



Economy & Enterprise
Torfaen ~ inspiring business innovation

Economi a Mentergarwch
Torfaen ~ hybu arloesi mewn busnes

Subscribe to our news
& events!
www.southwalesbusiness.co.uk



Torfaen Business Voice Llais Busnes Torfaen

AUGUST 2018

 www.twitter.com/TorfaenBiz

 www.facebook.com/TorfaenEnterprise

 Torfaen Economy & Enterprise



INNOVATION

NEXT EVENT

Thursday 20th September 2018

5:00PM

OVER **20 YEARS** OF
SUCCESSFUL AND
AWARD-WINNING
PRODUCTS.

www.pdronline.co.uk



Notes from our chairman

It was great to see both new and familiar faces at our last networking event and as we reach the mid-point in our events calendar we are re-launching bundle membership so that new members can enjoy 18 months' worth of networking events for one very reasonable fee. This includes the chance for a member spotlight and 2 tickets to each of our 6 events throughout 2018 and 2019 together with inclusion on the business directory, information about other events, breakfasts and social occasions that we support and of course the chance to meet new businesses and make new connections.

Our next meeting on the 20th September is kindly sponsored by PDR - International Centre for Design and Research and should give us all a chance to learn about the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Dates for your diary

20/09/18 - Torfaen Business Voice - 5pm

08/11/18 - Women in Business Event - 4:30pm

06/12/18 - Torfaen Business Voice - 5pm



All of our quarterly events are held at Greenmeadow Golf and Country Club, Cwmbran

Our next event

Our next meeting is Thursday 20th September, 5pm Greenmeadow Golf Club, and we are very pleased to announce PDR - International Centre for Design and Research is sponsoring this meeting.

PDR is a world-leading design consultancy and applied research center with a global client base. With extensive facilities, all housed under one roof, and capabilities across many design disciplines including user-centered design, product and industrial design, eco design, advanced prototyping and rapid manufacturing and service design, PDR is able to offer proven, award-winning product design and

As always there will be plenty of opportunity for networking both facilitated and informal. You are all welcome to bring a guest with your second ticket to give them a chance to join the group as the more new faces we have at each meeting the more we will all benefit.

As committee members we have plenty of personal experience of the benefits that membership brings whether its information we have gained about access to training and funding, joint working with other members or using their services or generating new business by simply getting to know others in the group and so being trusted and recommended. If you have any examples you are willing to share let Jo know as we are more than happy to give your business a shout out as an example of the benefits of membership.

I look forward to seeing you all at the event.



Ashley Harkus

Chairman, Torfaen Business Voice

Not a member? Why not join and come along?

Call 01633 648644

Email: info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk

Click on the following link:

<http://bit.ly/TBV-business-club>

development from concept design through to manufacturing handover.

On the evening, PDR's Business Development Manager, Anthony, will be providing the audience with an insight into how this process works.

There will also be two rounds of facilitated networking and a members' spotlight from Congress Theatre.

To book, please use the following link:

<http://bit.ly/tbv-sep2018>

IN THIS EDITION:

PAGE 3
Strategic Design Thinking

PAGE 5
Bringing your product to market

PAGE 6 & 7
Meet the businesses that did it!

Strategic Design Thinking

Design has a vital role to play in innovation because innovation is no longer purely technology focused and R&D-driven but increasingly it is about services, the user-experience and society.

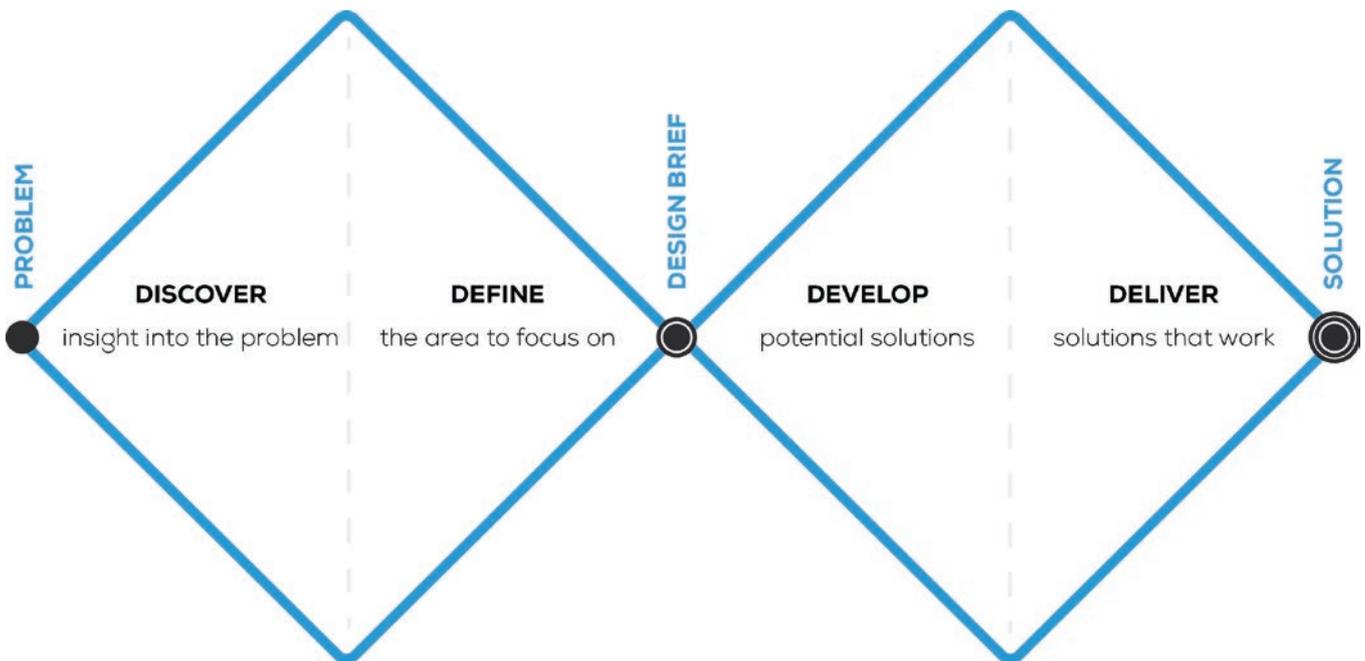
It is widely recognised that bringing designers to the table in early-stage innovation processes makes a crucial difference. For start-ups, strategic design helps to get brilliant ideas to the right market. For established businesses, it helps them to reposition or expand their offering accordingly.

Strategic design thinking has one single goal: to understand and solve a problem for its consumer. The current generation of consumers has developed an intolerance for inauthenticity - which means that in order to stay ahead, brands have needed to change their thinking from traditional to thoughtful.

“Design Thinking” is becoming broadly accepted as a creative problem solving methodology that can be applied to fields far beyond those traditionally considered design.

The “design diamond”, demonstrates design thinking as a linear process which has both divergent, exploration phases and convergent decision-making phases which specifically facilitate the understanding of the approach for business and management practitioners. In reality, design researchers rarely take an approach that is as genuinely linear as the double diamond may have you believe, however it does not change the core sentiment of ‘design thinking’ as a problem-solving strategy and the fact that having empathy with your stakeholders will result in better solutions.

At PDR, we use a mix of market and user research approaches, analytical skills and thinking, and ideation approaches to come up with innovative solutions to complex problems. More and more the problems we are approached about are what we would class as ‘strategic’. Instead of the specific and present “design a product/service that...”, we are more often confronted with vague and future-based problems such as “what should we do in 5/10/20 years’ time?”



What role does User Research have in Strategy Design?

Trend and market analysis alongside gathering an understanding of future technologies and contexts through interviews with experts and reviewing existing literature will give an insight into potential futures within which a business must function. However, this is not enough for most to develop a coherent strategy. Questions remain around what opportunities do these potential futures afford, where is the business best placed within this future, and how do we get it to this point?

This is where User Research plays a vital role in defining, or rather designing, strategy, by allowing us to:

- **Understanding the opportunities that future scenarios afford.**
- **Help us plan the path.**

Understanding the User's needs

Whilst product interactions will change over time, when you closely examine the user's needs and values these are rarely constrained to a technology or a timeline.

To understand these, we must take a more creative approach to both the research itself and the analysis of it. User trials and specified metrics are not of any use here. Instead, methods such as ethnography, cultural probes and design games will provide a much deeper insight of the user's values.

Once the user's values are understood, these can be mapped onto the potential futures and their subcomponents: technology, environments, and usage contexts. This will inform an end-goal and a strategy direction and will move the marker from 'potential futures' to a designed 'proposed future'.

Las Iguanas – Fajita Stack



Understanding the Present

As any high-achiever will tell you, a goal is only useful if there is a clear understanding of the starting point. Strategy Design should be seen as a defined plan to achieve that goal and an understanding of the present day is therefore vital to identify the missing components and required developments to move from the present to the future.

The previously discovered needs and values can create a framework for the investigation of the present. User Research methods such as contextual inquiries, interviews and diaries are then used to understand how the current state of play allows, or prevents, the user to actualise their needs and values. This defines the starting point of the journey, the present, and we can then clarify the steps required to move along the path.

This path will inevitably be challenging - if there are no challenges then there is no reason for it to be a 'proposed future' rather than a 'proposed present'! This is where the more traditional design skills of ideation and concept generation can help provide innovations and solutions to these challenges. These concepts will of course be informed by all the research that has come before it: a deep understanding of the user and the secondary research around future technologies, environments and usage contexts.

At PDR, the team is comprised of a wide range of people with varying specialisms meaning that we can cover the whole scope of research and analysis skills required to design strategy, and that we also have the ideation and conceptualisation skills to propose solutions to the challenges you hit along the way.

www.pdronline.co.uk

Torfaen Women in Business 2018

Thursday 8th November 2018

4:30pm – 8:00pm

Parkway Hotel & Spa, Cwmbran Drive, Cwmbran NP44 3UW

For more information and booking, visit:
www.southwalesbusiness.co.uk

Showcase your business

Display a pop-up banner and ticket for £36*

Trade Table and ticket for £48*

*Prices including VAT. All ticket profits donated to Teenage Cancer Trust



Why attend?

- ✔ Make new contacts through the networking opportunities
- ✔ Enjoy a friendly atmosphere over a scrumptious High Tea
- ✔ Be inspired by our guest speakers
- ✔ Visit the trade and showcase tables
- ✔ Great value for money at just £12 per ticket*
- ✔ Jenny Evans founder of the award winning Jenny Kate Ltd



Bringing Your Product to Market - What do I need to know about IP?

Bringing a new product to market can be an exciting but stressful time with so many aspects to consider, not least of all whether or not it will be a success.

But one area that should be high on the “to do” list is considering IP (Intellectual Property). And the earlier this is considered the better.

Types of IP

We should perhaps firstly consider the key types of IP that may be relevant to your product:

Patents

These protect technological advancement in products and industrial processes that are inventive and not obvious. Key to being able to protect your product via patent is that you must not have made your idea/product/invention public before an application is filed. This includes chatting to friends, looking for investors, or talking to potential manufacturers. If those conversations need to take place, a good non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is strongly advisable. And if you are still in the product development stage, running a few checks on what patents already exist may help you avoid conflict, and can help direct your development work so that what you put into the market is truly new.

Designs

Design registration is often overlooked but can provide very valuable protection. A registered design protects product appearance only, not any technical function, and can cover shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation. Seeking patent protection does not exclude you from also seeking design protection, and many Intellectual Property Offices, such as the UK, allow you to register a number of variants of a design at the same time at very little additional cost.

Design registration can also be the IP right of choice if your product doesn't qualify for patent protection but you have put effort into creating a beautiful product.

Trade Marks

These protect the brand elements you decide on for your product, and most commonly include names, logos and slogans, and more unusually can include colours, sounds and shapes.

When choosing a brand name it is advisable to undertake checks to see if the name is already taken, and more specifically already protected, so that unnecessary conflicts can be avoided with the owners of registered trade marks. A trade mark registration provides the right to take action against use of something the same, or so similar that consumers will get confused.



Developments in IP

Brexit

Brexit for many will have a significant impact on IP rights, in particular trade marks and designs, as these can be protected through special EU wide systems. Of course Brexit negotiations are ongoing, but all parties are working towards ensuring that existing registered EU rights will continue to have effect in the UK, minimising the impact on business owners who have feared having to re-register rights. The draft withdrawal agreement provides provision for this, although the position may be more complicated for rights which are still pending at the point of Brexit and this is still the subject of lobbying.

International Design Protection

In June this year the UK became an active signatory to an International convention which allows for the cost effective protection of designs in a number of countries. Previously UK businesses could only use this system, referred to as the Hague system, by virtue of the UK's membership of the EU. Separate membership by the UK is an important step ahead of Brexit.

Trade Secrets

The UK now recognises “trade secrets” as a specific type of IP right. This is as a result of an EU Directive, with the implementing law in the UK coming into force on 9 June this year. The most famous trade secret is perhaps the Coca Cola recipe. So if you have an internal process that is confidential, or a recipe for a formulation or product, then a trade secret may be for you. There must be some commercial value to it, it must still be secret, and you must take measures to ensure it stays secret to be afforded the protection that the law now specifies.

An understanding of the IP rights in your product can help drive the success of your product. A Chartered Trade Mark Attorney or Chartered Patent Attorney will be able to assist to ensure that you get the most out of the IP system for your business.

Innovation key to business success

Ambition, knowledge and innovation are at the heart of Wales' approach to economic development, making it an attractive and exciting place to invest. Knowledge drives innovation, innovation drives productivity and productivity drives growth.

Innovation is what turns ideas into profits; it helps businesses become more competitive, increase sales and tap into new markets. Well-planned and executed research and development can bear significant rewards and benefits for businesses. It can open up new markets, boost sales in existing ones and increase profitability. It could also, however, be challenging: fully developing an idea and taking it to market could be time-consuming and requires investment in resources, people and expertise.

Innovation support to Welsh SMEs

For SMEs in Wales, help is at hand. Business Wales inspires and helps businesses to innovate and develop new products and services; proactively engage in trade within the UK and overseas; upskill staff and ensure fair working conditions and environmental sustainability.

Business Wales is freely available and accessible to every start-up or SME in Wales and provides support at every step of their innovation journey. With an experienced team of business advisers and growth specialists, it can help you develop your ideas, discuss their feasibility, explore funding options, commercialise new products, streamline processes and direct you to further specialist support allowing you to create long-lasting relationships.

Business Wales helps Welsh business Motion Rail launch a Virtual Reality project to improve rail safety for children and workers

Founded in 2009, Motion Rail Ltd provides specialist railway communication services nationwide on Network Rail and London Overground infrastructure.

Working in partnership with the EU funded CEMET (Centre of Excellence in Mobile and Emerging Technologies), part of the University of South Wales (USW), and following support and advice from Business Wales, Motion Rail were able to produce a virtual reality system that can give users a safe way to learn about the dangers posed by railways.

With 1,150 level crossings in Wales and the border counties, and 20,000 miles of track in the UK, there are many areas that pose serious dangers to railway users, be it pedestrians, motorists or workers. Initially, the pioneering virtual reality technology, which has been endorsed by Network Rail, was developed for training railway workers on how to manage the hazardous environments while working on or near the tracks.

Steve explains: "It was clear from the outset of my work with Motion Rail that they had an interesting and extremely useful product that could have a huge impact on the way safety is taught within the rail network. They are a team that believes passionately in the difference they can make. The fact they are now engaged with Network Rail is extremely positive and I'm delighted Business Wales has played a part in that success."

Interview with Kelli Aspland, Solar Buddies



How did you spot the opportunity for innovation in your market sector/area?

Both our children were having issues applying their sunscreen whilst in school and their teachers being unable to assist them due to no touch policies in place. With a quick look we realised there was nothing on the market to help our children apply sunscreen in a controlled and mess free manner. This then opened up the idea of actually trying to develop something ourselves, which took a lot more work and time than we had originally thought!

How did you go about setting up the business and developing your idea/where or who did you approach for support and help?

Neither Laura nor I had experience of developing a product from scratch so we reached out to Cardiff Metropolitan University's Product Design Department to see if they could help us turn our ideas into something more professional. Without the help of the University we may never have succeeded, so we always give them the recognition they deserve with being part of our Solar Buddies journey.

We decided to seek help from Business Wales to help us understand what was needed from us to start our business up but we soon realised that we needed a more tailored business consultation. We had to seek IP lawyers and we needed to understand the regulations about selling a product to consumers so there was no single place that could give us all of the advice we needed.

What was the biggest challenge you faced?

I think the biggest challenge was taking an idea and turning it into the working product. It's all well and good thinking of an idea but to actually bring it to life was very difficult, especially when you have no experience in product design. That's aside from the knowledge we had to develop of IP and what was needed to protect our idea: sometimes it was enough to make us stop and question whether we could actually do this and complete the challenge we set ourselves. With grit and determination we worked relentlessly to learn all we needed to to get this off the ground.

Is there anything you would do differently in hindsight?

Looking back on everything both Laura and I have done over this last 7 years since starting Solar Buddies, I can honestly say no to this question. Neither of us has business background, let alone inventing a product that's now turning a profit. When you have no experience, everything you do is a learning curve. I do not believe there is a wrong way of doing anything when it comes to business but you have to learn and adapt to suit your business. You will always face challenges and make mistakes along the way but as long as you learn and improve then you can build a fantastic business.

What has been your proudest moment?

Now this is a hard one. I am proud of both of us for overcoming the hurdles we have. We've also won three awards and to be recognised for our achievements by other businesses and credible award bodies has meant the world to us. To have our business and product recognised is truly gratifying.

What advice would you give a would be new business/innovator?

Don't be afraid! You will never know if your idea will work if you don't try. Failing is learning and just means you alter your path. Before you waste time, energy, money, blood, sweat and tears on bringing your product to life, do your research. Make sure there is a market, make sure people will buy your product and there is a genuine need for your idea. You do not want to jump straight in and waste time and money on an idea that no one will buy. Find your market, do your research and then go for it when you're confident you have the green light.

Why do you think innovation is important in today's economic climate?

To ensure growth in any business, changing and moving with the times and your competition is vital. There are always problems in the world that need solving especially with advances in technology. New innovation means new businesses, which in turn create new jobs helping economic growth. Innovation inspires people's creativity and problem solving ability and we believe it's really important that schools nurture this talent in our children. Inspire to create, to flourish!



Capital Valley Plastics: Innovation Case Study

Capital Valley Plastics was founded in 1987, we manufacture polythene films and membranes for the construction industry. Initially running one blown film production line producing damp-proof membrane the company has expanded considerably over the years.

We currently run four blown film lines, with a fifth being installed at the moment, and a cast line. Our product range has also grown considerably, we now manufacture three thicknesses of Damp-proof membrane, Damp-proof course, vapour control layers, temporary protective sheet and a range of gas barrier membranes and DPC's.

Construction methods and British Standards are always evolving and being updated, this means we must make changes and develop new products to stay relevant in our market.

Due to the increase in multi-storey houses being built we developed our Radbar High Performance DPC, a specifically engineered DPC to cope with the additional load from a multi-storey building. The increase in developing land where ground gases such as radon, methane and carbon dioxide are present resulted in our development of the Radbar Radon, Amber 1 and Amber 2 Foil Barriers.

These high spec membranes protect future inhabitants from the potential hazard presented by the ground gases. Our most recent product development is the Radbar Flexible Hydrocarbon membrane. This was the first and is still the only BBA certified hydrocarbon membrane. The development of this product resulted in us winning the Excellence in Innovation award at the 2017 Monmouthshire Business Awards.

2018 has seen another expansion, this time into polythene recycling. We have opened a 35,000 square foot recycling facility on the Kays and Kears Industrial estate in Blaenavon. We are on target to recycle 9000 tonnes of waste polythene packaging this year, with every gram being used to manufacture our 100% recycled DPM's and DPC's.

These changes and expansions have enabled Capital Valley Plastics to gain market share year on year, meet our existing customers demands and attract new customers on a regular basis. We place product development and innovation at the heart of the business.

Meet the member

What do you do if you can't get the job you want? Create your own!

My journey started many years ago when, at the tender age of 18 and wanting to work with children, I was told I was too clever to study Nursery Nursing so, grudgingly, off to Uni I went to become a teacher. Not surprisingly after 6 months I had dropped out and found myself working as a Nursery Assistant for a year in a Day Nursery where I was told I wasn't qualified enough to do much other than nappy changing and tidying up!

Frustrated, I decided the only way to get the job I wanted was to open my own Nursery. I left Day Care to become a Civil Servant, working for the Dept of Work and Pensions for 5 years where I learnt customer service, admin (and how to take a great deal of abuse and still smile). After 5 years I thought 'What have I got to lose?' so, with my savings and a wonderful start up grant off Chwarae Teg I opened my first Day Care Nursery in Pontypool.

Osbourne Lodge Nursery was opened over 20 years ago and we have gone from strength to strength, winning wonderful awards and collecting the most fabulous staff along the way. Clare & Lisa, my Manager and Deputy have worked at the Nursery since we opened and many other staff have been with us for 8 – 11 years.

Since opening I have been able to gain my qualifications in Child Care to Level 5 and studied hard to also learn accounting, payroll and how to run a team of staff. Starting off very small helped the learning process of becoming an entrepreneur, as we grew my experience grew with it.

At one stage I was running two Nurseries as well as helping to run our 2 family shops selling fancy dress and partyware, and managing a small soft play centre. The birth of my child slowed things down considerably, downsizing to just the one Nursery in Pontypool.

I love being a hands on part of the Nursery and look forward to going to work each day. We care for children from birth until they enter school so there is always fun happening just beyond my office. For the last few years I have been Chair of our local network of Day Care Nurseries, helping to support other Nurseries from Newport to Blaenavon, and meeting other owners from all over Wales to help shape childcare policies and meeting with Ministers.

Based in Pontypool town centre, we have the added benefit of being very much part of the community, taking part in many events and even organising a few as Chair of Friends of Pontypool Town.

It may have taken a few years but I really did create my dream job!

Nikola Masters

Osbourne Lodge Nursery



We would like to thank our contributors:



Busnes | Business
Cymru | Wales



Indelible IP
protecting the unique



New members

Chwaraeteg
cteg.org.uk

Stage Coach
www.stagecoachbus.com/south.wales

Bundle Membership now available
18 months (6 meetings for a one off fee!)

Membership is affordable with just a one off payment of:

- £72 for the year for a business under one year old
- £90 for a business with fewer than 4 employees
- £117 for 5+ employees.

There are no hidden charges and membership gives you two free places per meeting.

Call 01633 648644

Email: info@southwalesbusiness.co.uk