking to find out more on a particular topic, make sure you keep an eye on the Events listings on our website to see what's coming up.

And if there's a topic you would particularly like to see covered by a workshop, email me or my team here at the Bulletin and we'll see what we can do!

In pulling this issue together, despite many things being different to how it was even 10 (never mind almost 20) years ago, it's been reassuring to see that the advice my old editor gave me still stands.

Because when you boil it down, good communication always has people at its core. Even when it's about products, it's about how those products help people do what they need to do. So our final feature this month looks at the importance of internal communication and how to take your workforce with you during times of great change.

There has never been a time when effective communication has been more important to businesses than it has been for the past year - and will continue to be for a long time

to come, so I hope you find this an interesting read and look forward to seeing lots of creative new content from Chamber members popping up across various platforms in the weeks and months ahead.



Laura Grant
*head of communications
& marketing*





CHRYSAOR



Our partners

As well as helping our member businesses to be better through a range of activities, the Chamber is committed to investing a significant amount of energy in moving forward the economic growth agenda and lobbying for change on key issues to create the conditions for success. Our regional renaissance.

Without the support of our Premier Partners, we would not be able to undertake much of the good work that we do. Their engagement is hugely valued and appreciated.

If you'd like to find out more contact our membership and events director, Seona Shand

T 01224 343929 E seona.shand@agcc.co.uk

Three future headlines we must avoid

THIS edition of the Business Bulletin focuses on communications and the media. PR professionals are adept at ensuring that good news from their businesses and clients makes the front pages. But a less seen part of their role is the behind the scenes work they do to make sure that negative stories never see the light of day.

So, what do we need to do now, collectively, as residents and the business community of this region, to avoid waking up to these headlines one day in the not-too-distant future?

Why Europe's oil and gas capital failed to grasp the opportunity to become a global hub for new energy technologies

Being at the heart of the drive to develop and deliver green energy solutions is, perhaps, a bigger and longer term economic opportunity for the region than when oil was discovered in the North Sea in the 60s and Aberdeen secured first mover advantage as the operations hub.

The collective expertise, innovation and skills across operators, supply chain, universities and other partners mean we are well placed to repeat this now - we have the momentum. And why not, this time make sure we get a larger slice of the research and development pie too, as much of this work in oil and gas took place elsewhere.

Now that funding has been secured from UK and Scottish Governments, we must ensure that nothing stops the development of the Energy Transition Zone. And it's also vital that the North Sea Transition Deal is delivered at pace.

As important as cash support is the clear message that the North-east of Scotland is viewed by government as a global clean energy hub. To succeed, we need to get our narrative straight and amplify the message that Europe's oil and gas capital is not the root of the climate change problem but very much at the heart of the solution.

Aberdeen city centre resembles a barren desert

Cities are a finely balanced eco-system of retail, culture, hospitality, residential and offices with people at their heart. If any of them are out of balance then the others are likely to fail. Changing retail habits were already threatening this and CV19 restrictions have exacerbated the situation.

So, to have confirmation of a refreshed city centre masterplan with an extended footprint is really positive news as we take the urgent action needed to recover from this setback.

It's great to see Aberdeen City Council take the lead but bold initiatives like this can only succeed with the public and private sectors working in partnership. The Chamber looks forward to supporting the development of the updated plan as it did in phase one, which has resulted in a number of hugely exciting additions to our city centre.

Current policy seems to be indicating a shift to '20-minute neighbourhoods' but this must not be at the expense of our cities. And the Chambers of Commerce in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh are working with partners to publish Urban AGE II, a report designed to demonstrate the pivotal role our three major cities will play in

Scotland's economic recovery and the support and conditions they will need to succeed.

Region loses race to recover from COVID

We need to make sure we are on the start line, revs high, if we are to compete in what will be a highly fierce competition between places to secure the conditions, investment and skills that will drive recovery and growth post CV19. What are some of the key actions we need to take?

Firstly, we need a strong suite of compelling investor-ready projects. We must lobby for government policy and funding that reflects this region is not seeking handouts but has a strong track record of returning handsomely on investment made here.

Although the energy transition piece is vital, we must quickly rebuild momentum behind the wider regional economic and sector diversification strategies. Our tourism, food and drink, life sciences and digital sectors all have a role to play in delivering the inclusive growth we need.

Aberdeen more than any other region of the UK is dependent on air connectivity to enable our internationally-focused economy and ensure we do not become a distant Northern outpost. Securing the future of our airport and connections to key hubs and cities will be central to our recovery and the Chamber will continue to work hard in supporting AGS Airports to do this.

Then there's self-help. It's important that we learn lessons from the last year but avoid self-fulfilling prophecies arising from the notion that everything we did before March 2020 was bad.

Whether with our consumer or business hats on we **must** start

Make your voice heard

ABERDEEN & Grampian Chamber of Commerce is seeking to better understand the issues, challenges and opportunities facing North-east businesses in 2021 and beyond.

We are inviting all businesses across the region to take part in a new survey to help us understand their priorities in the months ahead.

The results will help inform our lobbying, economic development and campaign activities as well as ensuring the business support services that we offer are aligned with the needs of our communities.

This isn't just about Chamber members, it's about the whole regional business universe. Large, small, established, new, Aberdeen city and Aberdeenshire. And across all sectors.

It's vital we all pull together to ensure the businesses of the North-east have the best possible chance of recovery.

The survey can be found on the agcc.co.uk homepage. Please take part and encourage others to respond as well so we have the fullest and most accurate picture possible.

Without your backing, the Chamber could not do the work it does supporting businesses and creating the economic conditions for the future economic success of the region.



thinking 'local first' when making purchases or procuring goods and services. Visit northeastnow.scot, set up by the Chamber and our partners to provide inspiration and information about local suppliers.

Finally, we *Absolutely* must talk ourselves up if we are to succeed as a place. No one else is going to do that for us. Yes, we have been bruised by recent events but we are not alone, everywhere is in the same boat. We still have so many strengths and reasons to be cheerful, so let's not keep them to ourselves. Don't forget to use the resources at absolutely.com

Russell Borthwick
chief executive



Prepare to supercharge your brand

THE past year has seen an enforced transformation of people's shopping habits but the inability to visit the High Street, or in fact any street, has only accelerated the move to online which was already gathering significant pace. It has also directed a spotlight on companies' digital marketing strategies and the major opportunities that exist for those smart enough to grab them.

"We are in an advanced digital age and I think even before CV19 an e-commerce site was a 'must have' for any company in retail," said Spencer Buchan, founder and co-owner of Quantum Digital Scotland, a global digital media and virtual content creation agency. "The problem was they thought that having a website and doing a bit of social media was enough.

"What companies should be doing, and probably are now doing in greater numbers, is putting together a real digital marketing strategy. It's not enough to just to have a website sat there. You have to continually look at the content and constantly update and refresh it because Google likes new relevant content."

He said companies should be aware of Google Analytics, a paid

for service which reveals how your website is performing, who is searching for your site and, if they are on it, how long for, what they are looking at and the areas of interest to them.

"It's important for Chamber members to have a clear objective and strategy for their digital marketing - know what they are trying to achieve, understand how their potential customers are behaving and shape their digital footprint based on their customers' requirements."

"Vital to success, however, is the website. The dwell time on websites is extremely low - a couple of minutes at the most - and if you have a website that is slow to react, the visitor or potential customer will not hang around."

Adam Bell is technical director of Moment which was born in 2018 with the singular mission of bringing modern marketing to the masses. His skills have taken him around the globe to Edinburgh, London, Melbourne and Leeds before returning to the north of Scotland which he feels is significantly behind the curve on digital marketing.

"For example, there is a search engine marketing conference called 'SearchLeeds' which is held

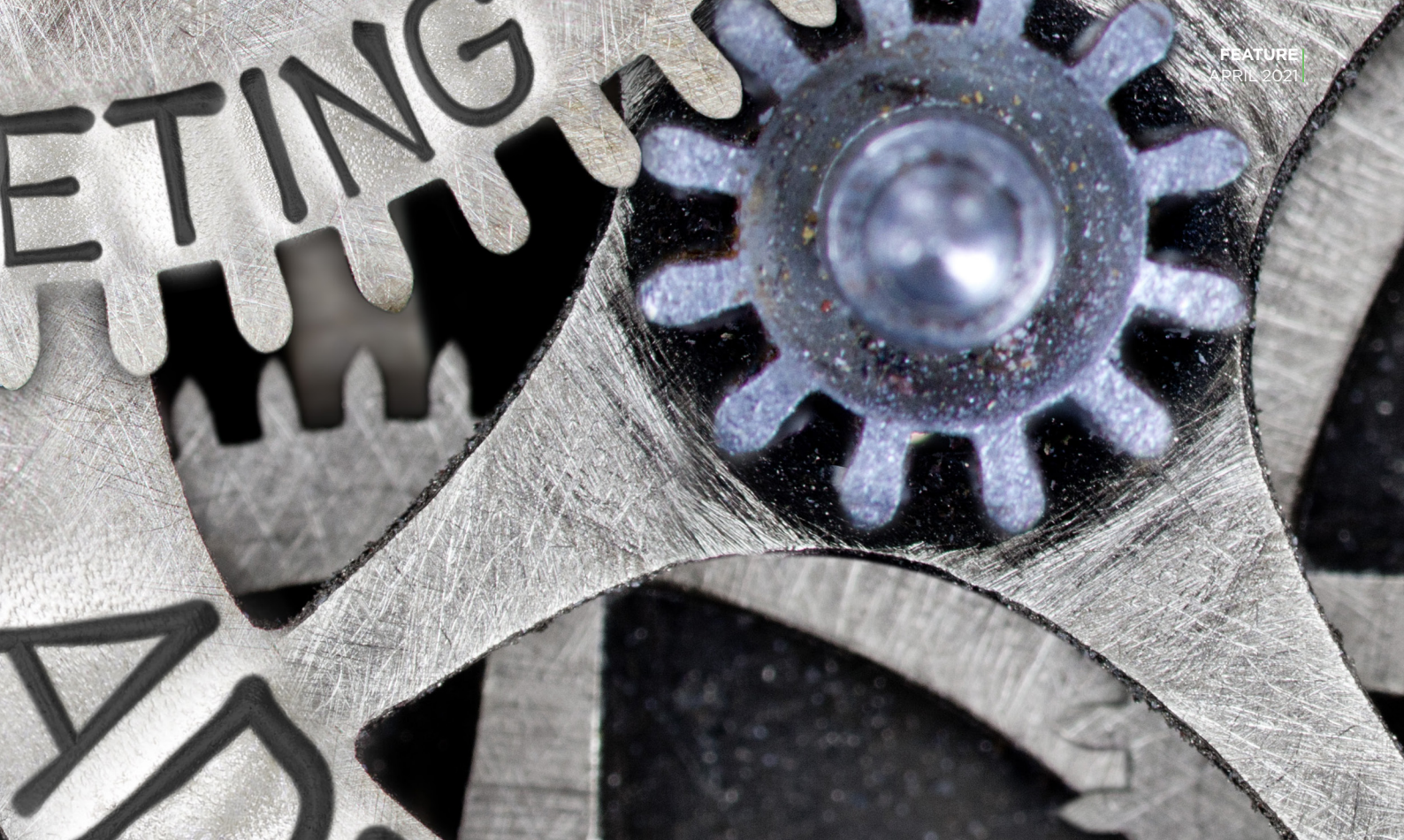
every year with 3,000 delegates and 'brightonSEO' is held twice every year in the Brighton Pavilion with 10,000 delegates but we have nothing like that here at the moment," said Adam.

"Results on the first page of Google receive at least 75% of total website clicks and that means that the results on page two and beyond share a maximum of 25% of the remaining search traffic and that kind of statistic makes it hard to justify not having at least some form of search engine marketing strategy in place.

"For businesses 'search' is such a fantastic platform. It comes with intent built in. If people are searching for something, they typically take one of four actions. They either want to: know something, go somewhere, do something; or buy something.

"Because of the intent that goes into each search term the opportunity for business is understanding what those exact terms are and then developing their content strategies from a landing page, website optimisation or advertising point of view around that information. So search, if you tap into it, can literally tell you what people want.

"A good starting point is to carry out a technical assessment of your



website using some of the tools out there that will let you run a free audit. People tend to build a website and do SEO to it and think 'that's it done'. In actual fact SEO is an ongoing process. The thing that's most likely to improve your rankings and get you onto page one and in with a shout of 75% of web clicks is content. It's adding material to your site on a regular basis.

"Focus on the kind of content which adds value to your potential customers because it answers the questions they have. You want to make your website the go-to resource for information in your niche to be more relevant to people so you will be found more often and will convert more of those who find you."

An outstanding example of e-commerce success is Inverurie-based fine foods company Donald Russell. For over 40 years it has supplied Michelin starred restaurants and luxury hotels across the UK and worldwide, and in the past seven years has gathered more than 300,000 five-star customer reviews.

Jason Stewart is the company e-commerce and digital manager who has a passion for digital and is the brand's expert in this area.

"We strive to ensure that our digital marketing efforts present our brand in front of consumers who want award-winning fine food delivered to their door and on a date of their choosing," he explained.

Donald Russell's e-commerce revenues more than doubled last year and website visitors more than trebled as the company continued with its ambitious digital growth plans. Now, the majority of new customers choose to order via the website and there has been a 50% growth in the ratio of orders placed online versus over the phone.

"To accelerate our digital growth we have invested a significant amount of our marketing budget on TV advertising during prime-time viewing and on networks and programmes relevant to our target audience. We also formed nationwide partnerships with several high-profile brands placing our offers on partner websites and within their promotions to drive quality, engaged traffic to donaldrussell.com.

"During our growth journey we have overhauled our digital marketing strategy to utilise search engine and social media marketing, resulting in substantial increases in organic and paid traffic.

"Last year we acquired a significant increase in new customers to Donald Russell versus 2019, and this growth has been sustained by really considered and optimised digital marketing efforts. We welcomed millions of visitors to our e-commerce site and are continuously improving the website functionality and user experience.

"Our marketing efforts are not solely digital, we typically send hundreds of thousands of physical mail shots filled with offers to our loyal customers every week. These mailings support our e-commerce operation with the website empowering customers to convert digitally but we also have a contact centre for those who would prefer to order over the phone.

"We email different segments of our customers every day of the year, and last year we sent tens of millions of emails containing offers and other engaging content such as recipes and new product launches.

"E-commerce is no longer something companies can ignore, as consumers grow in confidence and familiarity with shopping online. My advice to any company starting out would be to investigate the options for technology and support, speak to people in the know and form a



plan working with experts in their respective digital fields. Start small and test and learn as you go, you won't get it all right straight away. At Donald Russell we are constantly testing, learning and optimising."

So, what about the traditional way of marketing your business? Is it a thing of the past? Absolutely not, according to Erikka Askeland, managing director of Mediacraft, an award-winning journalist, copywriter and strategic communications specialist.

"Using social media to tell your story may be all the rage but underestimate the power of third-party media platforms at your peril," she said.

"I could have said 'print media' but that's dinosaur talk. Actually, I love magazines and newspapers but like everyone else on the planet I now mainly consume them online or via some electronic format or another.

"If you were to explain it to your social media manager, journalists and editors are the original influencers whose platforms reach either highly targeted B2B verticals or wider demographics. You choose. Your aim is to get a snippet – or better yet, an entire article with an amazing picture or two – in the

publication in a way that makes you or your brand look good. If you are appearing in a way that doesn't make you look good, this is when you push the button on your crisis communications strategy.

"However, getting your story covered isn't as straightforward as just sending an announcement and a picture. It helps if you know who you are sending it to, when it suits them best to receive it and at least have an inkling if they might be interested. If you're inviting broadcast media to an event or press conference, make sure you set out timings and consider needs of people with cameras and microphones.

"You may also have heard that many media organisations are cash strapped, as every advertiser and their dog throws their money at Google and Facebook instead. You could maybe throw some the way of your favourite target publication, which can work with you on sponsored content or 'thought leadership' slots.

"Back to Facebook and Google, what you are aiming for with your marketing communications is an integrated campaign. Some describe it as the 'peso' model – paid, earned, social, owned. Paid –

get your ad words campaign sorted; earned – have such a good story it gets picked up by third party media; social – once it runs put that link up on your FB or Twitter; and owned – you have a snazzy website, put it up on your news section.

"A final word about imagery. A picture is almost always required, the stronger the better – a good image can make the difference between front of page or a link. Everyone with a smart phone now thinks they are Annie Leibovitz. You aren't. Please consider using a professional."



Want to find out more?

Erikka, Jason and Adam will be among the speakers taking part in the Chamber's new 'How 2' series of practical workshops, the first two of which focus on marketing and communications. Visit the website for more information.

Where do you get your news and why?



“As IT services and solutions are Capito’s business I am always on the lookout for any news about tech. My first port of call in the morning is the BBC news app while lying in bed and then I look at BBC tech to see what’s happening and what’s changed. I subscribe to a number of specialist websites like CNET, which publishes reviews, news, articles, blogs, podcasts and videos on technology and Computer Weekly. I will then have a look on Twitter to see what is trending.

“Another site I find very useful is DIGIT which provides news from Scotland’s digital technology sector. They send out emails two or three times a week with what’s happening and they have things like ‘Movers and Shakers’ and details of companies which have been bought, sold or expanded. I used to have the Sky News app but I deleted it because it was all gloom and doom, especially through CV19. I now have a news feed on my phone which is tailored for me and provides news on the things that interest me like cars, football, Marvel and tech.”

Andrew Hart, *business development manager*, Capito Ltd



“I get my news from a variety of local and national news sites and helpful hospitality industry platforms. The local Aberdeen City & Shire Hoteliers Association is excellent at circulating the latest industry updates from UK hospitality via their newsletters and emails. VisitAberdeenshire is also a key platform that we utilise to digest local campaigns and download helpful insights for the tourism and travel trade industry.

“With hospitality being one of the hardest-hit sectors due to the significant restrictions on trading, Hotel News Scotland is also a great resource to find out how our peers are adapting their offering in other parts of the country. As a Master Innholder and Fellow of Institute of Hospitality, I benefit from insights from colleagues across the country. It has never been more important that we collaborate and make noise as an industry to ensure that we can reopen as quickly and safely as possible.”

Peter Walker, *managing director*, Maryculter House



“Our news and research are used specifically for our social media pages, in particular Facebook/Instagram and from time to time as a reference at our monthly online support groups. One in four women are likely to suffer a miscarriage in their lifetime and at MISS we would like to ensure that our members - any individual, gender, age, religion or background - receive reliable, information and knowledge from professional sites.

“Our news mainly comes from websites which we are connected with and can rely on for valid information such as Miscarriage Association and Tommy’s, as well as information/news from local or national media for any new research or pieces which have been covered for example Megan Markle’s miscarriage announcement on the BBC website or Radio 1.”

Abi Clarke, *founder and chair*, MISS (Miscarriage Information Support Service)



James Morrison

View commercial properties without a visit

FOLLOWING universally positive client feedback received from a pilot programme run throughout Grampian region, Shepherd Chartered Surveyors is rolling out free video tours of commercial properties throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.

Shepherd is believed to be the first commercial surveying practice in Scotland to offer nationwide video tours on such a comprehensive scale. The facility offers tours of around 200 commercial properties of all types and sizes, from the smallest retail outlet to the largest industrial unit.

The introduction of the video tours marks the latest stage in the continuous evolution of the range of services the firm can offer to the dynamic commercial property marketplace.

James Morrison, an associate within Shepherd's Aberdeen commercial department, said: "Our video tours have been designed specifically to meet the needs and demands of a growing number of clients who have expressed a wish to have an option to view videos of commercial properties.

"This was an emerging trend prior to the advent of the CV19 pandemic which has become more prevalent since, as clients have experienced frustration at being unable to physically view commercial property.

"We have committed a considerable investment in editing and other software to ensure the production quality of the videos is of the requisite professional standard and the feedback from clients has been universally positive."

Double award win for JFD ventilator

JFD has been named as joint winner in the Healthcare and Medical - CV19 response category at the Collaborate to Innovate awards for the InVicto ventilator.

It has also been named winner of the CV19 Pandemic Initiatives Award at the 2020 IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association) Awards for the ventilator.

InVicto was created in response to the UK government's ventilator challenge in 2020. It is currently undergoing clinical trials in India and the system is also being evaluated by clinicians in the US, South America, Turkey and Norway and preparations for global distribution are underway.

The project was initiated by JFD but collaboration was instrumental given that a number of technology gaps were identified and time was of the essence. To use experts from a range of fields to create the ventilator, a consortium value chain was created which was initially based on skill sets and then matured into specific organisations. These were Frazer-Nash Consultancy, Angus 3D Solutions, Medical Devices Unit (MDU), Narayana Health and Innovhealth.

St Machar Academy cuts carbon footprint by 77%

ONE of Aberdeen's largest secondary schools has started reducing its carbon footprint by more than 70% after connecting to a district heat network.

Not-for-profit Aberdeen Heat & Power (AH&P) has installed a 1.2km 'heat main' to link St Machar Academy to Tillydrone Energy Centre and is now delivering affordable heat and hot water to the 900-pupil school.

As well as supplying the academy, the heat main will in future also serve a new 650-pupil primary school being built in Tillydrone and 72 proposed new-build council homes beside Harris Drive.

An existing Aberdeen City Council nursery, providing capacity for early years learning, will also be connected to the district heating energy centre.

AH&P chief executive officer Ian Davidson said: "Adding these four substantial connections is giving us an excellent opportunity to expand our Tillydrone heating network.

"Our low carbon emission connections benefit the local environment and help meet zero carbon targets, and — for St Machar Academy in particular — bring huge benefits from using a low cost, low carbon heat source.

"In time, the school will be able to achieve a 77% carbon emission saving, simply by having removed its direct-feed gas boilers and connecting to a district heat source."

Why internal communications matter more than ever

Alan Gorham,
emergency response and media relations lead, BIG Partnership



WHEN Public Health Scotland revealed the remarkable positive impact that the CV19 vaccination programme is having in preventing serious illness, it was the tonic we'd all been waiting for.

We can, at last, allow ourselves to consider with more certainty the next steps we can take towards getting Scotland back to work.

It's great news for businesses eager to resume or ramp up their operations however, with vast numbers of employees working from home or furloughed, we are at a critical point for employee engagement. Reassuring the workforce that there is a plan, and action is being taken to ensure their health and wellbeing, has never been more important.

Keeping all of your people informed about plans to return to the office or shop floor is crucial to a successful restart. Effective internal communication will have a significant role to play in giving colleagues confidence that they'll be safe.

What does that look like within our current landscape where employees are scattered physically - and in all likelihood mentally - because of CV19? The first thing we need to do is step back and think about what we really want to say. Circumstances

have changed considerably, so what is the narrative? What do you want people to do? What kind of change are you seeking to effect?

Do you want the conversation to be two-way? If you are asking staff to share their opinions, have you thought about how you show that you are taking them into account? There is no point asking for views if you are not able to demonstrate a response. People need to know that they are being listened to.

When you're satisfied that you know what you're communicating and why, it's important to choose the right format. Written communication can cover everything from a quick text to a full-blown newsletter, while video ranges from pre-recorded messages on an intranet or social media, to speaking live at an online town hall.

Getting the tone right is crucial. Put yourself in your employees' shoes and think about the emotional impact of your content. A significant advantage with video is that it's easier to convey emotion. It's thought that 55% of meaning is communicated through body language, 38% through tone of voice and only 7% through the spoken word.

Frequency of communication must also be established. How often you need to provide updates may depend

on your sector and size. Is it possible to reach every member of your team at the same time, or do you need to repeat your messaging to ensure it has been received by the full workforce?

At BIG we, like many other businesses, continue to work from home and face our own challenges around communicating with employees.

What's working for us is clarity and consistency: updates have been provided via regular company-wide emails; question-and-answer guidance; virtual town halls with our management and smaller office and team conference calls. We've also hosted everything from Zoom pub quizzes to Teams coffee mornings to boost morale.

While it's easy to dismiss the small stuff as unnecessary, it can quickly become obvious during such interactions if anyone needs extra support.

No matter what format you choose - video, newsletters, email updates, internal social media, online town halls - improving your connection with staff is never a waste of time; and in these uncertain times, it could just help your business get ahead.



Jeff Burns and Ivor Smith

Magical safety briefings

FIFTH Dimension, a team of business presenters and magicians who have performed across the globe, has brought its unique approach to health and safety training to EPC-UK's annual 'Safety Kick-off' briefings.

Jeff Burns and Ivor Smith provide health and safety presentations, team development workshops and keynote talks using magic to convey their messages - and it was this distinctive method of delivery that prompted EPC-UK to approach Fifth Dimension.

As a leading force in the field of commercial explosives, drilling and blasting services, safety is intrinsic to every EPC-UK operation and the company kicks off every year with a series of safety briefings to review and reinforce its safety.

Ben Williams, EPC-UK managing director, said: "Due to current social distancing regulations, we had to deliver this year's Safety Kick-offs in a virtual way, so also took the opportunity to review the content and research alternate ways of bringing our safety message to life.

"We are all sometimes guilty of seeing only what we expect to see, rather than taking the time to review the situation we're in and re-examine. When it comes to safety, we want our team to do just this and Jeff and Ivor's presentation helped to underpin this message perfectly to our employees."

Safelift secured biggest ever contract

ABERDEENSHIRE firm Safelift Offshore has secured its biggest contract yet worth nearly £1m.

The Kemnay-based company will supply a wide range of mechanical handling and deck equipment for a new-build platform that is being installed offshore Azerbaijan for an unnamed supermajor.

The record deal to date could soon be followed by an even bigger contract, however. The company is in an advanced stage of discussion for the supply of another large package of equipment and material for a greenfield development in North America.

First OGTC Net Zero R&D project funding awarded

THE first OGTC Net Zero research and development programme project funding has been awarded to a graduate of OGTC's TechX accelerator and Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen.

BSC Separation has been paired with Robert Gordon University to further develop its unique super-compact, multiphase separator, a technology with the potential to significantly reduce offshore emissions and at the same time generate electricity offshore.

The technology has many potential applications. For example, it could be used as a super-compact CO₂ stripper replacing large contacting towers. It was recognised at the 2020 SPE Offshore Achievements Awards, receiving a commendation in the Emerging Technology category.

The multiphase separator R&D project has attracted the attention of industry partners who will contribute to phase one of the development project. Future project phases are planned, with the performance testing of a full-scale pre-production prototype being evaluated at the test loop at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen in the last quarter of 2021.

Scottish tourism business can connect with global operators and agents

SEVERAL hundred Scottish tourism businesses will have the chance to connect and do business with tour operators and travel agents from around the globe at VisitScotland's Scotland Reconnect 2021 digital trade workshop.

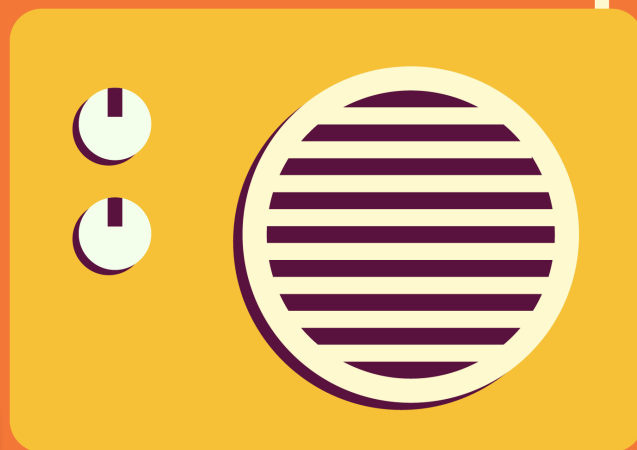
Registration is open and the national tourism organisation anticipates around 7,500 business meetings over the three days, April 27-29.

Given ongoing constraints on travel, VisitScotland will deliver the Scotland Reconnect 2021 digital event in place of the VisitScotland Expo live workshop event which would normally have been an annual feature of the business development calendar for tourism in Scotland.

In last year's event 264 buyers from 23 countries met with 240 Scottish tourism businesses, operators and destination organisations.

Tourism industry delegates will have the chance to engage with travel trade representing key overseas markets for Scotland during one-to-one meetings, as well as round table discussions on the latest issues affecting world travel and tourism.

Malcolm Roughead, chief executive of VisitScotland, said: "With restrictions still in place for both UK and international travel, it is unclear what the upcoming tourism season will look like. It is vital we continue to engage with our international partners on a 'dream now, travel later' basis so that, should the situation allow, we can move quickly to take advantage of any opportunities which may arise."



Thoroughly modern media

THE media has undergone massive change in recent years. The UK has developed from the arrival of colour TV in the 1970s and a fourth terrestrial channel in 1982 to almost 500 channels available in the UK.

No longer are programmes only available on the set in the corner of the living room but at any time on a huge range of devices.

After half a century of newspapers and TV dominating news provision they now compete with social media and citizen journalists.

Technology has transformed not only the way we shop for goods but also the way they are advertised. You look for something on the internet and next time you log on to Facebook adverts for that very item appear before you.

News gathering has changed dramatically since Steven Duff, the news editor for Aberdeen and Dundee, joined the BBC as a reporter in 2004.

“We were working with a cameraman who used tapes, with a VT editor who was editing tape to tape and we were out all the time gathering news,” he said.

“If there was a big fire we had to travel there because no one else was taking the pictures for us - but that landscape has completely changed.

“Now we often use user generated content (UGC) which people have filmed themselves because if there is a major fire it is extremely unlikely that it won't be filmed by someone.

““

“Where the BBC and probably most broadcasters differ from social media is that any material we use is verified. We ask for permission to use it from the owner and on the very rare occasions we are unable to identify or contact the owner it requires a very high level editorial and legal decision to go ahead.”

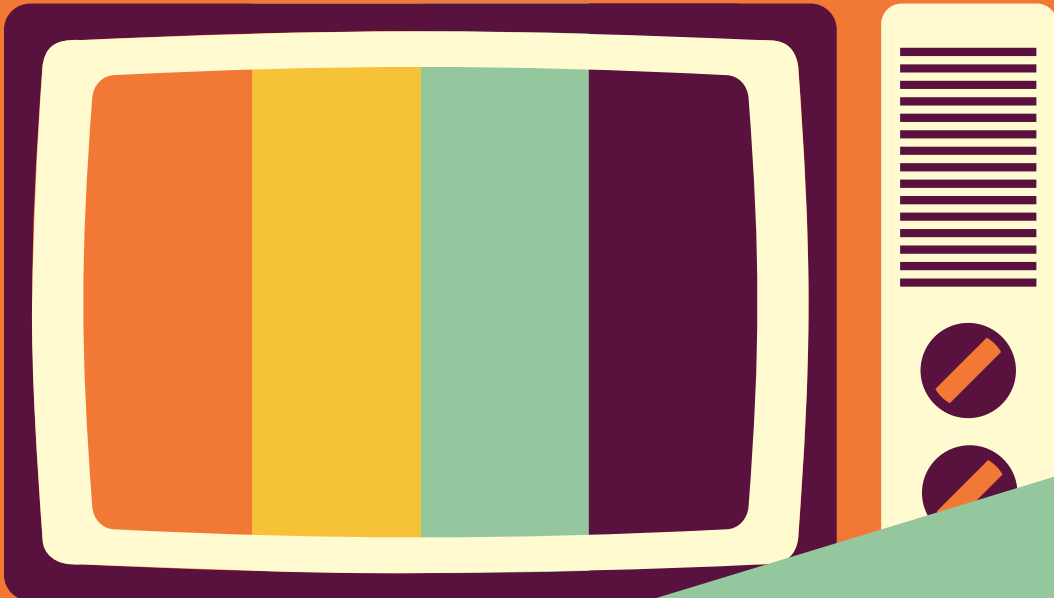
Steven Duff,
news editor
BBC

“That's not laziness on our part, it is just a good use of resources but where the BBC and probably most broadcasters differ from social media is that any material we use is verified. We ask for permission to use it from the owner and on the very rare occasions we are unable to identify or contact the owner it requires a very high level editorial and legal decision to go ahead.

“UGC has revolutionised how we produce news as have the iPhone and other smart phones which each reporter carries and are like mobile cameras and radio interview systems. We can broadcast live and the BBC has spent a lot of time developing its own apps to ensure good quality audio for live broadcasting.

“The pandemic has obviously shown us the potential of the likes of Zoom, FaceTime and WhatsApp as news gathering tools - but there is still a lot of room for craft camera operators and in fact there has been considerable investment in cameras by BBC Scotland in the last few years.

“There are five craft camera operators working in Aberdeen, Dundee and the surrounds whereas 10 years ago there were only two. At that time myself and other reporters were trained in video journalism skills and those cameras still exist but we only



use them in an emergency. We have moved back to professional cameras and craft camera operators because there is so much more programming on BBC Scotland.

“Our senior journalists will be reporting for TV and radio but more and more will also have an eye on digital so will be thinking about what’s good for TV but also about what will be good for a digital video for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram which is becoming a big thing.”

On the commercial side of broadcasting one of the biggest changes in recent decades is the increased accessibility, affordability and cost effectiveness of TV advertising and much of that has been driven by advances in technology, according to Danielle Kelly, director of strategy and sales Scotland at STV.

“Despite this misconceptions still exist about the price of advertising on TV, particularly for small businesses who may feel it is cost prohibitive. On the contrary, the way that commercial broadcasters can now tailor campaigns to suit clients’ requirements, and budgets, actually makes the practice far more accessible than ever.

“For example, if you’re a small, independent furniture retailer with

one store in an Aberdeenshire town, new technology means that you can target consumers solely within the Aberdeenshire region on STV – making your marketing more targeted and ultimately more cost effective.

“Working with commercial TV organisations like STV, advertisers now have the ability to really fine-tune their audience – breaking it down into regions and even micro-regions within those – to target the consumers that matter.

“

“We can build a bespoke audience for customers which increases the performance of the campaign and prevents wastage. It gives them peace of mind that their digital targeted campaign is likely to be seen by people who are interested in their content.”

Stephen Flight,
head of sales
Aberdeen Journals

“The Broadcasters Audience Research Board (BARB) utilises the very latest technology to assess which demographics are watching which shows, when and for how long. BARB provides the gold standard of audience measurement, and broadcasters can then use that information to create an even more focused campaign for a client.

“Campaigns don’t solely exist on broadcast TV anymore either. A growing number of commercial broadcasters now have their own video-on-demand platforms, and streaming numbers have boomed in recent years. STV Player, for example, grew by 65% in 2020. Online viewing provides broadcasters with extremely accurate and specific viewer data which can be used by advertisers to target the viewers they have a higher chance of turning into customers.

“However, although much has been made about how TV viewing habits are changing as new technologies are emerging, Ofcom reported last year that the majority of TV viewing in Scotland during the first national lockdown was centred on broadcast TV. In fact, people in Scotland watch the most broadcast TV of any of the UK nations and our own stats show that the average amount of minutes watched by STV viewers rose by 16% in 2020.”



As owner of a number of newspapers, magazines and radio stations across Scotland including the Evening Express, Press & Journal, Sunday Post and Original 106 in Aberdeen, DC Thomson is able to reach a massive audience across a variety of channels thanks to developing technology.

Stephen Flight, head of sales for Aberdeen Journals, said that the CV19 pandemic has had a massive impact on its business with the wider Scottish advertising market expenditure falling by £63.4m year on year during the second quarter of 2020. Things improved by Q4 when the 'the green shoots of recovery were appearing' and the drop was only £8m. The second lockdown stalled the recovery but ad revenue is expected to rise by more the 15% throughout this year.

Stephen highlighted the importance of local media, particularly during a crisis: "A study by YouGov found out that local newspapers and radio are seen as more than three times more trustworthy than social media," he said. "That is backed up by the fact that during the first lockdown the traffic across our news sites - the P&J, Evening Express, Courier, Evening Telegraph and Sunday Post increased by 34%.

"There is a perception that the print element is in decline, which nobody

can deny, but our overall audience is bigger than it has ever been. If we are putting together a campaign for a customer in Aberdeen, we can now use print, digital options and a campaign on radio so our reach is much greater, especially when you include our magazine portfolio.

"We can build a bespoke audience for customers which increases the performance of the campaign and prevents wastage. It gives them peace of mind that their digital targeted campaign is likely to be seen by people who are interested in their content."

The pandemic and the cancellation of major events prompted DC Thomson to launch innovative virtual calendar highlights. To replace the Royal Highland Show for the farming community they ran the first ever online Scottish Agricultural Show. Livestock producers sent in videos of their animals which were judged by respected breeders, there were beer and food tents in which exhibitors displayed their goods and there was even a baking competition.

"This was the first time we had done anything like that and it went extremely well. During three days it generated 82,000 page views and each time someone came on to look it was for an average of four minutes

and 57 seconds which is very good. 17,100 minutes of the show was also launched on Facebook."

They also turned Scotland's biggest food and drink festival, A Taste of Grampian, virtual.

"That was extremely successful. More than 50 exhibitors, 12 sponsors and 7,271 people viewed A Taste of Grampian which exceeded the live audience of previous years. We also know that 53% of these people watched with others, 60% bought or intended to buy from an exhibitor or sponsor and six in 10 people were inspired to try more local food and drink suppliers."

He said technology now enabled them to target advertising to its network of five million monthly users by identifying their interests and behaviours and sending them the appropriate content.

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Samir Khan-Young

CV19 hero Samir named Scotland's Apprentice of the Year

A TALENTED graduate apprentice has bagged the title of Scotland's Apprentice of the Year after working nightshifts to produce PPE for the NHS.

Glasgowegian Samir Khan-Young has been crowned the title at the Scottish Apprenticeship Awards.

The former Bannerman High School pupil was also victorious in the Graduate Apprentice of the Year category, which was sponsored by Scottish Funding Council. The virtual event took place on March 4 and was delivered by Skills Development Scotland.

Samir started his Engineering: Design and Manufacture Graduate Apprenticeship at Thales in 2017 believes his greatest achievement to date has been working nightshifts for Thales' Manufacturing Team as they produced PPE for NHS frontline workers.

Chair of Skills Development Scotland Frank Mitchell said: "Businesses backing talent through apprenticeships will play a crucial role in supporting Scotland's recovery from the pandemic.

"The Scottish Apprenticeship Awards show the value apprentices add to employers and the economy. In the most challenging of years, our fantastic winners and finalists show that apprenticeships provide the skills that employers and Scotland need for the future."

CAN secures DNVGL approval for remote inspection techniques

CAN Group has received approval from DNVGL to provide remote inspection techniques as an alternative inspection solution for the classification surveys of the structures of ships and mobile offshore units.

CAN is one of the first companies worldwide to receive the approval from the classification society for remote inspection techniques, covering UAV, ROV and rope access, both internally and externally on hull structures.

This latest approval accompanies and enhances CAN's existing DNVGL approvals as a supplier of ultrasonic testing, eddy current testing and magnetic particle inspection on marine vessels. Collectively, these approvals enable CAN Group to provide an integrated and cost-effective service for the completion of vessel classification surveys.

Neil Rose, CAN's inspection services director, said: "Obtaining DNVGL approval for remote inspection techniques ensures our clients that CAN Group is fully compliant to the highest standards. With extensive experience across our 35-year tenure, CAN is well versed at conducting class surveys and this new approval further cements our position as a leading inspection services provider."

Aberdeen Council considers bronze statue for football legend Denis Law

ABERDEEN City councillors have voted in favour of the authority looking into the possibility of creating a bronze statue of football legend Denis Law for the city centre.

It followed a motion at a full council meeting by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen Barney Crockett that the City Council should approach the Denis Law Legacy Trust with a view to enabling a bronze statue of Denis Law to be sited outside/near the vicinity of Provost Skene's House, in the heart of the city.

It was agreed that council officers should report back on the feasibility and costs of erecting a statue of the former Manchester United, Manchester City and Scotland great at the site.

The motion also noted the significant investment in Provost Skene's House, which is currently undergoing a £3.8m refurbishment and the plan for there to be a Hall of Heroes dedicated to individuals who have contributed to the success of Aberdeen throughout the world.

The cost and feasibility report will go to the next meeting of the City Growth and Resources Committee.

For sale sign to virtual design: a whistle-stop tour of 30 years in property

by **Jacqui Dougray**,
estate agency manager, Stronachs LLP



SOME will remember what it was like to live in a world where information was not literally at your fingertips and advertising took place in newspapers and magazines, on bus shelters and billboards, on ITV but never the BBC.

I entered the property sector over 30 years ago with my marketing input being limited to arranging for signs to be put up outside the property, typing up a stapled brochure that had a single photograph stuck to the front, keeping the office 'shop window' up-to-date with the latest properties, meeting advert deadlines for the weekly Home section in the P&J and visiting the ASPC office to drop off property details on floppy discs.

The years rolled by and communication with clients and external agencies was now by email, leading to quicker turnaround times and heightened expectations. Everyone within in the sector was working flat out as the Aberdeen property market had a life of its own and continued to boom; we experienced years when almost anything sold, without any real need to market.

The millennium came and within no time our sector was operating in a very different way, although our remit remained meeting the basic need of 'finding a home' we had an increasing number of tools at our disposal. Publishing packages that enable in-house creation of schedules and digital photography to create more imagery at less cost being two such tools. However, without a doubt the revolution, and revelation, was the internet - this was the equivalent of one firework exploding into a hundred brilliant individual displays.

With training, we suddenly had input into production of materials, choices as to how we could distribute and promote, with options available to suit most clients. We were introduced to ways we could market our clients' properties and our own services to an audience previously out of reach; in addition to targeted digital marketing we could freely engage with LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more.

Then came 2020 ... and yes it has been hard, very hard, and at times incredibly frustrating but it has also brought new opportunities and collaboration with sectors that pre-CV19 may have taken years to come about and be accepted

as 'the norm' in residential property.

Almost overnight, input from the creative sector has introduced affordable 360° virtual and remote viewings and we now have properties that are 'virtually furnished' - who knows what is next. The rate of change during my working life has been exponential and there is no reason to think that won't continue, after all, it's now hard to imagine there was a time you had to physically visit estate agency offices to find out if there were any properties for sale.

The recent HPI report from the UK Government showed that house prices in Aberdeen were down by 2.1% in December, not really what sellers want to hear and that is not necessarily the easiest starting point to promote an estate agency offering. However, prior to detailing the methods that are now available to gain a good sale price for their property I can also take a few moments to explain that if they are staying local, they may similarly secure their next home for less than originally planned.

Most scenarios can benefit from 'a little marketing' - be that new style or old school!

Stronachs

TEDx Aberdeen

x = independently organized TED event

What's the big idea?

More than a year on from the start of the first lockdown, we're beginning to take tentative steps out of what will, hopefully, be our last lockdown.

From inside our own homes we have witnessed extraordinary events unfold here and across the globe, from politics to natural disasters to demonstrations highlighting societal inequalities to economic decline. All of this has happened while we've been juggling our day to day family life, careers, home-schooling, caring for elderly relatives, managing our mental and physical health and more.

What is our world going to look, be and feel like when we are all able to meet, work, interact, socialise and play together? Or should the question be, what do we want our world to look, be and feel like when those restrictions are finally lifted? How do we spark conversations and connections to generate the ideas we need to inspire our thinking and shape our community in response to the CV19 crises? Enter TEDxAberdeen.

Based around the theme of 'new ways of seeing old things' our TEDx Aberdeen event will be held, CV19 restrictions permitting, on July 31 2021.

Organised and curated by a team of Vanguard volunteers, TEDxAberdeen

will welcome 100 attendees to enjoy a day of inspiring talks providing fresh thinking and compelling new arguments to change beliefs and perspectives. Our speakers will be members of our community, some of whom we will have not heard from before, which I personally find very exciting.

What is TED & TEDx?

TED is a nonprofit organisation devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. Meanwhile, independently run TEDx events help share ideas in communities around the world. TED events are non commercial, religious and political.

In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organised events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-

organized. (Subject to certain rules and regulations.)

Timing is everything - while this has been an exceptionally challenging year, we believe it is exactly the right time to create a unique gathering to inspire and unleash ideas throughout our community.

More information on the TEDxAberdeen program and speakers will be available in the coming weeks on our website and social media channels.

Moray Barber,
TEDxAberdeen licensee



Say hello and keep in touch:

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   **#TEDxAberdeen**



AFP managing director Sandy Robertson

Acumen wins Model Adviser...again

ACUMEN Financial Planning has been awarded the New Model Adviser Award (Scotland and Northern Ireland) for the fourth time in five years.

The awards, which recognise independent firms which excel in areas such as operations, business performance and development, client education and communication as well as charity work, were held remotely.

The Aberdeen-headquartered financial planning firm's managing director Sandy Robertson said: "We keep things simple by putting our clients at the centre of everything we do. Our role is help clients achieve their full financial promise and through that achieve what is important to them in their lives."

Scotland's seafood processing sector on recruitment drive

SCOTLAND'S vibrant £1.6bn seafood industry has launched a campaign to help find the right candidates to fill numerous vacancies that are continuously coming up across the processing sector.

Over 8,400 people in Scotland currently work in the seafood industry in a diverse range of roles spanning food processing and technology, HR, marketing, commercial and engineering. Seafish is collaborating with industry body the Scottish Seafood Association to show the wealth of opportunities available in the sector to help attract people looking to start, progress or change their career.

Skills sets that are in great demand across the sector include engineering and food technologists, according to Scottish Seafood Association members Thistle Seafoods, Macduff Shellfish and International Fish Cannery. Ryan Scattered of Thistle Seafoods, said: "We are always on the lookout for good engineers to join us and there are many transferable skills from across the oil and gas industry, or those leaving the Armed Forces for example that we would hope to attract. Similarly, food technologists are also in high demand and may be suitable for those in the hospitality sector looking for a new challenge."

Locals promote Aberdeen

VISITABERDEENSHIRE has recruited local people to be the faces of Aberdeen in a new tourism campaign encouraging visitors back to the city later this year.

The 'Our Aberdeen is Your Aberdeen' digital campaign aims to promote the city to potential visitors from the rest of Scotland and north of England, when travel is permitted.

The campaign video features city-based volunteers with Lord Provost Barney Crockett also appearing in the snapshot of the city. To illustrate the diversity of Aberdeen experiences, location landmarks range from Aberdeen Art Gallery, the beach front and Kirkhill forest.

Chris Foy, chief executive officer of VisitAberdeenshire, said: "Cities like Aberdeen are feeling the significant loss of corporate business and they will face particular challenges when travel restrictions lift.

"While consumer sentiment is very positive towards visiting rural locations the urban environment is further down many priority lists. However, we are confident that the fresh sea air and wide-open spaces that Aberdeen boasts, along with its well managed and innovative attractions, will provide a refreshing alternative to more congested cities."

Healthy Minds project to help struggling parents and children

HOME-START Aberdeen has launched a 'Healthy Minds' campaign to raise awareness and funds to support vulnerable families with young children living in Aberdeen following a YouGov survey which revealed over half of parents of under-fives are struggling to cope.

The charity, which provides crucial help for struggling young families, has been responding to the growing need for emotional support. Throughout the pandemic and the series of widespread lockdowns it has witnessed the growing challenges and isolation for many parents with young children and the impact this is having on families' wellbeing.

It has launched the campaign so it can help more parents to deal with challenges they face. During the pandemic, the charity has expanded one of its projects, a weekly group called Rising Stars, which focuses on encouraging social interaction, learning and development for children and their parents. In response to requests from parents the charity started operating a further evening group for parents, Evening Stars. The online meetings provide them with a safe place to share experiences, concerns or anxieties and get support and reassurance from experienced volunteers and other parents.

Over the next three months the charity plans to shine a light on mental health, sharing supportive resources, hosting online events and encouraging people to donate or get involved in fundraising activities linked to maintaining a healthy mind. Funds raised will help the charity to continue and expand its Evening Stars project.



Torbjørg Udem

Mintra adds 96 new courses

TRAINING portal Marketplace – Mintra’s digital trading space which brings training buyers and sellers together – has experienced a strong start to the year with the addition of 96 new courses from six leading providers.

Kongsberg Maritime, Maersk and EnerMech are among the companies which have signed up to Marketplace in recent weeks.

Marketplace brings together almost 100 training providers and represents one of the largest eLearning libraries for safety-critical industries. There are now more than 2,000 courses available on the platform, which operates as a one-stop shop for customers interested in buying eLearning content as well as classroom and blended learning.

Among the new courses on offer are highly specialised training for the maritime and oil and gas sectors along with leadership development relevant for a wide range of industries.

Marketplace manager Torbjørg Udem said the success of the platform lies in the fact that it is entirely agnostic: “Marketplace gives customers freedom: in one space they can compare providers and make choices on what to buy based on factors such as content, suitability, location and price,” she said.

“Our customers don’t have to be tied in to one provider – there is no exclusivity over what they buy and who they buy it from. They might want to buy from multiple suppliers but they’ll only have one invoice from Mintra.”

A word of advice



Eilidh McCluskie,
Bold St Media,
founder and director

What’s your area of expertise?

Public relations and marketing. We work with our clients to position them in front of their target market and deliver clear and engaging content that tells their story and shares their value proposition. With more than 15 years’ experience across sectors, we love getting to grips with a business or brands challenges, planning how we can utilise different PR and marketing mechanisms to overcome them and then analysing what creates most impact and return to inform what’s next.

What should people know?

PR shouldn’t be a nice to have, it should be an essential and even have a seat in the boardroom. PR is about more than being supported through a crisis or telling a one-off good news story, it’s the continued management of one of a business’ most valuable assets – reputation. With this in mind it should be an important part of the business strategy and a consideration when making big business decisions to help control your brand’s narrative and reputation.

What’s the biggest mistake companies make?

Forgetting that your staff can be your biggest brand ambassadors. Bring your team along on the journey, make them part of the story, let them know about the successes and empower them to share on the company’s behalf (with guidance of course). This genuine enthusiasm and passion for the brand is priceless.

What’s your top tip?

Start at the end – be clear from the beginning about what success would like look like. If you’re clear on this then all PR and marketing activities including content and brand alignment decisions should lead towards this.

Training levy still priceless to industry

David Nash,
director of strategy and policy,
ECITB



FOR decades studies have found that UK employers underinvest in skills. A recent report found that employer-led training had declined by half since the 1990s, with 39% of employers not training any of their staff in the previous year.

Failure to invest in training is often given as a reason for Britain's poor productivity performance and why skills shortages persist. This market failure is the reason why the industrial training levy was established, leading to the formation of the ECITB in 1991.

Work in the industry remains project-based and undertaken by a small but highly competitive contractor community. With the exception of some longer-term maintenance projects, contracts are relatively short in duration, leading many firms to take a short-term outlook.

This business model has in turn created the industry's own particular labour model with regular peaks and troughs in demand for people. Workers with transferable skills regularly move between employers to where the work is, and roughly one third of all workers are employed through employment agencies or as labour only subcontractors.

Training can be expensive and for employers the return on investment is uncertain, particularly if those employees leave and take their skills with them. So it is clear why an employer might be reticent to pay for costly training when their worker might be poached by a competitor, or they are simply not required in a few months' time.

This, in a nutshell, is why the industrial training levy was established. By requiring all companies over a certain size to pay in, and enabling all to access the resulting funds, it incentivises and enables training that otherwise may not occur.

The CV19 crisis has exacerbated the market failure for training and in doing so reinforced the value of the levy. When times are tough, the levy ensures there is funding available to train and develop staff in anticipation of economic recovery.

Last year, employers received £22m worth of training support from the ECITB, giving their workforce vital skills at a time when many companies would otherwise have been shedding training budgets. At the height of the lockdown, the ECITB purchased training on behalf of employers ensuring workforce training could take place.

Levy funding has also been used to counter the negative effect of the CV19 crisis on the recruitment of young talent into the industry. New apprentices fell by nearly 40% last year compared to 2019, while the number of new graduates declined by 30%.

In response, the ECITB devised the scholarship, a two-year off the job training programme designed to give learners technical and craft skills required by employers. More than 100 young people started the programme in September, with further cohorts to follow this year.

The levy therefore remains a vital tool – working to correct known market failure and ensure there is sustained investment in the industry's skills base in the future.



IT IS safe to say that there has never been a time when effective internal communication has been more important to businesses than it has been for the past year - and will continue to be for a long time to come.

The CV19 pandemic has forced employees into an alien environment where they are having to deal with new ways of working and collaborating, frequently with the added stresses of furloughs, job losses and the implications of mergers and acquisitions, not to mention home schooling.

The chat over a coffee has disappeared as have the formal and informal gatherings during which relationships are built and information is passed on. So, what is the key to good internal communications?

Bob Keiller, who started off his business life communicating with just two staff and ultimately was in charge of around 60,000, is recognised as an outstanding communicator.

He believes the answer is leadership which is about three things: Specifying where the company is going; specifying the path you want

to take; and then taking people on that journey.

“Taking people on the journey is, for me, all about communication and the key to good communication is persistence, effort and considering it from the viewpoint of the person you’re communicating with,” he said.

“Any communication has to be useful and interesting to them whereas most traditional management communication is dull and boring. People either read and forget it, or don’t bother reading it because they



“I quickly realised that just because you have information you think people should be interested in doesn’t mean to say they will be interested. It came down to a couple of key concepts for me, brevity and variety.”

Bob Keiller,
business advisor
AB15

don’t think there be will anything in it for them.”

Bob led Halliburton’s production services division in the early 2000s before piloting its buyout from Kellogg Brown & Root in 2006 when he became chief executive officer of PSN. Wood Group subsequently bought PSN and he became group director of Wood Group PSN and then chief executive officer of Wood Group from 2012 until 2015 when he was appointed chair of Scottish Enterprise and also set up his own business advisory company, AB15.

“I started doing weekly blogs to my teams in the mid-1990s when I was working on an offshore asset and I put lots of facts and nice information into them and the first week people said, ‘That’s quite good,’ the second week, ‘Oh I’ve not read it yet,’ and the third week, ‘I’ll give it a miss.’

“I quickly realised that just because you have information you think people should be interested in doesn’t mean to say they will be interested. It came down to a couple of key concepts for me, brevity and variety.

“The shorter you can make it the more likely people will take the time to absorb it and if you do the same thing every week people know



what's coming so they are not going to bother.

"Telling a story is a huge part of it. Stories are our oldest and most effective way of communicating so I try to get relevant business stories into my communication and tell them in a way that makes it intriguing at the start, dramatic in the middle and surprising at the end. That makes people empathise with what you're talking about so they get an emotional connection and it makes them remember it."

He said research into TV commercials had shown that key factors for success were humour, visual imagery, music and number one, story.

"It's quite difficult in a business situation to put in music, exciting visuals and humour whereas every one of us can tell a story. So, as an example, if you change a procedure in an organisation why not tell the story of why the procedure was changed and give them drama behind it, the arguments, the fights and eventual conclusion so that people understand the importance of it, remember it and take it on board."

Bob readily admits he has learned many lessons during his career not least that telling people something

once doesn't guarantee they will take it on board.

"Three years after starting a weekly blog in PSN I met an old chap called Randy in Houston and as I shook his hand he said: 'You're the fellow who keeps sending me these messages.' That told me that only after about 150 emails he was finally beginning to get the message.

"You have to have the same themes and same directional messages wrapped up in a way that people want to hear it repeatedly, incessantly, obsessively, and that's a challenge I suppose. How do leaders make enough time to do that?"

He said one positive from lockdown had been that leaders were communicating more often and openly with staff, partly out of necessity.

"Hopefully that's giving people an appreciation of the value they get by spending time on communicating. When I was a chief executive officer I would spend probably about a third of my time focusing on communication and most of that was internal rather than external communication. That involved two town hall meetings every week with different parts of the organisation, regular videos, regular blogs, regular

one-to-ones with various people and a lot of it was about listening as well as transmitting and it was invaluable in terms of taking people on the journey.

"Today we can shoot and post videos so easily that it has to be part of a leader's communication toolbox.

"Many people don't feel communication is like productive work and that if you communicate 'enough' that's good enough. I have never yet been in an organisation where someone said they get too much communication."

He stressed the importance of communicating information relevant to the recipient of the message.

"This is a hugely stressful time for a lot of people who have lost their jobs but anticipating the loss of the job is just as stressful. When you are communicating as leader the first thing they want to know in that situation is 'Do I still have a job? There is no point in talking about a great new future in the sunny uplands and a new dawn for the business."

He suggested it was also important to choose an interesting subject line to attract interest and among his best-read communications were



“Your baby is ugly” and “Thoughts on death and beauty.”

He also had a penchant for referencing popular music titles but one, by Blondie, slightly backfired.

“I called it ‘Call me’ and for the next three days my secretary was constantly answering the phone saying ‘No, he doesn’t want you to call him – read the email.’”

Steven Mearns was one of the recipients of Bob’s blogs when he worked for Wood Group PSN and he has carried some of the communication lessons he learned into his now successful TaxAssist accountancy business – winner of the Northern Star Business Awards ‘Staff Matter’ category.

Over the past three years owners Steven and Cameron Allan have grown the business from one to four offices with 10 staff.

“That’s a lot of change in a short space of time and change is difficult for anyone so we need to ensure our team really understand what we are doing and don’t feel worried, left behind or out of the loop,” said Steven.

“We have built a great team spirit with a settled staff and low turnover. We are lucky to have them but we

are working hard to look after each other.

“Our internal communication is a mix of formal and informal and we have some basic principles we try to stick to each week. We have a one-to-one conversation with each member of the team which can be anything from a couple of minutes to 20 minutes but we make sure we have that time in our diaries.

“We have a weekly email from the cooperative network to which we belong – the TaxAssist support

“

“We identified very early on that some people needed additional support and some needed time in the office, which we were able to accommodate, in order for them to work effectively.”

Steven Mearns,
owner
TaxAssist Accountants

centre. It provides a formal update on the economic and political situation and wider macro issues affecting all of us. We also have our own internal communication refining or expanding on anything in the formal one and highlighting any local issues.”

He said that although they are split into teams both he and Cameron make a point of regularly speaking to all members of staff, something which had been particularly important to maintain during lockdown when some staff had been finding things harder than others.

“We identified very early on that some people needed additional support and some needed time in the office, which we were able to accommodate, in order for them to work effectively.

“We want our team to be involved and feel part of our journey and believe it is very important that everyone knows everything at the same time otherwise you can accidentally fall into the trap of staff feeling not fully informed which can be dangerous.”

You never get a second chance to make a first impression

Andrew Pyke,
research and insights manager,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber
of Commerce



THEY say you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Well here's mine, the new research guy at the Chamber.

Let's start with the first impressions of Aberdeen and Grampian businesses. It goes without saying that your businesses, without exception, have been through a lot. I know for many of you, Plan C seems a long time ago, never mind Plan B. And business models that were working well enough have had to be re-engineered by you and your teams just to keep swimming.

It must feel like you deserve an even break, or at least an easing of restrictions. So, sincerely, hats off to you, who keep demonstrating the resilience and entrepreneurship that have built this region and will keep it the powerhouse that it is, no matter what. And here's to the roaring twenties, that can't come soon enough.

Let's move on to my first impressions of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce. I've got to say I'm a fan of the clarity of what the Chamber is here for... neatly summed up in three words: connect, support, advocacy.

Connect - facilitating conversations between people in business, because that's when the magic happens. Support - like training, events, customers documentation, policy and of course, research! And advocacy - making the case for business, accessing the key policy influencing forums. And I like the clarity of mission too, with a granite resolve to be there for businesses today and create the conditions for the region to grow. And it feels like businesses deserve a voice - and certainly the economy and the country need it.

And so on to my first impressions of Chamber research. I'd known about the industry-leading Oil & Gas Survey, sponsored by KPMG and added to by Fraser of Allander, and I loved the pre-Christmas virtual results event where Martin Findlay, who'd intended to use the session to celebrate the opening of their new KPMG offices, offered the virtual attendees a bacon roll. But I hadn't realised the extent of the work that has been done by the research team over the years, everything from surveys with new house buyers, to interviews with course participants, to market sizing.

I like that the research team feel they have a vested interest in the businesses we work with, more than just clients. And I like that we are open about how we collaborate; with other agencies, other data sets, other organisations...whatever works best for the project.

And that we are here to use research to help you get from where you are to where you want to be. Because as a Chamber, we are on your side.

And finally, in the spirit of 360 feedback, what were their first impressions of me? Someone who could really do with a haircut...

£100,000 towards cancer research

FRIENDS of ANCHOR has pledged almost £100,000 towards pioneering cancer research in Aberdeen.

The charity will fund seven new studies at the University of Aberdeen and is encouraging people to sign up to its Going the Distance event, Rally for Research, which will provide ringfenced fundraising to directly support the charity's research commitment.

Rally for Research is the third instalment of Friends of ANCHOR's Going the Distance campaign. It's the organisation's most ambitious virtual event since the pandemic began, with a goal of covering 72,000 miles - 1,000 miles for every research project the charity has funded to date.

Charity director Sarah-Jane Hogg said: "We've invested in pilot research projects since 2010 and as we head into a second decade of this commitment, we'd love for people to get behind the cause and rally for research. The past year has seen all non-CV19 research grind to a halt, so we're pleased to be part of the research revival here in North-east Scotland."

Going the Distance is an open invitation to people of all ages, abilities and fitness levels. Anyone can take part by walking, running, cycling, skating, swimming, rowing or even scooting. Participants will be given a mileage calendar to track their progress and will have access to a dedicated online community. Full details via the Friends of Anchor website.

STC INSISO looks to Canada and North America

STC INSISO has signed a partnership agreement with Canadian firm Hatley Engineering and Applied Technologies Inc to distribute its COMET investigation, prevention and root cause analysis package to the Canadian and North American markets.

The recently merged Aberdeen-based firm provides business performance improvements through the smart integration of process design, health and safety solutions, training and innovative software. Created by professional investigators with major incident experience, its COMET product comprises a unique methodology, training package and online solution for incident investigation, root cause analysis and prevention.

This agreement is the latest in a series of global distributor partnerships secured by STC INSISO over the last 12 months, aimed at introducing its product range to new markets and industrial sectors and expanding its international footprint.

Its strategic partnership with Practical Solutions Group (PSG) Services Australia Pty Ltd will enable clients in the Asia Pacific region to access STC INSISO's COMET incident investigation and root cause analysis methodology.

STC INSISO also has a distributor agreement partnership with Middle East firm PROCYON Group which will help STC INSISO tap into the Gulf energy market.



Sparrow Group's Angela Birnie with Jason Grant of RelyOn Nutec

Sparrows and RelyOn Nutec sign MoU

SPARROWS Group, specialist provider of engineering and maintenance services, and RelyOn Nutec, the global safety, training and competency organisation, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to roll out specialist training across the world.

The global strategic partnership paves the way for RelyOn Nutec to launch Sparrows' 100+ crane and lifting operation training courses across its worldwide training centres, a move which combines their joint expertise and will see multi-million-dollar investment in new training facilities and staff. It's expected that an executed agreement will follow the MoU shortly.

A new Sparrows centre of excellence has been launched in RelyOn Nutec's Qatar facilities to support clients working in the offshore, construction and infrastructure industries, with RelyOn Nutec committing to a significant investment to install its specialist crane and lifting simulator technology (RelyOn Simulation).

The Qatar facility will also create up to five new lifting and crane operation roles. In addition to Qatar, the partners are also actively assessing new facilities in elsewhere in the Middle East and in Kazakhstan. Both sides are set to make significant investments to ensure a quick roll out of the training by the end of 2021.

Building is also underway on a simulator at RelyOn Nutec's Wellheads facility in Dyce, Aberdeen, marking another investment in crane and lifting operation training for the organisation. Operating alongside Sparrows' existing simulator at their Tyrebagger facility in the city, will allow for increased capacity and additional accredited courses to be delivered across both locations.

April



Time is money so they say, make sure you are getting the most out of your day.

13 Tue
1 day

Cash Flow Management
Maximise cash flow with effective cash collection techniques

14 Wed
1 day

Time Management
Identify time wasting activities and manage your day more effectively

15 Thu
1 day

Train the Trainer
Feel confident whilst developing and presenting different types of training

20 Tue
1 day

Assertiveness at Work
Learn to communicate your point of view without causing conflict

21 Wed
1 day

Report Writing
Learn to produce clear, concise, and effective reports

22 Thu
1 day

Personal Effectiveness
Improve your self-management by changing the way you work

23 Fri
1 day

Train the Trainer Advanced
Improve training delivery techniques

27 Tue
1 day

Sales and Account Management
Develop a structured approach to selling

29 Thu
1 day

Project Management - The Fundamentals
Understand the principles of project management and the complexities of scale

29 Thu
1 day

Customs Procedures and Documentation
Understand how to navigate the various customs systems, procedures, and documentation

May



Effective financial planning through budgetary control contributes to organisational strategic objectives. Find out more by booking your place today.

4 Tue
1 day

Marketing 101
Develop a successful, integrated marketing strategy

5 Wed
½ day

Social Media for the Uninitiated
Reduce marketing risk by understanding how powerful social media is in business and how to utilise it effectively

5 Wed
½ day

Social Media Advanced - Using Mixed Media in Your Digital Communication
Be confident in the utilisation of a range of media types and have formed the outline of an overall digital communication plan

6 Thu
1 day

Motivation and Delegation
Create a motivational environment and use effective delegation

11 Tue
1 day

Business Development Accelerator
Develop a powerful strategy to drive sales

12 Wed
1 day

Budgeting and Planning - An introduction
Learn how to establish and maintain budgets

12 Wed
1 day

Import Procedures, Inward & Outward Processing
Avoid pitfalls when importing, understand methods of claiming relief

13 Thu
1 day

Essential Supervisory Skills
Bridge the gap between doing and supervising

18 Tue
1 day

Practical Contract Management
Learn the skills needed to ensure contracts add value to your business

18 Tue
2 hours

Bullying and Harassment: Turn Negative into Positive
Understand the legal ramifications of bullying and harassment

19 Wed
½ day

INCOTerms© 2020
Understand benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers

Upskill for the new trading environment

Do you export or import to the EU? The rules changed as of January 1 with new customs declarations required for any business moving goods into and outside of the UK.

Complying with the new HMRC rules requires some specialist knowledge. The Chamber is here to make sure your team have the knowledge and insight to keep your business running smoothly with our extensive portfolio of international trade training courses.

1 Day Beginner's Practical Guide to Exporting

A high-level overview of the export process

April 6

August 19

1 Day Customs Procedures and Documentation

Explore the various customs systems, procedures, and documentation

April 29

June 23

1 Day Import Procedures, Inward & Outward Processing

Avoid pitfalls when importing, understand methods of claiming relief

May 12

½ Day INCOTerms© 2020

Benefits of International Commercial Terms for buyers and sellers

May 19

1 Day Understanding Export and Export Documentation

Demystify international trade concepts and procedures

May 27

1 Day Letters of Credit – Methods of Payment

Make sure your letter of credit is not rejected due to discrepancies and understand the benefits of each method of payment.

June 22

These courses are currently delivered by our usual trainers running as Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT) via Zoom to allow for greater flexibility and safety.

For more information on our courses, contact us at training@agcc.co.uk





NORTHERN STAR2021 BUSINESS AWARDS

Welcome to the review of the 2021 Chamber's Northern Star Business Awards which took place on March 25 - just not as you know them.

In September 2019, over 600 guests came together in person at our amazing new P&J Live facility to celebrate business excellence and entrepreneurship at our 16th annual Awards night.

As the stragglers left the bar and headed for their taxis, we had already decided to move the event from its traditional home in the autumn, hot on the heels of the Golden Globes and Oscars, to the spring of 2021. And throughout the incredible events that unfolded last year, this seemed to have been a pretty smart move. We thought...

Through these most challenging of times, there are still good news stories out there. Businesses innovating, adapting and doing incredible things among the economic mayhem.

As we emerged from our first lockdown, this was reflected in us receiving a 16-year record number of entries to the awards. And the judges were hugely impressed by the quality and range of initiatives highlighted in the submissions.

By November over 400 people had already booked and we were looking forward to being one of the first major business events at the end of a long and dark tunnel.

Things didn't turn out quite as we planned but that doesn't mean we can't celebrate business success in North-east Scotland.

Thank you to everyone involved in the awards and our sponsors, especially Nucore Group, who have continued to support us throughout.

And thanks to you. Our members, the business community of the North-east. It is only with your backing that we can do the good work we do.

Let's work through the other side of this challenging period supporting our people, jobs, businesses, economy and the way of life we love in this fantastic part of the world. Achieving together what we could not individually.

The Chamber of Commerce is and always has been about in-person connection. We hope to see you in the flesh very soon.

Russell Borthwick
chief executive

With thanks to

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all those involved in the 2021 Northern Star Business Awards, with special thanks to all our sponsors and partners, without whom the awards would not be possible.

Principal sponsor



Nucore Group is a provider of integrated engineering solutions specialising in hazardous environments. Our range of services include design, manufacture, maintenance, installation and commissioning making us a unique turnkey provider of cost-effective solutions. Nucore provides critical services and support for the oil and gas, marine, renewables energy and petrochemical industries, as well as private and public sector customers.

As headline sponsor of the Northern Star Business Awards we are delighted to continue to show our support for these local and prestigious awards. Our business is centred around our core values and we believe our people are key to our current and future success - but the same is true outside of business too.

Local people are key to driving success across the region and we understand the importance of celebrating this, especially during these challenging times. Although the awards are not possible in person this year, we are delighted to still play our part in celebrating with the much-deserved finalists and winners of the Northern Star Business Awards.

Driving Sustainability sponsored by



Family Business sponsored by



Going Global sponsored by



Inspiring Futures sponsored by



Making the Difference sponsored by



Marketing Magic sponsored by



Rising Star sponsored by



Staff Matter sponsored by



Student Placement sponsored by



Associate sponsors



INSPIRING FUTURES WINNER

Recognition of an employer which is working in partnership with a school or schools to ensure young people are inspired and supported to find fulfilling careers.



Category sponsor



STUDENT PLACEMENT WINNER

This special award recognises the important contribution business makes to students through their participation in RGU's student placement programme.



BW OFFSHORE

Category sponsor



Many lives have been saved by youngsters with first aid knowledge thanks to Grampian Training Services Ltd.

Its long-term mission is for every child in the North-east to receive first aid training before going to secondary school and has trained more than 100,000 primary school children and several thousand teaching and nursery staff since being founded in 1996.

The company offers corporate sponsorship packages which enables it to provide legally required and fully recognised and accredited first aid training to company staff and free first aid training to primary five, six and seven classes and their staff in schools in the North-east.

Tom Malcolm launched the business in 1996 after discovering that first aid was not taught in any North-east primary schools. He saw this as a serious issue for a largely rural region with low population centres and with many people a considerable distance from an ambulance and other emergency response services.

As first aid is not a defined part of the Curriculum for Excellence and there is no central funding, the training has been funded by Parent Teachers Association. It begins in primary five and intensifies in primaries six and seven.

Among those who owe their lives to the training are a grandma who was choking and was saved by her primary six grand-daughter and a boy whose sister stopped his bleeding and managed his shock after a car accident.

Sponsor - Developing the Young Workforce North East Scotland

The Inspiring Futures award is an excellent platform to recognise and celebrate the ongoing success of an employer who has worked in partnership with schools over the past year to deliver a range of activities which provide skills and pathways for young people into the world of work. We are delighted to once again be sponsoring the award which also provides an opportunity to inspire more employers across the North-east to get involved and be part of shaping the future workforce of the region.

As part of BW Offshore's 'Global Summer Intern Program' Louis Patience had the opportunity of work experience in three locations: Oslo, Singapore and Aberdeen as part of the first placement for his MEng Fast-Track Degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering at the Robert Gordon University.

In the Oslo office the interns were introduced to the mentors and buddies who helped them to feel comfortable in a new country and working environment. They were assigned individual projects and Louis' was to investigate cybersecurity for the fleet and produce a report to address how the FPSOs were vulnerable.

In Singapore he had a similarly enriching experience working on a project on the use of subsea power cable and visiting Keppel Shipyard to board BW Opportunity, an FPSO vessel which was undergoing refurbishment. Back in Aberdeen he continued his Singapore project, experiencing the global nature of the company when communicating with colleagues in Singapore.

Louis found all his colleagues helpful and friendly and his mentor for his time in Singapore and Aberdeen assisted him in identifying a project for his final year at RGU on the use of subsea power cable to power an FPSO from shore.

BW Offshore also provided technical support and access to additional resources he required and at the end of the year he was offered a graduate role with the company.

Sponsor - Robert Gordon University

Recently named as the Scottish University of the Year and boasting a 97.6% undergraduate employment rate (HESA 2018), RGU has a global reputation for producing highly skilled graduates across many sectors. RGU's long-standing and close relationship with business ensures that our degree programmes are all informed by industry demands. With work placements featuring on the majority of our courses, RGU is proud to sponsor this award in recognition of the contribution North-east organisations make to students' learning experience and the success of the university.

RISING STAR WINNER

Recognition of a future star who is destined for great things having made a significant impact in an organisation.



Category sponsor

1495



UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

BUSINESS SCHOOL

MARKETING MAGIC WINNER

Recognition of a company which has created a successful marketing campaign which has driven customers through the door or grown exposure.



Category sponsor



THE MARKETING
SOCIETY

George Strachan first encountered TaxAssist Accountants at a careers fair in Aboyne Academy in early 2018 when he was in his sixth year at school. He approached the managing director, Steven Mearns, and asked if any work experience opportunities were available at the new TaxAssist Accountants office on the High Street in Banchory.

Following a very impressive spell on work experience, George was offered the opportunity to join TaxAssist Accountants as a Graduate Apprentice (GA).

The GA is a partnership between TaxAssist Accountants, Robert Gordon University and The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. It is a five-year course during which George will work and study towards an honours degree and a chartership in accountancy.

George stood out as a rising star because of the way in which he has taken to the work and the speed at which he has become a major asset to the company. Not only has he picked up the existing procedures and work flows but has had the confidence in himself and his ability to challenge the status quo and make real added value suggestions which have improved the company's bottom line.

The impact George has had on the company has been impressive on every measure, whether financial, cultural or motivational. He is a problem solver and a quick learner, attributes which have meant he has rapidly earned respect.

Sponsor - University of Aberdeen Business School

The University of Aberdeen Business School is thrilled to be sponsoring the prestigious Rising Star Award at the Northern Star Business Awards 2021. We pride ourselves in working with ambitious professionals through our undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes to enhance careers by developing vision, knowledge and strategic leadership. The Rising Star category allows us to shine a light and celebrate the people who are making a significant impact in their organisations and our local economy. It is fantastic to see so many change makers and innovators based in the North-east!

Aberdeen Football Club is a long-standing BIG client. AFC Community Trust (AFCCT), the club's charitable trust, was set up in 2014 to support people of all ages and from all walks of life through a range of football-related education and wellbeing initiatives.

BIG devised the #StillStandingFree campaign, to provide support, public health information and entertaining content through club channels. The name, a play on the club's motto Stand Free, reflected confidence in the future.

The campaign marshalled the forces of staff and players, the Trust's team and volunteers and fans to deliver food and essentials five days a week to vulnerable families, particularly children who would normally receive free meals at school.

Over the course of 160 days, the club and AFCCT made 2,600 food deliveries to more than 12,000 people, including 7,000 children who may not otherwise have had a nourishing daily meal, as part of its #StillStandingFree campaign.

They spoke to 15,000 fans, checking on their welfare throughout lockdown. Those who were identified as being particularly vulnerable or struggling had their spirits lifted by calls from players, former players, the manager and the chairman.

A mental health app for fans was launched in partnership with Health Shield, while PE @ Pittodrie, which took place every weekday to encourage physical activity and engage young people before beginning schoolwork, had more than 50,000 views.

Sponsor - The Marketing Society

The Marketing Society is a leading global community of progressive marketers. We empower brave leaders in marketing by helping them do well - in their organisations and in their careers; do good - in business and society; and feel good - about our profession and community. We are here for marketers who want to make an impact and make a difference. In Scotland, our vision is to build a vibrant marketing community renowned for enlightened thinking, innovation and creativity. The Northern Star Business Awards shine a light on businesses that encapsulate these values.

INSPIRATION FROM INNOVATION WINNER

Recognition of a company which is at the forefront of the latest thinking and is using technology or innovation to drive the future.



EIP is a subsea technology developer and offshore engineering specialist in oil and gas and renewables. It specialises in rapidly developing game-changing technologies to address market needs.

Ecosse IP was established in July 2018 by entrepreneur Mike Wilson following the sale of his previous business, Ecosse Subsea, to Oceaneering. Mike invested in developing new innovative technology to support the offshore oil and gas, renewables, maritime and defence sectors.

The funding to design, engineer and fabricate its latest technology MOWT (Mass of Water Turbine) was done directly by Ecosse IP rather than from external industry funding and grants. However, EIP has worked closely with organisations including OGTC, Zero Waste Scotland and Scottish Enterprise (as part of the Nippon Foundation project) to fund new technology developments and take products to market.

Successfully securing external funding has supported its other technologies developed over the last 18 months - Ambient Lifter, Ambient Linear and FLOWT (Floating Offshore Wind installation system) which is being developed from concept through to a pre-commercial stage.

MOWT is a patented technology which harnesses kinetic energy from slow-moving water. It has applications in a range of market sectors including offshore oil and gas, utilities, renewable energy, aquaculture, marine and defence.

Currently, electricity generation from turbines is based on high-speed water in tidal and wave settings. MOWT captures energy from slow-moving water, offering a new solution in hydro-kinetic power generation.

MOWT has been designed for use in rivers and subsea currents, with larger versions for harbours, estuaries and tidal environments, offering an energy solution with minimal environmental impact. The patented technology presents commercial opportunities for multiple markets.

CUSTOMER FIRST WINNER

To celebrate an exceptional company which has put the interest of customers at the heart of everything it does.



Nimbus Blue is an Aberdeen-based IT provider which was established in 2010. Its team of cybersecurity and IT systems experts has helped more than 100 companies improve how they work by enhancing their IT management capabilities.

It sees the role of IT as driving growth, compliance, security and productivity across all aspects of a business. It helps businesses make conscious, strategic IT decisions which bring peace of mind and help to achieve business goals. Its key offering is its 'Pro-cover' service, a strategic IT management engagement over at least 12 months and designed to partner with growing and/or changing businesses.

Following the successful introduction of Pro-cover, an enhancement project was launched which was based on customer feedback. Clients wanted access to data for making informed decisions on-the-move, without contacting the customer helpdesk, so Nimbus Blue created a live dashboard using Bright Gauge. It provides real-time information on service tickets opened and closed, number of laptops in use, contact people within the client company, workstation status; and the number of positive and negative reviews.

This empowers clients to see what's happening within their infrastructure. Nimbus believes the way to grow is through people so its focus is on the people they serve. It doesn't have a sales function and relies entirely on what people say about them. 'We live and die by our customer service', is its mantra.

A measure of success is that its customer feedback score in the last six months was 99.1% based on 114 reviews, an increase from 98.5% the previous year. Turnover increased by 39% year-on-year between July 2018 and June 2020. Nimbus Blue has demonstrated its ability to expand its capabilities alongside the growth of a business.

DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY WINNER

Recognition of a business which is passionate about environmental sustainability, reduces impact on the environment, is engaged in reducing waste and carbon emissions or is helping drive the energy transition.



Keenan Recycling Ltd started as a garden composting business in 2001 and is now the UK's largest food waste recycling business. Its primary objective is to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Keenan Recycling launched its commercial food waste collection services in Scotland in 2009 and a £2.2m investment from BGF in 2015 enabled significant expansion plans, including a move into England.

The company is also a key supplier for UK anaerobic digestion (AD) plants. Following funding from Zero Waste Scotland, Keenan invested in its own processing facility where it produces biofuel for AD plants. It processes more than 100,000 tonnes of organic waste a year, turning it into premium grade compost or generating electricity through AD.

The company works across a diverse range of sectors including local authority, education, retail, hospitality and commercial business units and recently secured a £7.5m contract to supply the fuel to power Aberdeen's P&J Live, making it one of the greenest venues in Scotland.

By cutting waste going to landfill Keenan helps its customers save money and reduces the impact on the environment. A fifth of UK greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food waste, making it a greater cause of global warming than plastic waste.

The company is now focused on replacing the largely linear economy of 'take, make and dispose' with one in which resources circulate at high value, avoiding or reducing the need for virgin resources.

Sponsor - Circular North-east

Sponsoring the Northern Star business awards is important for Circular North-east. For most businesses going above and beyond in relation to ensuring they minimise their environmental impact is not business as usual. And it is important to recognise those businesses that make a particular effort to do this.

Category sponsor



MAKING THE DIFFERENCE WINNER

Recognition of a company with a big heart which is committed to positive change within the community.



NESS supports some of the most vulnerable in society and, because of the CV19 pandemic, has probably never been needed more in its 141-year history.

It was established in Aberdeen in 1879 and is now the sector leader in Scotland, uniquely delivering joint sensory services – a service model of particular benefit to the elderly, dealing with age-related, dual-sensory loss.

In addition however, NESS undertakes a number of added value services funded from charitable and trust funded income - including peer support, social and activity groups for elderly and younger service users, as well as employment, welfare, ICT, hospital information and transcription services. In spite of the challenges it has continued to provide emotional and practical support to its service users in every way possible.

Living with a significant sensory loss can be both physically and emotionally challenging. All age groups are at high risk of social isolation, frustration and disengagement from society due to communication barriers. The services NESS provides are designed to give them better opportunities to determine how to live their lives, improve emotional wellbeing, increase independence, reduce discrimination and enable better integration into society.

There are a number of specific projects including support for those over 65, the 19s and under and those seeking employment, training, or help with navigating benefits.

Sponsor - Balmoral Group

As a local business and Chamber premier partner, Balmoral Group is delighted to sponsor the Making a Difference category. We all know someone somewhere that goes the extra mile to help others, be that individually or collectively. We hear and read about extraordinary kindness, selflessness and generosity on a daily basis, particularly over the past year or so. We are determined that these initiatives are celebrated and want to ensure that they don't go unrecognised. It's unfortunate that there can only be one winner in this category but we know these wonderful organisations will continue their far-reaching support of our local communities and we thank them all.

Category sponsor



STAFF MATTER WINNER

Recognition of an organisation which takes care of its people, so its people take care of its business.



Category sponsor



TaxAssist Accountants is a professional services firm offering a full range of business support services to individuals and small businesses. It helps individuals with their tax returns and to organise their affairs in a tax efficient way. For small businesses and their owners, it also offers support services such as payroll, tax, accounting, bookkeeping and VAT returns.

The company has committed to a bespoke development plan for each employee and with clear business objectives they make it easy for the team to understand how their efforts contribute to the goals of the business.

Development is delivered in many ways, from simple shadowing and work experience to five-year degree and professional institute qualifications, each team member team has a clear understanding and agreement with their manager about the terms of their development. The partnership between the firm and the employee puts responsibilities on both parties and these form the basis of each development conversation.

The key skills required focus on the need to understand each clients' circumstances so they can advise accordingly. The whole process starts at the recruitment stage with trial periods and work experience built in to reduce the risk of either side misjudging the opportunity.

The business continually works to build and maintain a talent pipeline, put the team's development and wellbeing at the top of its priority list, make a concerted effort to be well connected on social media; and encourage clients to post reviews on Google and Trust Pilot.

Sponsor - Spirit Energy

Spirit Energy employs more than 350 people in Aberdeen and we are a proud part of the North-east community and economy. The Northern Star Business Awards celebrate some of the top businesses, large and small, as well as the individuals who are at the heart of that community and helping to grow and diversify our economy. Our support for the awards is in recognition of what the region has to offer now and in the future.

FAMILY BUSINESS WINNER

Recognition of a family business with an outstanding reputation and true integrity.



Category sponsor



Greenwell Equipment was launched in 1996 by brother and sister Mark and Julie Turnbull, with dad Richy, selling second-hand furniture from a 20 x 8ft cabin on Greenwell Road.

Today it is a multi-million-pound business which has worked on some of the UK's largest infrastructure projects, including the Queensferry Crossing, the AWPR, the Aberdeen Harbour development, A9 upgrade, and the HS2 Rail development in England.

Greenwell now has four divisions: office furniture, warehouse, cabins and containers. The company operates across numerous sectors including oil and gas, civil engineering, renewables, fish processing and transportation. Richy is now into his 70s but is still involved on a day-to-day basis assisting with his vast knowledge and contacts. Mark has been at the helm since launch with sister Julie, but both their children are young so succession planning is currently focussed on nurturing 'Team Greenwell'.

Scott Brown, who joined in 2002, became a shareholder in 2008 and was appointed director in 2017. Scott is earmarked to fill Richy's role and support the racking and modular cabin side of the business in preparation for future retirement plans.

Greenwell made David Hay, who managed the racking and pallet division, a shareholder in 2008. He trained his son Chris as a school leaver and when his dad suffered a stroke, from which he is still recovering, Chris stepped up to fill his dad's role. The furniture, racking and modular division supervisor, Zibi Biorka, meanwhile has been with the company for 12 years and his two sons also work at Greenwell.

They are proud of their strong team, 'the Greenwell family', which has low staff turnover and is well positioned to address future challenges.

Sponsor - Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeenshire Council is delighted to support the Northern Star Business Awards once again. The Awards are an excellent way to recognise the achievements of organisations and businesses across Aberdeenshire and the North-east of Scotland.

GOING GLOBAL WINNER

Recognition of a company which has been successful in growing internationally.



Category sponsor

**Aberdeen International
Airport**

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR WINNER

In recognition of the company which has shown excellent practice and inspiration to all businesses by being a market leader.



James Fisher Offshore (JFO), part of James Fisher and Sons plc, is a global provider of specialist offshore engineering solutions to the oil and gas sector.

It draws on more than 20 years' industry experience to deploy innovative technologies and methods to support high-assurance projects throughout their lifecycles, maximising safety while minimising costs.

Headquartered in Oldmeldrum, it has invested significantly in the global expansion of its team, facilities and capabilities to meet the evolving demands of its international customers. The team serves the Asia-Pacific market from its newly established operational facilities in Johor Bahru and Kuala Lumpur and has recently secured and progressed a host of new projects in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar.

JFO also expanded its decommissioning business in the Middle East establishing a new facility in Dubai to solve the complex challenges of its recently awarded contracts in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

JFO merged with another James Fisher and Sons plc (JFS) group company, James Fisher Subsea Excavation, which integrated a new base of operations in Ciudad del Carmen, Mexico, within its worldwide network. It also appointed DRI - an agent in France - to expand its European presence and investigate new markets in the renewable energy and civil sectors.

Before 2012, 80% of the company's revenue was associated with the UKCS. Today, over 65% of its revenue is gained from overseas markets.

Sponsor - Aberdeen International Airport

Aberdeen International Airport is delighted to be involved with the Northern Star Business Awards once again. It's been a challenging year for many organisations and industries and we need to make sure the successes are not lost due to the pandemic. The Going Global Award is one very close to us at the airport and we're delighted to be sponsoring it and helping make sure businesses in the North-east are celebrated. All the effort, hard work and determination in the North-east right now thoroughly deserves to be recognised and the Northern Star Business Awards help do that.

Motive Offshore Group Ltd has followed up its win in the 'Going Global' category of the last Northern Star Business Awards with the 'Business of the Year' title in 2021.

Since it was established in 2010 by James Gregg and Dave Acton, the company has developed from a winch manufacturer into a leading global solutions provider for the back-deck and beyond. It specialises in the manufacture, rental and servicing of high-capacity winches, umbilical testing and deployment equipment and associated services to the onshore and offshore energy and marine industries.

It now has seven divisions and is headquartered in Banff with bases in Kintore, Port of Blyth, United Arab Emirates, the USA and Norway.

Following multi-million-pound investment in 2019, Motive has executed an ambitious growth strategy, through tactical diversification and internationalisation, designed to create a £20m EBITDA business by 2025.

In November 2019, Motive acquired Stavanger-based Pumptech, specialists in flexible flowlines and umbilical testing. This acquisition enhanced the company's service provision to include the deployment and testing of umbilical equipment and associated services.

A month earlier Motive's spooling and inspection division had its largest contract win which included working across 16 vessels worldwide. In May 2020, Motive Offshore reported a 115% year-on-year turnover increase for its fabrication division. It has also accelerated its move into the renewable energy marketplace.

Community involvement by Motive is seen as reinforcing the sense of community in each of its bases so encouraging staff retainment and maintaining Motive as an employer of choice, committed to improving the areas in which it operates.

Motive operates as a community in which all staff benefit from encouragement and a sense of ownership creating a team dedicated to success.



Nicholas Little

Top marks for International School Aberdeen

INTERNATIONAL School Aberdeen (ISA) has received re-accreditation from a globally recognised education body.

ISA, on North Deeside Road, has welcomed an 'exceptionally positive' report from the Council of International Schools (CIS), an organisation committed to the highest standards of international education.

The school, which welcomes local children and international families, received 12 commendations and was congratulated by the CIS for its excellent work.

Last summer, ISA continued its 100% pass rate in the International Baccalaureate Diploma - a pre-university qualification highly regarded by universities in the UK and around the world. ISA students scored almost 15% above world averages in an already elite qualification with 95% of its students achieving grades A to C and over half achieving an A.

ISA's head of school Nicholas Little said: "The report demonstrates a clear appreciation for our values, community relations and desire to provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to pursue their lives as global citizens."

Sutherlands of Portsoy and RGU project

SUTHERLANDS of Portsoy has announced a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Robert Gordon University.

Dilara Okut has been chosen to lead this two-year project which is primarily focused on maximising the potential of fish waste. During this time Dilara will be working on site in Portsoy and in the labs at RGU with support from Dr Giovanna Bermano and academic team lead Dr Kyari Yates.

Access2Funding claimed back £1m in two months

IN THE first two months of 2021 Access2Funding successfully claimed more than £1m back to Scottish companies in Research and Development tax relief.

Access2Funding launched in Scotland in March 2020 and achieved a return of more than £3m for Scottish businesses last year.

Suzu Carter, regional manager for Scotland, said: "Many businesses are struggling in the current climate, but Access2Funding's expert team of tax specialists are on hand to help companies claim back money that they do not know they are entitled to.

"Claims this year have not been limited to scientific sectors they have included construction, manufacturing, food production, hospitality, plumbing, joinery, electrical engineering, breweries, architectural design, printing and signage."

Nicol of Skene harbour contract

NICOL of Skene has been appointed as principal contractor by Doig and Smith on behalf of Aberdeen Harbour Board to carry out the installation of approximately 3km of new water mains, including all associated civil works as part of the ongoing Aberdeen Harbour Expansion Project (AHEP).

The project will connect the new Aberdeen Harbour to the existing Scottish Water supply network and Torry Quay.

Nicol of Skene will also install ducting for an underground communication network which will run alongside the new water main. Civil works will also include the construction of a shared cycle path and footpath which will head from AHEP, through St Fittick's Road finishing at North Balnagask Road.

OceanTools helps tsunami early warning effort

SUBSEA engineering firm OceanTools is supporting a tsunami detection project in Southeast Asia, having successfully delivered its first shipment of tsunami detection housings to a client in Indonesia.

Depth rated to 7,500 metres, the housings will be used for early detection of tsunami threats which will provide the authorities with the opportunity to efficiently evacuate people living in its path and reduce the number of fatalities.

"Nearly 230,000 people lost their lives in the Indian Ocean Boxing Day earthquake and tsunami of 2004," said Kevin Parker, OceanTools managing director.

"Being involved in a project which has the potential to save human lives on this scale is deeply rewarding for us. As a result of developing such technology, we now sit on a UNESCO Joint Task Force which uses our technology, not just for tsunami detection, but to monitor the effects of climate change on the world's oceans."



Phil Milton,
chief executive officer, Well-Safe Solutions



Quick fire round

What was your first job?

Apprentice mechanical engineer.

When would you like to retire?

When I am old enough and it stops being fun.

What did you have for breakfast?

At the weekend I always look forward to a crispy bacon roll and a nice cup of coffee.

Who, or what, inspires you?

My friend Doddie Weir and what he has done to raise funds to help with the fight against motor neuron disease as he continues his own battle with it.

What's the last book you read / film you saw?

'My name's Doddie', The Doddie Weir autobiography.

What does your company do that others don't?

Well-Safe Solutions offers a true 'Tier 1' well decommissioning solution to the oil and gas industry. We have the ability to tailor our offering to suit our customers' requirements, from providing bespoke P&A well engineering and project management services through to deploying our owned and operated bespoke P&A assets. These are delivered using commercial models to align with our customers' requirements from performance-based to complete lump sum solutions.

What are the most pressing challenges that your industry sector faces today, and why?

As we recover from the CV19 pandemic and progress with the energy transition, we need to ensure the retention of highly-skilled personnel and critical supply chain capability within the industry. This will ensure that we maintain the safe delivery of our current energy requirements. We must then progress with a controlled transition utilising these essential skills and retraining, where required, to ensure continuity of employment for people and support for the supply chain capabilities that we already have here in the UK.

What is the hardest lesson you have learned in your career to date?

If anything, 2020 has taught us all to expect the unexpected, and while you cannot plan for every eventuality, you really need to give careful consideration to the 'unknown unknown's'.

What is the most valuable piece of business advice you have ever received?

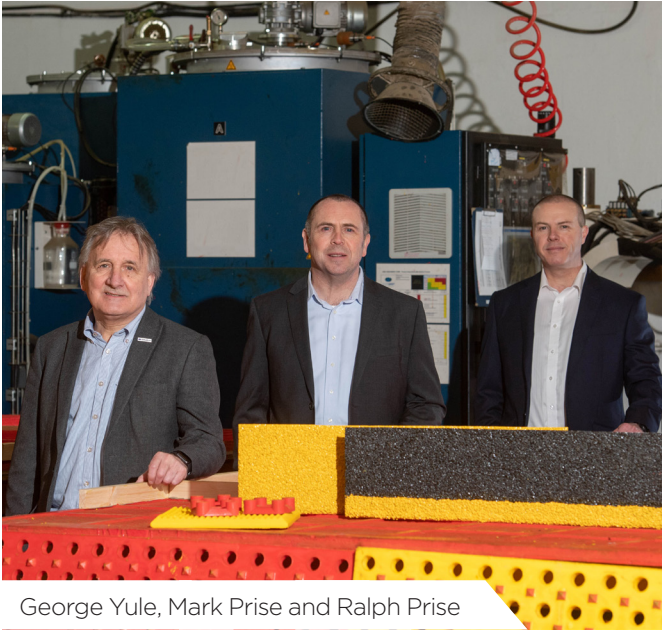
Be nice to people and treat them how you would like to be treated yourself.

What's been your proudest career achievement to date, and why?

Being part of the team that took Well-Safe Solutions from concept to market and continuing the journey as we progress with building our team and delivering our company vision.

If you could make one thing happen tomorrow that would benefit North-east Scotland, what would it be?

The North-east of Scotland is an amazing place with so much to offer. It would be great to see this more widely recognised, bringing in more tourism and more investment. Needed, more than ever before, given the devastating impact CV19 has had on the hospitality sector that we all like to enjoy with our friends and families.



George Yule, Mark Prise and Ralph Prise

Banchory firm makes major appointment

A BANCHORY based industrial safety and anti-slip flooring specialist has changed its name and made a significant strategic appointment as it prepares for major UK and international expansion.

Scotgrip (UK), which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, has rebranded as Scotgrip International and successful Aberdeen entrepreneur George Yule has invested in the company and been appointed chairman. Since its formation in 1991, the privately owned company has built its reputation and a strong and loyal customer base on high quality products and excellent customer service.

“We believe there is tremendous potential to expand both in the UK and internationally,” said George, who has enjoyed an illustrious career in the offshore energy sector, spanning almost four decades.

The former executive vice chairman of Aberdeen Football Club is a previous recipient of the Grampian Industrialist of the Year award and was recognised in 2020 by the University of Aberdeen with an honorary professorship for his support and contribution to entrepreneurship and academia.

“Scotgrip International provides a range of safety related services and anti-slip industrial flooring products for the energy sector. As well as our UK locations, we have satellite offices in Houston, Bangkok, and Stavanger. We are now planning to expand into the West African, Middle East, and Asia-Pacific regions.

“We are confident there is scope to take our high standards and range of innovative products all around the globe, not only in the offshore energy sector but also in industry sectors such as renewables, maritime and pharmaceutical plants, in fact anywhere where slips, trips and falls are an occupational hazard. In doing so, we have every opportunity to grow our sales revenue by as much as 40% - to £2.2m - in 2022.”

Mintra acquires Safebridge

MINTRA, a provider of digital learning and human capital management systems for safety-critical industries, has acquired the maritime digital learning and crew competence management specialists, Safebridge, for £5.1m.

The acquisition by Mintra, which has a base in Aberdeen, significantly accelerates the company’s growth in the global maritime sector and its strategy to rapidly increase its market share.

The acquisition will double Mintra’s maritime eLearning portfolio with the addition of more than 50 technical and compliance titles. It also increases the company’s operational capabilities and combines an impressive suite of crew management and certification technologies to give Mintra an integrated, unique and market leading position.

The move follows Mintra’s acquisitions of OCS HR in 2016 and Atlas Knowledge in 2018. It will result in the addition of 500 new customers and 200,000 users, which will lead to Mintra servicing more than 4,000 customer accounts and two million system users worldwide.

Students given opportunity to work with risk software

ABERDEENSHIRE process safety firm Salus Technical has teamed up with the University of Edinburgh to provide the next generation of engineers with an opportunity to work with real-life industry software.

Salus Technical managing director and founder David Jamieson offered the company’s new risk assessment software solution, Bowtie Master, free-of-charge to university students of degrees related to process safety, such as chemical and process safety engineering. Aimed at enhancing and streamlining the risk assessment process across a range of sectors, Bowtie Master will give these students the opportunity to experience pioneering industry-relevant software as part of their studies.

The University of Edinburgh has accepted the offer for their students and asked David to lecture to undergraduate students on its chemical engineering degree course.

TWMA in high Spirit

SPECIALIST drilling waste management company TWMA has secured a seven-figure contract with exploration and production company, Spirit Energy.

The first scope of a five-year contract will involve TWMA providing drilling waste management services on the harsh-environment jack-up rig Maersk Resolve as Spirit Energy drills the Grove North East well in the Southern Sector of the North Sea.

The contract, which carries the option of two one-year extensions, marks TWMA’s first project with the E&P company and includes the full breadth of the company’s services lines.

Making the energy transition a reality

Shane Taylor,
research and policy manager,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber
of Commerce



ONE of the main asks we were hearing from members as we approached the UK Budget in March was for dedicated support to drive forward the energy transition in the North-east.

We know that our supply chain has the expertise to be at the centre of the UK's journey to net-zero. Foundational pieces of work like OGUK's Roadmap 2035, the OGTC's 'Closing the Gap' report and the UK Government's own Energy White Paper all demonstrate the critical role that the sector will have to play in decarbonizing the wider economy and in the development of critical technologies.

However, we also know that the sector is striving to meet this opportunity after a time of real challenge. Our most recent Oil and Gas Survey illustrates the huge difficulties faced by the supply chain in 2020. Headline measures like business confidence and activity were down to levels not seen since the last major downturn in 2015-16. Furthermore, engagement with the Scottish Government's PACE programme, often seen as a precursor for redundancy, is disproportionately high in the region.

Despite the real pain faced over the last year, our survey also illustrated a significant shift in strategic direction by firms. The previous edition found that 25% of firms claimed to be

actively diversifying their operations and seeking work outwith the oil and gas sector, but this has now increased to 49%. When asked if firms would be considering accelerating their diversification away from oil and gas following CV19, 57% suggested that the impact of the pandemic had amplified their efforts to diversify.

Now is the right time for government to get behind the sector and supercharge its plans to decarbonise. With that in mind, it was fantastic to see such a strong vote of confidence in our region in the UK Budget itself. Over £30m in funding, focused on key projects like the Global Underwater Hub and Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone, will further develop our growing reputation as a centre of excellence for net-zero technologies. This comes alongside a further £2m to develop proposals for the much-awaited North Sea Transition Deal.

It's real progress on the path to transform one of our region's key sectors but it also follows the announcement of a major policy shift from government. While they are committed to investing in the transition itself, both the UK and Scottish Governments have expressed their intention to remove the vast majority of direct financial and promotional support for the fossil fuel sector overseas. Both governments have also outlined a general intention to

do this imminently, with the Scottish Government definitively settling on COP26 as the deadline for withdrawing support. The Chamber, driven by member feedback, has made the case both direct to Ministers and in response to consultations that this rapid timeline risks the very transition we hope to build.

As we approach COP26, we would argue that the UK has a major role to play in setting the tone of policy to achieve a true 'just transition'. That means reflecting that the transition will take place over decades and that our long-term ambitions are best achieved by supporting the oil and gas supply chain companies that will drive this transition in the immediate term. Withdrawing the industry's access to key government export support at such pace cannot be seen as a sensible step to preserve our domestic talent pool and ensure that the industry meets the transition from a position of strength.

In the coming months, we'll be pressing government to work with industry to set out an export support roadmap which strikes a better balance, allowing the sector to take both the expertise it will develop in new technologies and in decarbonising the UK's oil and gas production into international markets.



Phil Anderson

North-east financial services firm expands in 10th anniversary year

ELLON-BASED firm Phil Anderson Financial Services recently experienced their busiest January ever for arranging mortgages on behalf of clients, while September and October last year proved their busiest months ever for mortgage leads.

In addition to the increase in its mortgage business, the firm has continued to support an ever-widening customer base with their financial affairs across a range of service areas including investments, pensions, savings, mortgages and insurance, despite the restrictions and challenges of the past year. Turnover for 2020 was £1.1m, with the firm predicting that will increase by almost a third in 2021.

Phil said: "We appreciate that the past year has been exceptionally difficult for people, both personally and professionally. However, as a business our ultimate goal is to help our clients to make the changes that will improve their lives, and that's been more important than ever during this challenging period. Whether that means arranging mortgages as people's lives evolve, advising on how to make the most of your pension, or even opening an ISA to save for a much-needed holiday when restrictions are lifted, we're in a very privileged position to be able to help people to achieve their goals."

Electra Learning opens Ontario office

ELECTRA Learning is increasing its client reach by opening an office in Mississauga, Ontario. The new office will mean that Electra Learning can work in close proximity with its clients in the region enabling an enhanced service offering.

Digital skills development opportunity

THE North-east's biggest educational establishments have joined forces with some of Scotland's leading digital training providers to boost the region's digital capabilities.

The Future Skills Partnership, which is being spearheaded by Opportunity North East (ONE), will help the region keep pace with the country's other major cities in digital maturity and adoption.

The University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College have partnered with Code Clan, The Data Lab and Skills Development Scotland to launch a web portal providing individuals looking to further their digital education with a single source for information and advice on all the courses available.

Jared Owen, director, digital and entrepreneurship at ONE, said: "The purpose of the Future Skills Partnership is to provide access to the latest in digital learning and education to people across the region who we know will benefit from expanding their digital skillset.

"ONE and its partners have a clear ambition to accelerate economic diversification and support sustainable economic growth. Driving digital adoption and maturity is a key part of this and the web portal is a great way of helping everyone – people and organisations – across our key sectors access the resources to do this.

"The region has led the way in terms of energy for many decades, and the pace of digital transformation within that sector in particular is accelerating. This presents us with a tremendous opportunity to enhance the existing skills base in the region to support the energy transition, as well as other industries as they embrace the digital future."

Green award for Legasea

LEGASEA, based in Aberdeenshire, has won a Scottish Green Apple Environment Award in the campaign to find the greenest companies, councils and communities. The award is for environmental best practice in relation to its subsea circular economy services.

Legasea competed against more than 200 other nominations in the Scottish Green Apple Awards for Environmental Best Practice and will be presented with the trophy and certificate at a ceremony planned for May.

The Green Apple Awards began in 1994 and have become established as the country's major recognition for environmental endeavour among companies, councils and communities.

The awards are organised by The Green Organisation - an international, independent, non-political, non-profit environmental group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice around the world.

Up your marketing game for the best that is still to come

Grace Longmuir,
marketing and communications whizz,
Prospect 13



WHAT a year - and it's only April! With businesses all around the world adapting operations due to a certain virus it will be unsurprising to hear that many marketing strategies were thrown out the window in sheer panic.

Survival is key however now is not the time to cut costs on managing your profile. Now is the time to get stronger, get in the minds of prospects, think creatively and try fresh approaches to suit the new world we live in.

As we all sit on the cusp of a new beginning as restrictions begin to ease this spring, professional marketers must keep focus on delivering impactful and effective communications. The value of a tailored marketing strategy should never be underestimated, now more than ever as organisations grapple to keep control over business priorities.

One of the many benefits of marketing is that it is designed to be flexible. It is one of the greatest challenges of a marketer to predict future customer needs, wants and desires. When the pandemic hit, consumers themselves were not even aware of their own needs or how purchasing decisions would evolve.

But that should not stop your marketing activities. Instead, it allows you to re-evaluate your marketing plan and be 'smart' about how you position your products and services.

It is an ideal time to refresh or rebrand when things are quieter. This 'revival' presents an opportunity for you to present your brand with a new purpose and show to customers that you are progressing to meet their current needs.

Communication with your customers should also be stronger than ever before. Not only is it important you show sensitivity to what is going on but keeping your customers fully informed on operational changes to your services and any other developments is vital.

A question we often get asked is whether businesses should still be posting on social media? We say 100% yes! But with caveats. Don't post for the sake of posting and remember the bigger picture; question if your post is going to add value to your business and your followers.

Now is also a good time to think about content creation. Even if it doesn't seem to be the right time for you to post, building up a library

of content ready to use when things settle down helps you stay in control.

Another key thing to bear in mind during tough times is that sharing good news is so important; positive stories help to break up the monotony of the doldrums of lockdown. Sharing more upbeat developments brings encouragement and a 'can do' mentality motivates and can help shine a positive light on your business.

Taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture to re-strategise and focus your marketing efforts goes a long way. There has never been a better time to re-evaluate your marketing plan and up your game for the best that is still to come in 2021.



Jim Thomson of Wellpro Group and Brian Garden of Omega Well Intervention

Omega and Wellpro form alliance

DOWNHOLE technology developer and manufacturer Omega, has announced a strategic alliance to deliver downhole tools to the Middle East and North African (MENA) market, led by senior management teams with decades of well intervention expertise.

The agreement will involve Wellpro Group managing the deployment of Omega Well Intervention products through its extensive network across the region, a move which will go alongside significant investment in all MENA facilities.

Omega Well Intervention, which has 23 years of experience developing and manufacturing downhole tools, will provide access to an engineering design team as well as manufacturing capabilities and test facilities for product development.

Wellpro Group, which already delivers a comprehensive portfolio of through tubing and inflatable packer products to the international oil and gas market, will provide technical engineering support combined with wellsite personnel responsible for flawless service delivery.

Tendeka and Northern Solutions collaborate

A NEW collaborative agreement has been signed under which Northern Solutions Alaska LLC will represent global completions specialist Tendeka in actively promoting sales, installation, and services of its completion products and technologies in the region.

The two companies have previously worked together on several projects in Alaska which contributed to the introduction and ongoing success of Tendeka's FloSure Autonomous Inflow Control Devices and most recently its new PulseEight Electronic Ambient Valve technology in Prudhoe Bay.

Paul Guilfoyle, Tendeka's business development manager for Canada and Alaska, said: "This mutually beneficial arrangement, although in the works for some time, has even more significance today as we adjust to find new ways of working. Tendeka's regional team and the combination of local experience and support from within Alaska, will ensure that together we can continue to meet the technology requirements of Alaskan operators."

SME Spotlight



Emma Ross,
Urban Wellness Hub and Urban Wellness Float, co-founder/co-owner/director

When was your business established?

We took over a former council community centre in 2017 and built the float therapy facility in 2019.

What does your business do?

Provides a range of health and wellbeing options. Our particular areas of focus at the Hub are to offer solutions for postural tensions, aches and pains (all the way from migraine relief to joint and back pain) and helping with stress and relaxation. We do this via our resident EMMETT and BOWEN therapists and the main part of our business floatation therapy, which is Scotland's only float room. Also known as sensory isolation, sensory deprivation or REST.

What sort of companies do you do business with?

We have been providing corporate wellbeing talks and memberships packages for float sessions with oil and gas companies, as well as the emergency services. Which we hope to expand in 2021. However, our main client base is individuals looking to proactively support their health and we are seeing a rising trend in the floatation room being used for stress management, anxiety, deep-relaxation and sports performance recovery. Our clients are from all industries, including public sector, through to the offshore industry as well as elite athletes.

What is the biggest challenge facing your business at the moment?

Lockdown. Having a mainly bricks and mortar business specifically to deal with health and wellbeing, and not being able to support our clients. We have even had requests from GPs looking for appointments and surprised to find we are not open. Our float room is one of the most sterile and hygienic environments on the planet. Float rooms are open in England but not in Scotland!

And the biggest opportunity?

Getting more companies to join the dots between proactively supporting their workforce (especially as we come out of lockdown) with a proven wellbeing therapy like floating and helping the workforce maintain a healthy mind and body. We have designed SME membership packages that may suit many Chamber members.

What are you most passionate and proud of when it comes to business?

Pre CV19 was reading the client testimonial journal that people would complete after their 1st, 2nd, 5th or 7th float. How it has helped them, in some cases life-changing, and many getting quite emotional after their float experience. It is very humbling to hear such stories from people of their personal experience.

A day in the life: ChamberCustoms executive

Kevin Stott,
export documentation executive,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Explain what you do for a living?

ChamberCustoms is the customs advisory, training and brokerage service delivered through Chambers of Commerce across the UK. It's different from other brokerage services by harnessing the reach, expertise and knowledge of the British Chamber network to offer an unbeatably fast and reliable service with a high level of compliance with HMRC procedures.

The Chamber is the only customs broker in the country with direct links to all sea, air, rail and road ports and terminals in the UK. It can help you keep control while it does the hard stuff, acting in the best interests of your business every time.

And it's not just about the EU. We can advise on all aspects of international trade in countries around the world, supporting businesses and helping them succeed in overseas markets.

How did your day start?

By keeping the North-east warm and assisting with the import of containers of firewood from Lithuania. After that it was checking email requests for import declarations for bacon from the Netherlands and 350,000 trees from Northern Ireland destined for a garden centre customer. I then had time to grab a quick coffee before sending 19 tonnes of carrots to Southern Ireland.

How much of your day is planned vs dealing with issues as they arise?

It's very varied – and really opens your eyes to how much trade goes on in the North-east! Did you know that every year the Chamber facilitates the movement of goods worth almost \$1bn from this region using certificates of origin, preference and non preference documents, ATA carnets and letters of credit as well as customs declarations?

Today we received a frantic call from an anxious importer of bathroom furniture who had been told her delivery was cancelled due to goods not being cleared at the port. We express-onboarded her company and prepared the import declaration, claimed the cargo and within a couple of hours the goods were on their way to her warehouse. Result.

And after lunch?

It was time to export some local produce. We helped send luxury chocolates and artisan lemonade to Germany; and despite some irregularities with the tariff, health certificates and transport issues we were successful in exporting fish - squid, crab, mackerel, monk fish and scallops - to several EU countries including France, The Netherlands, Denmark and Latvia); as well as the Ukraine.

Finally, just to round off the day, it was back to importing and we helped get two truckloads of furniture from Spain and Italy.

Don't take our word for it

"All of our customers can sit easily in their new sofas and armchairs thanks to the ChamberCustoms team.

"We have been importing quality furniture from the EU for many years but on January 1, everything changed. The new customs regulations following Brexit meant this was no longer as straightforward a process.

"The expert team at the Aberdeen & Chamber of Commerce helped us understand the complexities and produce the necessary paperwork. So far, they have enabled the safe arrival of seven shipments from Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Lithuania. They even helped us with a deferment account and postponed VAT accounting.

"If you are involved in importing goods from or exporting goods to the EU, give the ChamberCustoms team a call."

**Andersons House Furnishers
(Inverurie) Ltd**



The first of a new series of practical workshops, make sure you check out the Event listings on the Chamber website to find out about future How 2 sessions

16 Apr

8:30 – 10:00
Webinar
£20 for members
£30 non-members

How 2: Get started with marketing & PR

Our brand new 'How 2' series of online workshops will connect you with experts from a range of member companies who will share their insights and practical suggestions of value-adding actions you can incorporate into your business right now.

This first session will provide a beginners guide to communications and is aimed at those with a limited knowledge of marketing and PR. Guest speakers Erika Askeland of ABZ Mediacraft, Nikki Morris-Laing, head of strategy at Hampton; and the Chamber's Kathryn Collie will take you through the basics of how to craft a press release, what to consider when creating a social media content strategy; and how to get the most out of advertising.

23 Apr

8:00 - 10:00
Webinar
Free

Maximise Your Membership

What support does your business need right now? Are you clear on how to get the most out of the Chamber resources at your fingertips?

Get to know us and your potential new business partners of the future at this interactive discussion in which you tell us what's important to your company – or pitch to other new Chamber members – and we provide a forum for knowledge-sharing, idea-generating and networking while connecting you with the experts across the Chamber team to help you take the next steps.

Free to attend, come ready to join in.

29 Apr

8:30 – 10:00
Webinar
Free

Scottish Parliamentary Election Hustings

Ahead of the public going to the polls on May 6, candidates from the main political parties will be given the opportunity to talk about their priorities and plans for the future of the region and the country as a whole. Full details at agcc.co.uk/events

7 Sep

7:30 - 9:30
P&J Live
£55 for members
£75 non-members

Business Breakfast - Energising the race to net zero

Regarded by offshore exploration and production professionals as Europe's premier energy event, SPE Offshore Europe attracts attendees from around the world.

As part of the keynote programme, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce is delighted to once again host the high-profile breakfast event on the opening day of the 2021 show.



The premier event for Europe's oil and gas industry, make sure you have a seat at the Chamber's high profile breakfast to kickstart your 2021 show.



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Hamish Murray

Montrose Port at the forefront of circular economy effort

HAMISH Murray, projects team leader at Montrose Port Authority, has been selected to represent the business to promote awareness and encourage participation in a Tayside-wide environmental programme.

He will act as an ambassador for Circular Tayside, a joint initiative between Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce, Perthshire Chamber of Commerce, and Zero Waste Scotland, funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Montrose Port Authority has been working hard in recent years to secure projects which contribute to a green economy, the flagship being the Seagreen offshore wind farm currently under construction 27km off the Angus coast, as well as wave energy trials last year.

Hamish said: "I am delighted to be representing the port in such an important forum and to showcase how we, as a traditional, heavy industry business, are trying to do our bit to protect the environment and grow a green economy in Angus and across Scotland.

"The ambassadors of Circular Tayside represent the variety of business operating across the region and it's great to see how we are all able to work together and share our ideas and experience to help the region prosper."

Five year contract for Imrandd

AGILE technology, data intelligence and engineering company Imrandd has secured a five-year contract for the provision of topsides integrity data analytics and onshore inspection support with Apache Corporation's North Sea subsidiaries.

The contract covers all of Apache's operated offshore assets in the Forties and Beryl fields in the United Kingdom Continental Shelf.

Imrandd will apply cutting edge in-house data analytics software, integrity and inspection solutions, underpinned by a knowledgeable, experienced multi-skilled team to support Apache's continued commitment to safe and efficient asset management.

Azets moves and recruits

AZETS, the fast-growing accountancy firm which specialises in the SME market, is showing confidence in the North-east economy by taking a 10-year lease on new offices in the heart of Aberdeen's professional services district.

The new open plan offices at 37 Albyn Place will feature the latest information technology, communications systems and flexible working facilities designed to support the evolving hybrid home and office working culture.

Azets previously operated from offices in Carden Place and West Craibstone Street.

The new offices will allow the business to progress with plans to expand to more than 70 staff and trainees during the next two years - a 40% increase on the current staff complement of 50.

There will be a variety of positions available across the business, including 10 university graduate and student placement vacancies later this year, with a further eight graduate and student placement vacancies during 2022.

£100,000 young entrepreneurs fund

A £100,000 seed fund for budding city entrepreneurs has been set up by Aberdeen City Council to support the city's businessmen and women of the future.

It forms part of the Young Person Guarantee commitment to provide every 16 to 24-year-old a place in education, training or employment.

The City Council has partnered with Business Gateway to provide a comprehensive package of business start-up support, mentoring and guidance called ABZWorks Seed Fund for young people wishing to start-up their own businesses.

Aberdeen City Council co-leader councillor Douglas Lumsden said: "With increasing competition for jobs and a growing focus on supporting the local economy by shopping local and buying local services, now is a good time for young people with a creative spark and ambition to consider self-employment. Finding the money to set up a business can be a huge barrier so I am really pleased that the city council is using the Young Person Guarantee to help our young entrepreneurs. Not all of these businesses will succeed, but it is incumbent on us to give our young people the opportunity to fly and support them on their journey, whether or not their venture takes off."

The ABZWorks Seed Fund is open to city residents aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training. It is open to individuals as well as to groups of young people who fit the criteria.

Everyone who applies for the seed fund must do so via the local Aberdeen Business Gateway office and have a fully costed business plan.



Kelly Fraser

Kelly Fraser has been appointed as manager of the North of Scotland KTP Centre. She joins the team from RGU where she worked for nine years, most recently as research funding manager. The KTP Centre is a joint venture between the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University and is affiliated with four other academic partners.



Dawn MacDougall

Dawn MacDougall has joined MHA Henderson Loggie as tax director from international accountancy firm EY where latterly she was head of tax in its Inverness office. Dawn has more than 30 years' tax experience and will be based in Edinburgh and Inverness working across all of MHA Henderson Loggie's offices in Scotland.



Susan Dawkes

Robert Gordon University has appointed cardiology expert Professor Susan Dawkes as head of the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice. In her new role, Prof Dawkes will lead the School's partnerships and collaboration with the health and social care sector and its provision of high-quality health education and research.



Jodie Donald

Escone Solutions has appointed Jodie Donald as support lead as the business application firm advances its helpdesk support services for a growing client base. She steps up from her role as support analyst after joining Escone Solutions in 2019 and signing up to a QA Apprenticeship programme.



Lindsay Robertson

Lindsay Robertson, a graduate of The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment at Robert Gordon University with a master's in architecture, has joined Annie Kenyon Architects as an architectural assistant. Lindsay previously worked in the construction industry for 10 years and brings valuable experience that enhances the existing in-house skill set.



Celestino Maússe

EnerMech has appointed Celestino Maússe to the newly created role of Mozambique country manager as the company seeks to expand as local activity ramps up. Previously he led business development in Sub-Saharan Africa for companies such as SNC-Lavalin and Kentz and has held general management positions in Mozambique for both Kentz and Golder Associates.



Graeme Kinghorn

Graeme Kinghorn has been appointed chief executive of Mental Health Aberdeen, one of the oldest mental health charities in the country. A chartered accountant with more than 25 years' experience, he has been treasurer and a voluntary board member of MHA for more than a decade.



Mark Kimberling

activpayroll, the global payroll and tax compliance specialist headquartered in Aberdeen, has appointed Mark Kimberling as chief commercial officer. Mark has had a very successful career in the human capital management sector and brings more than 30 years of experience to the team, having worked for leading health and wellbeing insurance and services companies.



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Leonardo Machado

Maersk Training UK has appointed Leonardo Machado as managing director as the company plans to expand its offering to the North Sea energy sector. He was previously managing director of the company's operations in Brazil for six years where he played a key role in developing training for the wind and production industries.



John Vassiliou

Shepherd and Wedderburn has appointed John Vassiliou to its sector-leading immigration team amid rising demand from clients for business and personal immigration advice following the UK's departure from the European Union. John has 10 years' experience of advising clients in the UK and overseas on a broad range of immigration matters.



Sabine Weth

Sabine Weth is joining Swire Energy Services as vice president of offshore wind, a new position and a notable shift in the long-term focus for SES. She will also form part of the executive management team for the global business. Sabine joins from KONGSTEIN, where she was country manager for Norway.



Stephanie Calder

ZynQ 360, a provider of software solutions and visualisation services, has bolstered its senior business development team with the appointment of Stephanie Calder as global software sales manager to help grow its UK and Europe client portfolio. An experienced professional, she has 14 years of experience in various business development roles.

Other recent appointments

Jack Edwards has joined Aberdeen Cyber Security as an engineer. He will play an important role in supporting and securing the company clients' IT environments.

Infinity Oilfield Services Limited has appointed **Michael Stott** as sales manager UKCS covering both asset management and actuator Gauntlet sales for the UK. An industry veteran with over 30 years' experience, he started his oil and career as an apprentice marine engineer at John Lewis & Sons and then rig engineer at Odeco before spending 20 years at Turner Diesel and then latterly at Weatherford, Archer and Parker Drilling.

Aberdeen Considine has strengthened its legal teams with a number of promotions across the firm. Six lawyers, covering a range of legal disciplines including family law, commercial real estate, corporate and commercial law, and conveyancing, have been promoted to the position of senior solicitor, with one further promotion to associate level. **Sarah Jack** (commercial real estate), based at the firm's Waterloo Street office in Glasgow, has been made associate with **Megan Hannah** (family law), also based in Glasgow, promoted to senior solicitor. **Erin Shand** (corporate and commercial) and **Tom Main** (family), both based in firm's legal office in Aberdeen, have been promoted to senior solicitor. Conveyancing specialists **Stevie Kelman** (Banchory and Stonehaven), **Jordan Watt** (Peterhead and Ellon) and **Mairi Innes** (Perth and Dundee) have also moved up to senior solicitor.

Thomas McMillan, Savills UK head of energy consultancy based in Perth, has been appointed as the new chair of Solar Energy Scotland.

Want to raise your profile?

If you have new appointments or promotions in your business, we want to hear about them. Send the details, along with a high resolution image, to bulletin@agcc.co.uk and your business could be in a future issue.



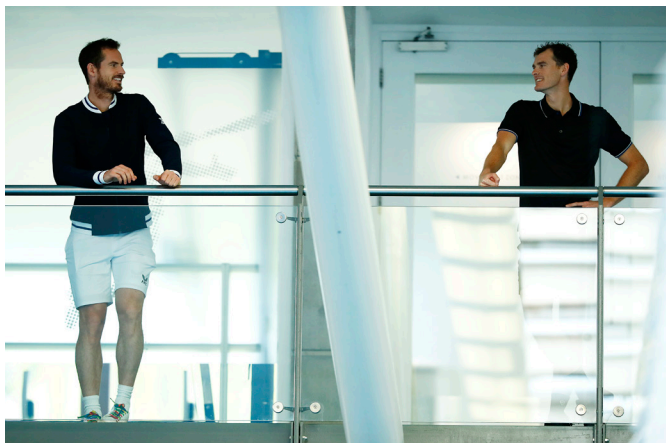
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Jamie Murray to bring together Britain's best for Aberdeen

JAMIE Murray is back in his tournament director's chair and bringing live tennis to Aberdeen with a special Battle of the Brits event to be held in December at Aberdeen's P&J Live Arena.

Players competing for the trophy will include Jamie, seven-time Grand Slam champion in doubles and mixed doubles, former World No. 1 in men's doubles and Davis Cup winner; and Sir Andy Murray, the former World No. 1, two-time Wimbledon champion, US Open and Davis Cup winner and two-time Olympic champion.

The tournament will give Scottish sports fans their first chance to watch the Murray's play live on home turf since Andy took on Roger Federer in the Andy Murray Live event in Glasgow in 2017.

Jamie said: "I am super excited to bring live tennis to Scotland. Andy and I have had some incredible experiences competing as part of Team GB in Davis Cup in Scotland but to be able to represent Scotland is such a unique opportunity for us, especially against England. I would love to think Andy's and my achievements can inspire a passion for tennis in Scotland and help build a lasting legacy for the sport here. Bringing big tennis events to Scotland is a huge part of that - this will be an amazing two days of tennis and entertainment for all the family."

Louise Stewart, head of entertainment at P&J Live said: "We are thrilled to be hosting this unique and exciting event at P&J Live. This will be the first ever tennis event to be held at the North-east of Scotland's events complex. We will be ending the year on a high."

Prosafe signs Buzzard contract

PROSAFE has signed a £6m contract with CNOOC Petroleum Europe Limited for the charter of the Safe Boreas to provide gangway connected operations supporting the Buzzard platform complex in the UK sector of the North Sea. The Safe Boreas will perform the gangway connected work scope using dynamic positioning, providing CNOOC Petroleum Europe Limited flexibility in operation.

AI scholarships on offer

THE University of Aberdeen is offering nine scholarships for its MSc in Artificial Intelligence (AI), worth a combined £90,000.

Available for applicants starting the MSc in September 2021, the scholarships pay tuition fees for the degree programme which caters for the need for AI-literate workers in a range of industries.

Each scholarship is worth £10,000 and is part-funded by The Data Lab, a Scottish innovation centre, along with the Scottish Funding Council and the European Social Fund.

Designed with input from an advisory board including companies such as Intelligent Plant, Arria NLG and public sector bodies including Aberdeen City Council, the MSc involves coursework and individual and group projects to solve real-world problems relevant to businesses and organisations.

FG Burnett tops the charts again

FOR the second year running, FG Burnett has topped the charts in the CoStar Awards. CoStar Group is the leading provider of commercial real estate information, analytics and online marketplaces.

The CoStar Awards, recognise the UK's most active commercial real estate agencies for their cumulative deals across the calendar year 2020.

In Aberdeen, FG Burnett has consolidated its performance in 2019 by again being placed top agent in four of the five categories, namely, the total number of agency disposals across all sectors, total floor area transacted and the same from a single branch firm.

String of contracts for EnerMech

INTEGRATED solutions specialists EnerMech has secured a string of new contracts in the first few months of 2021.

The Aberdeen-headquartered company has a strong pipeline of work for the year ahead with eight projects awarded in the last three months. The campaigns are a combination of new and extended contracts and will be split across its bases in Aberdeen and Great Yarmouth.

The new awards include a first campaign for the onshore utilities market. The five-year multi-million-pound deal will involve the company delivering crane lifting services to a significant onshore petrochemical facility based in Southern Wales. Other wins include a frame agreement extension with TechnipFMC for pre-commissioning services, delivery of shutdown and small bore tubing services for Chrysaor and the supply of rigging equipment and crane management services for Petrofac's duty holder assets in the UKCS.

Research to better support CV19 patients in Scotland

A £296,000 cross-university collaborative study will investigate emerging models of rehabilitation for people suffering from long-CV19 to recommend how to best maximise recovery and quality of life for patients across Scotland.

For most people, symptoms of CV19 resolve after around 12-weeks. However, some people experience symptoms that last longer or develop new symptoms, which can significantly impact on quality of life. Evidence is still emerging on the nature and extent of long-CV19, and how best to manage it.

Funded by the Scottish Government's chief scientist office, researchers at Robert Gordon University and the University of Stirling will examine various models of community rehabilitation delivered by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and other health professionals to find out what works for long-CV19 patients under their individual circumstances.

Professor Kay Cooper, clinical professor of Allied Health Professions, Robert Gordon University and NHS Grampian, said: "Community rehabilitation for people with long-CV19 is in its infancy, with service models developing and evolving as we learn more about the long-term consequences of CV19. A variety of models are being used in Scotland and this research will help us understand what works in different settings and contexts.

"Rehabilitation services are pivotal to supporting people in their recovery. By assessing the various models being used, we can make evidence-based recommendations to maximise quality of life and recovery for people with long-CV19 across Scotland through the most appropriate models of rehabilitation for service users' circumstances."

Aberdeenshire whisky sells out in eight minutes

DUNCAN Taylor Scotch Whisky in Huntly has been featured on Channel 4's Sunday Brunch where one of their new Octave whiskies was showcased on the latest episode of the popular lifestyle show.

Celebrity guests Alexandra Burke tried the whisky alongside the hosts Tim Lovejoy and Simon Rimmer. Tied in with International Women's Day, the spirits expert Karina Elias was shown live from the Red Bar in Grosvenor House, Mayfair and talked about three spirits where there was a woman at the helm of each one. She hailed the company's Dalmunach Octave 2016, four-year old as 'the most delicious whisky I've tasted this year'.

Moji Shand, chief executive officer, was delighted when the TV show confirmed that the Octave Dalmunach was going to appear. He said: "It was a double whammy for us. One, it was a chance to speak about the fantastic women that work in our company and two, whilst it's easy for us to bang on about how good our whiskies are, it's always great to get them recognised on such a big platform as this."



Bus station to vaccination

LOCAL bus operator Stagecoach has revealed a new look for the buses taking people to their CV19 vaccination.

The award-winning JET 727 bus service that connects Aberdeen Union Square and P&J Live has been given a new-look reflecting the changing needs of those using the service.

The fleet of nine double deck buses will carry people to their vaccination up to every 20 minutes, seven days a week. The timetable has recently been adjusted based on feedback to offer better connections for staff at the Centre.

Peter Knight, managing director for Stagecoach Bluebird said: "I was really pleased when I heard P&J Live was to open as our local mass vaccination centre. The JET 727 route has been the flagship bus service for P&J Live since opening in 2019. We are extremely proud to have kept this vital service operating throughout the pandemic and it now has a new purpose, helping people get to their vaccination."

The JET 727 bus route connects the city centre to the NHS Mass Vaccination Centre at P&J Live operating via Broad Street and Great Northern Road. Services from across Aberdeenshire connect to the frequent service in Aberdeen Union Square and in Bucksburn.

ASCO start the year with West Africa contract wins

GLOBAL integrated materials and logistics management company ASCO has started 2021 with the announcement of two vessel monitoring contracts in West Africa, worth in the region of \$3.5m USD.

Contracts include provision of ASCO's fully managed vessel monitoring service for collision risk management, along with an entire field monitoring solution inclusive of design, procurement, installation, maintenance and monitoring.

The vessel monitoring service is just one of ASCO's dedicated global marine services, offering clients a 24/7/365 global marine control service coordinated from a dedicated marine operation centre in Aberdeen.

Fraser Coleman, ASCO marine operations manager, said: "These contract awards are confirmation of the excellent service provision that ASCO already delivers and demonstrates our capabilities of multi-regional for vessel monitoring and collision risk management.

"Through advanced technology and our team of experienced mariners, we are able to provide a reliable and immediate service to clients anywhere in the world from our operations control room in Aberdeen, ensuring the best use of valuable marine resources."

Welcome to the Chamber

Acciona Industrial UK Ltd

A global leader in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, Acciona has been awarded the NESS Energy Project contract for the construction and operation of a waste-to-energy plant in Aberdeen. The company is responsible for the design and turnkey construction, commissioning and operation of maintenance of the plant for a 20-year period.

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