



Torfaen Business Voice

Llais Busnes Torfaen



ONLINE

20TH

ANNIVERSARY

2001 - 2021

AUGUST 2021

**Next Virtual Meeting:
30th September, 4:30pm**



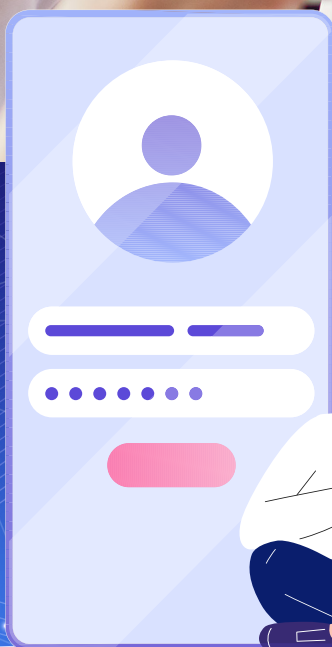
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**COME & JOIN
THE CLUB!**

Torfaen Business Voice Online membership for
£18.00 for the rest of 2021.

<http://bit.ly/TBV-membership-form>



NOTES FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

It was great to see so many of you on screen for our last networking session, our next meeting is on the 30th September and we have tweaked the format to make it a little easier on the tech side. There should be plenty of time to talk to other businesses and promote your own during the club's twentieth anniversary year! Whilst we haven't been able to celebrate this milestone in the way we'd have liked this year, we're hoping to do so as we turn 21 so keep an eye out for details of how we'll be marking the occasion.



Ashley Harkus

Chairman,
Torfaen
Business
Voice

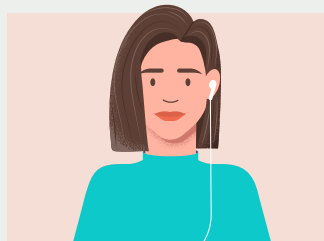
Back in the here and now as restrictions are lifted a lot of businesses are facing the challenges of how to adapt to changing rules and guidance. In this newsletter we look at the thorny issue of compulsory workplace vaccination in the hope of providing some help.

It's still a difficult time for some sectors with rules, supply chain problems and staffing issues so we can use the opportunity to share experiences and have a good old moan about it all if nothing else. Anyway, look forward to seeing you all there.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: VIRTUAL MEETINGS

30/09/21 - Torfaen Business Voice - 4:30pm Online

25/11/21 - Torfaen Business Voice - 4:30pm Online



Take Part in Our Networking Meeting & Make it Count!

Our Next Online Networking meeting is on **Thursday 30th September 4.30pm** this will be on our Microsoft Teams platform. It is friendly, informal and keeps you in touch with local like-minded business owners.

Come and join us and tell us why your business is worth getting involved with!

Not a member why not join us online, membership at £18.00 inclusive of VAT for the rest of 2021.

<http://bit.ly/TBV-membership-form>



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CHANGES TO SELF-ISOLATION FOR FULLY VACCINATED ADULTS

All adults who have been fully vaccinated will no longer have to self-isolate if they are identified as close contacts of someone with coronavirus from 7 August 2021, the First Minister has confirmed.

The changes to the NHS Wales Test Trace Protect (TTP) service for fully-vaccinated adults will come into effect from 7 August 2021 – the same day as Wales is expected to move to alert level zero, if the public health situation allows.

Children and young people under 18 will also be exempt from the need to self-isolate if they are also identified as close contacts of a positive case. But everyone who tests positive for coronavirus or has symptoms must continue to isolate for 10 days, whether they have been vaccinated or not.

Read more at Business Wales News and Welsh Government Press Release:

<https://bit.ly/BusinessWales-Article>

<https://bit.ly/Government-Press-Release>



WELSH GOVERNMENT: VACCINATION SAVES LIVES: NEW TOOLKIT TO HELP EMPLOYERS ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO GET COVID-19 VACCINE

The Welsh Government is encouraging employers to do all they can to support their workforce to get vaccinated.

A new toolkit has been launched to support businesses and organisations to help their workers get the COVID-19 vaccine. It encourages employers to:

- Be as flexible as possible when it's time for staff to have a vaccine, this could include giving employees paid time off work to attend their appointments for both vaccine doses.
- Use the campaign resources provided by the Welsh Government to run an awareness campaign in their organisation and provide employees with access to reliable and accurate information about the vaccine.
- Share the Q&A document and expert advice videos to explain the vaccine and answer common questions employees may have.

- Urge staff to be cautious about misinformation and encourage them to use trusted sources like phw.nhs.wales if they are searching for information or answers to questions about the vaccine.
- Create employee vaccine champions by encouraging staff to discuss their experiences and share information with colleagues, family and friends.

Read the Welsh Government press release here:

<https://bit.ly/Vaccination-Saves-Lives>

The promotional pack can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/Promo-Pack-For-Employers>

GRAND DESIGNS... ON YOUR MONEY:

BARCLAYS ISSUES HIGH-VIS SCAMS WARNING TO PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



- Barclays data reveals a 31 per cent increase in business scams, compared with last year.
- Barclays issues warning to all 15,725 property and construction businesses in Wales, as the bank's data reveals this sector fell victim to the most scams in 2020 (24 per cent).

Barclays data has revealed that scams targeting businesses increased by almost a third (31 per cent*), when compared with last year.

Impersonation scams were the most commonly used tactic by criminals to target businesses in 2020 (44 per cent), with figures more than doubling in the second half of the year when compared with the first half (62 per cent). Impersonation scams are when fraudsters pretend to be organisations or authorities in the hope that they'll trick their victims into sharing personal or banking information – or to even transfer money out of their account.

The bank is issuing a scams warning to all businesses, but particularly the 15,725 property and construction businesses in Wales**. Nationally, the data reveals that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in this sector made up almost a quarter of all business scams last year (24 per cent). On average, each scam cost property and construction SMEs a staggering £4,110.

John Heaver, Barclays Head of Business Banking Fraud, said: *"Property and construction businesses often display their company details outside or near*

construction projects they're working on, making it easier for fraudsters to research and target their scam. SMEs should consider having checks in place to confirm the legitimacy of any new suppliers, or even unexpected changes to existing suppliers, during a job.

"It's incredibly important that business owners and their staff are aware of the different type of scams that can occur and remain vigilant at all times. The vast majority of scams could be prevented by taking simple steps such as double checking payment details with a source you know is genuine. I'd encourage SMEs to talk about preventing fraud with their staff, suppliers and clients, however if they are ever in doubt, they should contact their bank for more advice."

Barclays checklist for SMEs to help build the foundations of scams prevention:

1. Put on Your Scams Hard Hat

You'd never walk on a construction site without a hard hat – likewise, you should never disclose sensitive banking details. If you receive an unexpected call, email or text – whether claiming to be your bank, the police, or a company such as your internet provider – never disclose your banking details or transfer money to another account. Never download any software or give access to your device. Instead, call the person back on a known and trusted number to verify the request.

*Article continues on page four

2. Research on a Tea Break

When looking to make purchases from a new seller, take the time to thoroughly research the company, check customer reviews, and try to avoid placing large first time orders. If buying a larger item, try to see it in person (providing it is within government guidelines to do so). Check any documentation and serial numbers carefully to ensure what you are buying is genuine and if there is a legitimate reason why the cost may be lower. Remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

3. Be Airtight With Suppliers

If information about your suppliers is accessible to the public, it may make it easier for fraudsters to target you by intercepting supplier emails and invoices, and replacing the genuine bank account details with their own. Before making a payment to any new banking details, verbally confirm they are correct with the supplier or sender on a number that you know is genuine. Do not call the number listed on the invoice or email containing the payment instructions in case it's fake.

4. Another Brick in the Firewall

If you get an unexpected text message or email asking you to follow a link or open an attachment, use a different method to check if this is a genuine request first before clicking on anything. Make sure your corporate infrastructure is secure and your online systems up to date and protected with robust anti-virus and firewall software.

5. Is This Really Your Boss?

Have you ever received an email from your CEO or Financial Director asking you to make an urgent payment? Fraudsters are able to impersonate emails and signatures to make them appear to be from the people you work

with. Pause, pick up the phone and verbally confirm with your colleague that the payment request is genuine. If it really was them, they won't mind you double checking.

Last year, Barclays prevented hundreds of millions of pounds of fraud and scams, and the bank continues to ramp up its mission to educate their customers on the rising threat. Weekly cyber security awareness webinars are available for all UK businesses, and were attended by 1200 SMEs last year.

Customers should get in touch immediately with Barclays if they feel they have been the victim of a scam on:
0800 3891 652.

To find out more about how you can protect your business from Fraud and Scams visit:

<https://bit.ly/Business-Fraud-Protection>



Do you need help with your Torfaen Business?

Online Business Support Clinics

Any existing business or new start up within Torfaen looking for impartial advice and support can book a free and confidential 20 minutes consultation with members of the business support team at our monthly support clinics. For more information and to book a place please click on the dates below:

<https://bit.ly/Thursday-30th-September>



<https://bit.ly/Thursday-21st-October>



ACCESS FREE SUPPORT WITH YOUR HR POLICIES FROM THE LOCAL NURTURE, EQUIP & THRIVE PROJECT

I'm Margaret Jones, the Equality and Diversity Officer on the Nurture, Equip and Thrive (NET) project in the Torfaen, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent local authorities. The project is totally funded by the Welsh Government and European Social Fund with no direct cost to the SME.

I work with SME's within those local authorities to assist them to introduce and/or update their HR policies and procedures, raise employers' and managers' awareness of their legal responsibility as an employer and ensuring the policies and procedures focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. This work will also look at whatever good practice can be included in the organisation's policies and procedures.

Having those policies and procedures in place will inform and direct managers and employees on their rights and responsibilities and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and language in the workplace. Ensuring that employment policies and procedures are compliant with domestic legislation and communicated to staff is a good defence if, unfortunately, you are taken to an Employment Tribunal.

If you would benefit from my help, please contact me.

Margaret.jones2@torfaen.gov.uk
07817 057512



IS YOUR BUSINESS READY FOR HYBRID WORKING?

Returning to the workplace is on the minds of many employers. However, a recent survey carried out by CIPHR showed only 15% of workers want to return to the office full time, with 72% of workers wanting to split their time between the workplace and working from home.

Currently, many businesses have a solution that was rushed together when the pandemic hit. It's now time to evaluate this and consider options for how your business will evolve going forward. It's vital that companies find solutions that work for both their employees and their business. This is likely to mean some changes need to be made to the way the business operates, including options that allow for more flexible working.

The market shows hybrid solutions such as RPS TeamsTalk are going to pave the way post-pandemic. Our TeamsTalk solution allows members of your team to be at home or in the office on a flexible basis and still all work on the same phone system.

No more mobile diverts and customers not being able to get through to the right person, TeamsTalk seamlessly links everyone together ensuring your customer gets the best level of service.

Finding solutions for your business post pandemic may come as a daunting challenge, but the team at RPS are here to help.

01633 481424 | welcome@rpstelecom.co.uk



KEEP YOUR MARKETING COOL DURING THE SUMMER

As we all know, during the summer months it's easy to get lost in the normal day-to-day activities of running your business, combined with school holidays, the odd family day trip and staff taking leave. This often means that your own marketing activities get left behind.

That's why in this article, we discuss fun ways in which you can be consistent in telling your brand's story to your customers and followers.

CONSISTENCY

Even though you will probably be spending most of your time dreaming of sitting in the sun by the sea, it is important that you remain consistent with what you post, both in frequency and in message.

However, this doesn't mean recycling the same post every other day, but making sure your branding and design are consistent across all platforms, and your brand language is consistent with how you speak to your audience and therefore help build trust with your followers.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

With so much going at the moment it is easy to lose sight of some of the key fundamentals to your business's online strategy. As a business, being able to understand who your audience are is crucial. Once you know your audience, everything will be more likely to resonate.

GET PERSONAL

As a marketing agency, no two days are the same, and sometimes it can be easy to get lost in the day-to-day routine and forget to share all of the personal,

behind the scenes things that make our brand what it is.

Some of the things we do to show our personality are:

- **Show your work life balance:** Your social media doesn't have to be all work and no play. People want to see behind the brand, show what you and your team get up to behind the scenes (both in work and on your days off) and tell your story about who you are as a team, not just a business.
- **Create customer personas and tailor your content to them:** Once you have gathered enough data, you can create a customer persona based on factors such as age, location, income etc. From this you will be able to tailor your content towards them.

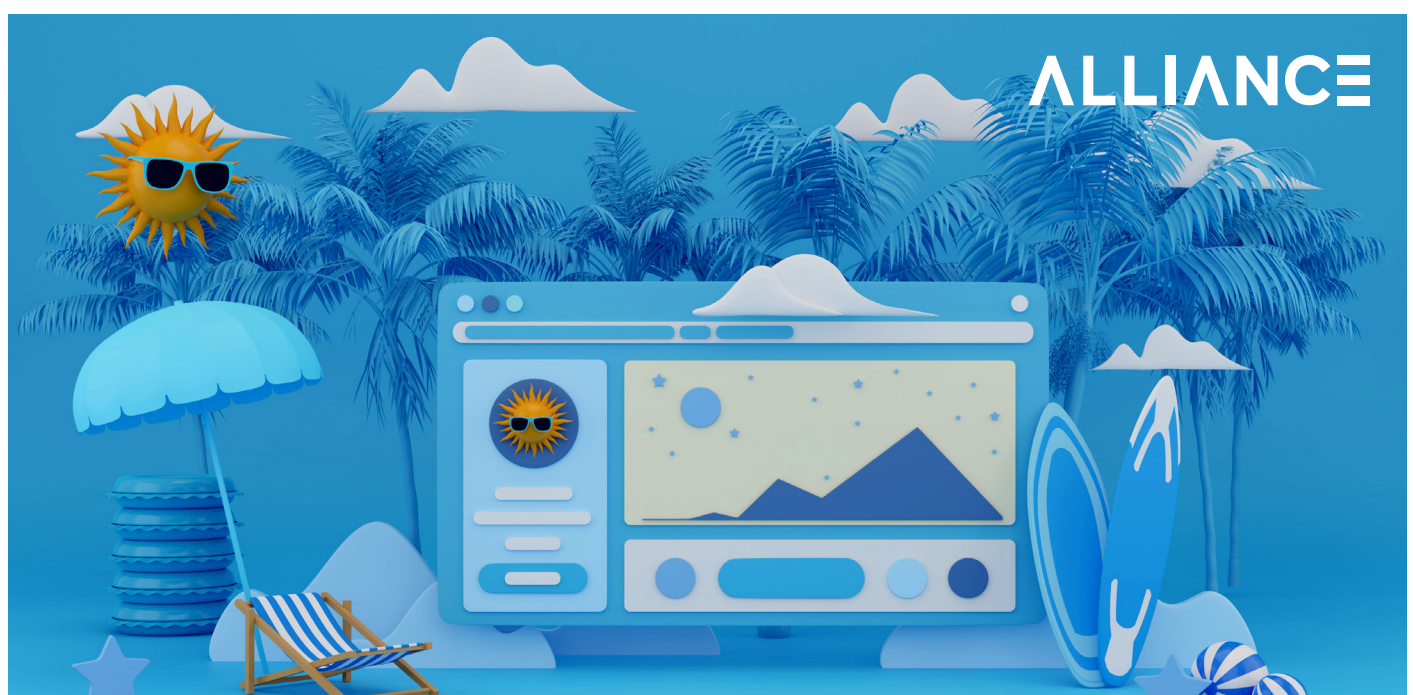
It's the little things that can have the most effect, keep that in mind next time you're scheduling some content for social.

INNOVATE

Don't get left behind! Although making sure your brand purpose and story is on point is great, continue to be forward thinking and align yourselves with trends in your industry. While still sticking to high quality standards.

There are plenty more marketing activities you can focus on over the summer, for further information and advice about any of the above or to discuss your specific requirements please get in touch by emailing:

hello@allianceagency.co.uk or phone 01633 449885



JOIN OTHER EMPLOYERS WHO ARE BENEFITTING FROM HAVING AN AGE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Multi-generational workplaces are better for business



Through the Age at Work programme, responsible business network Business in the Community is working in partnership with Age Cymru to support employers to tap into the benefits of a multi-generational workforce.

Age at Work offers a range of FREE support and tools that can help employers to recruit, retrain and retain mature workers to remain in the workplace and thrive, and will benefit employees of ALL ages.

The support includes a Business Age Audit, Age Inclusive Toolkit and an Age Learning Network, where your organisation can learn from other peers and the BITC team by discussing challenges and opportunities, sharing best practice and developing an action plan for your business.

Participation in Age at Work is free of charge to organisations of all sizes and from all sectors thanks to support from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Why not benefit from increased innovation, productivity and other benefits that a diverse workforce brings? For more information on the Age at Work programme click - <https://bit.ly/Age-at-Work-Wales>

or contact Jill Salter, BITC Cymru:
07793 443893
jill.salter@bitc.org.uk

