

Elmbridge Business Network

Elmbridge
Business
Network



Newsletter - Winter 2009-10

Free and easy way to grow your business

Elmbridge firms are being invited to join an exciting new initiative to help grow local business.

Elmbridge Borough Council is inviting local businesses to join its leisure discount scheme, the More Card, by offering **discounts and offers** to cardholders.

Supported by Elmbridge Business Network, the scheme is intended to increase footfall by reminding residents of the excellent variety of traders operating in Elmbridge and offer them a little 'more'.

The scheme is simple and free to join. Offers will be listed on the Council's website and can be updated with just a few days' notice. They can be tailored to what suits the business, for example buy one get one free, a percentage off or a free gift or trial. The scheme launches to the 3000 More Card holders in February 2010.

Many types of business can participate in the scheme. **So whether you are a local shop, restaurant, attraction, accountant or tradesman, we want to hear from you.** An application pack can be downloaded from www.elmbridge.gov.uk/ebn or by contacting the Senior Leisure Officer on 01372 474586 or leisure@elmbridge.gov.uk.



Inside this issue:

- Free tourism conference
- North Surrey Business Expo
- Protect your staff from seasonal flu
- Training opportunities
- Business Panel results

Contact us at:

Community Planning and Engagement Manager, Elmbridge Borough Council,
Civic Centre, High Street, Esher, KT10 9SD

T: 01372 474377 E: communitystrategy@elmbridge.gov.uk W: www.elmbridge.gov.uk/ebn

A business case to 'jab out flu'

Local businesses are being asked to help increase the uptake of the seasonal flu vaccine and 'jab out flu'.

Around 172 million working days were lost in 2007 due to illness which cost employers £13 billion¹. The most common cause of absence is minor illnesses such as colds and flu².

For most people catching seasonal flu is an unpleasant experience and not necessarily serious but for older people, carers and those with long term medical conditions, the infection can be more serious and lead to complications.

Spread the word

Elmbridge Health and Social Care Partnership has developed an information postcard which aims to encourage those eligible to receive their free seasonal flu vaccination. Businesses can help by displaying the postcard and giving it out amongst staff. Information can also be displayed on staff intranets.

Catch it, bin it, kill it!

Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing, use a tissue and dispose of it immediately to kill any germs and wash your hands regularly. Encouraging good hygiene amongst your staff will help to stop the spread of infection.

Jab out flu at work

Some organisations choose to pay for their staff to receive a flu vaccination where they are not entitled to a free one. They consider that the cost to the business of paying for this service, which can vary between providers, is less than the cost of lost business and/or paying for temporary staff when employees are off sick with flu.



Cllr Rachael I Lake, Vice Chairman of Elmbridge Business Network, encourages at risk groups to be vaccinated against seasonal flu

To receive information postcards, please contact katie.mills@surreycc.gov.uk. For more information on seasonal flu please visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu.

¹ CBI/AXA. (2008). *At work and working well? CBI/AXA absence and labour turnover*

² CIPD (2009) *Absence Management*

Not yet a member of Elmbridge Business Network?

Join for free and benefit from this six monthly newsletter in addition to invitations to free events and regular updates on issues affecting business in Elmbridge. Go to www.elmbridge.gov.uk/ebn and complete your details.



Domestic abuse

Calculations based on the 2004 Sylvia Walby report, *The Cost of Domestic Violence*, indicate that the cost of domestic abuse in Surrey totals £466m per annum. Nearly 11,000 incidents were reported to Surrey Police during 08/09.

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men report having been victims of abuse at some time. With these figures it is almost inevitable that most business will have staff and customers/clients who are affected by abuse.

Employers need to be aware of domestic abuse when investigating such things as poor performance; high levels of or patterns of absenteeism; low morale and lack of participation in team events or high levels of stress that are not obviously linked to work.

The North Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, run by Walton Weybridge & Hersham CAB, offers free confidential advice to anyone affected by abuse. If you would like an outreach worker to come and talk at a staff meeting, please contact 01932 260690. Further support is available from Surrey Domestic Abuse Helpline, a 24 hour confidential service, on 01483 776822.

North Surrey Business Expo 09

With nearly 50 stands displaying thriving businesses from across Surrey, the first North Surrey Business Exhibition was held in June at Kempton Park Racecourse. Organised by Surrey Chambers of Commerce, the exhibition was a great success with many companies making new contacts and doing business with each other.

There were a wide range of companies on display from copywriting, marketing and web development to accountancy and business coaching. Free seminars were also available for businesses to attend covering networking skills, effective marketing, making your website work and pitching for business. Business Link Surrey provided one-to-one advice throughout the day allowing individuals to really benefit from in-depth discussions.

Following on from the success of the 2009 North Surrey Business Expo; Surrey Chambers of Commerce is already planning the 2010 event.

Taking place on June 22nd, the Expo will be held at Kempton Park once again. In 2010 the Expo will be bigger and better than ever; re-named Surrey Chamber Business Expo 10 it will include stands and free seminars, but will also feature a networking breakfast before the Expo is officially opened.

It's more important than ever to keep promoting and marketing, so if you would like to book a stand please contact Sarah Edwards from Surrey Chamber on 01483 833449 or at sarah.edwards@surrey-chambers.co.uk



Delegates at the 09 Expo (Karen Sutton - Pick & Mix Marketing)

Increase staff motivation, create positive PR coverage and contribute to your community...



Employee volunteering works wonders in terms of strengthening team spirit, improving your public image and providing 'hands-on' involvement in your local community. Benefits include:

- Enhancing the **skills** of your employees
- Customers, potential recruits and local people will see your organisation as **socially responsible** and constructive. And employee volunteers make great ambassadors!
- Improve levels of **recruitment** and **retention** – because employee volunteering creates such a positive culture
- Access to local networks and alliances, perceptions and problems, which can inform management **decisions** and help **innovation**.

A key finding from the Institute of Directors showed that 76% of Directors noticed the benefit of skills that their employees had gained in voluntary roles.

Volunteering can be a long or short term commitment with opportunities ranging from regular assistance with marketing to one-off team conservation projects.

Voluntary Action Elmbridge works with a number of organisations in the Borough

and will be able to help you identify appropriate projects for your employees.



Please contact Claire Dewsbury at Voluntary Action Elmbridge on 01372 463587 or claire@vae.org.uk if you would like any further information.

Keep flying the flag!



Elmbridge Business Network's Chairman, Derek Williamson, and Vice Chairman, Cllr Rachael I Lake, promoted the Flying the Flag for Business conference in November 2008

It is a year since Elmbridge Business Network held its Flying the Flag for Business conference, however there are still opportunities for local businesses from the London 2012 Games.

A good place to start is Business Link's 2012 web pages, which include:

- Quality management systems and standards help
- Details of 2012 themed events
- Links to further information including: Compete For, the chosen site for the publication of 2012 Games-related contract opportunities

Visit www.businesslink.gov.uk

Business Network Panel Results: Spring 2009

All members of Elmbridge Business Network are invited to give their views through the Business Network Panel. Here are the results from the last survey to which 83 businesses responded:

Effect of the current economic climate on businesses

- A quarter of respondents reported having orders cancelled.
- Just over half had orders/volume of work reduced.
- Staffing levels had remained unchanged for 44% of respondents, but 17% had made redundancies and a small number were considering redundancies.
- 27% reported that working hours had been reduced and 13% overtime reduced. Half of respondents had frozen staff pay.

Community safety


- 22% of respondents said their business or an employee whilst at work had been the victim of a crime in the last 12 months.
- 44% thought that the police and other local public services were successfully dealing with crime in their business neighbourhood.

Volunteering

- 20% of respondents said they allowed staff time off (paid or unpaid) to undertake public volunteering. 15% said they would be prepared to actively promote volunteering and 16% said they would like help/support to do this.

Premises and staff

- 40% of respondents thought that within the next 5 years their business would require further employment land or premises.
- The main premises and staff factors that affected respondents were lack of parking, traffic congestion and lack of affordable land/premises. Lack of a skilled workforce was not a main issue.



Give your views on the next survey by joining Elmbridge Business Network at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/ebn

News in brief...

Surrey County Council has teamed up with MITIE to provide businesses with a total waste management solution. MITIE can help your business find the best options for the disposal of your waste. Find out more at www.surreycc.gov.uk/businesswaste.

Elmbridge Fairtrade Network wants to hear from businesses who serve or sell Fairtrade products or would be interested in doing so. Please contact Judy on 020 8398 6401 or judyp@orpheusmail.co.uk.

The Continuous Employment Support Service (CESS) is a joint initiative between SEEDA and Jobcentre Plus to provide a rapid and effective service to those employees who have been notified that they are facing redundancy. For more information, contact the CESS enquiry line on 01483 470138.

Local Employer Partnerships can help you get access to job ready candidates and skills training, with a minimum of hassle, risk and cost, and will demonstrate your commitment to providing employment and training opportunities to the communities you operate in. Find out more at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/lep.



Shops and stock kept safe this Christmas

With Christmas shopping underway and the January sales just around the corner, shops and businesses will be well stocked. However, high stock levels, decorations and a large volume of customers all multiply the fire safety risks for shop owners.

To support the business community during their busiest time of year, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is visiting premises to advise retailers how to keep their shops and stock safe from fire.

To ensure the safety of both the general public and shop staff, firefighters are advising businesses to check retail areas, stock rooms, loading bays and other external areas to make sure the following are easily accessible and free from obstruction:

- Escape routes and exits
- Fire alarm call points
- Fire exit signs
- Fire instruction notices
- Firefighting equipment

Businesses can get more detailed fire safety advice by logging on to www.fire.gov.uk/workplace+safety or by calling Surrey Fire and Rescue Service on 01737 242444 and asking to speak to their local area protection officer.

If you have any information regarding a deliberate fire in your area, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Accessing business funding and opportunities in recruitment and training

At present the range of recruitment and training opportunities is vast.

Jobcentre Plus is able to offer cost free recruitment exposure (0845 6012001) to its list of job seekers, which today also includes managerial and professional categories. Payments may be possible to companies recruiting those that have been out of work for a while and it also offers recruitment on a cost-free trial basis under certain situations.

Train to Gain offers funded training in many areas of vocational and key skills. This is a good time to consider training as a wide range of skills are funded at present, including management skills. More details available from Train to Gain on 0845 7512288.

Business Link has advice, guidance and training facilities on all aspect of business and has a website packed with information www.businesslink.gov.uk. Advisers are always ready to have a preliminary chat to see how they may support your business. The main number 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk.

Elmbridge Community Learning Partnership (part of Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership) facilitates planning with local partners to identify local training and learning needs through research, provision of information and signposting. Contact Elizabeth Whiddett on ew@surreyllp.org.uk.

Surrey libraries and your business

Membership of Surrey Libraries is **FREE** and offers access to a wide range of resources including:

- Fiction and non-fiction books including printed business information such as Regional Leads (Surrey) and Croner's reference guides
- **FREE** internet access

We subscribe to a number of online databases including:

- **FAME (Financial Analysis Made Easy) & Kompass Europe** - only available at Guildford Library, but if you can't get there, staff in **Enquiries Direct*** can help you.
- **COBRA (Complete Business Reference Advisor)** – available from home to library members and in all libraries. Known for its BIFs (Business Information Factsheets) and BOPs (Business Opportunity Profiles), but also has legal information, local area profiles, UK market synopses, health & safety information. COBRA is aimed mainly at people starting up a business.
- **Marketline** – basic market research information on companies and industries. This is available in all libraries. Includes SWAT analyses for companies and lists competitors.

We also produce a quarterly newsletter with Trading Standards – if you would like to join the network and receive the newsletter register at www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreybusinessnetwork

*Enquiries Direct: 01483 543599 (open 9-6 Mon-Fri; 9am-5pm Sat) Fax: 01483 543597
Email: libraries@surreycc.gov.uk Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries

Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund

Elmbridge Borough Council has handed over a grant from the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund. Mr Chris Bavin of "The Naked Grocer" in Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames is the first recipient from the fund which has been set up to benefit the local economy and attract people to local businesses."

On receiving the funding, Mr Bavin said: "It is great that the ECIF has been set up to create a better shopping environment in Elmbridge and we believe that smaller independent shops give a better and more village like feel to Walton town but they must be supported otherwise you will only have the supermarkets and empty shops for choice!"

For more information about the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund, visit our website at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/business/ecif or by contacting the ECIF co-ordinator on 01372 474385.



Chief Executive of Elmbridge Borough Council, Robert Moran, visited the Bridge Street store to personally congratulate Mr Bavin and to see the new signage that ECIF had funded.

Elmbridge Business Network is pleased to be working with Business Link, Tourism South East and Visit Surrey to invite you to

Success through Innovation

Expert advice for the year ahead

Conference and networking event for Surrey tourism, visitor and hospitality businesses

**14 January 2010
Mercedes-Benz World, Weybridge**

The conference will include presentations, interviews, a chance to question industry specialists and representatives, finishing with networking opportunities over a buffet lunch.

During lunch, delegates will have the opportunity to take part in a tour of Mercedes-Benz World. There will also be an exhibition of businesses that offer support services to the tourism industry.

Agenda

- 10.00 Registration and refreshments
- 10.30 Welcome
- 10.45 An audience with Tobias Elwood, MP and Shadow Tourism Minister
- 11.15 Showcase of Surrey Tourism ExCELLence Award winners
- 11.25 Alison Rice, Tourism and Travel Journalist and Broadcaster
Innovative tips and insider's advice on securing media coverage
- 11.45 Refreshment break
- 12.00 Rabih Hage, Owner, Rough-Luxe Hotel
How Rabih created one of London's most innovative new hotels
- 12.15 Juliette Shears, Strategic Partnership Manager, Business Link
2012 opportunities
- 12.25 Panel discussion
- 12.50 Question and answer session
- 1.00 Lunch, including opportunities to meet the speakers, take a guided tour of Mercedes-Benz World and visit exhibition stands

Attendance is free of charge

For further information, contact Dan Homes on 023 8062 5544 or membership@tourismse.com

Book your place by **6 January** by visiting www.southeastservices.co.uk/CR/Surrey_bookingform.pdf