

Written 14 March 2022

BUSINESS NEWS NORTHERN IRELAND

Welcome to our round up of the latest business news for our clients. Please contact us if you want to talk about how these updates affect your business. We are here to support you!

How To Create a Marketing Plan

Successful businesses all have two things in common – a thorough understanding of customer needs, and they have a total dedication to their customers.



This involves the process of knowing:

- Who their customers are;
- Their customers' perception of the company and their needs; and
- How to attract them back time and time again!

The logic is that you gather information about your business and get an insight into the way customers and prospective customers think and make 'buy' decisions. So, take a day out to work on your marketing plan and set some targets.

At the end of a marketing day, you should be in a position to:

- Have gathered information about existing and potential customers needs and wants
- Have facilitated a discussion about the marketing position the company should be in
- Know the unique selling points that this business has and how to take advantage of these
- Understand how to differentiate the business from competitors
- Produce a marketing plan

A marketing plan sets out how you are going to put your growth strategy into practice. The marketing plan ensures that everyone in the business knows what you are trying to do and what they need to do to make it happen.

The key areas to consider are:

- Include your targets or objectives for the next 12 months. What are you trying to achieve?
- Outline a budget and any deadlines which will help you focus on your priorities and commitment to achieving them.
- Focus on communicating with existing and potential customers – set out when and how you will do this (to maintain customer awareness).
- Outline how you are going to reach new customers and by what methods (social media, website, newsletter, mailings, calls, signage, events).
- Build a schedule of marketing activities.

Please talk to us – we can provide you with a marketing template to get your thoughts into a plan so you can take action and grow your business!

Do you know of anyone starting a business?

Then ask us about our comprehensive guide to the financial, tax and accounting considerations of starting a business, “The New Business Kit” which we offer free to start ups or those who have recently made the jump into business ownership.



The guide helps start-ups think about:

- Selecting a legal entity;
- Registering with the tax authorities;
- Accounting and bookkeeping;

- Value Added Tax;
- Payroll taxes and pensions;
- Income and corporation tax;
- Cash planning and forecasting;
- Insurance;
- Selecting professional advisers; and
- Digital accounting systems.

In addition there is a section of useful names, addresses and telephone numbers. Just ask – it is free!

What is Peer to Peer (P2P) lending?

P2P is a relatively new concept which bypasses the banks to allow businesses to borrow money directly from ordinary people. Businesses get the funding they need, and lenders get a better rate than they would leaving their money in the bank. In between the borrower and the lender stands the P2P platform which handles the collection and distribution of loans and repayments.

P2P is very bespoke. The idea is to assess what the business needs first rather than attempting to fit them into a 'product'. Consequently, an early informal chat through is often the best way to progress. Our P2P experts will guide you through the funding process, advising you every step of the way and their knowledge of the market and the lending platforms is unrivalled.

Our P2P experts have been involved in advising businesses on the raising of funds via P2P platforms since its emergence. They have even advised some newly emerging platforms on how to construct their lending guidelines and how they should treat new borrowers.

Please talk to us about financing options – we can introduce you to an expert!

HMRC asking employers to justify NIC increase on payslips

From 2023/24 there will be a separate 1.25% deduction on employee payslips for the Health and Social Care Levy announced by the Prime Minister last September. However, for 2022/23 there will be a 1.25% increase in the rate of national insurance contributions.

HMRC is asking employers, where appropriate, to include the following message on payslips:

'1.25% uplift in NICs, funds NHS, health & social care'

Note, this is not obligatory.

Should you consider a Salary Sacrifice Arrangement to reduce tax and NICs?

With the increases in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) from 6 April 2022 many employees and their employees are considering changing their entitlement to their contractual salary for either tax free benefits in kind such as additional contributions into their pension, or benefits in kind that have a low tax and NIC charge such as an electric company car. This needs to be done with care and requires a change to the Contract of Employment.

From 6 April 2017 where a benefit is given as part of optional remuneration arrangement (salary sacrifice), the rules for valuing the amount of the benefit treated as earnings from the employee's employment has changed.

Where a benefit is given under optional remuneration arrangements, the general rule is value of the benefit treated as earnings from the employment is the greater of the amount of:

- salary or cash pay given up by the employee in return for the benefit
- the benefit treated as earnings from the employment under the normal rules, ignoring any amount made good, as outlined in HMRC booklet 480

The 5 exceptions to this rule are:-

- employer pension contributions;
- employer-provided pension advice;
- employer-supported childcare and provision of workplace nurseries; and
- cycles and cyclist's safety equipment
- Ultra – Low (< 75g) CO2 emission cars

Many employers have started offering zero or low emission cars as an alternative to additional or reduced salary entitlement. The normal optional remuneration arrangement rules do not apply to cars with CO2 emissions of 75 grams per kilometre (km) or less. Cars with CO2 emissions of 75 grams/km or less continue to be taxed on the cash equivalent of the benefit worked out under the normal rules without having to make a comparison with the salary foregone.

Example

An employee is given an electric car which is available for their private use under an optional remuneration arrangement in which the employee gives up salary of £150 per month, or £1,800 per year. The car has zero CO2 emissions and has a list price of £40,000 and a cash equivalent value of £800 (£40,000 x 2%). The relevant amount to be treated as earnings from the employment is the £800 cash benefit because its CO2 emissions are no more than 75 grams.

Ukraine: what you can do to help

Many want to do their bit to support those who have been forced to flee their homes because of the invasion. Here is how you can help #StandWithUkraine.

Financial donations

If you want to donate money, there are a number of charities providing humanitarian relief in Ukraine. See: [Donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Appeal](#)

The UK Government will match public donations to this appeal pound-for-pound up to £25 million.

Donating essential supplies

One of the best ways to help is by donating cash through trusted charities and aid organisations, rather than donating goods. Cash can be transferred quickly to areas where it is needed, and individuals and aid organisations can use it to buy what is most needed. Unsolicited donations of goods, although well-meant, can obstruct supply chains and delay more urgent life-saving assistance from getting through.

Organisations across the UK are gathering essential supplies, such as clothes, first aid and sanitary products. Many charities and community groups will have lists of items they need.

Charities with experience of responding to disasters are best placed to reach victims on the ground.

Apply to be a sponsor

The government will be launching a new sponsorship scheme to make sure that Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes have a route to safety.

The scheme will match people, charities, businesses and community groups to Ukrainians who do not have family ties to the UK.

Details of the scheme and how you can apply will be published shortly by the [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities](#).

Extracted from: [Ukraine: what you can do to help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Small Business Sustainability Basics Programme

Small Business Britain is launching “The Sustainability Basics programme”, in partnership with Oxford Brookes Business School, to help small businesses make the most of the opportunities of sustainability.

This free programme (and community of like-minded businesses) will give each entrepreneur the basics they need to supercharge their sustainability planning, reduce their impact on the planet, and turn their sustainability plans into fantastic commercial advantage.

This programme will be delivered over six weeks entirely via digital channels.

Webinars are recorded and available for catch up on a dedicated page on the Small Business Britain website.

All sessions begin at 11am and the modules include:

1. 21 March 2022: Sustainability is Good for Business
2. 28 March 2022: Starting at the Beginning: Energy and Transport
3. 4 April 2022: Where You Are & What You Do
4. 25 Apr 2022: A Team Effort: Working With & Adapting Your Supply Chain

5. 3 May 2022: Offsetting: The Good, The Bad & Making a Plan
6. 9 May 2022: Sustainability for You

See: [Small Business Britain | Champion. Inspire. Accelerate.](#)

Global Business Innovation Programme (GBIP) in the Netherlands: Women in Innovation Agri-Tech

Opportunity for innovative UK female business leaders to collaborate with the Netherlands on Agri-Tech solutions. Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has opened another GBIP to give up to 15 innovative female-led businesses a chance to explore the Agri-Tech opportunities with the Netherlands.

The programme is structured around three main phases:

- Getting ready for the market - you'll get a chance to attend a pre-activity briefing workshop to build knowledge and understanding of the market and potential opportunities.
- Visiting the market - you'll get a chance to explore the innovation opportunities with the Netherlands first-hand, over the course of five days, through meetings with key companies and research organisations, and matchmaking with potential collaborators and partners.
- Exploiting the market - you'll get an opportunity to attend an exploitation workshop and get one-to-one support from a designated Innovate UK EDGE innovation and growth specialist for the duration of the offering, including developing an action plan to capitalise on the opportunities identified.

The Netherlands horticulture sector is the second biggest agriculture exporter in the world, known for its modernised farming methods and innovative and sustainable farming practices. This Women in Innovation Agri-Tech programme seeks to strengthen ties between the Netherlands and the UK through female entrepreneurs leading the way in this sector.

The areas of interest for the programme are focused around:

- horticultural production
- precision / robotic farming
- livestock improvement / genomics
- novel foods
- food waste streams
- net zero

See: [Global Business Innovation Programme with the Netherlands: Women in Innovation Agri-Tech | Newable Events](#)

UK and Japan forge closer links on telecoms

The UK and Japan will strengthen their cooperation on efforts to diversify the technology used in telecoms networks.

- Two nations agree to closer cooperation to solve global telecoms supply chain issues
- Includes commitment to more information sharing on innovative ways to build networks
- Will support R&D collaboration on future tech such as Open RAN and 6G

The UK Minister for Digital Infrastructure Julia Lopez and Japan's Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Yuji Sasaki met in London on Friday morning. They agreed several joint initiatives to support efforts to reduce the global overreliance on a small number of suppliers to build and maintain telecoms networks.

Both nations committed to greater information sharing on their respective policy approaches seeking to build a more competitive and diverse global market for telecoms equipment, including for 5G and future wireless networks.

Further commitments include deeper cooperation on research and development, particularly on open and interoperable network technologies such as Open RAN, which allow telecom providers to mix and match technical equipment from different suppliers within a network.

The Japanese and UK governments also agreed to share information and facilitate joint efforts between industry and academia in both countries to develop future communications technologies such as 6G.

See: [UK and Japan forge closer links on telecoms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-japan-forge-closer-links-on-telecoms)

IPO launches call for views on designs system

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) are carrying out a call for views as part of a review of the designs system to make sure it remains fit for the future.

The designs system enables rights holders to protect designs and enforce their rights. The IPO are seeking views and evidence from users of the system so that they can ensure the UK's designs framework works for the businesses, consumers and professionals that use it. This will help them better understand how they can make the most of new opportunities and flexibilities now that the UK has left the EU.

The call for views seeks a wide range of evidence on three main areas:

- new opportunities
- future framework
- better regulation

The consultation closes at 11:45pm on 25 March 2022.

For further information visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Finding and choosing a private coronavirus (COVID-19) test provider

The lists of and information about private test providers, to help you get private COVID-19 tests have been updated.

See: [Finding and choosing a private coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test provider - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-and-choosing-a-private-coronavirus-covid-19-test-provider)

Business landlords and tenants encouraged to resolve rent payment disputes

The process to resolve any disputes over non-payment of rent should begin ahead of the emergency protection from eviction ending.

The emergency protection from eviction for business tenants is due to end on Friday 25 March 2022. The special provision in the Coronavirus Act 2020, which was first applied at the end of March 2020, gave a total of 24 months special protection, in line with England and Wales. This provided time for landlords and tenants to work together to resolve any non-payment of rent.

As this deadline approaches, business landlords and tenants should keep working together to meet their legal obligations and resolve any rent arrears which may have built up during the pandemic.

Mediation process

Landlords and tenants can seek third party advice and start the mediation process to ensure plans are in place before the 25 March 2022. There are a number of mediation and dispute resolution options available to businesses and landlords to guide them through this process. An online search of 'commercial rent mediation' will provide results of some third parties offering mediation services.

See: [Business landlords and tenants encouraged to resolve rent payment disputes \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](https://nibusinessinfo.co.uk/news/article/business-landlords-and-tenants-encouraged-to-resolve-rent-payment-disputes/)

Composites training courses at NIACE

The National Composites Centre (NCC) is bringing its world-leading capabilities in advanced composites to Northern Ireland Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre (NIACE)

NIACE is the regional Centre of Excellence for innovative composites manufacturing research and technology and is delivered by a partnership between Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University and the NCC.

From March through to September, the NCC will be offering courses at NIACE with a particular focus on working with SMEs and upskilling workforces to support the growth of the regional composite industry.

The following courses will be available:

- [Introduction to Composite Materials](#) - 22 March, 28 June
- [Introduction to Resin Infusion Techniques](#) - 10 & 11 May, 23 & 24 August
- [Introduction to Manual Prepreg Techniques](#) - 13 & 14 April, 26 & 27 July

- [Introduction to Design for Composites](#) - 2 June, 20 September

If you have any questions or would like to discuss training not covered here, you can contact the NCC training team on training@nccuk.com or +44 (0)117 370 7600.

Extracted from: [Composites training courses at NIACE \(nibusinessinfo.co.uk\)](#)

Women in Construction Summit 2022

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB NI), and the Women in Construction Network will host the second Women in Construction NI Summit, Crowne Plaza Belfast, Wednesday 6 April 2022. The Summit will celebrate the success of women working in the construction industry through inspirational guest speakers as well as panel discussions addressing key issues, challenges and opportunities within the industry.

See: [Women in Construction Summit 2022 Tickets, Wed 6 Apr 2022 at 09:00 | Eventbrite](#)