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OYSTER PERPETUAL YACHT-MASTER 40

Letter from the editor

Can we talk about the weather? Please?

THERE is a 1939 novel entitled *Gadsby*, written by Ernest Vincent Wright, that is perhaps the most famous example of a lipogram. A lipogram is a work that studiously excludes a certain letter from the entire text; Wright chose the most common letter in our alphabet for his work: the letter E.

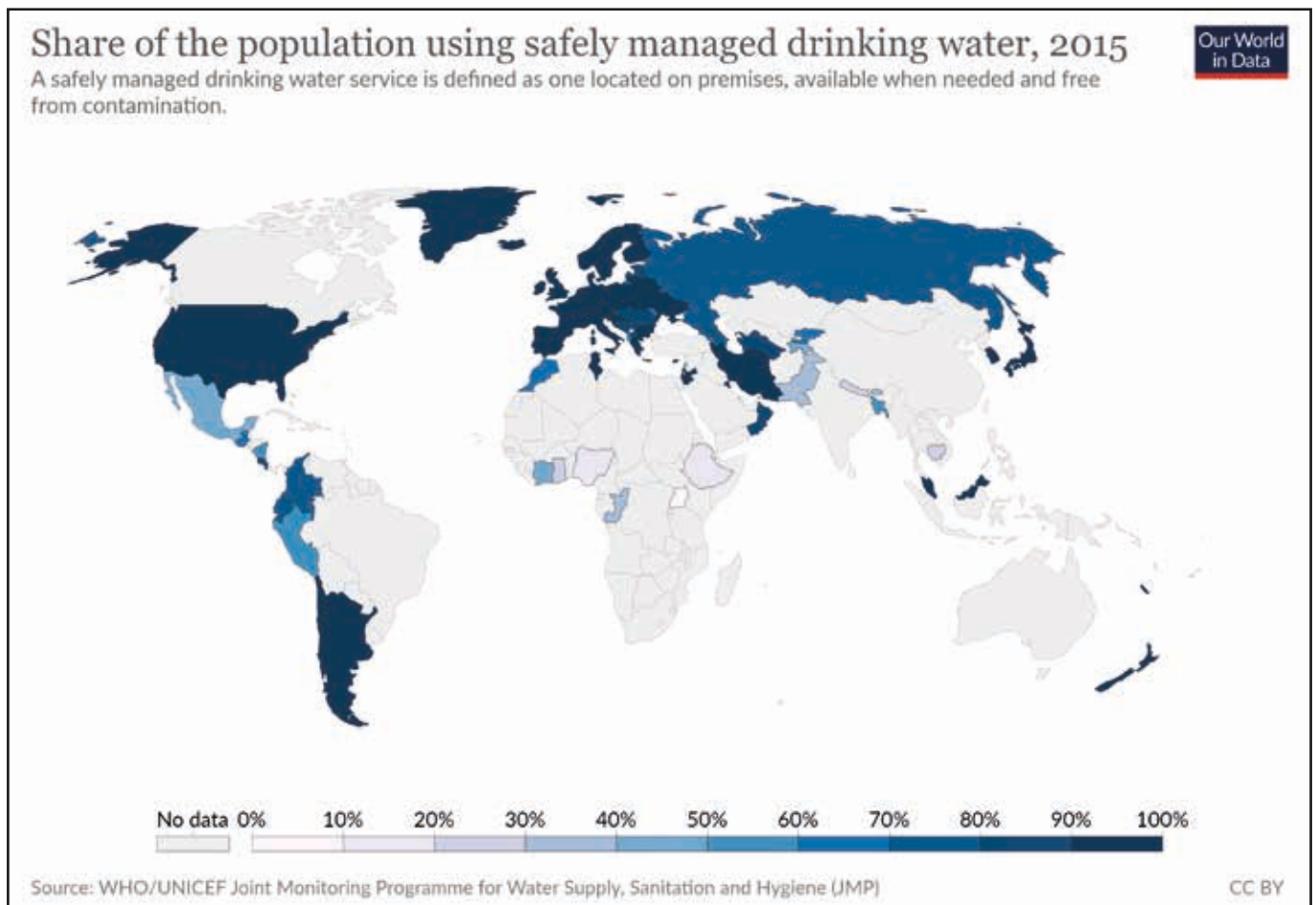
And he managed it. Well, almost. *Gadsby* runs to 50,000 words, and the only Es you'll find anywhere in its text are those in the author's name, two "the"s and one "officer". If I'd been editing *Gadsby*, I'd have pushed for some alternatives to those few rule-breakers, but Wright did pretty well, all-told.

In the same playful spirit, I set myself a similar challenge for this editor's letter — as steep a one as Wright himself faced. My contribution to the genre of constrained writing, as the style is known, was to not once mention the C word. But it was going to be a losing battle. It is — still — all about Covid.

It's impossible to ignore the spectre that's come to



define and defile economies, households, hospitals and workplaces. Have you found yourself talking about the weather to anyone lately? It's autumn, the most lovely of our four distinct and beautiful seasons, when golden leaves and a morning chill remind us that nothing lasts forever. (Readers in the tropics, bear with me, please; I'm feeling inspired.) Sharing our observations of the vagaries of weather has always been a go-to conversation starter, and at



SDG6: Share of population using safely managed drinking water (2015 data)

Source: Our World in Data

the change of seasons it's usually a subject in itself.

But not this year. In the 2020 small-talk in your Zoom work group (no more water fountains), or at the bakery or bus-stop, Covid will spring up like a rude Jack-in-the-Box. Talk all you like about the subtle hues of the leaves at sunset; when you've shot your bolt, it'll be Covid again, the floundering economy, the masks, the misery. It even hovers over every personal encounter: was that a cough or fart, and which would I rather it was?

It's become harder than ever to guess at a person's thoughts or intentions. Face masks mean we must watch for twitches in brows' feet, laugh lines and forehead furrows, or wait for the telltale bob of smiling cheeks. We're getting the hang of it, but man, it's getting old. And so are we: this year has slipped behind us, months sinking one-by-one into the 2020 pond with barely a ripple. It's the year that hasn't happened, at least not in any good way.

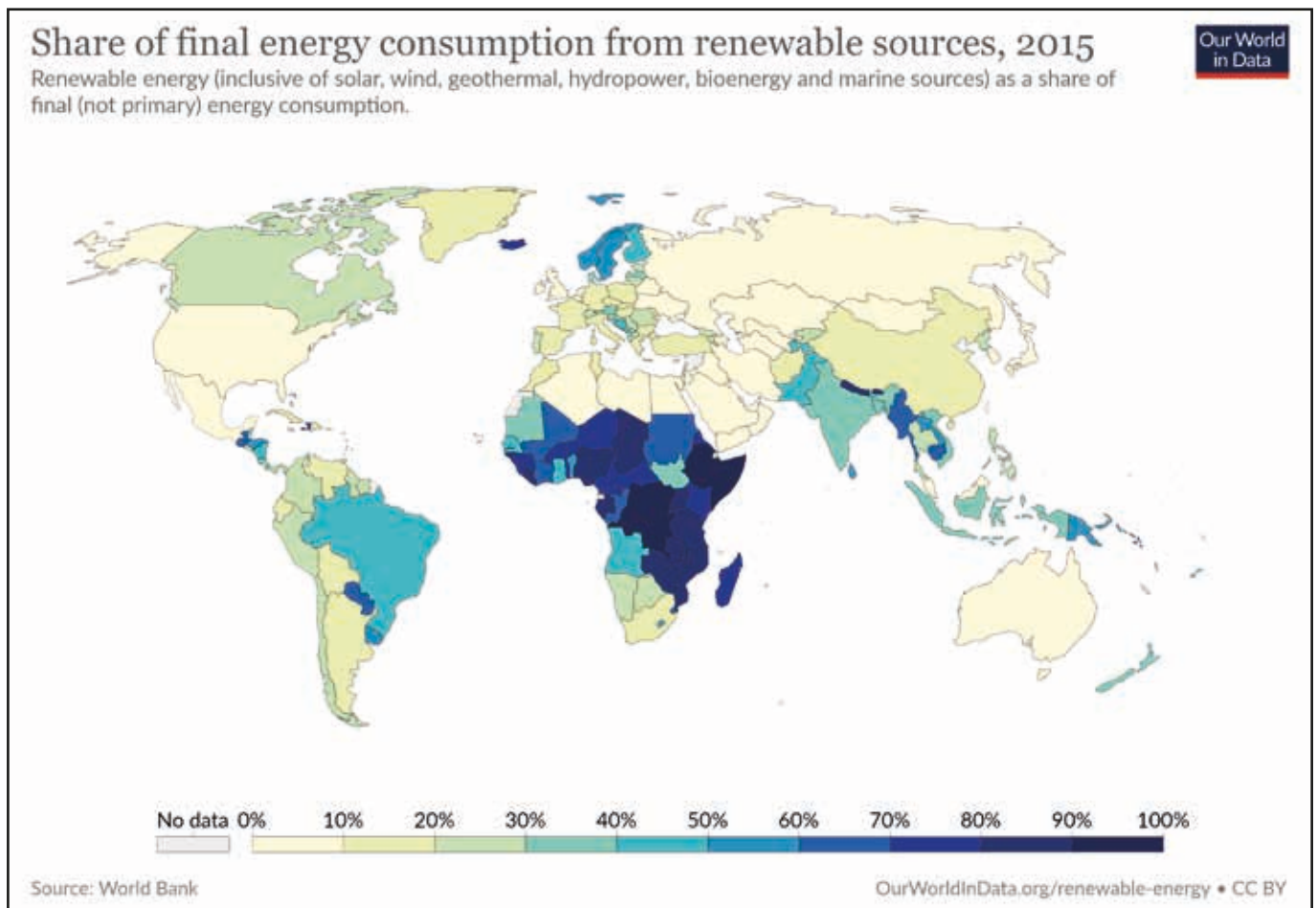
Mask-wearing and lockdown rules are now causing deeper social fractures than Brexit. "The solidarity of the early weeks of the pandemic has given way to distrust,"

according to a recent poll of 10,000 people. The survey found that more than half of respondents who regularly wear masks have "severely negative" attitudes towards those who don't. Of those who did not break lockdown, an even greater majority — 68 percent — have those same "severely negative" views about escapees, partiers and other public rule-breakers. We've gone directly from "We're all in this together" to "Us and them."

So anyway, I failed in my bid — don't mention the virus — but I hope that this autumn issue of *BV* stands in some sort of opposition to the general mood of the day. The pages in your hands, or on your laptop screen, are testament to the resilience of — if nothing else — the enduring spirit of innovation. And of human spirit, too, I hope; some inspiring tales have been thrown up amidst the misery and confusion.

Happy autumn, and happy reading.

Hal Williams, editor
hw@bv.world



SDG7: Africa leading the world in renewable energy consumption (2015 data)
Source: Our World in Data

Are you blaming workers for a drop in productivity...?

Am I correct in noticing, in recent issues of *BV*, a trend to “blame” distanced workers for a drop in production in the UK (and elsewhere)? In features on two facing pages in the Summer issue, your writers took to task remote workers who are “doing nothing” from their home offices — and “getting away with it” — as well as the (alleged) fact that no one wants a return to “the office”.

Really? We have had precious little say in how the Covid situation has been dealt with, at any level, and it seems to me that the powers-that-be are making it up as they go along, and finding scapegoats along the way. I think Britain’s workers deserve some credit for keeping on keeping on during a very challenging period. Yes, there has been a drop in production. Duh! Yes, some people will be “pulling on the elastic” and trying to make their lives as comfortable and easy as possible. We are stressed, as a nation and as a species. If we wobble a little, it is to be expected. To a degree, anyway.

I see no evidence, in my personal work and social groups, of any intentional “slacking”. We are doing what we can, as best we can, under the circumstances we have been presented with. Please ensure that your coverage does not lean towards any kind of incrimination of workers for the situation in which we find ourselves. Articles which cause division have no place in any self-respecting publication — as I’m sure yours is.

Kelly Wright
Dundee, Scotland

The editor replies:

Thanks for the letter and the word of warning, Kelly, but I believe your apparent skim-reading of our articles has led you to a false conclusion. There is no intention to blame anyone; we are simply presenting the various facets of the pandemic and its effect on the workplace. I hope you see the intended balance in the spread of our coverage.

HW

Brexit optimism justified, as long as there’s a deal

I have much sympathy for reader Gordon Scott, who declared in *Correspondence* last year that Brexit should allow the UK “to become an independent coastal state”. And yes, I too am concerned for the security and well-being of our proud, brave and hard-working fishing communities.

But Welsh government Brexit minister Jeremy Miles was right in saying (in October) that “access to the EU single market far outweighs the issue of access to UK waters”. He told Michael Gove that it would be “inexcusable” to end the trade negotiations with no deal. Miles was also right to insist that the damage this would cause to business (and the inevitable job losses) should not be countenanced. Is it not enough that we must fight for economic recovery from the impact of Covid-19?

A year ago, Jacob Rees-Mogg described the EU-UK Brexit agreement as a *tournedos Rossini* of a deal (as Mr Scott reminds us). And history is likely to judge Brexit a resounding success too, provided we conclude a trade deal with the European Union.

William Hopkins
Gloucester

Education key to making my homeland a safer place

I’d like to congratulate you on your series of articles on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. As a junior school teacher, originally from Monterrey, I was particularly interested in the article on goal four, that of education. The goals are laudable, although I cannot help feeling they are unachievable; and if this wasn’t the case before the pandemic, it is now. This event will put the UN efforts back by at least a decade. In a place such as Monterrey, education is of paramount importance to prevent the local economy falling into the hands of local drug cartels. What struck me most about the Lego initiative was how important it is to take back public spaces such as parks, and make them safe and pleasant.

I left my hometown almost 10 years ago, tired of the violence. I believe it will be very difficult to transform the situation quickly, but I am optimistic that education will be the catalyst.

Julia Vázquez
Sayulita
Mexico

Inspiring role models and causes

I'd like to commend your writer Heather Leah Smith, and *Business Vision* as a whole, for maintaining a focus on some of the more inspiring figures of the business community. Heather's profile on Stacey Brown-Philpot is one example of the kind of article I speak of. Ms Brown-Philpot's prominence in the (usually) male-dominated tech world is impressive in itself, and the way she has networked with fellow "alpha-females" is instructive, and a lesson to young entrepreneurs following in her footsteps.

I am also pleased to note a continued emphasis on the environment in your magazine, and its interface with enterprise. The two factors are inextricable parts of the future for our planet: commerce will have to continue (albeit in a hopefully more considered and compassionate way) and we will have to step up our game when it comes to sustainability, conservation and energy generation.

Please maintain your admirable focus, and continue to encourage businesses globally to engage with best-practice at every level of industry, trade and production. The public perception of companies and corporations is increasingly important, as I believe they are discovering. Time for them to abide by the sort of behaviour that will take us all to a safer, happier future.

Doreen Jones
Humberside





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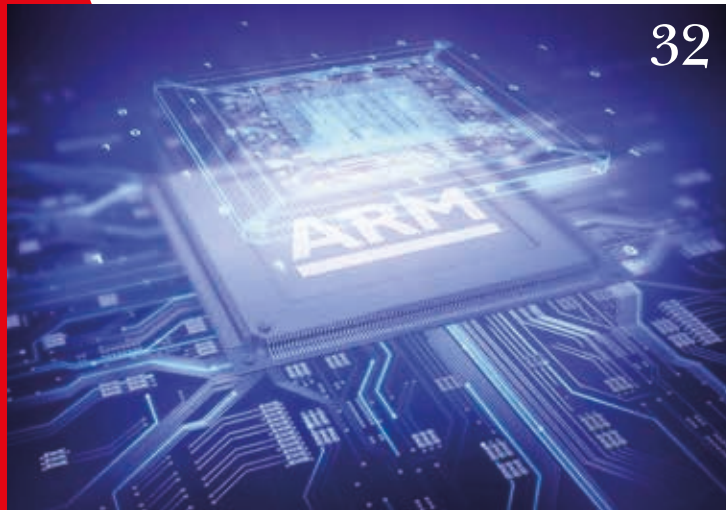
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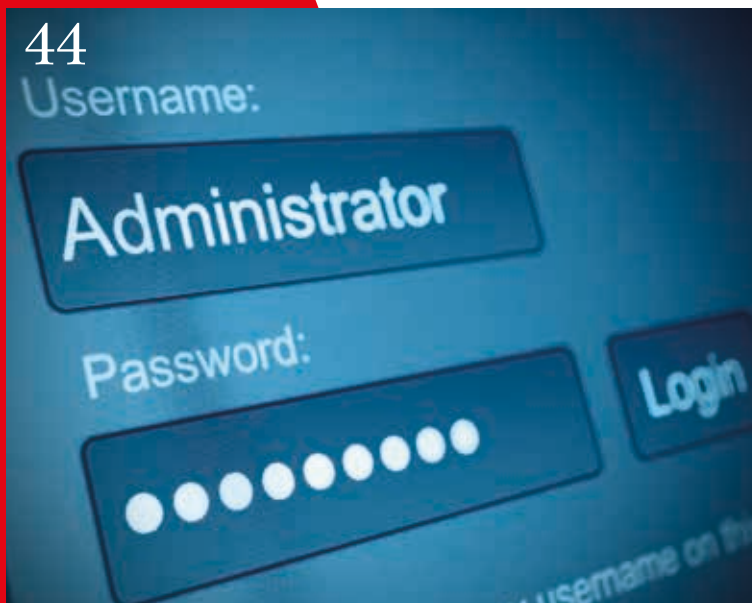
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BASHAR KILANI oversees IBM business in the Gulf countries and the Levant. In this issue's Heart of The Matter column, he discusses the effects of coronavirus on business in the region, and the future of work.



From blue collar to 'new collar': pandemic is changing the world of work — and so is technology

THE PANDEMIC has altered nearly every aspect of our personal and professional lives. Organisations around the world have shifted to remote working, and are facing challenges to manage business continuity despite capacity, productivity and security issues.

The combined health and economic impact of the pandemic is creating a “new normal” that will transform the Gulf region, and the world. Digital engagement will be accelerated, and within a few years people will find themselves in a transformed world. We will see a move towards automation and Cloud to make applications and data more accessible, supply chains will emerge with intelligence and flexibility, and new ways of doing work will engage people.

In the Gulf region, we are constantly seeing bold and innovative measures as well as data-driven decisions that help contain the spread of the pandemic and reduce the economic impact. We are also seeing retailers shifting to eCommerce and forms of digital engagements in sectors including education, healthcare and banking.

Most economic sectors will contract in the short term, and a new phase of experimentation will emerge where organisations re-imagine revenue streams and rebuild supply chains. This requires agility and leadership to explore new worlds and quickly adjust and react as new realities emerge. The transformation will accelerate digital adoption and establish new economic foundations.

While there is an organic element to the transformation that the pandemic has catalysed, there is also a need to evaluate and re-focus the human capital that will be central to the reimagined economies of the near future. Recently, the IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV) published a paper titled *Beyond the Great Lockdown: Emerging*

Stronger to a Different Normal, describing the key trends that will shape the post-lockdown era including the workforce of the future. Preparing and empowering young talent and professionals with the necessary digital skills are key to making them relevant in the workforce. With 70 percent of the region’s population less than 30 years of age, and as we navigate these uncertain times, we are seeing the importance of emerging technologies and digital skills.

According to an IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV) study, as many as 120m workers in the world’s 12 largest economies may need to be retrained or re-skilled as a result of AI and intelligent automation in the next three years. The study also shows that the time it takes to close a skills gap through training has increased by more than 10 times in just four years, and that new skills requirements are rapidly emerging as other skills are becoming obsolete.

Organisations need to change the culture, processes, systems and applications, design different business models, re-skill the workforce to align with the trends and stay in the game. And it is our responsibility to prepare students and workers for the way those technologies will shape jobs and the nature of work. Today, “new collar” roles are about skills, not degrees or having a traditional background in technology.

At IBM, we are helping re-skill existing workforce in order to align with current trends and remain relevant. We recently collaborated with the Ministry of Education in the UAE and Abu Dhabi School of Government as well as other leading government and private entities and educational institutions across the region to offer IBM’s Digital Nation Platform to their ecosystems. IBM Digital — Nation Platform is part of IBM’s global push to

**Evaluate
and re-focus**



close the digital skills gap and empower youth with the most in-demand skills in data science, analytics, programming, cloud and AI, helping them become digital-ready.

Equally, the different sectors will need to transform in a way that uniquely benefits their industry as well as ensure it remains interconnected with the wider economy. That will involve new operational models in the travel, retail, logistics and hospitality industries which are major contributors to the economy, in addition to oil and gas. As the Gulf region gets back to business, retailers are seeing volumes return to almost 50 percent of pre-lockdown, and airlines are starting to reconnect the main global destinations.

The focus now is mainly on capturing and processing data that will help create new digital engagements and improved customer experiences while conforming with today's safety regulations such as social distancing and contactless transactions.

Of course, education and industry specific transformations are critical aspects to a reformed economy. But infrastructure has to be central to all sectors. The workforce that will capture and gain insight from the manifold data at their disposal needs the right infrastructure to succeed and cloud architecture is critical.

Today, most enterprises are only 20 percent of the way into their cloud journeys, but the remaining 80 percent of workloads are still on-premises. The move to hybrid-cloud architecture where data can flow between different cloud platforms in integrated workflows will enable organisations to embrace the challenges of the digital world.

The successful digital transformation draws upon three components: an appropriate technology platform, the corporate culture to deviate from traditional forms of service and corporate ownership, and deep and meaningful customer engagement (internal or external).

Customer-facing workflows must be humanised

and automated, end-to-end. This is where the focus on data becomes so critical for personalisation and efficiency to deliver a unique experience and enable the use of AI to automate interactions and improve accuracy of predictions. On the heels of digital trends that are starting to mature, the next wave of normal has begun. The rise of new technologies — AI, blockchain, the Internet of Things, robotic process automation, virtual and augmented intelligence, 3D printing and others — is teeing-up an era of change in business architecture. IBM defines the result of such revolutionary change as “The Cognitive Enterprise“.

With the right infrastructure and workforce, data is merely the beginning of the value that companies can derive from a reimagined economy. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to untap the data that all companies have. AI-adoption is expected to continue growing rapidly. Average spending on AI will probably more than double in the next three years and with heightened AI use will come heightened risk, in areas ranging from data responsibility to inclusion and algorithmic accountability.

The level of cognitive understanding between humans and machines is inherently lower than it is between humans and other humans, yet the latter arena has been structured for centuries around ethics. Since AI relies on huge computing power, it can derive insight from massive amounts of data that would challenge human cognition. Relying only on traditional ethical approaches to decision making may be insufficient in addressing AI-powered decisions.

** Prior to his current appointment, Bashar Kilani was the Business Unit executive for IBM software business in MENA. He began his career with IBM in the UK and held several managerial and executive positions in software development, services, sales and marketing. His international career has taken him to assignments in the US, Europe and the Middle East.*

Capture and gain insight

BV Christine Lagarde



BV
PEOPLE

The first lady, many times

THE FIRST female President of the European Central Bank (ECB), Paris-born Christine Lagarde has a star-studded career behind her.

She was educated in France and the US, gaining masters' degrees in English and Law, before joining Baker & McKenzie in 1981. There she focused on labour, anti-trust, mergers and acquisitions, as well as international corporate arbitration. She racked-up another of her "first female" scores as member of the executive committee in 1995, was made a partner 1987.

She put in a stint as managing partner in the Paris office, then served as global chair from 1999 to 2005, based out of the Chicago headquarters.

Lagarde left Baker & McKenzie in 2005, taking up the position of Minister for Trade and Finance in the French government of Dominique de Villepin. She worked to attract FDI in France and drove fresh markets for French products. Lagarde launched the Cap Export mechanism to boost the technology sector.

After a period as French Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Nicolas Sarkozy appointed her Minister for Economy and Finance. (Yet another first, this time the first woman finance minister of a G8 country.)

She set about reviving a flagging economy, pressing for a stronger work ethic, and — against the better judgement of much of the French public — took a tilt at the 35-hour working week, something she saw as laziness.

Lagarde has chaired the ECOFIN Council, and became the 11th managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in July 2011. Yes, the first woman to hold the position.

After two terms at the IMF, in November 2019 Lagarde was elected president of the ECB, with her major foe the results of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lagarde was named Officier in the Légion d'honneur in April 2012.

Paul Krugman



BV
PEOPLE

The man whose CV you want

PAUL Krugman is an author, professor of economics, a *New York Times* columnist and a Nobel prize-winner; that should be enough to be getting on with.

Krugman has been head of international affairs at Princeton University and Centenary Professor at the London School of Economics. He has retired from those posts, and is now the Distinguished Professor of Economics at the City University of New York.

In 2008, he won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, making him the most celebrated economist of his generation. Krugman has written and edited several books and authored hundreds of articles on the subject of international trade and finance.

He writes about other subjects, too, and had a column in the online magazine *Slate*. Krugman has held teaching posts at MIT, Yale and Stanford and acted as a consultant for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the World Bank, the IMF and the United Nations. He was senior international economist on the Reagan-era Council of Economic Advisers.

He has written extensively on international trade, back in 1979 he came up with a novel model concentrating on similarities between countries. It was based on consumer brand preferences and economies-of-scale that make true internationalism difficult to manage. It was partly based on work by Joseph Stiglitz et al, and became known as the New Trade Theory.

Krugman opposes austerity and proposes stimulus in difficult times — being notably critical of the Obama administration's plan for the 2008 recession for thinking too small.

Capital chasm set to derail global economic recovery

European rates for new equity capital have fallen by nearly 50 percent and the average number of US IPOs has halved as Covid takes its toll on business. NEIL SHAH puts things in perspective.

SMALL- and mid-cap stocks (SMIDs) are more vulnerable to Covid shock than markets already priced-in.

A capital chasm is set to emerge as the unprecedented conditions have left many businesses in need of re-capitalisation that institutions and other pools of capital can't deliver. Central banks and governments should focus significantly more of their firepower on the sector to head-off economic calamity.

These are the main findings of Edison Group's latest report, entitled *Racing Covid's Capital Chasm*.

The report identifies two key factors in the lack of capital supply. First is the 31.5 percent year-on-year decline in private equity sector activity in Q2 2020,

This lull in activity is likely to persist

which has reduced the funding available from PE houses.

Edison's analysis suggests that this lull in activity is likely to persist, given the amount of leverage in the private equity industry.

Second, the report points to the historic decline in the amount of new equity capital being raised in public markets over the last decade.

In Europe, the rates of raising fresh capital have fallen by nearly 50 percent, from 380 annually between 1997 and 2007 to 220 per year between 2008 and 2018. In the US, the average number of IPOs annually has exactly halved from 300 IPOs 20 years ago to 150 today.

As any further shocks are likely to drive investors towards large-cap stocks and be more severely felt, since emergency fiscal measures have already been used, the report stresses that many SMIDs, which deliver up to 33 percent of revenues and employment, may be unable to recapitalise. This could spell economic disaster.

Edison suggests that if the capital chasm does not emerge it will probably be due to government intervention, or a



Small- and mid-cap stocks are more vulnerable to Covid shock than markets already priced-in



The extension of QE to buy equities was a measure pioneered by the Bank of Japan

continued upward trend in the use of public equity markets to raise funds.

The report indicates that Covid-19 appears to have increased investor appetite for public equities, as £55bn was raised in Europe through IPOs and follow-ons in H120.

London accounted for £23.7bn, or 43 percent, of this total — 15 percent more than the total raised across the whole of 2019. According to the report, since March 1, £17.4bn was raised in 249 follow-ons in the London market as companies raced to recapitalise.

The report also underlines the sizeable \$136bn raised by US public equity markets in H120, which is a \$109bn increase on the same period in 2019.

Even in a more benign scenario, the report suggests, the flow of capital may be restricted. Investors are expected to be more exacting when picking smaller cap stocks. Companies should prepare to compete for funding.

Edison stresses that strong balancesheets will be fundamental. It advises smaller-cap companies to emphasise, where possible, that funds will be used to consolidate and improve pricing power in their markets and that, by being

larger and more powerful, their stock liquidity will improve as well.

The report also recommends that companies speak to as wide an investor audience as possible and look further along “the long tail” in the distribution of capital, especially in the US where investor appetite for foreign stocks has been vastly underestimated.

While the total US equity market has doubled since 2008, holdings of foreign equities have nearly trebled over the same period. Between 2009 and 2018, net purchases of foreign securities amounted to almost \$750bn.

COMMITMENT

The report then makes a number of policy recommendations, such as suggesting that governments further extend QE to buying equities, a measure already being openly discussed in the US and one pioneered by the Bank of Japan.

Edison also urges the UK government to create a patient capital fund of significantly more than the £30bn that has been suggested. Larger starting sums are likely to reduce the fund’s total capital requirements over time by demonstrating complete commitment.

This in turn should reduce

the risk of under-supply from elsewhere in the capital ecosystem.

Other benefits include the possibility of the fund returning more money to taxpayers, over the long term.

Aside from further capital provided by central banks, the report also recommends incentivising the provision of equity capital to SMIDs. Tax regimes that currently favour loan capital should come under scrutiny while incentives for the provision of new equity capital — either at IPO or for subsequent raises — should be improved.

To level the playing field for SMIDs, rather than fuel demand for larger-cap issuances, these incentives can be tapered, with investors benefitting most from fresh capital injected into micro-cap stocks.

The report also recommends tax benefits could be conditional or proportional to the period over which the newly released equity is held to protect against short term investments, and that measures remain flexible so they can be carefully calibrated on an ongoing basis to respond to changes in the capital ecosystem.

** Neil Shah is head of research at Edison Group.*

BV Early cancer-detection tech secures £2.4m funding boost

TECH to improve the early detection of cancer has received a significant boost with a funding deal to support further development.

Glasgow-based ClinSpec Diagnostics Limited (ClinSpec Dx), a spin-out from the Department of Pure and Applied Chemistry at the University of Strathclyde, has developed early cancer detection using a simple blood test.

Since the company was established in 2016, studies on brain, prostate and pancreatic cancers have highlighted the technology's potential.

This latest investment allows ClinSpec Dx to progress its multi-cancer development programme, including completion of its second trial on brain cancer, and the development of a multi-cancer algorithm covering common cancers.

Fast, inexpensive and simple

Led by CEO Mark Hegarty, the business plans to hire five more employees to strengthen the scientific and operations teams, taking its total headcount to 14.

Fast, inexpensive and simple, the ClinSpec Dx blood test uses technology based on the research of Dr Matthew Baker at the University of Strathclyde. Through a combination of infra-red light and artificial intelligence, its “drop, dry, detect” system provides results in minutes.

Early diagnosis means

significantly higher survival rates, increasing the availability of treatment options and improving chances of recovery and better quality of life. The blood test also has the potential to indicate the type and severity of the tumour, allowing doctors and clinicians to prioritise and fast-track treatments.

The funding round was led by Mercia's EIS Funds with Scottish Investment Bank, the investment arm of Scottish Enterprise, profit-with-purpose investor SIS Ventures, EoS Advisory and the University of Strathclyde.

ClinSpec Dx has raised £4m to date, including a first round of seed funding in 2019 led by EoS Advisory alongside Mercia's EIS Funds and the Scottish Investment Bank's Co-Investment Fund, as well as grant funding from the Higgs EDGE Special Award and Innovate UK through the



From left: Doctors David Palmer, Holly Butler, Matthew Baker and Mark Hegarty



The blood test has the potential to indicate the type and severity of the tumour

precision medicine accelerator fund.

ClinSpec DX remains open for a further £1m to accelerate development, build value and prepare the groundwork for Series A funding.

ClinSpec Dx CEO Mark Hegarty said the funding was “a significant step forward”.

Scottish Investment Bank director Kerry Sharp said ClinSpec Dx offered “a textbook example of the type of company SIB was

established to support”.

“It’s innovative, ambitious, has its sights set on international expansion and, crucially, is developing a platform product that could prove vital in saving lives,” he said.

UK GOVT ‘FAILING TO FOSTER INNOVATION’, SAY SMEs

JUST 15 percent of UK SMEs think the government is fostering innovation with the economic environment it is creating.

Research by R&D and intellectual property firm GovGrant found that while over three-quarters of businesses consider innovation important for recovery from Covid-19, there is a disconnect between them and government support schemes.

The survey collected the views of 500 SME decision-makers across seven sectors; 85 percent of respondents considered innovation important, but just 26 percent felt their current activity met that description.

GovGrant CEO Luke Hamm said that despite the government’s R&D Roadmap outlining its commitment, research showed the need for further support for innovation. “SMEs urgently need clarity and a common definition of innovation that transcends sectors, geography and generations if we’re going to plug the gap between the support that’s available and how SMEs make use of it,” he said. “This is particularly true when it comes to IP.”

This is indeed confusion around the definition of innovation, with respondents split across three different definitions: 42 percent said innovation was tiny and continual changes that happen daily; the rest felt it either happened rarely (but with impact) or occurred sporadically.

Many SMEs are — perhaps as a result — failing to claim tax credits for R&D. Nearly a quarter admitted that they had never done so.

Almost a quarter (23 percent) do not have anyone at board level in charge of the commercialisation of intellectual property and innovation. A quarter of respondents thought the main purpose of a patent was to add commercial value, and a fifth said they had no strategy in place to track IP.

“We need to be taking intellectual property much more seriously,” says Hamm. “The Government must do more to improve awareness and accessibility of its support schemes, including the Patent Box, if SMEs are to invest in R&D and thrive.”

Feathers, fur and forests: why fashion is so crucial to our biodiversity crisis

By SAMANTHA DEACON

WHAT WE wear and how fashion makes us feel says a lot about us, but the industry comes with environmental costs.

It was a fashion head, Kering CEO Francois-Henri Pinault, that French President Emmanuel Macron turned to when asking the G7 leaders to reduce the industry’s carbon footprint.

Biodiversity loss is a planetary emergency. According to WWF’s recent report *The Living Planet*, humanity has already wiped out 83 percent of wild mammals and half of all plants, and severely altered three-quarters of ice-free land and two-thirds of marine environments. One million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades.

The UN’s latest Global Biodiversity Outlook is equally alarming: all 20 of the Aichi



Samantha Deacon

biodiversity targets agreed to in Japan in 2010 — the “decade of biodiversity” — have been missed.

Even in financial terms, natural destruction is an issue businesses cannot afford to ignore. The World Economic Forum’s *2020 Nature Risk Rising* report states that \$44tn, or half of global GDP, is “moderately or highly dependent” on nature.

Despite this, many fashion and retail businesses are failing to consider the wider impact of their operations and supply chains.

While many industries have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint, they are yet to properly address the biodiversity crisis. Most clothing starts out as a crop, a creature, or in a forest. The industry is reliant on natural resources for raw materials. As demand rises, the cultivation of fibre and the farming of livestock increasingly results in deforestation. The production of raw materials places strain on pollinators, water sources and soils.

Hugo Boss and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in their joint report *Biodiversity Risks and Opportunities in the Apparel Sector*, point



Wool and cashmere come from farmed animals that create waste and over-grazing



Cotton growing requires pesticides to prevent damage from pests like the boll-weevil

to raw material production, material processing and product manufacturing as the greatest threats. Conventionally grown cotton relies on large quantities of water and pesticides, while wool and cashmere come from farmed animals that create waste and over-grazing, leading to soil and grassland degradation.

But the call to arms is being heard, with Kering — which owns luxury brands including Gucci and Balenciaga — leading the way. The Fashion Pact, launched at the 2019 G7 summit, has seen 33 fashion and textile companies pledge to set practical objectives for reducing the environmental impact of their industry. By 2025, Kering hopes to restore and regenerate a million hectares for its supply chain, and protect a million hectares of critical, irreplaceable habitat.

Initiatives such as CanopyStyle have been working to eliminate the use of the world's ancient and endangered forests in viscose production. The initiative represents 198 clothing brands

The industry is reliant on natural resources

and designers collaborating to meet the long-term goal of lasting forest conservation. It is working to kickstart new industries which make viscose and fabrics from next generation sources such as recycled clothing and leftover straw.

Further encouragement will arrive from the World Economic Forum as it prepares a series of New Nature Economy reports this year. The series aims to catalyse public-private momentum in 2020, with a focus on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's milestone summit (COP15) in Kunming, China, and the related Business for Nature mobilisation.

The finance sector, which

may ultimately enable action, announced a Finance for Biodiversity pledge, encouraging investors to sign-up. The industry is increasing its environmental focus beyond the climate crisis to create a taskforce for nature-related financial disclosures.

The conversation starts in the boardroom. Businesses deal with risk management on a daily basis and this needs to include Nature. The Natural Capital Protocol includes a sector specific guide for apparel, helping businesses to identify, value and measure their impacts and dependencies on natural capital.

Business decisions should adopt the conservation hierarchy to ensure gains through conservation. In practice, this means businesses should avoid, minimise, restore and offset their impacts on biodiversity.

Given the clear connections between fashion, farming and nature, now is the time for fashion businesses, including retailers and consumers, to collectively halt biodiversity loss.

Message in a bottle: no business is an island — and plastic battle is on

Pioneering business Ocean Bottle has developed a reusable bottle that, with every purchase, funds the retrieval of the equivalent of 1000 discarded bottles from the ocean. The firm fields questions from BV editor HAL WILLIAMS.

WITH Ocean Bottle, founders Will Pearson and Nick Doman have been able to actively encourage consumers to play their individual role in stopping plastics from polluting our oceans.

Since its inception in September last year, the company has donated 17 percent of its revenue to plastic collection — and collected 30 million bottles from seas. **BV** spoke with Pearson about the ambitious project.

BV: *Tell us about the inspiration for your venture.*

WP: I have wanted to work with protecting the environment since high school. Without a well-functioning planet, we cannot sustain life on earth as it exists today, it's as simple as that. A big part of Ocean Bottle came from spending a year working at

sea. After my first season in the Indian Ocean, I was travelling in Colombia and found rivers quite literally choking with plastic. This was where I learnt how much plastic is pouring into the ocean each day. I was left asking myself how we could possibly collect plastic before it enters the ocean in a truly scalable way.

I came across Plastic Bank, which was setting up recycling infrastructure in some of the worst hit places, and we realised this was a great solution but we needed to connect people all over the world to it.

So, we decided to create a product that people could use every day to be more sustainable, but also have a massive, direct and tangible impact on the plastic crisis. Enter Ocean Bottle.

BV: *Where are you based, where does manufacture take place, how does distribution work?*

WP: We launched our products in September 2019 having partnered with K8 design in Norway and Plastic Bank in Canada. Our manufacture takes place in China at a highly specialised factory who are able to achieve the scale, cutting edge design and sustainable credentials we need. We have now sold our products in 88 countries and have funded collection over 800,000kgs of ocean bound plastic, enough to stretch from London to New York and back again if this was in plastic bottles.

We have 8 full time staff and some incredible interns on our growing team in London.



The company has donated 17 percent of its revenue to plastic collection



Ocean Bottle founders Will Pearson and Nick Doman

Recently, we've been fortunate enough to pick up the Green Product Award, Red Dot Design Award and Forbes under 30.

BV: What are your respective roles within the company?

WP: Our team does a little bit of everything and we tend to take quite a collaborative approach to the start-up way of working! The team covers brand, community, partnerships, operations, product design, finance and the impact platform.

BV: Tell us about the design and composition of the bottle itself.

WP: The product is made from vacuum-insulated stainless steel and recycled ocean bound plastic. We do not use composite materials, which means the product is actually recyclable at the end of life unlike many other lifestyle products.

A recent Ocean Bottle review in The Times said that "If Apple were to make a drinks container for life, this would be it." We have tried to make the product both as functional as possible - you

can take it apart, fill with ice and different beverages and put in the dishwasher - and also aesthetically striking with its Scandinavian design. On top of its design, you then have the fact that it is actually doing something for ocean health far beyond just being another bottle.

BV: Where are the bottles available in Europe / globally?

WP: The bottles are available first and foremost online at oceanbottle.co - you'll also find them in select retail locations from Selfridges to Soho House to the Nobel Peace Centre. We also offer bespoke designs for companies who wish to co-brand bottles for employees, clients and other lucky people!

BV: A successful Crowdfunding launch, but how are sales going so far?

WP: Interest was really lifting off at the beginning of the year post launch September 2019. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has played a role in slowing down the number of collaborations we do with brands, however we have

seen an increase in e-commerce.

BV: How much does an Ocean Bottle cost (RRP), and what percentage of that goes to plastic recuperation?

WP: Our RRP is £40 and to date we have given 17 percent of revenue to plastic collection

BV: What backing, if any, have you received from governments and/or environmental groups? Is the initiative gaining traction?

WP: We work with NGOs and have great backing including the Norwegian Government who bought 800 bottles for delegates of the Our Ocean summit, including world leaders, heads of state and royals.

BV: Airbnb and Ed Sheeran have got behind you: what wider community support have you won as a result? Are you seeking other high profile backers?

WP: We love to work with people who have a great following and are keen to get their audience involved with our mission. Just as importantly to us is working directly with all the individuals who get behind what we are

doing. We now have over 700 brand ambassadors.

BV: *Explain to us how the plastic retrieval process works in practical terms, and how funding is directed towards it.*

WP: What many people don't know is how much plastic pours into the ocean each day. 22 million kgs, enough to fill a truck every minute. We have a massive overproduction of single use plastics and a lack of waste management infrastructure particularly in impoverished coastal communities. The combination is a disaster and means we have a lot of plastic going into the ocean.

We need to stop production of most single use plastics and also develop plastic collection infrastructure to solve the problem from both ends. It's now estimated that unless we do something drastic, ocean plastic will double by 2030.

We are deploying plastic collection points with Plastic Bank and enabling locals living in coastal communities around the world to exchange plastic for valuable rewards including money, products, tuition, healthcare, access to microfinance all via blockchain technology.

We're currently funding plastic collection in Haiti, Brazil, Indonesia and Philippines.

‘We can no longer leave CSR at the periphery’

BV: *You say that “the business idea was driven by a desire to create profit for good: the founders reject the view that environmental protection falls solely in the charitable sector’s court”—is there a groundswell of support for this sort of approach to business and conservation?*

WP: There is enormous interest and support for this as we can no longer leave CSR at the periphery of what companies do. Just as environmental damage has been a by-product of human progress, perhaps there is now the opportunity to make positive environmental impact a by-product of business. It is our belief that we are living in yet another Kodak moment, where

companies who do not take into account their impact on people or the environment will likely be left in the wake of the eco equivalent of the digital camera.

BV: *Your ambitious goal of one bottle per person on the planet: is it realistic? And how durable are the bottles?*

WP: We did actually have a customer drop their bottle out of a car window at high speed and to our delight it survived! Unlike single use products, which should be compostable, ours is actually designed to be durable and for reuse. That being said the end of life is still extremely important so we have ensured that it is fully recyclable.

BV: *What are your immediate plans for the future?*

WP: Our pledge is to fund collection equivalent to seven billion plastic bottles by 2025. In the shorter term, we're hoping to make it to Christmas!

We have a lot of exciting partnerships and marketing plans, as well as new products and also the smart chip platform as each of our products is NFC activated for continued impact, so people can fund more plastic collection just by bringing it with them to partner locations.

‘WALKING THE WALK’ IS VITAL IN THIS ARENA

David Fletcher, partner at law firm Farrer & Co — which advises Ocean Bottle — spoke to BV about the legal challenges SMEs face when bringing a sustainable solution to market.

THE IMPORTANT thing, says David Fletcher, is to be clear and consistent.

“A challenge is to ensure that SMEs, and indeed all companies, are very clear from the outset on what they mean when they use the word ‘sustainable,’” he says, “and how they intend to measure their performance.

“Consumers are increasingly sophisticated in analysing sustainable credentials and the term can mean different things to different people.”

Reaping commercial benefit from an environmentally friendly business model can be complicated. Fletcher advises aspiring entrepreneurs to consider strategies with care, and consider their true motivation.

“Proposing a business model that isn't environmentally friendly presents negative risks,” he says. “Any business plan should look out for a period of at least five years, and current market forces are dictating that businesses — from the largest energy producer to small packaging companies — embrace sustainability.

“However, I don't think entrepreneurs should be harnessing sustainability for commercial profit; just as I would not say treating your employees well is about maximising income. Being sustainable isn't a decision that any good business makes in order to make money, it's part of being a good business in the first place.”

The good news is that support exists for those driving environmental change. “I have been encouraged by the government support and grants available to some of our clients to support their innovation.

“I would certainly encourage entrepreneurs to explore this option; it can be extremely beneficial.”

Net Zero scale-ups picked to join govt-backed programme

THIRTY promising UK scale-ups driving the goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 have been selected to join the government-backed Net Zero programme.

The companies are involved in electric vehicle manufacture, vertical farming and the production of animal-free dairy products, calculating environmental footprints, improving manufacturing and recycling supply chains.

UK Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma said “innovative companies like these will help us to create green jobs and build back better as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic”.

The UK has the most Net Zero companies in Europe, with a total of 323 (compared with 207 in France and 150 in Germany). Some 37 percent of the companies are at an early stage of growth, providing a pipeline for the sector’s future. Just 26 percent are late-stage.

Coaching sessions and peer-to-peer learning opportunities

In 2019, the UK also led Europe for VC Net Zero investment, with £336m ponied-up; that is 55 percent more than France and 18 percent more than Germany.

The government-backed initiative is the first of its kind, designed to accelerate growth. Sessions will include quantifying sustainability, navigating the regulatory landscape, and how to internationalise.

The programme is supported by the UK’s Tech Nation and partner BNP Paribas, who bring their expertise to scaling-up climate action. The partnership

will support the collective mobilisation of clean tech solutions.

Anne Marie Verstraeten, UK Country Head of BNP Paribas, said the bank “had a responsibility to connect our ecosystem of clients and the innovative start-ups at the forefront of developing technologies that tackle environmental challenges”.

The 30 companies, assessed through a rigorous judging process, will be joined by four Fellows — companies at a later stage of funding or alumni of Tech Nation growth programmes. They will have access to Net Zero coaching sessions and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Tech Nation CEO Gerard Grech admitted that scaling such businesses can be difficult. “Which is why we are delighted to launch a new programme focused on businesses at this stage of growth from all over the UK, especially given the impact they will have on climate change and their drive towards a net zero economy.”



Vertical farming is one of the industries involved in the scheme

Four-car pile-up for Trump Administration: auto makers sue over China import tariffs

THE TRUMP Administration is being sued by car makers Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Tesla and Volvo over government tariffs on imported Chinese components.

Lawsuits naming US trade representative Robert Lighthizer as defendant have been filed in New York’s Court of International Trade over duties on products used by all four manufacturers.

The ongoing trade dispute dates back to Donald Trump’s early days in office. After a tariff tit-for-tat affecting products from steel and peanuts to jeans and Harley Davidson motorcycles, a partial deal was worked out earlier this year — but duties remain on some Chinese goods. That includes some vital componentry for the auto trade.

Duties will remain on some goods from China

The tariffs are referred to as List 3 and List 4. The former went into effect in 2018, placing 25 percent duties on imported goods worth \$200bn. List 4 came into effect last year, and entails a 7.5 percent tariff on imports worth \$120bn. The goods affected range from raw materials to electronic components.

Tesla last year requested a waiver on import taxes for computer components and display screens for its Model 3 cars.

That request was denied. The company’s new filing calls the levies “arbitrary”, “capricious”, and “an abuse of discretion”. Tesla is seeking cancellation of the duties, as well as a refund for those it has already paid — with interest.

Mercedes branded the dispute an “unprecedented, unbounded, and unlimited trade war” that would affect imports worth more than \$500bn.

The tariffs had been introduced in the hope of reducing the US trade deficit with China, which stands at some \$28bn.



raw8/Shutterstock.com

The ongoing trade dispute dates back to Donald Trump’s early days in office

A man in a light blue shirt and dark apron is operating a pallet jack in a warehouse. He is moving a pallet of red kegs. In the background, another worker is visible, and there are stacks of cardboard boxes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a large industrial facility.

EXPANDING HEATHROW IS HELPING BRITAIN BOOST EXPORTS

HUGHES CRAFT DISTILLERY, ONE OF THE MANY BUSINESSES ACROSS THE UK THAT SUPPORT HEATHROW EXPANSION

Heathrow is Britain's biggest port by value for global markets outside the EU and Switzerland, handling over 30% of the UK's exports. Expansion will double our cargo capacity and create new domestic and international trading routes, helping more businesses across Britain reach out and trade with the world.

Heathrow expansion is part of the plan to strengthen Britain's future. That's why we are getting on with delivering Britain's new runway.

Heathrow
Building for the future

TRADE INFO IS BY VALUE FOR 2016, EXCLUDES EXPORTS TO EU AND SWITZERLAND AND SOURCED FROM uktradeinfo.com FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.heathrowexpansion.com/uk-growth-opportunities/trade-export-growth/

BV Job-loss fears as UK's Arm Holdings is sold to Nvidia

JAPAN'S Softbank is selling the UK's Arm Holdings, whose technology powers most smartphones, to American chip company Nvidia.

The California-headquartered firm, known for its gaming graphics cards, recently overtook Intel to become the world's most valuable chip manufacturer.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said in a statement that the combined company will be pursuing developments in AI, healthcare, life sciences, robotics, and self-driving cars. "AI is the most powerful technology force of our time and has launched a new wave of computing," he said.

The \$40bn (£31.2bn) deal ends four years of Softbank ownership and Huang expressed hope that the move could lead to more UK jobs as an entity "for the age of artificial intelligence" was created.

But there are also fears — from Arm — that the opposite could

Brexit may affect some aspects of the deal

be true. Co-founder Hermann Hauser said in an interview with BBC Radio 4 that the takeover was an "absolute disaster" that could destroy the company's business model and lead to job losses.

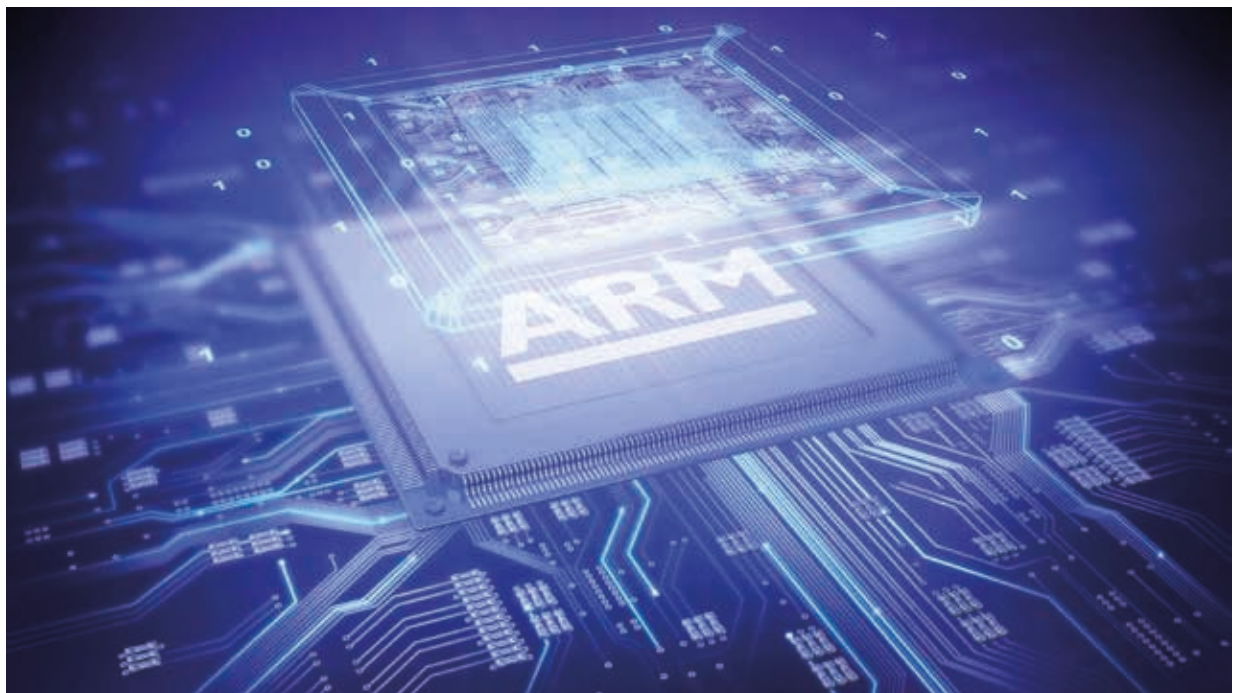
Nvidia may have to meet legal conditions to prevent that, and to maintain Cambridge's status as Arm's headquarters, as part of the deal. It is understood that the city will remain the company HQ at least until September 2021. Softbank had made commitments to secure UK jobs and ministers are expected to impose conditions

on the cash-and-stock takeover to ensure that those protections remains in place, and that decision-making stays in the UK.

The Japanese tech group will receive \$21.5bn in common stock and \$12bn in cash, making it the largest Nvidia shareholder. An extra \$5bn cash bonus has been promised if chip designer Arm hits its financial performance targets, and Nvidia is expected to issue \$1.5bn in equity to Arm employees.

Concern has also been raised about a possible conflict of interest, with some of Arm's clients now beholden to a business that may be in competition with them for sales. Nvidia's stated intention is to maintain "global customer neutrality".

There are additional fears that the US may in future try to prevent Chinese firms accessing Arm intelligence, and that Brexit may affect some aspects of the deal.



'AI is the most powerful technology force of our time and has launched a new wave of computing'



Pull your business up onto the ramp and take a look at the undercarriage

STUART CROOK explains the importance of working capital to entrepreneurs

THERE ARE countless ways of measuring the financial health of a business. Profit is a key metric, along with factors like sales revenue and customer base, but it's essential to not underestimate the importance of cashflow.

Fully understanding working capital provides you with insights into your business and helps to identify potential weak points in financing day-to-day operations. If you've been trading for a while it could be time for an "MOT" (roadworthy check, for *BV*'s international readers).

Working capital is the sum of money required to fulfil a business's everyday financial obligations: essential payments that must be paid, such as wages, invoices and workplace maintenance. The formula is: working capital = current assets – current liabilities.

Cashflow problems are a leading cause of business bankruptcy; 82 percent of start-ups that fail do so because of poor cashflow management. This is a

Requirements of a business change over time

simple concept that shouldn't be underestimated.

Another important metric is working capital ratio, which refers to the number of times a business can pay off its current liabilities through current assets. If your current ratio is less than one, it's a clear warning sign. The calculation for working capital ratio is: Working capital ratio = current assets ÷ current liabilities.

As requirements of a business change over time, the amount of working capital needed will fluctuate. Most business costs are involved in the production, procurement and/or delivery of its products or services. Often,

these debts will need to be paid before the business is reimbursed by the sale of goods to customers (for building work, for instance).

The operating cycle or cashflow cycle is a process that allows you to understand that your funding requirements are dependent on the length of the cycle. It's essential that you take into account the time it takes for your product or service to be manufactured or provided, and how long it takes for invoices to be raised and, most importantly, paid.

Your working capital requirement then refers to the amount of finance needed to cover the time delay. The longer the cashflow cycle, the more working capital a business will need. To help keep control of the cashflow cycle, it's important that payment collection policies are implemented to ensure your business is promptly paid.

** Stuart Crook is a partner at Wellers*

Covid means access to clean water and sanitation go down the drain

Of all the SDGs, few have suffered the impact of Covid-19 as rapidly or profoundly as number six: 'To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.' JASON AGNEW reports as part of his ongoing series for BV.

WHILE we are constantly urged to wash our hands as an effective way of combating the coronavirus, three billion people worldwide lack the basic facilities at home that would enable them to do so.

The United Nations estimates that two in every five healthcare facilities worldwide have no soap or water, let alone alcohol-based gels, with which to sanitise.

As basic hygiene is considered to be among the most effective protections against this particular virus, it was inevitable that Covid-19 would rip through the world's shantytowns and slums. From Rocinha in Rio to Dharavi in Mumbai, it has left a trail of death and misery in its wake.

Of course, this is not the only



water-related problem facing the planet. It is estimated that a third of the world's population does not have access to potable drinking water and that over 10 percent are forced to practise open defecation.

With populations rising exponentially, four in every 10 people find themselves without sufficient water for drinking or basic sanitation; seventy percent of available water is used for irrigation.

Each day, nearly one thousand children die due to preventable water- and sanitation-related diseases.

Climate change is causing devastating droughts and desertification, leaving many with



UK Department for International Development via Wikimedia Commons

Emergency aid from the UK includes providing clean water, for example in Pakistan in 2011



Houses on stilts rise above the polluted water in Belén, Quito, Peru

no water — or, paradoxically, inundated. Floods and other water-related incidents account for 70 percent of all natural disaster deaths.

AquaFed, the International Federation of Private Water Operators, was set up to help governments meet targets 6.1 — to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all — and 6.2: to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all.

Representing more than 400 private water and sanitation service providers in 40 countries, AquaFed members' expertise helps to identify solutions.

In France, companies such as Veolia and Suez are working with public authorities and local associations, developing special tariffs and other systems to help water-starved people in economic difficulty.

It benefits thousands of families with a system that has been successfully reproduced in Morocco and Haiti.

Companies that contribute

to the realisation of the SDGs include clothing manufacturer and fashion company Gap.

70 percent of all natural disaster deaths water-related

In partnership with the Swasti Health Resource Centre in Bangalore, Gap is helping to build water-filtration plants to provide clean water to thousands of people in rural Indian communities. The systems already in operation serve more than 5,000 households and 29 schools across 30 villages.

Gap Inc has also set itself the ambitious target of zero discharge of hazardous chemicals (ZDHC) by the end of 2020.

It is working in partnership with other garment manufacturers such as Next and Inditex (Zara).

Since Procter & Gamble set up

its Children's Safe Drinking Water initiative in 2004, the company has provided more than 17 billion litres of clean water globally, using a simple purification packet that can treat 10 litres of water in 30 minutes.

Some of the world's largest and best-known multi-nationals — Walt Disney, Coca-Cola and McDonalds among them — have committed to reducing their water consumption in production processes. Coca-Cola has made a pledge to safely return to communities the same amount of potable water that is used in the production of its beverages. Water efficiency has become the order of the day as the world becomes more aware of the precious nature of this resource.

Whether or not these corporations and companies are merely paying lip-service to the problem or making a real and lasting difference remains to be seen. But the fact that so many people around the world still have no access to safe running water brings shame on political and business classes everywhere.

Light at the end of the tunnel — and it's sustainable, at that

BV's JASON AGNEW has a closer look at one of the more attainable SDGs, No. 7: Affordable and clean energy

THIS SDG is one that could well be achievable. Energy generation in most parts of the world is becoming more sustainable and widely available.

In 2010, 83 percent of the world's population had access to some form of electricity; this had risen to 89 percent by 2017 — and renewable energy is making serious headway. But this still leaves some 800 million people without access, most of them in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Access to electricity in this region almost doubled from 25 to 44 percent of the population between 2000 and 2017, but millions still go without. Rural coverage currently stands at 78 percent.



This lack has become more serious during the pandemic, as electricity and other energy sources are vital to healthcare facilities — and to ensure a supply of clean water and the IT services to facilitate social distancing.

And yet, in Sub-Saharan Africa where only 28 percent of health facilities have reliable access, the spread of coronavirus has been slower than in Europe or the Americas. This is possibly due to a young population which spends a great deal of time outdoors, but this is just one of the unknowns about the coronavirus and its spread. What is certain is that a reliable source of power is vital to medical establishments around the world in developed and



Rahul Banarasi / Shutterstock.com

Three billion of the world's inhabitants are dependent on polluting cooking fuels such as animal dung



Costa Rica aims to be carbon-neutral by 2021, with the help of this hydroelectric dam

developing countries, in general and for treating patients who have become infected with Covid. The problem is exacerbated in remote and rural areas, where the challenge of supply is greater.

Clean and safe cooking fuels are not available to three billion of the world's inhabitants, who are dependent on primitive and polluting methods such as wood, coal, charcoal or animal dung.

"Dirty" energy is the biggest single contributor to climate change, accounting for around 60 per cent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. The pollution caused from the use of combustible fuels to heat homes led to an estimated 4.3m deaths in 2012; 60 percent of the victims were female.

The good news is that the share of energy produced using renewable methods is increasing year-on-year, approaching 20 percent thanks to rapid growth in hydro, wind, and solar technology and deployment.

Despite Donald Trump supporting traditional-but-harmful sources of energy to win

votes in the rust belt or fast-track fossil fuel projects — at the behest of lobbyists spending \$16m — most world leaders are embracing the cause.

Sweden threw down the gauntlet with its own ambitious goal

Financial flows to developing countries for clean energy are on the rise.

In 2015, Sweden threw down the gauntlet with its own ambitious goal: to eliminate fossil fuels from electricity generation within its borders by 2040. It has made dramatic investments in solar, wind, energy storage and smart grids, as well as clean transport.

The Central American republic of Costa Rica has

managed to produce 95 percent of its electricity from hydro, geothermal, solar and wind over the past four years — and aims to be carbon-neutral by 2021.

The Spanish group Iberdrola is the top producer of wind power in the world, and a leader in renewable energy at the global level. It has put its money where its heart is, with investments of more than €100bn over the past 20 years. The company's Electricity For All programme has brought power to seven million people who previously had none.

Its projects are based on modern forms of energy and with environmentally sustainable models developed in a number of Latin American and African countries.

The company has set itself a 2030 target to increase the number of people benefiting to more than 16 million.

Despite the corruption of some leaders and the unfair distribution of the world's wealth, when it comes to energy there is definitely light at the end of the tunnel.

Focus on goals, communication and a human touch have stood insurance group in good stead

CHERRISK, located in Budapest, and its insurance partner, the UNIQA Group, headquartered in Vienna, have made a splash in the insurance sector with their innovative approach.

The CHERRISK business model is based on a lean operation and works with freelance colleagues, claims experts, marketing, legal and PR partners in Germany.

Krisztián Kurtisz was appointed CEO of UNIQA Hungary in 2016. **Business Vision** asked him about the CHERRISK mission, its origins and its future plans...

BV: *How did you come to create CHERRISK? Is it true that it would have been a deal-breaker for your role as CEO of UNIQA if you weren't permitted to launch it?*

KK: I accepted the offer of becoming CEO together with getting support for launching CHERRISK.

BV: *Why was that so important to you?*

KK: I've been working in the insurance industry for over 20 years and seen many faults of the sector, as well as the potential of how it could positively influence many lives. I decided to create a new model from scratch using a wealth of insider knowledge of the industry.

BV: *How receptive was UNIQA at the time of CHERRISK's creation? And how does UNIQA feel about it in retrospect?*

KK: UNIQA has been supportive of CHERRISK from the beginning, and now that the model has proved itself the company has come to see



Krisztián Kurtisz, CEO of UNIQA

an even greater potential for growth. I believe that one effect of CHERRISK's creation has been an overall simplification of the product line: can too much choice be a bad thing?

We live in an era when information is instantly available, and time has become a scarce commodity. We optimise for that.

BV: *What negative perceptions of the sector have you been made aware of, and how have you addressed those concerns?*

KK: We carried out research regarding consumer perceptions and attitudes towards the insurance sector, and the most general finding was that most people are neutral on the subject.

We wanted to change that and show that insurance is a good thing, it can help people in very difficult situations and maybe even help them to avoid getting into those situations.

A good example is the CHERRISK GO app, which rewards drivers who avoid touching their phones. In my opinion, if we manage to prevent just one person from playing

with their mobile and running someone over, then we are doing a good job.

BV: *What does CHERRISK do differently to other organisations?*

KK: Our mission is to help people adapt to the challenges of our ever-changing world. That may be through insurance offerings with our partner or the habit-building lifestyle app, CHERRISK GO, or our Charity Programme. The motivation comes from the building blocks of our company — our team.

BV: *You mention a new model, Insurance 2.0: can you expand on that?*

KK: The Insurance 2.0 model refers to the core business processes that we designed for the CHERRISK service model. This includes an automated customer care system, where the clients themselves can manage their insurance: any change in personal data or claim reporting. The status of all issues is transparent in one's account, and this self-service allows instant access to information.

The standardised product portfolio means that the CHERRISK insurance products are suitable for many people across numerous countries. The Insurance 2.0 idea is based on a lean organisation, which can service the insurance needs of different markets from one centre. We don't plan to build skyscrapers and large country operations, but rather focus on building a conscious community.

BV: *When, and why, was CHERRISK launched? What makes it special?*

KK: CHERRISK by UNIQA was

CHERRISK in Numbers



Participants of community program:
26,000 +



Policies taken out:
~ 43,000



Charities supported:
23



CHERRISK GO downloads:
120,000 +



Cherries collected:
406 million

Minutes spent in motion:

12 million minutes
cycling

175 million minutes
mobile free driving

809 million minutes
walking, running

launched on September 17, 2018. It's special because of the people who are building it: our team and community make CHERRISK really special.

BV: Tell us about the “cherries” system of rewards...

KK: The CHERRISK GO app is available for anyone to download on a mobile phone, and users can earn cherries for healthy and safe behaviour. The app can detect three types of movement, and users can earn cherries while walking, jogging, biking or driving — without using their phone. These cherries can be used then for cool products, services or discounts provided by our partners or charity.

BV: What charities does the scheme support? Is that list expanding?

KK: We supported 23 charities during the past two years, helping seriously ill children, protecting animals and nature, and much more. We try to focus on current issues where our community can best help. We helped a Hungarian charity to provide food for elderly

people in their homes during the Covid-19 lockdown in April, for example.

BV: Has your company been affected by the Covid-19 crisis?

KK: Covid-19 made us live our mission statement every day by having to adapt to new situations. We changed to 100 percent home-office mode and prepared a new country launch in Germany from safe distance.

It was very important for us to help our community with up-to-date, transparent information about the travel situation around the globe — many of them are CHERRISK Travel Insurance customers — in times when things changed fast and information was confusing.

BV: What does the future hold for the insurance sector?

KK: The traditional life/non-life division between insurance products is likely to change in the near future to a more customer-centric system with retail and business type of insurances. The development of retail and business type of insurances will

be separated even more, and this might be the guiding principle of new company structures, as well.

Retail products are turning into commodities, which means that the only differentiator will be price — which is then influenced by the efficient cost structure of insurers and a lean operation. Business insurances will focus on individual risk management of B2B customers domestically and internationally.

BV: What has been your proudest moment as CEO?

KK: My proudest moment as the CEO of UNIQA Hungary was when the Hungarian customers voted our service the best experience in the Hungarian market after three-and-a-half years of hard work. We achieved this while turning the company from a loss-creating company to a €10m profit-making operation.

BV: What is the secret of good leadership?

KK: Focusing on certain goals at a time, and clear communication. Those are the key ingredients to good leadership for me.



Fintech Pledge – a boost to partnerships between banks and companies

GROWTH platform Tech Nation has announced the launch of a Fintech Pledge with support from HM Treasury (HMT) and the Fintech Delivery Panel.

The initiative hopes to accelerate the growth of the UK's fintech sector by enabling enhanced collaboration between banks and leading firms.

The pledge will set global standards for the establishment of efficient and transparent commercial partnerships.

The key principles rely on banks providing clear guidance for the onboarding process and clarity on progress. They will commit to providing a named contact, guidance and feedback

Improve processes and engagement

within six months of signing.

Five major banks — Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, NatWest Group and Santander — are early signatories through their involvement as members of the Fintech Delivery Panel.

The Fintech Pledge formalises the ongoing work of banks to

evolve and improve processes and engagement with the sector. Tech start-ups and banks are increasingly looking to drive better consumer and client outcomes via partnerships.

Commercial partnerships with banks are important in the growth and scaling capabilities of fintechs.

The launch of the Fintech Pledge continues efforts under way to support the UK's fintech ecosystem, including in open banking and in pioneering regulatory innovations such as the Financial Conduct Authority's regulatory sandbox.

The UK's fintech sector is seen as a global leader, and is a



The Fintech Delivery Panel was established in 2017 by Tech Nation at the request of HM Treasury



Commercial partnerships with banks are important in the growth and scaling capabilities of fintechs

strategically important for the UK economy.

The Fintech Delivery Panel was established in 2017 by Tech Nation at the request of HM Treasury. The panel is made up of

fintech leaders and the five largest UK banks. New members include representatives from Monzo, Transferwise, OakNorth and Atom Bank, as the panel tackles new objectives alongside existing

work. Covid-19 and Brexit are both on the agenda.

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said there was a commitment to seeing the economy bounce back.

FINTECH FUNDING KEY TO KEEPING SMEs STRONG AFTER END OF LOANS

ONE OF Europe's largest business lenders says the fintech industry must be strengthened to support SMEs after the Bounce Back Loan scheme closes at the end of the year.

iwoca CEO Christoph Rieche believes smaller businesses already struggled to access finance from large banks before the scheme was introduced.

With over one million firms approved for a loan so far, the scheme should "serve as a wake-up call for everyone in the finance industry", Rieche says. Demand from SMEs had not been met by high street banks because of their risk appetite, he added.

The iwoca CEO believes that fintechs can help to fill the funding gap, but for the industry's full potential to be realised, a number of key issues should be addressed

Non-bank lenders need the support of regulators to access capital on competitive terms —

as large banks can, and there should be a greater level of industry co-operation through the Bank Referral Scheme so businesses can reach out to a range of lenders.

Rieche says the finance industry, business groups and government must promote the clear benefits of Open Banking and build trust.

"The launch of the Bounce Back Loan scheme was a watershed moment for hundreds of thousands of SMEs across the country," he said. "However, if smaller businesses are going to be able to access the finance they need after the scheme ends, then fintechs need to be given a greater opportunity to do what they do best.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the cracks within the ecosystem of small business support. Bounce Back Loans managed to paper over these, but we now have an opportunity to fully address these weaknesses."



BV
PEOPLE

Charles 'Chuck' Feeney



Philanthropist extraordinaire with an unusual mission: to give it all away...

CHARLES “Chuck” Feeney, 89, is (relatively) broke. Which, paradoxically, is a success.

Feeney co-founded airport retailer Duty Free Shoppers with Robert Miller in 1960 and made billions of dollars. This riches-to-rags tale is one of intention, and a testament to a life of frugality, generosity, and philanthropy.

Feeney pioneered the noble idea of Giving While Living — spending money on worthy causes while still alive and kicking, rather than setting-up a foundation after one’s death.

Basically, Feeney decided to give all his money away. He set aside \$2m as a retirement fund for himself and his wife, and gave away the rest. Anonymously.

It took a while, but this year, Chuck Feeney finally managed to get rid of it all — after four decades. He donated more than \$8bn globally to charities, universities and foundations through his Atlantic Philanthropies foundation.

Feeney fought against the trend of publicising generosity, and kept his charitable work secret. It earned him the sobriquet of “the James Bond of Philanthropy”.

Feeney later launched General Atlantic, a private equity powerhouse, and lived a life of austerity. The need for secrecy about his philanthropy faded, and he encouraged other HNWIs to follow his lead. Bill Gates and Warren Buffett listened, and in 2010 launched the Giving Pledge, urging the world’s richest people to give away at least half their fortunes.

Feeney donated to peace efforts for Northern Ireland, and contributed to upgrading Vietnam’s healthcare system, among other worthy causes. He sought to invest — or donate — where his money could make the most impact, and he went for broke. Literally.

Buffett called him “an inspiration”, and it’s hard to disagree with that assessment.

Strong formal vision is key to small business success: study

PRODUCING a formalised, long-term strategic vision will be vital for small UK businesses to thrive post-Covid. A study commissioned by Allica business bank wanted to identify what makes a successful SME, and provides guidance for businesses as they chart a course of recovery. The study analysed data from over 1,000 companies and ranked their success for factors including productivity, growth, consistency and outlook.

Just over half of all UK small businesses (55 percent) have a formalised long-term vision, with this figure rising to 66 percent among the most successful. Of businesses ranked least successful in the study, only 37 percent had such a plan in place.

A formalised vision can range from quantitative targets designed to grow revenues or employee headcounts to qualitative goals such as improving the lives of customers. Despite this, the study found that 36 percent of companies don't set financial targets at the start of the year, and 34 percent have no feedback process in place. Sectors apparently impact a company's likelihood of setting a formal vision and financial objectives. Those in manufacturing (74

percent), accounting and finance (71 percent) and legal (71 percent) were the most likely to have financial targets. Around half of those in the retail, real estate, hospitality and leisure sectors had no targets in place.

Variation related to maturity

The research exposed regional differences, with 60 percent of London business owners boasting a strong vision, compared to just 47 percent in the East Midlands — the lowest of any region. There was also variation related to business maturity; companies which had been trading for more than five years were less likely to have a long-term vision (54 percent) than newer companies (61 percent).

Chris Weller, CCO at Allica Bank, said there was “no silver bullet” for every small business. “But as this study has found, there are a number of common factors found in the most successful businesses ... A successful business is far more than just its financials,

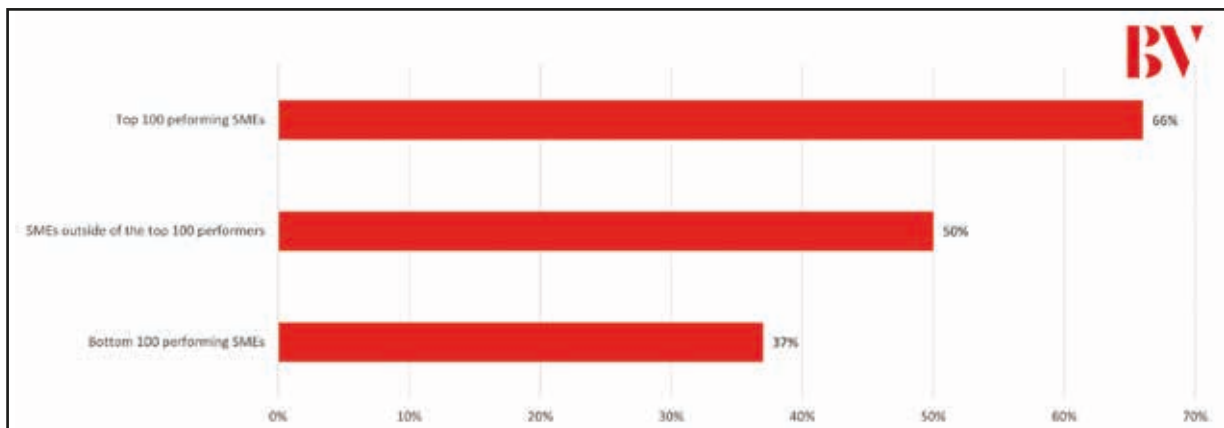
and these factors apply to every facet of the company.

“One of these key areas is putting in the time to truly understand the business, and producing a formal vision which underpins every decision that's made. This clarity of self-knowledge is something that runs through the most successful businesses and helps to power that success: motivating employees and providing a clear metric to provide accountability.”

Bastien Hibon, founder and director of advisory firm Brand Cornac, said a formal vision “isn't something that emerges from a business owner's head fully formed”, but has to be worked at, carefully drawn out and articulated. “A formal vision isn't just about what you want your business to do,” Hibon said, “it's also why you exist as a business and how you do what you do.

“It's not something you change every five minutes, but something you constantly work towards ... Doing so provides tangible advantages.”

Allica Bank is making the findings available and running a series of free online workshops with relevant partner organisations.



Percentage of small businesses with a formal long-term vision

Cybercrime is costing UK companies millions as hackers ramp-up attacks

Studies reveal worrying trends as platforms go out-of-date and cyber attacks increase. HAL WILLIAMS reports.

SMALL businesses in the UK are targeted by up to 65,000 cyber attacks daily — and around 4,500 of those hacks are successful, costing companies £2.48m per instance.

Lockdown measures have changed the IT landscape. Just 11 percent of UK businesses believed — pre-lockdown — that their entire workforce would be able to work remotely. That shot up to 70 percent once lockdown hit, and more than half managed to transition in less than 48 hours.

Precious little governmental

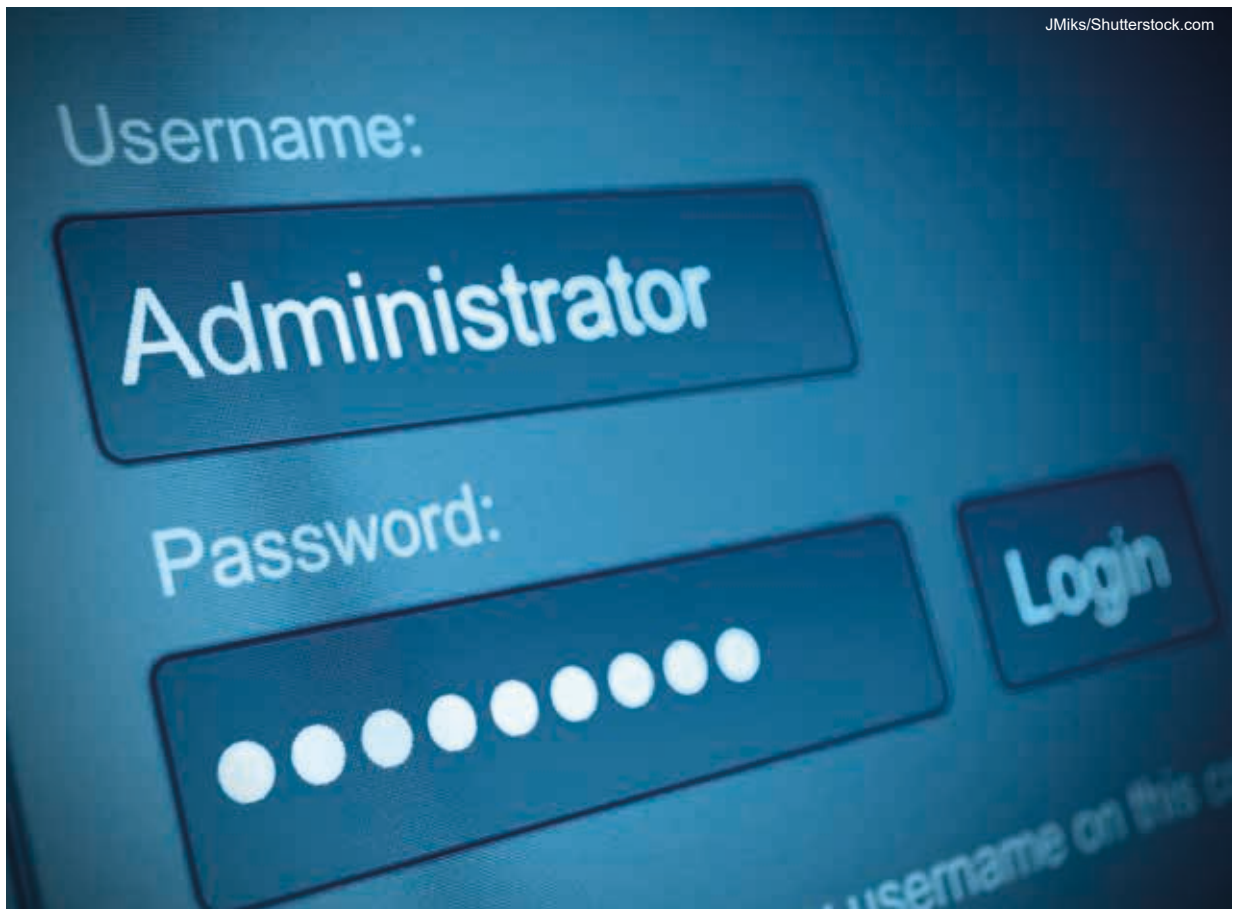
consideration was given, at the time, to the security of IT and Cloud. Half of the companies canvassed in a study by global recruiter Robert Walters and data provider Vacancysoft admitted that they did not have adequate cybersecurity provision to maintain a 100 percent remote working model.

Some 44 percent of consumers say they would stop using an online company that was breached during an attack. A warning shot for e-traders: in May this year there was a 168 percent spike in

e-commerce transactions. Online sales represent 27.5 percent of total UK retail sales this year — a figure expected to grow to almost 33 percent by 2024.

And the problem is not confined to Britain. Almost 97 percent of European e-commerce firms using one particular website platform are at high hacking risk, according to more research, this time from cybersecurity company Foregenix.

This study, which analysed 113,000 websites in Europe using the Magento 1 e-commerce



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A numbers game: it all comes down to ones and zeroes with maximum security to keep hackers at bay

platform, also reveals 430 sites — 0.38 percent of the total — are currently being hacked and card data is being stolen.

Foregenix found 52 percent of the 40,000 Magento 2 websites analysed were at “high” or “critical” risk. The rate for merchants’ websites currently being hacked and losing data stands at 0.25 percent. North American rates for Magento 1 and 2 platforms at high risk correspond to European figures, but “critical risk” for European merchants is lower.

Darius Goodarzi, principal of Information Security and IT Risk at Robert Walters, said cyber attacks had hit an all-time high in recent years. “As the general public became increasingly aware of personal data and privacy issues — including the introduction of GDPR — cyber security increasingly became a ‘differentiator’ for brands in a market where customers demand more transparency.

“The tech industry has set the tone, with brands such as Apple and Whatsapp putting security

at the centre of their marketing message. For e-commerce, on the other hand, the pace at which the sector grew during Covid-19 raises questions as to whether their cyber security has been up to par with the sharp increase in traffic to online sites.”

‘Magento 1 websites are a major concern’

Cybersecurity job vacancies within the Consumer Goods and Services sector have increased by 17 percent over the past year.

Marlborough-based Foregenix monitored over 275,000 Magento websites globally using its WebScan solution in May and July. It searches for malware, security patches (for Magento 1) and analyses the website framework implementation

for vulnerabilities, such as unprotected admin pages.

The global data showed that while Magento 1 users fell in June and July, the take-up for Magento 2 went up for the same period.

“Magento 1 websites are a major concern in the industry following the end of life for the platform in June,” says Foregenix co-founder Benjamin Hosack.

“Websites built on Magento 1 have a decaying security posture and the risk of being targeted and compromised is increasing.” Hosack recommends migration to Magento 2 or another platform. “While Magento 2 offers continuing security support, it is still crucial for merchants to remain vigilant and be proactive to reduce the risk of their own and clients’ data being compromised.”

Foregenix has signed a strategic partnership with e-commerce hosting firm Sonassi, part of the iomart group, to provide more protection to firms planning to upgrade their website platforms. Sonassi MD Neil Christie says the Magento community has



Due to regulation, the banking and financial sector maintains top position for IT security

been “targeted by criminals for the last couple of years”, causing considerable damage. “Our partnership with Foregenix is a strategic move,” he said.

The joint effort will give Sonassi’s clients access to Foregenix’s FGX-Web solution, which monitors for threats and suspicious behaviour and alerts users to attacks and possible breaches as they migrate to more secure platforms.

According to Foregenix’s research, there are more than 200,000 e-commerce companies worldwide using Magento 1 — and since June they have no longer been supported for upgrades.

It is predicted that the current national £68bn spend on cybersecurity will need to be doubled to stay on top of the problem in the UK. But in a period of rapid, non-legislated change, the question remains about where accountability for data breaches lies.

Nathan Tittensor, of UK-based cybersecurity consultancy i3Secure, says the legal sector

Personal information mishandled when not on-site

should begin considering its security posture. “It deals with high volumes of confidential information, (but has) never been mandated to have certifications around security,” he said.

“Although we are starting to see firms achieve certifications such as ISO 27001 to demonstrate they have robust practices and enhance customer trust, it is remote working that has really shone a spotlight on the sector and they should act fast before it is faced with the consequences of personal information being mishandled when not on-site in offices.”

Due to regulation, the banking and financial sector maintains top position for IT security. Cybersecurity hires in recent years have been driven largely by the need to facilitate secure open banking and stave off automated fraud.

Ajay Hayre, senior tech consultant at Robert Walters, said: “This has truly been the year for fintechs, who have increasingly been stepping into the space of traditional banks — playing an active role in the government bailout scheme, as well as obtaining licences to be able to deliver traditional banking services such as direct debits and overdrafts.

“The urgent need for this sector to protect data in transit or in the cloud has led to a surge in cybersecurity hires of 37 percent since 2018. If fintechs follow the gold standard of their elder, more experienced siblings — traditional banks and financial service institutions — then their security protocols will not be of concern.”



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A nation of shopkeepers? Entrepreneurs, more like!

ENTREPRENEURIAL Britain is a two-day initiative planned for 2021 and designed “to reignite the entrepreneurial spirit” of UK towns and cities.

The outbreak of Covid-19 and the attendant trend towards digital living have caused concern for urban prosperity. With a peer-to-peer learning conference, the event aims to share ideas on how to invigorate local economies.

Featured subjects will include entrepreneurial clusters, attracting investment, funding, diversity and inclusion, and successful high street blueprints. There will be awards for those who have illustrated how to improve transport links, encourage graduates to stay in an area, mobilise communities, make use of public spaces, and support local business heroes.

Existing infrastructure — malls, office parks and high streets — may soon become redundant,

Concern for urban prosperity

organisers say. The conference will look at ways to reimagine these spaces as engines for socio-economic development.

The host city for 2021 will be announced soon. The winning city for 2021 will be the host for 2022, setting a pattern for future events.

Nick James, founder of Fresh Business Thinking, said the initiative set its sights on entrepreneurial clusters and how their successes can be replicated. “An example that stands out to us is Frederick Terman,” he said, “who is widely credited as the

founder of Silicon Valley.

“In the 1920s, he was a member of the Stanford University engineering faculty ... Terman encouraged students to stay in the Valley and to set up their businesses there, which he sometimes invested in. The rest is history.”

Entrepreneurial Britain is being launched by the founders of The Great British Entrepreneur Awards. One of those founders, Francesca James, said modern life has been reshaped by the pandemic and digital transformation.

“We must support regional business creation, growth and entrepreneurial activity to create sparks in the UK economy,” she said. “The British economy would benefit to the tune of £34bn a year by 2030 if the local economies of towns and cities were to realise their full entrepreneurial potential over the next decade.”



A two-day initiative designed ‘to reignite the entrepreneurial spirit’ of UK towns and cities



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How to set up your finance department — in easy steps

By CARLO GUALANDRI

IN THE EARLY stages of building a business, entrepreneurs can manage without a dedicated finance department — but with growth that is no longer true.

Starting a finance department is often worse in theory than in practice — and benefits quickly follow. It pays to keep an eye on cash-flow, keep investors happy and control costs

Every business needs three important things:

A bank account

This is a no-brainer, and a legal requirement. When choosing a business bank account, consider rates and fees, services and compatibility with your technology and services.

Payroll

Many banks now offer basic finance management features, but dedicated technology is better. Make sure the technology is approved by HMRC (another legal requirement). Look out for features including payslips, options for paying weekly and monthly, pension payment features and automatic registration of EPS or EYU forms.

Accounting software

There are lots of options, which is great, but confusing. Look for software that integrates easily with existing systems, and consider the pricing model.

Cost-per-user is good when your team is small, but a flat fee can work better in the long-run. For accounting and payroll, cloud-based models that allow a finance department to work remotely are best.

According to research by Soldo, nearly a third of growing businesses in the UK and Ireland struggle to select business priorities. Given the correct information, finance departments can help to make crucial decisions and will notice when something goes awry.

Accurate financial records and reports are vital when looking for investment. Banks and investors ask for financial data before making decisions

EXPENSES

Setting-up spend management alongside the finance department will help keep track of employee spending — something that can quickly spiral out of control.

Expenses are often managed informally at the beginning, but it's crucial to get an early handle on business costs.

Business leaders that plan to scale and grow quickly should consider an automated spend management system. It removes the burden of admin-heavy and repetitive tasks from the finance team.

A finance department should have the access to the best tools. Cloud-based software is regularly updated and is easier to scale. Automation cuts workload.

PRIORITIES

Having your money in order is the key to investment and growth. If a business is having cash-flow issues, that should be even more reason to invest in a finance team to identify which areas of the business aren't performing. The right finance department will pay for itself in economies and increased profitability.

Get hiring. You won't be disappointed.

** Carlo Gualandri is founder and CEO of Soldo*

On the block: your office. What does a workplace even look like nowadays?

By HAL WILLIAMS

BRITISH developers are being forced to close millions of square metres of retail space and seek alternative tenants — or solutions.

What’s to become of our city centres? It’s a question at the forefront of many minds. Some normally bustling areas are already deathly quiet, and not just through lockdown. Hundreds of shops and cafés are closed, with more likely to go the same way. An independent survey with 500 senior decision-makers found that 73 percent of them expect businesses to downsize to smaller office spaces as a result of the pandemic. Another study of 400 property development

‘Go to meet’ and ‘work from home’

firms — this time by the Altus Group consultancy — showed 38 percent of executives were finding alternative uses for retail properties, and another 57 percent were considering following suit. The annual report on Global Property Development Trends found that a second wave

of Covid-19 infections could deliver the coup de grace to UK high streets. Non-food retailers have taken the worst hit so far, collectively reporting £9bn in lost sales since January.

Hannah Ford, partner and employment expert at national law firm Stevens & Bolton, said a return to the traditional 9-5 office-based working was looking unlikely. “There remains a need for regular face-to-face contact between colleagues/clients/business partners,” she said, “but office spaces may now predominantly be a place for meeting and learning rather than for all forms of working.”

Ford feels the term, “go



Developers are being forced to close millions of square metres of retail space



An open-air bathroom, private swimming pool — and your very own slide to the ocean

to work” may soon become anachronistic: “We will instead ‘go to meet’ and work from home,” she predicts. Knock-on effects may be unavoidable. Historically, London businesses that had offices in locations such as the City or South East have been able to command higher fees for their services than their regional counterparts.

“Remote working has highlighted that the office’s postcode does not impact the service provided,” says Ford. We may see a levelling of fees across certain sectors, she believes, and possibly “a similar levelling in salaries”.

Businesses will still serve a purpose for meetings and collaborations, Ford concedes, “but (we) will no longer require large premises which house a workspace for each employee. We are likely to see large office premises that have previously been occupied by a sole tenant now being carved up into smaller units let by various tenants.”

Remote working improves

diversity in workforces, because an individual’s career choices will no longer be impacted by geographic limitations or by time constraints which made a lengthy commute previously impossible.

And of course, some are thinking of pulling on that piece of elastic and working as remotely as possible — from a beach in Barbados, or the many other countries offering digital nomad visas (see *Living the dream?* on the next page).

For some, the latest remote working revolution could mean the difference between tubes, buses, taxis, cars and trains or what one firm is calling “the world’s greatest commute”.

Luxury resort operator Soneva is hoping to transform the working-from-home concept with a villa ownership option in the Maldives.

“Those choosing the ownership option will be able to reside on the island and fully immerse themselves in its lifestyle,” reads the blurb, “enjoying a sense of tranquillity and community,

experienced by neighbouring like-minded owners.”

Each villa features natural light, lush greenery and signature details including an open-air bathroom, private swimming pool — and your very own slide to the ocean. “All villas are sustainably built,” the company says, “using reclaimed and recycled materials and equipped with wifi, state-of-the-art energy and waste-saving technology, and eucalyptus, oak, driftwood, cedar and pine timber finishes.

Villa owners can join a rental programme for a return on investment, get discounts on flight transfers and other benefits.

All of which sounds very appealing — but does little to solve the conundrum of what happens to all our city centre office blocks. As Ford warns: “Employers should carefully consider the implications of permanently changing an employee’s contractual place of work.” With temptation and possibility in place, workers need to consider those implications, too...

Living the dream? Remote working from overseas can easily become a nightmare

By LLOYD DAVEY and SARAH TAYLOR

REMOTE working looks set to continue for the foreseeable future, and there is an increasing trend for employees to base themselves overseas.

Technology enables roles to be performed from almost any location, and where an employee physically performs their work may have no discernible impact on their output. Many employers may already be unaware of where each of their employees is currently based. They should, however, be aware of a number of legal and practical issues that arise.

Working from another country may entitle staff to the same rights as local workers simply because they log-on in that country to perform their role. These local rights may be more generous

Legal and practical issues arise

than those to which the employee is entitled under UK or European law and might include holiday entitlement, enhanced maternity and other family friendly rights, as well as additional rights on termination of employment.

Employers should be aware that a UK sponsorship licence may be invalidated by a migrant working remotely from overseas, and the employee may no longer be permitted to live and work in the UK. It could also lead to the

Home Office taking compliance action against the employer.

An employee working remotely from another country may become subject to local income taxes and, consequently, their employer may be subject to tax reporting and collection obligations in the host country in addition to those under UK PAYE. Employers may also have local social security reporting and collection obligations.

An employee working remotely from overseas may create a taxable presence, known as a “permanent establishment”, of the employer in the host country for corporation tax purposes. The employer’s VAT position may also be impacted.

A number of data protection issues can arise, and employers should ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place in respect



Technology enables roles to be performed from almost any location

of the transfer of any personal data. Working remotely from some locations may increase the risk of hacking and cyber fraud, and employers should consider whether their security practices are adequate.

Employers have a duty of care for the health and safety of their employees and must take reasonable steps to address that. They should conduct risk assessments of employees and their proposed working arrangements. Employers should

also ensure compliance with applicable health and safety legislation in the host country.

Arranging for adequate home-working equipment to be transported overseas will be costly, and the employer's existing insurance policies may not cover this.

While working overseas is an attractive option for employees suffering from remote-working fatigue, it can quickly become a headache for the business. Employers should ensure that

internal policies, procedures and employment contracts are up-to-date. Each request should be considered on a case-by-case basis, to avoid discrimination. When requests are granted, employers should enter into a formal written agreement with the employee, clearly documenting the terms of their remote working arrangement.

** Lloyd Davey is a partner at Stevens & Bolton LLP; Sarah Taylor is a senior associate.*

IS WORK-LIFE WEEK A TIMELY OR TIRED CONCEPT? AND HOW BEST TO MARK IT IN TIME OF PANDEMIC?

NATIONAL Work-Life Week sure picked its moment to arrive.

With a topsy-turvy world of remote working, overseas escapes, sackings and furloughs, the general work-life balance is firmly out-of-whack. The week is presented as an opportunity for employers and workers to focus on wellbeing and alignment.

Research conducted last month found that 61 percent of workers believe home-working is generally better. But that isn't the case for everyone. For working parents, there's a struggle to balance the needs of children with professional obligations. Changes have been needed to fit in childcare and get some quality family time in the evening.

Employee benefits company Sodexo Engage has outlined some steps employers can take to win back the balance — while maintaining productivity levels.

1. *Get talking*

We no longer natter in the kitchen, or stop by someone's desk for a chat. Without that physical presence, it's harder for colleagues and managers to see when someone is struggling. Employers can help by organising regular check-ins by phone. Rather than merely focusing on to-do lists, these should be used to discuss responsibilities and ask if help is needed. These communications should touch on non-work topics to strengthen social wellbeing.

2. *Encourage time away*

One of the downsides to working from home is that home becomes the office. This erosion of time and space between professional and personal lives can be a problem. It's all too easy to answer work emails and handle other concerns outside of office hours — which is a recipe for burnout. Burned-out employees are 63 percent more likely to take a sick day and 2.6 times more likely to leave their current employer, according to Gallup.

Businesses can push for employees to close their laptops at a certain hour, and could even go as far as banning work emails outside of certain hours. Employees need to be reminded to use their annual leave, even if it's for a long weekend at home. Getting away from the screen has never been more important.

3. *Get flexible*

Flexitime allows employees to fit their working hours around individual needs. Starting or ending the day earlier, shifting the position into a part-time role, or working compressed hours are possible solutions. This can empower staff to work at times when they are at their most productive and engaged, while allowing them time to pursue passions outside of work.

4. *Provide professional support*

From worries about pay cuts to the anxiety of living and working during a pandemic, there's plenty of pressure on workers right now. It's vital that proper mental health support is in place. Offering an employee assistance programme can give staff confidential access to professional mental health counsellors.

5. *Re-evaluate working from home*

When offices reopen, many employers may want to get everyone back in. But some on both sides of the fence may want to retain the working-from-home model.

Research from Cardiff University and the University of Southampton found that 47 percent of employees want the system to continue. Alongside this, Working Families, a work-life balance charity, found that 48 percent of parents and carers surveyed plan to make changes to their old work pattern.

Introducing a more permanent remote working policy means the team can continue to reap the unexpected benefits — think no commuting — and find the balance they need.

Using behavioural science can boost productivity and liberate our creative sides

Many Conservative MPs in Britain are reportedly flinching at the idea of compulsory ‘unconscious bias training’. STEPHANIE WATSON explains why all of us should be prepared to shake up our entrenched views...

ONE OF the most common quirks of the workplace is confirmation bias, which is the human tendency to search for, favour, and use information that confirms one’s pre-existing views.

This can extend to performance evaluations, hiring, and even how employees think about their customers or audiences.

Innovation requires a mix of new ideas, and a diverse and open attitude. Nobody likes to admit that they’re wrong, which is why

A ‘devil’s advocate’ can be effective

confirmation bias can be hard to overcome.

Biased hiring results in less diverse teams, which hinders

productivity. Businesses perform better when they have greater ethnic and gender diversity. Processes should be reviewed to eliminate unconscious bias, such as standardisation in the hiring process and the removal of names on CVs.

When it comes to making big decisions in the workplace, a “devil’s advocate” can be effective in bringing confirmation bias to light. Appoint someone in the team to ask contradictory questions that spark debate, and



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Technology has earned its place in the work environment – but it can lead to distractions



Processes should be reviewed to eliminate unconscious bias

uncover potential holes in a major decision. Businesses have been challenged by the move to remote working, and the change has taken its toll on the bottom line. With something approaching “business as usual” on the rebound, it’s vital that productivity recovers with it.

Looking at the problems through the lens of behavioural science presents some solutions.

According to *The Times*, the UK is in a meetings epidemic, with the average worker now spending 213 hours a year — that’s 26 working days — stuck in meetings. And according to research by MIT, a third of all meeting time is wasted.

An effective strategy is to set default duration times. Meetings often run to an hour due to diary software, but cutting that to 30 minutes will create a new standard and keep employees focused.

According to research by McKinsey, the average professional spends 28 percent of the working day reading and answering emails. The study also found that 70 percent of email recipients responded within six seconds, and 85 percent did so within two minutes.

Email culture places social pressure on employees; recipients feel the sender needs a speedy response, especially if it is

someone in a senior position. This pressure might explain the finding that more time spent on emails equates to higher recorded stress levels. The pressure also causes disruption to workflow; employees take up to 23 minutes to recover from the interruption of emails.

Dedicated distraction-free time periods can be an effective solution. Email-free or no-meeting days (or afternoons) allow uninterrupted prioritisation of tasks.

** Stephanie Watson is a senior behavioural planner at Total Media.*

LEGAL TECH START-UP HASTENS ID CHECKING

WITH law firms working remotely and consumers practising social distancing, in-person ID checks are proving a challenge.

Legal tech start-up Thirdfort has developed a web and mobile app that combines document scanning, facial recognition technology and Open Banking to streamline identity and source of funds checks.

FCA-regulated Thirdfort secured £1m in its latest fundraising. The seed-plus investment round garnered interest from investors, and the company’s total funds raised stand at £2.7m.

Thirdfort graduated from Mishcon de Reya’s MDR LAB accelerator programme in 2018 before setting up its first office in London. The business has since attracted funding from angel investors.

Olly Thornton-Berry, co-founder and MD, says the need for the legal market to adapt in light of the Covid-19 pandemic had been a catalyst. “We believe there’s an opportunity to help lawyers cut fraud risk while improving the client experience,” he said.

World citizens, lend Spotify your ears: it has just what they need in the era of streaming

“GONE ARE the days of Top 40,” Daniel Ek says of the by-gone playlists of curated radio hits. “It’s now the Top 43,000.”

Ek is the founder and CEO of Spotify, the world’s most popular freemium audio streaming service. Since its launch over a decade ago, Spotify has procured the distribution rights to more than 60 million tracks and podcasts. That’s a nearly infinite stream of options for the company’s 138 million premium subscribers, and 299 million active monthly users.

Music lovers have flocked to Spotify to peruse its album collection, find old favourites and discover new talents, create playlists and share content through internal and external social media tools. The

The gig economy has been decimated

company has established strong partnerships with leading brands and is available on over 300 devices across 80 hardware brands, promising users uninterrupted access.

In light of the financial stress — and mental trauma — caused by the Covid-19 crisis, Spotify is proud to offer a lifeline to hard-hit musicians and struggling fans.

Since its launch, Spotify has paid more than €15bn in revenue to rightsholders. The gig economy has been decimated by the pandemic, with live events put on indefinite hold and musicians’ livelihoods endangered. In addition to contributions made to MusiCares, the CDC and the WHO, Spotify has pledged to match donations of up to \$10m through its Covid-19 Music Relief project. It also introduced a new feature (the Artist Fundraising Pick) to give musicians a means to support charitable causes, themselves, their bands and their crews.

Spotify provides tools for artists to engage with fans and establish new audiences. It has seen a 68 percent year-on-year rise in the



DenPhotos/Shutterstock.com

The company invests in continuous R&D to bring innovative products and services to market



Music is medicine, and Spotify is happy to provide a free service that keeps users connected

number of artists and their teams using these tools. The number of artists included in the top tier (those accounting for the top 90 percent of streams) stands now at over 43,000 — up 43 percent from a year ago.

Music is medicine, and Spotify is happy to provide a free service that keeps users connected to their favourite content. “In the midst of an economic downturn, Spotify’s free tier and freemium model are more valuable than ever,” Ek points out. “It’s important to remember that just over 60 percent of our paid subscribers come from our free tier, so growing the top of the funnel has always been a priority.

In April, Ek reported that he had seen an increase in the number of users coming to the platform for its free service. “This should allow us to expand the pool of subscribers available to us as the economy recovers,” he said.

Spotify users are spread across 92 global markets, including the company’s recent launch in Russia and 12 European countries. It

expressed optimism for global expansion plans, citing “pent-up demand” in untouched markets worldwide. “If we do this right, we have the opportunity to reach 250 million more listeners in these markets over the long-term,” says Ek.

Spotify recently signed a multi-year global license agreement with the world’s largest music company, Universal Music Group, advancing an industry-leading partnership that promises value for artists and exciting experiences for fans.

It announced a multi-year partnership with Warner Bros and DC to produce and distribute an original slate of narrative-scripted podcasts — exclusively on Spotify. It introduced *Harry Potter at Home*, an exclusive rendering of the *Sorcerer’s Stone* as read by notable actors, including Daniel Radcliffe, Eddie Redmayne and Whoopi Goldberg. It debuted *The Michelle Obama Podcast*, along with a host of other original content.

Spotify’s podcast catalogue

now totals more than 1.5 million shows — half of which were launched this year. Podcasts are finding increasing favour with audiences, the company reports, and consumption continues to grow at triple-digit rates.

The company invests in continuous R&D to bring innovative products and services to market. It has launched features to promote social connections as the Covid-19 protective measures keep people locked in place.

“I know many people are wondering how we will continue to weather this storm,” Ek admits. “With so many unknowns, there are some questions we simply can’t answer at this point.

“But I can say that I am confident that we will continue to be in a position of strength when this is behind us, because of our model, our scale, our superior user experience and our content pipeline.

“These are the fundamentals that have fuelled our success and will continue to do so in the future.”

António Guterres



UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office via Wikimedia Commons

ANTÓNIO Guterres is a politician, diplomat, former Prime Minister of Portugal and the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations — once described as “the world’s most impossible job”.

Guterres became UN High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015 and is credited with making the organisation more efficient with staff cuts in Geneva — one in five HQ staff went — and increasing cost-effectiveness. Activity volume grew wildly during his watch, from 38m refugees in 2005 to over 60m in 2015 because of conflicts around the world.

He tried to get Western countries to do more to help, with modest success.

Guterres was born in Lisbon in 1949, during the rule of dictator António de Oliveira Salazar (1932 to 1968). Guterres was active in the protest movement against his successor Marcello Caetano, who was removed in the Carnation Revolution of 1974.

The young António entered Portuguese parliament in the 1976 election. He served on a number of committees and was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from 1981 to 1983, and became Prime Minister in 1995. He stayed in power until 2002, overseeing Portugal’s transition to the euro and returning Macau to Chinese sovereignty.

Guterres was a major player in the East Timor crisis, a former Portuguese colony. He was in favour of its independence (it had been occupied by Indonesia since 1975) and achieved that status in 1999.

During Portugal’s presidency of the EC in 2000, Portugal adopted the Lisbon Agenda for growth and employment. Guterres chaired a summit between the EU and Africa. His Socialist party lost the 2002 elections and he resigned.

The Security Council is the most powerful UN body, with five permanent members who hold veto over decisions. The (less powerful) Secretary-General is the UN’s chief diplomat who oversees administrative functions.

Guterres started his five-year term in 2017. In his acceptance speech, he told the general assembly: “The dramatic problems of today’s complex world can only inspire a humble approach.”

Good man.

BV
PEOPLE

Jules Miller



BV PEOPLE

IT TAKES a problem to incentivise solution-finding, and so it was for Jules Miller, founder of dietary supplements firm The Nue Co.

At the age of 25, back in 2015, Miller, then London-based, suffered from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). She was ill, tired and stressed, and it got so bad that she had internal bleeding. She started researching alternative remedies.

She began taking dietary supplements, to no avail, and noticed that most of the pills she was experimenting with contained filling and bulking agents. This is where her contacts came in...

Miller's grandfather, George Miller, was a University of Cambridge chemist. Working with him, she began looking into dietary supplement formulation. She found that many of the ingredients of OTC nostrums contained potentially aggravating ingredients.

In 2017, she started her own — all-natural — supplements company, Nue. It now has annual revenues of nearly £8m, with sales in 2020 rising six-fold on the previous year. Miller credits the pandemic with part of that success, as people became more preoccupied with their underlying health.

Miller was born in London, but her family moved to Colombia when she was a baby. Spanish became her first language, though she returned to the UK with her parents at the age of seven. She studied philosophy at Birmingham University before beginning a career in advertising. She at one time worked as head of business development for vegetarian food company Detox Kitchen.

She reached out to Natalie Massenet, founder of fashion retailer Net-a-Porter, and Harvey Spevak, head of US fitness firm Equinox, both of whom helped her in her quest to tackle IBS.

Nue's launch product was Debloat, a treatment for the syndrome. Vitamins and skin treatments followed, all successful. The company was initially based in Cambridge before moving to New York — a good idea, as the US is the largest market in a booming sector. Annual industry sales of dietary supplements are expected to hit £160bn by 2026.

Nue first focused on online sales, but now has a shop in New York, with funding of \$11.5m from backers, which include Unilever. CEO Miller and her husband Charlie Gower are the majority shareholders.

Academy drives creation of new SMEs during lockdown

ST JAMES'S Place Academy helped 39 financial advisers to launch their own businesses — after the government's lockdown measures were announced in late March.

The new enterprises — across the UK, from Aberdeen to Kent — are run by recent graduates who received support from the academy during the pandemic. Entrepreneurs range in age from 24 to 59, and over a third are female.

Through its two-year training programme, the academy helps financial advice professionals to build a career in planning and wealth management. It has continued to support those enrolled into the programme and will re-open to new intakes throughout 2020.

Since its creation in 2012, the academy has helped create 557 SMEs which employ hundreds of advisers, administrators, paraplanners and marketeers.

There are always teething problems

Former semi-pro footballer Robbie Simpson decided to press ahead with his plans despite warnings that it was a bad time to start a new business. "It really couldn't have been better for me," he says.

USING TECHNOLOGY

"I've had to adapt to new ways of working, in terms of using technology, and — as with any start-up — there are always teething problems. But ... I really feel there couldn't have been a better time to launch my business."

Former business manager Naomi Haynes, who was appointed



Robbie Simpson

by the academy in March, endorsed Simpson's comments: "It's been brilliant to get out there and not let lockdown negatively impact me ..."

"The lockdown has actually given me the opportunity to connect with people via video calls, as well as via telephone, to provide advice on their financial journey during a difficult time."

The academy has three career programmes to provide training, ongoing support, professional development and access to opportunities.

GRANT COULD DRIVE SWIFT PAYMENTS FOR UK SMEs

AN ONLINE instant payment platform has been awarded a £2.5m grant by the Banking Competition Remedies' Capability and Innovation Fund.

The money, which will be used to fund further development of the payment solutions from the Previs platform. It follows a competitive application process that saw £20m dispersed to six companies. The BCR's mission is to facilitate the commercialisation of financial technology relevant to SMEs.

The grant will be used to push market adoption of Previs tech that improves cashflow for SMEs who trade with large corporates. It supports the delivery of a SmartData initiative, in partnership with the FSB, aimed at enhancing the availability of trading data.

The award comes at a critical time for UK businesses, as government support for Covid-19 is withdrawn. Poor business practice around invoice payment is common, creating cashflow challenges. An FSB study of more than 4,000 firms showed that 62 percent of small businesses had been subject to late or frozen payments.

Previs CEO Paul Christensen said that with BCR funding and FSB collaboration, his company would help to get punctual payment for more SMEs. "Our top priority is getting working capital to small businesses, to provide the immediate cashflow support they need," he said.

That would require a change to the payment culture across the UK, he added. "We're calling on government, large corporates, organisations that represent the interests of SMEs, and the public to join us in creating a movement that ensures every SME has the option of immediate payment, whenever they issue an invoice."



Protecting mental health in the post-Covid 19 workplace

RECENT events have thrown up significant challenges for almost everyone, but the impact of the pandemic on our mental health is still unclear.

Furloughed, sacked or remote-working employees have experienced emotions from excitement and optimism to anger and anxiety.

Dealing with new ways of working, or not working at all, make up only part of the picture. People have had to cope with their whole lives changing literally overnight. Juggling childcare and work, being separated from loved ones and dealing with financial pressures are just some of the issues.

“After dealing with the challenge of social distancing and being separated from colleagues, the thought of returning to the office, getting back on public transport, or coming off furlough could be overwhelming,” said Unum HR director Natalie Rogers.

Even before the pandemic, up to 18 percent of the UK population reported often feeling lonely — and since lockdown, that figure has risen to 25 percent. With some 90 percent of the workforce keen to continue working from home at least some of the time after the restrictions are lifted, employers need to consider what

the implications are for mental health.

Remote working can lead to feelings of detachment and isolation, and a side-effect of lockdown has been an increase in alcohol intake. According to Action on Addiction, a quarter of adults were drinking more in June than they were before March.

It may have been a temporary solution to boredom, anxiety and stress, but 15 percent of those drinking more have said they are experiencing problems, including work issues.

INVISIBLE THREAT

Official messaging has emphasised the need to avoid personal contact. Even as restrictions ease, we are encouraged to remain alert to an invisible threat.

Leaving the safety of the home can be stressful, especially to those with underlying health issues or vulnerable family members. Many people have become anxious about returning to a work environment that involves working with colleagues. After spending so long in a safe and comfortable environment, there is something strange about being surrounded by people again.

It's important that employers recognise this syndrome and put plans in place to support mental health and wellbeing of staff.

Here are some tips:

- Encourage employees to look after their own wellbeing, while reminding them that support is there for them.
- Look for any changes in behaviour or signs of anxiety or frustration; early intervention can nip a problem in the bud.
- Equip line managers with the skills to spot and support employees who may be having difficulties.
- Clearly communicate the safety measures that have been introduced to make the workplace Covid-19 safe, and ensure employees understand the guidelines.
- Be honest about your plans and acknowledge any concerns that exist.
- Provide clear objectives and directions so employees know exactly what is expected of them.
- Highlight what mental health support is available, such as a confidential Employee Assistance Programme. Clearly communicate how to access the service.

A multilayered business case for honouring human rights

Companies should engage with guiding principles to ensure fairness and wellbeing – and to benefit their bottom line. BJÖRN FASTERLING lays out a win-win solution.

THE WIDELY endorsed United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) expect business enterprises to have sophisticated governance and management processes, such as human rights due diligence, in place to fulfil social responsibilities.

This also means having people with human rights competencies. The UNGPs are not mandatory, and implementing them may be costly. So why should business enterprises engage? A multilayered business case provides the answer.

Hiring the right people and establishing sophisticated internal management processes both require investment. In some cases, human rights due diligence may lead to a situation where a company must rethink exploiting an otherwise lucrative opportunity. To argue the business case in favour of human rights you may have heard phrases like “in the long run it will pay off”, or, in the same vein, “the interests of society and corporate interests tend to converge over time”. However, first, we don’t know what happens



Björn Fasterling

in the long run. And, second, if societal and corporate interests really converge over time, they should have converged long ago. In order to establish the business case for human rights, we need to put forward more compelling arguments than referring to vague ideas about long term advantages.

Let’s make the business case for carrying out a business’s human rights responsibilities using six different layers of arguments that are mutually supportive. Each may not provide a convincing business case on its own, but taken together, they may be sufficiently persuasive.

COSTS

Implementing the UNGPs may

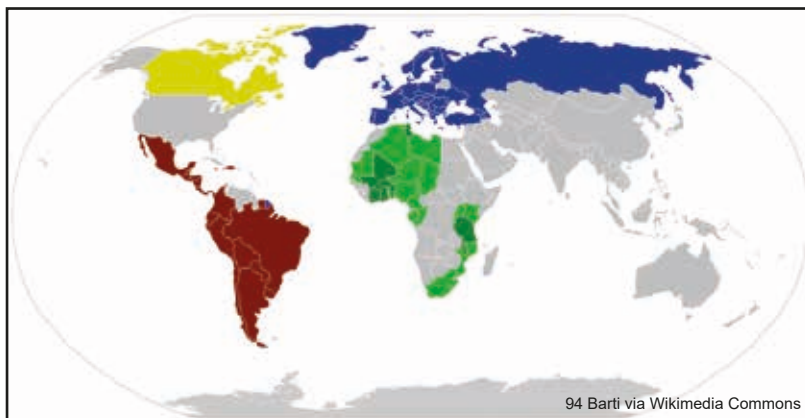
be costly. However, respecting human rights may engender savings, such as avoiding costly conflict that could lead to a disruption of business activities and supply chains. Already companies account for such costs as “stakeholder pushback”, or as “costs of conflict”, but in many cases could probably just as well book them as “costs related to negative human rights impacts”.

STAKEHOLDER PREFERENCE

Key stakeholders may prefer doing business with a partner that respects human rights. A proven commitment to the issue may preserve and attract clients, investors, suppliers or future employees, or keep the company in business with governments that are monitoring public procurement processes.

LEGAL ANTICIPATION

The UNGPs’ human rights due diligence standard is not mandatory. However, it is already inspiring legislation and court decisions, and in some cases has informed hard law. Large French parent companies are required by law to enact “vigilance” plans that also cover human rights respect



States that recognise regional courts of human rights jurisdiction

94 Barti via Wikimedia Commons



The UNGPs' human rights due diligence standard is already inspiring legislation and court decisions

and implement them throughout corporate groups and supply chains. Similar legislative projects are in preparation elsewhere in Europe. An international treaty being discussed at United Nations level envisages states to adopt legislative measures, including oversight duties for companies.

Courts in Canada, the UK and the Netherlands have provided interpretations of a parent company's duty of care in tort law cases that may apply extraterritorially for a group's global activities. These developments indicate that having human rights competencies and implementing due diligence measures are a way for a company, not only to comply with existing law but also to anticipate future legislation and be better equipped once it is in force.

ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

A company that, on an ongoing basis, assesses potential negative impacts of its activities,

Fundamental moral duties

integrating its findings throughout its organisation and routinely addresses problems that surface while drawing lessons from past experience (all necessary steps) can more aptly respond to crises and rare events. Such a company can also more easily adapt to new, disruptive circumstances. Emerging research shows that such capabilities, sometimes addressed as "organisational resilience", may prove to be crucial for continued success.

RETHINKING BUSINESS

Implementing management processes aiming at prevention and mitigation of human rights risks, and learning from past problems, also makes a habit of questioning incumbent business models. To regularly review business models through the

lens of human rights respect could motivate a repositioning of corporate strategy, unearthing sources of competitive advantage that have been overseen in the past.

BUSINESS ETHICS

Respecting human rights means fulfilling fundamental moral duties, owed by managers as individuals and by companies as collectives. As far as a company's human rights impacts are concerned, being ethical has been made easier, because the UNGPs provide clear and proven guidance.

For a company, respecting human rights by implementing the operational principles of the UNGPs is an intelligent choice. It is a prudent choice, it could be a source of business success, and it is the right thing to do. If you feel that your company does not have the necessary human rights competencies for this step, perhaps you need to take them into account.

Business for Peace award winners announced by ICC

THE ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) and the Business for Peace Foundation have announced the three winners of the 2020 Oslo Business for Peace Award.

This year's honourees are Marc Benioff, founder, chair and CEO of Salesforce, James Mwangi, chairman and CEO of Equity Group Holdings, and Felicitas "Joji" Bautista Pantoja, co-founder and CEO of Coffee for Peace.

The Oslo Business for Peace Award is awarded annually to business leaders for their outstanding businessworthy accomplishments and to recognise efforts to foster peace and stability in the business community.

Commenting on the announcement, Secretary-General of the ICC John WH Denton AO said: "On behalf of the ICC we congratulate the worthy honourees who have dedicated their careers to transforming their businesses, industries and

Business can be the greatest platform for change

communities through positive change to meet the challenges of tomorrow. ICC is proud to be a partner of the Business for Peace Foundation and play a role in the nomination process."

The 2020 Oslo Business for Peace Award winners were selected by an independent Award Committee of Nobel Laureates in Peace and Economics, following a global nomination process assisted by ICC, Principles for Responsible Investment, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Global Compact.

Past winners include Paul

Polman (Unilever), Ouided Bouchamaoui (Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts), Richard Branson (Virgin Group) and Durreen Shahna (Impact Investment Exchange).

The 2020 award winners:

Marc Benioff (United States) built Salesforce on the idea that business can be the greatest platform for change, integrating social responsibility into the company culture. On day one, he established the 1-1-1 mode of philanthropy, whereby a company contributes one percent of profits, equity and employee hours back to the communities it serves.

Marc Benioff is an outspoken advocate for business leaders, supporting causes such as LGBT rights, education inclusion, wealth reallocation and alleviating homelessness.

Today, Salesforce has 35,000 employees and more than 150,000 customers worldwide. Mr





From left: Marc Benioff, Felicitas Pantola, James Mganwi

Benioff is recognised for leading a revolution in the tech sector to create a more equal, fair and sustainable way of doing business.

James Mwangi (Kenya) is recognised for his work to democratise financial access in Kenya, providing 96 percent of the unbanked population opportunities for broader economic participation. His ability to merge economic theory to the practical realities of village life has enabled him to revolutionise the banking industry in East Africa.

Today, Equity has 12.7 million clients across the socio-economic spectrum including youth and women and commits two percent of its revenue to philanthropy, supporting education and literacy.

Felicitas “Joji” Bautista Pantoja (Philippines) is acknowledged for dedicating her career to building peace in conflict zones and improving the lives of marginalised groups through economic stability. Based in the Philippines, Coffee for Peace uses coffee production as a tool to address the economic, environmental and peace issues prevalent in conflict-affected communities.

Today, Coffee for Peace provides sustainable livelihoods for indigenous and migrant groups in rural areas, enabling over 880 farmers to escape poverty

and build their coffee production capacity. The company’s focus is on sustainable agriculture, peace and reconciliation between religious groups, environmental protection and entrepreneurship.

** The 2020 winners will be celebrated at the Business for Peace Summit in May 2021 in Oslo, Norway.*



Five major business wins to celebrate in West Midlands

A STRING of international companies moving to the West Midlands has put the region top of the UK's overseas investment chart — for five years running.

The region has been the UK's leading location for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) outside of London and the South East, according to data from the Department for International Trade.

It attracted 157 new FDI projects in 2019/20, which equates to eight percent of the UK total. That is the largest share generated by any UK region outside of the capital and surrounding south-east.

Major sources of investment have been the US, Germany, France and India. In total, 802 foreign investments have been

157 new FDI projects in 2019/20

made in the region since 2015.

Business, professional and financial services (BPFS), advanced manufacturing, transport technologies and tech and digital have been the regional sectors attracting international companies.

Global heavyweights such as consultancy Alvarez & Marsal and Indian IT firm Microland are among its most notable investors

from the last five years.

Neil Rami, chief executive at the West Midlands Growth Company — the region's investment promotion agency — said the region's performance had been consistently strong.

"This robust track record of international appeal clearly signals our credentials as a global business destination," he said. The region is also set to benefit from the 2021 Coventry City of Culture, 2022 Commonwealth Games, High-Speed 2 rail infrastructure and 5G multi-city testbed facilities. These investments would further hone the area's competitive edge.

In 2018, professional services consultancy Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) strengthened its UK presence by opening a new office in Birmingham. A&M has



The Manufacturing Technology Centre in Ansty Park provides local university expertise



Alvarez & Marsal strengthened its UK presence by opening a new office in Birmingham

4,500 employees spread across four continents, and provides advisory, business performance improvement, turnaround management and due diligence services to private and public sectors around the world.

The firm recognises the fact that business leaders want advice from professionals with an understanding of the local market.

A&M also recently set up a transactions services practice in Birmingham, led by former Ernst and Young specialist Wayne Jephson.

IPG Photonics, a leading manufacturer of high-performance fibre lasers, invested in a purpose-built UK head office at Coventry's Ansty Park in 2019. The Massachusetts-based company committed to creating 30 high-value jobs as well as the new facility.

Location and supply chain are enticing factors, with the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) providing local

university expertise.

David Goodwin, Managing Director, IPG Photonics UK, said the region was likely to play a leading role in driving the UK's productivity capabilities and wider industrial strategy. "For us, there isn't a better-placed location to accelerate the industrialisation of laser-based manufacturing," he said

DIGITAL HUB

Microland opened a state-of-the-art European HQ in Birmingham's Bournville suburb in February. It had previously set up a digital hub in Longbridge — also in Birmingham — in 2018.

Nagaraja Kini, the company's associate vice-president, said the primary objective of the second investment was to drive IT infrastructure solutions. "We knew that the region was the only place for us to fulfil our growth ambitions."

One of China's largest investment groups, Fosun International, became the owner of Wolverhampton Wanderers

Football Club (Wolves) in 2016. The club has had its best placing in 40 years — and a successful UEFA Europa League campaign.

Fosun plans to extend the Molineux stadium and work in partnership with City of Wolverhampton Council and the University of Wolverhampton to enhance the area around it.

Deutsche Bahn Engineering & Consulting (DB E&C) has led the development of the UK's new High-Speed 2 (HS2) rail network, with bases in the UK and Ireland. Part of Deutsche Bahn — Germany's national railway company — DB E&C has created jobs and supported regional engineering skills development.

The firm has partnered with the University of Birmingham to create career opportunities for local graduates and open up R&D projects.

Christian Hünefeld, DB E&C's Director for the UK & Ireland, said the Birmingham base had delivered an outstanding ROI and created new business leads.

Taking financial stock if faced with redundancy

SHONA Lowe, Private Client & Corporate Director at 1825, says: “It is a harsh consequence of the economic downturn caused by coronavirus that lots of people in the UK are facing redundancy. Well-known high-street names have announced that many jobs are at risk and as the furlough scheme puts more financial responsibility on employers, it’s likely that we will see more of this in the coming months.

“Facing redundancy can feel overwhelming and put a lot of pressure on household finances. But, getting in control of your finances and being aware of your overall financial position can help alleviate money stress and make you feel more in control of the future. Following a quick checklist can help you take stock of your overall financial position, check in on personal and professional goals, review what changes might need to be made and decide what’s next.

“There are plenty of free to

use resources available for people looking for support with both the Money Advice Service and Pension Wise offering independent advice. If you are dealing with a complex financial position it’s worthwhile seeking the support of a specialist financial planner or adviser.”

Tips from Shona Lowe at 1825 on what to do if you are made redundant:

Take a look at your overall finances

“Take a look at your overall financial position. This can be difficult and feel daunting but it is so important. You need to understand the full picture – savings, investments, debts, incomings, outgoings. The whole lot.

Grab a pen and a blank piece of paper

“Next, get a pen and blank piece of paper. Draw a horizontal line from now into the future, considering where you want to be in 10 years’ time. Think about the big events, what you want your life

to look like and the income you need to make this happen.

Now, challenge what you have written down

“Now you have your ideal you need to think about what is possible. Consider how recent events might have changed this and what you value as important. Review your financial position and then revisit the goals. What can you bring forwards? What needs to be pushed back? What will be too much of a stretch financially? Can you scale this back?

Decide what to do with your redundancy payment

“The next thing is to decide what to do with your redundancy payment. This depends hugely on personal circumstances. You may have another job to go to so might want to invest this money for a longer-term goal. If you are retiring, you might want to invest some and keep hold of some for spending now. You might know you need the money immediately to help you meet day to day living



Get a pen and blank piece of paper. Consider where you want to be in 10 years’ time.



Many employers provide benefits such as private health care or life insurance

costs or you just might not know yet.

Consider paying off debt

“If you are in a position where you don’t need to make full use of your redundancy payment due to another income source or savings, consider whether it’s time to pay off any debt. The interest you are charged on debts can often be higher than the interest paid on savings so paying down debt can make financial sense in the longer term.

Don’t forget about your taxes

“Much will depend on how much your redundancy payment is, your overall tax position and whether your employer will contribute to your pension instead of making some or all of the payment to you. Up to £30,000 of a lump sum redundancy payment will be tax free but tax and national insurance contributions may be payable on non-exempt amounts such as any paid holiday, payments in lieu of notice or the cash value of any assets you receive as part of your package, for example a company car, mobile phone or computer.

“For most people, the tax position should be taken care of by their PAYE code and the correct amount of tax will be payable as it is taxed at source like a normal

salary payment but you should still check to make sure. If it isn’t right and you have a balance to pay or a refund to claim, you’ll need to complete a tax return. If your affairs are complex, it may be helpful to have this completed by a professional.

Check out your pension

“Make sure you understand your existing pension and know how much have saved – get your paperwork together, speak to your provider or adviser, check the value of your pension, where it is invested, and importantly establish the type of pension you have. It’s also worth understanding whether it’s possible for your employer to put some of your redundancy payment into your pension.

“Often people decide to leave their pension in their current scheme and leave it grow over time. Depending on how long you have until retirement it’s worth thinking about where the pension should be invested and the level of risk you are able to take. If you are younger you might want to take on a bit more risk, as you could have time to ride out any market ups and downs, but if you are older you might want to have less risk, so you know your savings will have a better chance of holding their value for when you want to access them in the near future.

Your pension is an investment so it’s important to remember that investments can go down as well as up.

Think about other benefits your employer offers

“A pension isn’t usually the only benefit that your employer will have offered. Many also provide benefits like private health care or life insurance so it’s important to know not only what pension you have but also what benefits you had in your previous job. And then you need to know what you will be eligible for in your new role. The cost of the benefits you want to keep or start which you need to pay for and the pension contributions you want to make should be factored into your financial planning and it can be useful to compare the products of different providers if you’re arranging benefits yourself.

Make sure your other financial affairs are in order

“As well as your current finances you should also think about your other financial affairs. An up to date Will, Power of Attorney and pension nomination are often at the bottom of the priority list but getting these in place will give you the peace of mind that you’ve taken control and set out what you want to happen.”

Money worries? You're not alone – and now it's time for C-suite to give reassurance

WITH staff understandably anxious about money and many businesses feeling the knock-on effect as the recession hits, it's up to the C-suite to save them.

Four in 10 employers canvassed in a recent survey said increased financial stress among employees had negatively impacted their business this year. That's almost three times the number who reported experiencing this challenge before 2020.

And with eight in 10 business owners concerned about the impact of this year's economic environment on their employees' financial wellbeing, the problem is set to grow.

That's according to new research from financial wellbeing platform nudge, which is urging



Jeremy Beament

businesses to bite the bullet and talk about money. It wants employers to help staff upskill and take control of their finances to alleviate additional workplace stress and reduce business disruption.

Seven in 10 employers agree that employees' financial

wellbeing has become more of a priority since Covid-19. But two thirds of employees surveyed feel that their company provides little or no support for that financial wellbeing, and only seven percent feel they can talk openly to their employer about money problems.

A lack of commitment from the top may be hindering progress, to the detriment of business performance. While more than half of employers agree that they would like to do more, the majority — 88 percent — believe their organisation's board or upper management could better support them in promoting the financial wellbeing of their employees.

Jeremy Beament, co-founder of nudge, said there were powerful



Eight in 10 business owners are concerned about their employees' financial wellbeing



Only seven percent of employees feel they can talk openly to their employer about money problems

actions that employers could take right now, from opening conversation on the subject and helping staff develop their skills. “This would improve their general wellbeing,” he said, “and enable them to dedicate more time and attention to their job.

“But these initiatives must be driven from the top. Leadership teams have a responsibility to empower every level of their business and ensure their teams feel supported as we navigate this uncertain period.”

With over half of the UK’s workers surveyed worrying about money at least once a week, and one in five doing so on a daily basis, financial stress is having a tangible impact on the workplace.

Some 40 percent of employers say employees have lost concentration and made mistakes as a result of money concerns, and many report staff being unproductive. A quarter of employers believe that members of their team have called in sick due to money worries.

A new level of urgency has

‘These initiatives must be driven from the top’

emerged, with financial wellbeing closely linked to mental health; a quarter of employees claim money worries affect their mental wellbeing.

Susanne Jacobs, founder of The Seven and expert in trust, psychological safety and intrinsic motivation, said that when we lack financial security, our brains switch into “threat mode”.

“This diminishes our cognitive performance, increases our error rate and negatively impacts our wellbeing,” she said. “With the pandemic amplifying financial concerns, employers need to

act now and support their staff to avoid a second epidemic of burnout.”

But businesses don’t have to boost financial rewards to make a difference. Most employees — 85 percent — consider it important to have the skills and knowledge to manage their money and to feel in control of their finances. A similar percentage believe they can be content with just enough money to live comfortably.

Vodafone’s reward manager Georgia Rule said that wellbeing of staff “is hugely important to us”. It impacts everything from productivity and engagement to retention. “That’s why we invest so much time and resources in promoting it,” she said. The firm provides educational resources and offers financial wellbeing webinars to give basic support around budgeting.

To help businesses support their employees’ financial wellbeing, nudge has published a new report, *Elephant in the Workplace*. To download a copy, visit <https://bit.ly/3bvYgco>

Burnout is coming to get us — and WHO has taken note

THE WORLD Health Organisation has officially recognised burnout as a major health risk, and not a moment too soon for some stressed workers.

While furloughed or sacked staff have it worse, those carrying on remotely are feeling the weight of working from home, or as someone recently put it, living at work.

A recent Gallup poll found that 76 percent of employees experience burnout on the job — 28 percent of them “very often” or “always”. Another survey revealed that 41 percent of companies don’t address burnout, and 36 percent of staff canvassed had no idea whether their company had any kind of support programme in place.

Some common burnout symptoms to look out for include staff becoming easily angered or upset, lacking concentration, being overly critical or cynical, and being tired.

Employee benefits firm Sodexo Engage has pulled together five main factors that contribute to the problem.

1. *Unfair treatment at work*

It is important to create a workplace culture where staff are encouraged to ask for help. Healthy habits must be set in

41 percent of companies don’t address this issue

place and regular “check-in” meetings should be diarised. This presents staff with a platform to address any issues or concerns about mistreatment. It’s not about the number of hours worked, it’s about how people are treated in those hours.

2. *Unmanageable workload*

It’s a misconception that to solve burnout, employees simply need to be encouraged to work fewer hours. Access to software and equipment may hinder their ability to produce work on time. Employers can solve this by ensuring the team has the resources needed to deliver work without becoming frustrated with processes, lack of training or technology. Employers can proactively prevent burnout at the same time and reduce risk of mistakes.

3. *Unclear communication from managers*

Consistent and clear communication from managers is vital. Keep staff in the loop about company direction, hold frequent catch-up meetings and offer support and information about how the business is adapting to the government advice.

4. *Lack of manager support*

Managers are responsible for keeping tabs on the wellbeing of staff. They should guide staff to support programmes and make clear any benefits or company initiatives that exist.

By having an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place, employees can reach out for professional support for physical, mental and financial health, as well as relationship worries. An EAP can offer external support and advice where HR may not be able to assist.

5. *Unreasonable time pressure*

Working around the clock to get work finished is something that must be addressed. Staff probably feel as though they’re drowning under a mountain of work but don’t feel entitled to ask for help. When this goes unnoticed, burnout follows. Make it clear that employees can speak out if they feel they have too much on, or need extra support.



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Covid-19 is no holiday: UK business owners stint on leave thanks to pandemic

HOLIDAYS are crucial for mental health, experts say, but business owners are taking fewer of them — Covid-19 is taking a toll here, too. Over the next 12 months, 73 percent of small business owners across the UK predict they will take a maximum of five days off, and more than a third will take no time off at all.

A study by small business lender iwoca found that even in normal times less than four percent of business owners took the usual 25-28 day's leave that most employees are allocated. Single employee businesses — there are 4.5m of them in the

It has proved hard to factor in time off

UK — fare even worse, with 44 percent expecting zero holiday days.

While many businesses have adapted their operations as a result of working from home, it has proved hard to factor-

in annual leave. Adding to the problem is the need to quarantine after a foreign trip: 41 percent of owners say they wouldn't be able to run their business if they had to isolate for 14 days.

But the vast majority of business owners — 89 percent — agree that holidays are important for mental health. In June, ONS data revealed that up to 19m adults in Britain feel high levels of anxiety as a result of coronavirus. The small business community faces further challenges arising from the pandemic, with government measures unwinding and rising economic uncertainty.



Business owners should consider how and when they are going to take some time off



Holidays are crucial for mental health but business owners are taking fewer of them

UK business owners will need continued support to ensure levels of anxiety remain under control, say experts.

Samantha Guilfoyle, founder of SG Accountancy, answers for many when she says, “I don’t do holidays.” She has no one to take responsibility in her stead, but has worked out a plan to keep anxiety and overwork at bay.

“I get in the van and go to the beach and get up the next morning and come into the

office,” she says. “I haven’t got anybody that I can leave to run things. I can reduce my hours, divert my phone and take my laptop with me, so I can still work if I’m out and about.

COMPELLED

“It’s only in the last couple of years I’ve actually moved into an office. I was in danger of just working at home and not doing anything other than work.

When somebody called me at home, I felt compelled to deal

with it. I’d be on call 24/7.”

Niamh Keys of iwoca said many small business owners were rightly channelling their energy into ensuring the future of their business. “But this could be taking its toll on their own wellbeing,” she warns.

“As we all look to get through this unsettling period, business owners across the UK should consider how and when they are going to take some time off and prioritise their wellbeing.”

FIRM THAT SNAPPED-UP TROUBLED THOMAS COOK IS FACING JOB CUTS

THE COMPANY that bought-up 2,000 defunct Thomas Cook shops last October has warned that almost 900 of its staff may lose their jobs.

Hays Travel said in a statement that 878 employees of a workforce of 4,500 may have to go because of coronavirus travel restrictions.

“Devastated” owners John and Irene Hays say Spanish travel restrictions led to hundreds of thousands of cancelled holidays. They had “made every possible effort” to protect jobs, the statement says.

The company is consulting with 344 staff who were training as travel consultants, and 534 working in the foreign exchange division. Experienced travel sales staff, apprentices and other head office staff are understood not to be affected.

“Following the decision to ban travel to Spain and the changes in furlough conditions coming at the same time, we have had no choice,” said the Hays.



BV PEOPLE

Anthony Impey MBE



CITY & Guilds has appointed Anthony Impey as chair of its Industry Skills Board (ISB).

The ISB aims to engage and amplify employer voice to inform the skills development and government policy agenda, and in doing so help the UK and its people develop skills.

Impey has a strong record in founding and growing businesses and not-for-profit organisations in the tech and skills sectors. He started his first business while still at school, selling stationery from his locker, and went on to build several successful businesses including Touchbase Network and Optimity.

He also founded TechCity Stars and Tech Up Nation, a not-for-profit organisation that helped disadvantaged young Londoners kickstart careers. He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 2018 New Year's Honours for Services to Apprenticeships and Small Business.

Impey is also chair of the Federation of Small Business new policy think tank, the UK Government's Apprenticeship Stakeholder Board and the Mayor of London's Apprenticeship Advisory Group.

Commenting on his new role, Impey said: "I've been a member of the ISB since its inception in 2014 and am excited to be taking on this new challenge at this pivotal time when we need to reskill the nation like never before to get people back into work and kickstart the economy.

"When educators, government and employers work together on a shared skills agenda, the positive impact on people and the businesses they power can be huge. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the ISB and at City & Guilds to champion the importance of skills and training."

David Phillips, MD at City & Guilds, said the appointment was welcome. "Skills policy needs to be firmly rooted in the needs and experience of employers to be as effective as it can be," he said.

"At a time when every industry will need to rethink the skills needed to fuel economic recovery, it's absolutely vital that employers are more closely involved in skills and education policy development and implementation."

The ISB was founded in 2014 by City & Guilds to provide an independent voice for employers in the skills system, highlighting their needs and perspective as well as current and future skills and recruitment needs.

Its current membership includes representatives from BT, NatWest Group, Laing O'Rourke, NHS Education, Marstons, Nestlé, the Public Sector, small businesses and the CIPD.



Weapons of mass distraction: time is money, so take steps to use it as wisely as possible

By FRED KRIEGER

RARELY do business leaders pay as much attention to time as they do to finances.

They track each penny paid for rent, salaries, printer paper and coffee beans. But time is the most precious commodity of all, and the way it is monitored and used can be the difference between success or failure.

Time-wasting behaviours — unnecessary meetings and the constant checking of messages — is estimated to cost over \$650bn a year in the US alone. These inefficiencies can be significantly reduced through a business-wide time-management strategy.

The first step is to know how time is used right now. Businesses need to embrace a centralised method for employees to log their time to deliver granular insight while providing an overview for the company as a whole.

In this way, leaders are empowered to set targets and change working practices based on specific challenges. An appointed chief time officer (CTO) — who thinks about time in the same way a chief financial officer (CFO) thinks about money — can take charge of time

Being busy — it's not the same as being productive

allocation decisions.

Next, it is vital to recognise that being busy is not the same as being productive. The recent shift to remote working has exacerbated the trend of tech overload, so many employees now switch between apps for instant messaging, video conferencing and task management, resulting in fragmented workflows.

On average, UK employees use four to nine digital tools each day. By removing these weapons of mass distraction and streamlining their tech, businesses can reduce wasted time.

In today's culture of instant communication, businesses easily fall into an urgency mentality where they respond to events as they unfold rather than creating and controlling situations.

All too often, employees

work on the “latest and loudest” tasks rather than those most relevant to their job roles and the success of the business as a whole. This approach can foster a downward spiral of multitasking and “firefighting”, which puts employees on the back foot. It saps energy, reduces work satisfaction and ultimately undermines productivity.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, businesses must first slow down to speed up. Rather than being expected to react to every message or interruption immediately, employees should be empowered to prioritise tasks. This may mean muting notifications at appropriate times, or saying no to additional work when it will hamper core tasks.

Poor time management can be a significant cost to businesses, so it's important leaders recognise the value of time as a resource. By bringing in a chief time officer to oversee company-wide tracking and ensure employees are empowered to prioritise their work, businesses can achieve their optimum level of efficiency.

** Fred Krieger is founder and CEO of Scorio.*

Getting a handle on the spread of Covid-19 — with help from a dream

SIMON SASSOON fields questions from BV editor HAL WILLIAMS about ‘visible hygiene’ and his company’s solution to slowing the spread of Covid-19. Even MI6 is interested...

THE IDEA came in a dream, says Simon Sassoon, inventor, entrepreneur, and nephew of British cultural icon Vidal.

In his dream, Sassoon the inventor saw some sort of device hovering above a door handle — and it set his creative mind in motion. With the current mood of fear about contracting coronavirus sitting heavy on society’s shoulder, Sassoon realised he had the germ of an idea (sorry) that was worth pursuing.

Like a true pioneer, he quit his job — and flew to Hong Kong to develop his invention with an engineering team. Eight months later, he emerged with a prototype: the automated door handle disinfecting system. An odd idea pre-corona, perhaps, but one which — in the midst of a pandemic — has reportedly

The pandemic instils new behaviours and a new mindfulness

found favour with The Savoy, Kew Gardens — and even MI6.

The device was christened 99POINT9 (the percentage of germs it claims to kill) and 99POINT9 Hygiene Limited was born. The UK-based company’s system has the backing of bodies and experts including the American Environmental Protection Agency.

BV spoke to Sassoon about the creative and marketing process, from inspiration and initial concept to final product...

BV: You speak of “permanent behavioural changes” as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Do you feel these changes are positive, negative or neutral?

SS: I believe these changes are amazingly positive. Prior to Covid-19, cross-contamination from soiled surfaces such as door handles, posed a significant threat to human health. Yet the general public — on the whole — did not adhere to healthy hygiene practices. A life-changing event such as the pandemic

instils new behaviours and a new mindfulness. Public hygiene will forever be changed — for the good.

BV: Is the drive to capitalise on those changes opportunism or responsible development?

SS: It’s both. In the case of PPE, this presents an opportunity for price-gouging and inferior product. This preys on fear, is irresponsible, and in some cases unsafe. But events such as the global pandemic inspire forward-thinkers to develop game-changing products. Where there is challenge, there is opportunity.

BV: How do you feel about your description in *The New York Times* as a “germ visionary”?

SS: “Visionary” implies I had a plan of sorts. I didn’t. I am a creator. I was inspired to create the 99POINT9 and my only plan was to create a good, innovative product. For me it’s always about the product.

BV: Your dedication to the hygiene problem predates the Covid-19 pandemic: what was your initial impetus?

SS: I have always used a paper towel, feet or elbows to exit a restroom. It struck me that in ever-popular “touchless restrooms” touching the door handle when leaving negates all the positive effects of touchless flushers, taps, soap dispensers, hand sanitiser dispensers and hand driers. The most frequently touched object in the restroom is the door handle. Also, in 2006, I was living in Manhattan. My girlfriend had a habit of bringing a paper towel



The 99POINT9 device

back with her from the restroom. I asked her why she did this, and she said the same thing: she couldn't bring herself to touch the door handle.

BV: *The hospital-grade formula used in your device is said to “kill 99.9 percent of bacteria and viruses, even when dry” — how was it formulated, and by whom?*

SS: It's known as “intelligent mist technology”, and it was created by a board-certified chemist in the UK. The brief delivered to the chemist was to create a disinfecting formulation that would still have efficacy on a surface even after drying. This was achieved by adding a non-toxic pesticidal compound to the formulation that dries on surfaces as an invisible solid.

BV: *Your system has been approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Is yours the only company focusing on this?*

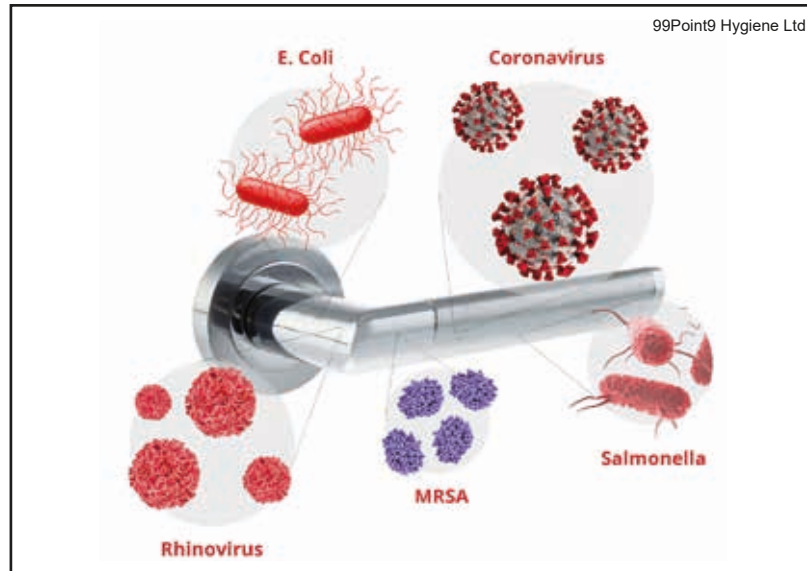
SS: There are other companies who have come to market with alternative solutions, but the 99POINT9 is the only product of its type approved and registered by the EPA.

BV: *Is there an element of OCD or germophobia to all this? Is this more about making the public feel secure than actually minimising a real risk?*

SS: No. Door handles are among the most frequently touched surfaces in our daily lives. It is not surprising they are one of the dirtiest surfaces. A person wipes their nose and touches the door handle, the handle is then touched by the next person — who may touch their face. That completes the circle of cross-contamination. Eliminating this is crucial.

BV: *Your products have found acceptance from some major venues, organisations and brands: The Savoy, The Shard, Wembley Stadium, Kew Gardens, even MI6 and Blenheim Palace. How did you manage to get such high-profile placements?*

SS: I am fortunate to have



The most touched object in the restroom is the door handle

great distributors who support my products and vision.

The pandemic has made us all germ experts

BV: *Is there any evidence that door handles are any more germ-laden than, say, banknotes, coins or handrails?*

SS: Having never swabbed bank notes or coins I couldn't say for certain. With banknotes, it is always the purchaser's prerogative to use a credit/debit card to avoid risk. I would assume handrails pose the same risk as door handles.

BV: *You are quoted as saying that “lifestyles have turned from being convenience first and hygiene second, to the other way round”. Do you think that's permanent, or will we revert to our old ways when (if) the new normal ever presents itself?*

SS: Life-changing events such as lockdowns and enforced isolation can have a remarkable effect on people's mindsets. What is certain is the pandemic has made us all germ experts. We've never been exposed to so much germ information. If a work colleague has a bad cold and you

see them opening a door before you, I believe most people will think twice before touching that handle. We now know non-porous surfaces present real health risks.

BV: *You have the support of the former CEO of the British Medical Association, Tony Bourne. That's a useful partner to have...*

SS: It is always gratifying to have support from a respected individual such as Tony. It brings validation in its own right. I feel privileged to have him with us on this journey.

BV: *I heard something about you being involved with the clean-up after 9/11...?*

SS: I wasn't involved with the clean-up, but a member of our medical advisory board — Dr Marc Wilkenfeld — was. As an expert on environmental health, he contributed valuable data to government commissions and institutions.

BV: *Tell us more about his involvement with your company.*

SS: Marc's a professor of clinical medicine at Columbia University and consultant to the US Department of Environmental Health and Safety. He's also chairman of 99POINT9's medical advisory board. His advice to date has been invaluable, and remains so. He has helped us prove the efficacy of 99POINT9 by creating testing protocols



Simon Sassoon, inventor, entrepreneur, and nephew of British cultural icon Vidal

and subsequent analysis. As chairman, he has added other members to our board including Dr Steven Morse, a globally renowned professor of infectious disease and epidemiology, and

past programme manager for biodefence at the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency.

BV: What stage of production is your technology at? How is

your company doing in financial terms?

SS: We have just begun shipping to UK and international distributors. Financially, we are very close to being self-funded.

SMALL DOESN'T MEAN IMMOBILE: SMEs SHOULD LOOK FURTHER AFIELD

SMALL businesses should re-evaluate trading horizons to take advantage of a link between overseas trade and SME performance.

This is one of the findings of a study by Allica Bank, which analysed data from over 1,000 companies. It ranked their success on a scale that evaluated productivity, growth, consistency and outlook.

In the post-pandemic marketplace, the focus is on recovery plans and survival — but Covid-19 has proven the worth of planning for the future. Overseas trade may seem counter-intuitive when personal travel is limited, but with the rise in e-commerce and a dramatic shift in people's lifestyles during lockdown, small businesses need no longer be confined by geography.

The study found that among Britain's strongest-performing SMEs, 34 percent ranked overseas trade as their greatest driver of success. Two-thirds of the top-performing SMEs were trading abroad, versus just 40 percent of the worst performers.

The report also highlighted the fact that many SMEs could benefit from a domestic expansion of their consumer base, underlining the value of a good website and active social media presence.

Allica Bank's CCO Chris Weller said business owners should think about how to leverage the existing strengths of their enterprise. "Do you have a strong brand reputation that would resonate in neighbouring regions? Are your existing premises large enough to be used in new and additional ways? And do you have any existing relationships where, upon review, you could cut out the middleperson and take on more of the value chain?"

Expansion will be different for all small and medium-sized businesses, Weller says, but there will always be opportunities to take advantage of.

"In times of uncertainty, having multiple sources of revenue can be the difference between survival and closure," he said. "There is no better way to future-proof your business than to conquer new markets."



Shift the focus and adapt for success after pandemic

By NATASHA FRANGOS

THE CHALLENGES facing businesses in 2020 are a balancing act of complex and competing priorities.

There is an increasingly vital sustainability agenda, a need to react to consumer needs, pressure to manage the use of intelligent technologies. It's fair to say we were looking at a fundamental shift in the business landscape even before Covid-19 was added to the mix.

Being totally in tune with teams, customers and the broader market has never been more important, and business leaders suddenly need to digest information and adjust strategies on the hoof.

If there's one thing the crisis has taught us, it's that predicting the future is a fool's game. Matthew Cushen, co-founder of Worth Capital and founder of Uprising Consulting believes businesses should task themselves with identifying possible scenarios linked to change in the coming months or years — Brexit, for instance — then look at likely paths, possible impacts, and consider how each scenario could be dealt with.

Jan Bunge, MD of creative digital studio Squint/Opera, says this is a natural and essential part of

Predicting the future is a fool's game

business. Future-proofing designs by investing up-front, getting feedback and building solutions is a sensible and sustainable approach. It's about creating a mindset of experimentation with even smaller tasks, from mocking-up the front cover of a brochure to building a 3D model of a hotel lobby.

Many are welcoming the flexible working revolution. But has the enforced shift resulted in the best approach for business? Bunge argues it hasn't. Virtual working practices are inefficient, and keeping staff engaged during video conference calls is a challenge.

Squint/Opera has identified a solution by looking to create virtual environments where teams and clients can meet in real-time 3D. Just a few months ago, that would have sounded futuristic; now it has broader appeal.

We should consider how technology can be embraced and

enhanced, not changed.

An industry such as hospitality provides a great example: far from gimmicky robots in reception, the greater availability and use of technology is a chance to upskill employees on how to better understand customers and deliver an improved service. So says James Riley, CEO of Mandarin Oriental International, who sees tech as a time-saver that allows customer needs to be better addressed.

The crisis caught us ill-prepared, but that's no reason to want to turn back the clock. In many cases, this was the direction we were heading in anyway.

Colin Goldstein, commercial growth director at small business lending platform iwoca, points to the rise in job vacancies for data scientists — in a wide range of sectors. He says tools are more universally accessible, so more businesses use data to drive decision-making.

Many businesses may still be in the thick of it, but there are lessons to be learned and adjustments that can be made. Those who recognise this early on, and act in the right way, will be the ones to thrive in years to come.

** Natasha Frangos is head of Corporate, Creative, Media and Technology at haysmacintyre.*

Shipping data point to a rebound in world trade, UNCTAD report reveals

THE NUMBER of ships pulling into ports to unload and load containers rebounded in many parts of the world in the third quarter of 2020, according to new UNCTAD calculations.

This offers a hopeful sign for world merchandise trade, which suffered a historic year-on-year fall of 27 percent in the second quarter.

Maritime shipping saw a dramatic slowdown earlier this year as government measures used to curb the Covid-19 pandemic restricted economic activities and travel. By mid-June, the average number of container vessels arriving weekly at ports worldwide had sunk to 8,722, an 8.5 percent year-on-year drop.

But new data show that,



globally, the average weekly calls have started to recover, rising to 9,265 by early August, just three percent below the levels of one year earlier.

“Most of the manufactured goods that we produce and consume are shipped in containers,” says Shamika N. Sirimanne, director of UNCTAD’s technology and logistics division. “The latest containership port call patterns therefore offer a ray of hope for economic recovery from the pandemic.”

A new UNCTAD article explores how data on the movement of vessels — which

carry over 80 percent of the goods traded globally — can help policymakers navigate the troubled waters of a crisis while they wait for official statistics on trade and gross domestic product.

“Even in the absence of official trade statistics, maritime transport provides reliable near real-time data that can help policymakers make better decisions in managing the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis,” Sirimanne says.

The UNCTAD article shows that, globally, container ship arrivals started to fall below 2019 levels around mid-March 2020 and then to recover gradually around the third week of June.

The start of the decline coincided with the World Health Organisation’s decision on



Most of the manufactured goods that we produce and consume are shipped in containers



Carriers may decide to skip port calls if demand doesn't turn out as expected

March 11 to classify Covid-19 as a pandemic, while the gradual recovery reflects the timeline when some countries began easing out of lockdown.

The UNCTAD article says that although most regions have seen some recovery in the third quarter of 2020, both in absolute numbers and compared to 2019 levels, the global figures hide important regional differences.

For example, while weekly container ship port calls in China and Hong Kong had climbed to 4.1 percent higher than the 2019 numbers by early August, calls in North America and Europe were still 16.3 percent and 13.2 percent below the levels registered one year earlier.

“The regional and country trends appear to follow the progress of the pandemic,” the article says. “Distinct port call patterns in South America and Africa can also be observed, probably reflecting the delayed onset of the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdowns.”

The diverging and volatile port call patterns across regions since

Most regions have seen some recovery in the third quarter of this year

June 2020 also underscore the fragility of the apparent recovery and the presence of factors that extend beyond the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

Not all weekly changes in port calls are the result of the pandemic, UNCTAD says. “Trade policy changes resulting in shifting trade patterns and regulatory measures that affect shipping and ports can also affect port calls.”

The article adds that the ship deployment strategies used by carriers as well as decisions by shipping alliances can influence port call choices as well.

“That’s why it’s also interesting

to look at other indicators, such as container shipping timetables,” says Jan Hoffmann, chief of UNCTAD’s trade logistics branch and one of the article’s authors.

The timetables, which show the deployment of cargo carrying capacity measured in Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEU), reflect shipping lines’ expectations for near future demand.

While container shipments to and from China and the US have resumed in the third quarter, timetables show a continued decline for many European countries.

Hoffmann warns, though, that data on shipping schedules should be interpreted with care because, for example, carriers may decide to skip port calls if demand doesn’t turn out as expected — a phenomenon known as “blank sailings”.

He adds that there is also a certain risk of circular dependency. “Carriers’ expectations may be based on economic forecasts, which in turn may depend partly on economic analysts making use of data on shipping schedules.”

Report: Go all-in with digital transformation to cut costs and grow

FOR THE first time in 10 years, finance executives are predicting an uptick in technology spending.

Research shows that by accelerating cloud migration and the adoption of RPA, data visualisation and advanced analytics solutions, finance can optimise cost efficiency and drive enterprise growth.

Most finance executives expect to see a five to 10 percent increase in the share of the operating budget dedicated to technology in 2020. This is despite a projected 3.4 percent decline in the overall budget.

Technology spending, as a percentage of the finance budget, has been flat or declining since 2009 – but finance is prepared to make incremental investment to advance its digital transformation agenda.

Executives are setting aggressive year-over-year digitalisation targets. At the end of 2019, respondents to the Hackett

Group study expected to see a rise of 26 percent in the adoption of data visualisation tools, 24 percent in RPA implementations, 20 percent in migration to next-gen, cloud-based core finance applications, and an 18 percent increase in the adoption of advanced analytics solutions.

The research recommendations favour faster, digital finance to support companies' two main objectives for 2020: To optimise the cost structure to become more agile in preparation for economic volatility, and to invest in product and services innovation. For finance functions, that means addressing internal cost inefficiencies and working with the business to identify and execute growth opportunities.

According to Hackett Group North American practice leader, Jim O'Connor, "Finance has an aggressive agenda for 2020, with analytics and technological

advancement as the top two transformation priorities.

"Finance executives realise that in (a) competitive digital economy, companies cannot arbitrarily cut cost at the expense of sustainability. It is finance's job to ensure intelligent cost reduction through smart automation and the use of analytics to help management decide where to cut and where to invest."

Because finance is asked to juggle multiple projects, the function must find ways to prioritise. The research identified six critical development areas, defined as those with the largest gaps between the importance of its objectives and finance's ability to deliver on business expectations.

They are: redeploying capacity to value-added work; improving performance measurement; improving agility; aligning skills and talent with business needs; improving analytical capability; and leveraging new technologies.





Nilly Essaides,
Research Director

The study found that finance must take a holistic approach to addressing its critical development areas across all elements of the service delivery model. Finance must be clear how services will be delivered, and focus on people.

“The low prioritisation finance has placed on human capital, including upskilling and reskilling of staff, is one of the most concerning elements of this year’s findings,” says research director Nilly Essaides.

“It’s towards the bottom of the ranking of service delivery model elements and isn’t even on the

top 10 list of finance key issues for 2020.”

Finance must address the skills needed for the future, but it must also decide how services will be executed, and define roles to deliver on business expectations.

Without the right service delivery model, the right roles, people, and skills, even the best technologies will likely fail to produce the results, says Essaides.

Many finance organisations rely on legacy financial applications, the study found. These have the lowest success rate for meeting business expectations.

“Our data show strong growth in the adoption of cloud-based, core finance applications,” said Essaides. More than 70 percent of those who have adopted cloud-based solutions have been able to realise or exceed their business expectations, she added.

Driving cost efficiency and supporting growth should be top strategies for 2020, the study found. Finance has an opportunity to become more of a strategic advisor to support the enterprise growth strategies while also generating the expected cost



Jim O'Connor,
North American Practice Leader

efficiency improvements.

Building the right analytic capabilities, the right technology for efficiency improvement, and aligning skills and talents with business requirements are all priorities.

“Without advanced analytics, management cannot make fully informed decisions, or make them quickly,” says Essaides.

There remain several hurdles, the biggest of which is overcommitment, followed by skills deficiencies, capacity constraints, and technology and process complexity.

LETTING AGENTS LOSE OUT TO DIGITAL MANAGEMENT

A DIGITAL property management platform has a solution for self-managing landlords who lack faith in letting agents.

apropos (it insists on the lower case “a” in its title) aims to transform the rental experience by enabling landlords to track and manage portfolios 24/7, while benefitting from transparency and consistency of service.

A National Landlords Association survey found the proportion of private landlords choosing to let and manage their own properties had increased to 43 percent, up seven percent from Q3 2019. Another study by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government showed 52 percent of landlords canvassed did not use an agent at all, 34 percent used one for letting services only, and just nine percent used an agent for letting and management.

David Alexander, joint managing director of apropos, said the findings were “an accurate reflection” of the changing nature of the industry.

“Throughout the UK, there are over 10,000 letting agents who use the same old traditional business model, working on the basis of landlords handing over their property in order to maximise profits at all costs,” he said. “apropos is reinventing the process.”

New legislative measures can create uncertainty around what is and isn’t allowed across an industry, with added complications for self-managing landlords. apropos offers guidance and ensures that landlords are protected and following procedural guidelines.

The company enables activity monitoring via an online dashboard that displays all transactions 24/7 on laptops, mobile devices or desktops.

Tenants can book viewings and provide feedback on the property, submit and track their rental application, pay rent and book check-in dates. They can also report and monitor maintenance online with no face-to-face contact.

Technology to the rescue in fight to halt spread of virus

BV features a report from the World Bank on water initiatives in Africa to combat the transmission of Covid-19

LIKE many Malawians who live in the peri-urban areas of the capital city, Mary Kooneka’s home does not have running water. To get water for her family, she makes frequent trips to a kiosk in her Mchezi neighbourhood, with cash to pay the attendant.

During the limited hours of the manually-operated kiosk — three hours in the morning and three hours in the evening — congestion was common, increasing the risk of spreading Covid-19.

And, at one Malawi kwacha per litre of water, costs were high for those dependent on water kiosks, making it difficult to engage in the increased hygiene and handwashing practices recommended by the government to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

“I used to receive cash directly from water users as they come to draw water, which is a health risk in this time of Covid-19,” said



Chrissy Kawanga, a former kiosk manager.

In response to community concerns, the Lilongwe Water Board (LWB) began the installation of E-Madzi kiosks, fully-automated systems allowing users to draw water using an e-card. The E-Madzi kiosks gives residents access to water at any time.

The system has also enabled a 65 percent reduction in water costs, because there is no longer need for an attendant, and no waste. With this technology, about 8,750 customers in some of the city’s vulnerable neighbourhoods are now able to access water for improved hygiene practices and handwashing to prevent Covid-19.

The government is supporting the kiosk installment through its implementation of the World Bank-financed Lilongwe Water and Sanitation Project. Soon, what started as a pilot programme with four kiosks in 2019, will increase to 35 additional kiosks around Lilongwe. More funds for the scale-up came from the recently-approved Covid-19 response package financed by the bank.

In addition to the kiosks, the package includes installation of public handwashing facilities in public places across the city led by Lilongwe City Council, training and awareness campaigns on handwashing, and protective equipment for LWB frontline staff.

“The E-Madzi kiosks have simplified the way we manage water kiosks, especially, that we do not need an employee of the water board to be available to sell water and receive cash while ensuring water is available all the time,” said



A woman swiping her card to draw water at the e-madzi kiosk in Lilongwe



John Maweja, a Lilongwe Water Board kiosk technician.

The E-Madzi system is comprised of three main elements: a smartcard, a dispenser unit and a water management system. The system is installed at a kiosk and is operated through an electronic water management device. The card uses Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to allow users to draw water by tapping on the dispenser unit. Consumers with a prepaid smartcard only tap the water dispenser, and credit is deducted from the smartcard balance to the exact amount of water collected. The technology helps to reduce

water wastage due to spillage and non-revenue water. The Water Management System Server captures all the reports from remote kiosks to enable LWB system administrators to remotely monitor the performance and water usage of the kiosk through an easy-to-use web-based dashboard.

“This system is a very useful platform to ensure continuity of water supply services to some of the most vulnerable communities in Lilongwe, at times when water is most needed,” said Odete Muximpua, World Bank task team leader of the LWSP. “The system minimises human

contact, thus reducing the risk of contamination from taps during opening and closing, and cash payment transactions at the kiosk.”

The cashless system further improves the collection efficiency by the water service provider. The supply and installation work for the system costs about \$41,500.

“This system is easy to use and suitable for installation in congested and Covid-19 risk areas like schools, hospitals, bus stations or community meeting places,” said Muximpua. “Congested areas need to have services with reduced contact to minimise the risk of transferring the coronavirus.”

WATERPOUTT IN MALAWI BRINGS TECH AND HOPE

THE EU-funded Waterspout project is working to provide safe drinking water to communities in need.

Researchers are increasing the uptake of Solar Disinfection (SODIS) by designing, piloting and bringing to market three solar-based technologies (solar rainwater reactors, solar jerry cans and solar-ceramic filtrations). SODIS uses solar energy to inactivate pathogens in water stored in transparent containers placed in direct sunlight.

Most SODIS systems typically treat only two litres of water, but the Waterspout solution will treat larger volumes, up to 20 litres. The project has also launched an outreach effort that, with the support of local authorities, aims to ensure that these technologies are adopted by the targeted communities.

Malawi currently reports 86 percent national coverage for drinking water supply. Although access to safe water is increasing, there are “blind spots” where limited access is a result of poor governance, technical failure and water inequality. The most affected are in rural areas.

Waterspout Malawi is working with product designers and local communities to develop a combined solar disinfection and ceramic filtration unit to treat water at the household level, according to Kingsley Lungu of the University of Malawi.



Awards 2020

Autumn
announcement
highlights

AN INVITATION TO VOTE

Readers are cordially invited to vote in the *Business Vision (BV)* Awards Programme.

BV seeks out candidates with outstanding corporate achievements but all eventual winners will have convinced the judging panel that they have the vision to maintain and build on their success well into the future.

Visit our website www.bv.world/awards to place your vote or email us at award@bv.world

We will send you a copy of the nomination form.

The information you provide will be used by the *BV* judging panel but not shared with third parties. As a small token of our thanks you will be entered in a free draw for a one-year complimentary subscription.

No vote is wasted. Your recommendation will receive our full attention.

Nationwide Building Society — Best Banking CSR | UK 2020



NATIONWIDE Building Society (NBS) works in the interest of its 15.9 million members, not external shareholders. It was founded 135 years ago with a mandate to create value for members and communities, and demonstrates outstanding corporate social responsibility (CSR). Last year it donated £2.4m to increase access to affordable housing, and it has earmarked another £3m for the fintech partnership challenge Open Banking for Good. NBS is a living-wage employer with a diverse workforce, up to an including senior management level, and more than 60 percent of its employees are involved with volunteer organisations. The *BV* judging panel congratulates Nationwide Building Society on achieving Carbon Trust Triple Standard accreditation — and on winning the 2020 Best Banking CSR (UK) award.

Catalyst Partners — Best Corporate Finance Advisory Team | MENA 2020



EGYPT began to garner attention as an emerging market in the early '90s, and has steadily evolved into an attractive FDI destination. Egyptian growth investment firm Catalyst Partners establishes relationships with medium-sized enterprises and family businesses. After an incubation period — in which the multidisciplinary Catalyst team mentors clients on design, strategy and process — regular diagnostic assessments are undertaken. The implementation stage could involve a project completion, an IPO launch or an equity exit. Catalyst Partners tailors finance solutions to client needs, with a balance of innovation and risk management. The *BV* judging panel declares Catalyst Partners winner of the 2020 award for Best Corporate Finance Advisory Team (MENA).

Stirixis Group — Best Value Creation Business Consultancy | Greece 2020



STIRIXIS Group is like an attentive gardener, helping budding enterprises to thrive in even the most challenging conditions. Over the past quarter-century, the Greek company has assembled a team of experts in systems-thinking and human behaviour to design, create, develop and manage business concepts for clients worldwide. The consultancy has offices in Greece, Bucharest and London to help businesses find a solid footing and chart a sustainable path for evolution. It tailors solutions to each case, and prides itself on swiftly delivering results. The STIRIXIS Group project portfolio boasts 700 projects in more than 24 countries around the world, across a range of industries. The *BV* judging panel declares the STIRIXIS Group winner of the 2020 award for Best Value Creation Business Consultancy (Greece).

PKA — Best ESG Pension Fund | Denmark 2020



PKA HAS been looking after the pensions of Danish healthcare and social workers since 1954. The member-owned fund makes responsible investments that foster sustainable development. PKA’s ESG practices are continuously monitored to ensure promises and performance align. If a company strays from its standards, there are consequences. PKA, in collaboration with other investors through Climate Action 100+, convinced Shell to make emissions concessions — and blocked another oil giant, Exxon Mobil, when it failed to. PKA’s \$52bn portfolio includes geographically diversified investments in renewable energies, sustainable properties, social impact investments and growth creation. PKA has 330.000 members, and they are encouraged to exercise voting rights and pursue dialogues with investee companies. The **BV** judging panel salutes a company with conviction, and declares PKA winner of the 2020 award for Best ESG Pension Fund (Denmark).

Dubai Islamic Bank — Most Customer-Centric Islamic Bank | UAE 2020



DUBAI Islamic Bank (DIB) aims to become the world’s leading Islamic financial institution by delivering unsurpassed customer service and developing innovative products. The bank provides a range of Shariah-compliant accounts for its two million customers, who can visit one of the 66 DIB branches or use its robust digital banking tools. DIB’s secure mobile banking platform affords customers easy access, peace-of-mind and plenty of rewards; its payments platform is integrated with all Dubai Smart Government apps. The **BV** judging panel announces Dubai Islamic Bank as winner of the 2020 award for Most Customer-Centric Islamic Bank (UAE).

HackerOne — Most Innovative Cybersecurity Platform | Global 2020



DIGITAL security platform HackerOne entices “white hat hackers” to use their powers for good and help to prevent cyber crime. Since 2012, crowd-powered HackerOne has uncovered some 180,000 verified vulnerabilities for 1,800 organisations. A global legion of ethical hackers, over 600,000 in 150 countries, expose security flaws in a controlled environment. HackerOne clients include the US Department of Defence and many Fortune 500 companies, and its hackers are handsomely rewarded for their efforts, claiming \$81m in bounties. HackerOne advisory and triage service teams collaborate with clients’ internal security and development teams to cut the “signal-to-noise ratio” of potential business vulnerabilities. The **BV** judging panel presents HackerOne with the 2020 Most Innovative Cybersecurity Platform (Global) award.

Iberdrola — Outstanding Impact on SDGs | Europe 2020



OVER the past 20 years, Iberdrola has invested more than €100bn to establish itself as a leader in renewable energies. The utility company focuses on three of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals: affordable and clean energy; climate action; and industry, innovation and infrastructure. It has invested €150m to install 150,000 EV charging points over the next five years and allocated nearly €2bn to R&D. Iberdrola's new innovation hub in Bilbao will next year unite 200 professionals on collaborative international projects worth an estimated €110m. The *BV* judging panel announces Iberdrola as winner of the 2020 award for Outstanding Impact on SDGs (Europe).

Siemens — eHighway: Best ESG Freight Traffic Solution | Global 2020



IN 2019, industrial manufacturer Siemens converted a five-kilometre section of German autobahn into the world's longest eHighway. The eHighway applies the principles of electric railways to bring savings and environmental benefits to freight transport. Overhead charging cables are installed on existing roadways, and customised freight trucks draw power from the lines with links (called pantographs) that can connect and disengage at speeds of up to 90 km/h. A hybrid drive recovers energy generated by braking, and powers trucks off the eHighway. The project has proved so successful that Germany may soon approve an additional 4,000 kilometres, converting 60 percent of its trucking industry from fossil fuels to renewables. The *BV* judging panel announces Siemens' eHighway as winner of the 2020 award for Best ESG Freight Traffic Solution (global).

Galt & Taggart — Best Capital Markets Team | Georgia 2020



A STRONG team of professionals with extensive industry experience has helped Galt & Taggart to establish itself as one of Georgia's leading investment banking and management services companies. It started out as a brokerage in 1997 and began issuing bonds in 2014. Galt & Taggart has found a place at the forefront of Georgia's developing capital markets through investment banking, brokerage and research, and asset and wealth management. The team's research capabilities have been compared with those of industry giants such as *Bloomberg* for their in-depth coverage. Galt & Taggart has its own university internship programme to source talent, and it plans to expand its brokerage team. The *BV* judging panel declares Galt & Taggart winner of the 2020 award for Best Capital Markets Team (Georgia).



BELFIUS Bank delivers on today's demands with quality services and a strong digital focus. Its mobile banking app is rated best in Belgium on Google Play and the Apple Store. Belfius Bank has 3.6 million customers, and over 1.4 million access the app at least once daily. Users can make contactless payments, transfer money via Siri and send and receive money — without logging-in. The app can even provide personalised investment advice. A new partnership with Proximus, the largest Belgian telecom, promises a “radical renewal” of the already-powerful app in the near future. The **BV** judging panel presents Belfius Bank with the 2020 award for Best Mobile Banking (Belgium).

Handelsbanken — Best Bank Governance | Sweden 2020



TRUST and respect form the cornerstone for Handelsbanken's operations. The bank has a presence in Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Finland and the UK. Handelsbanken offers competitively priced, quality banking services — and market reviews and customer surveys show it consistently hits the mark. The Swedish Quality Index ranks Handelsbanken customers as the country's most satisfied, and its banking app is also top-rated. Handelsbanken trusts its employees to act in the best interests of clients and bank, and its profit-sharing scheme encourages initiative. Its governance code favours prudent management strategies and seeks to increase financial literacy. The **BV** judging panel is pleased to present Handelsbanken with the 2020 award for Best Bank Governance (Sweden).

Sunfire — Most Disruptive Cleantech Leadership Team | Germany 2020



BASED in the German hi-tech hub of Dresden is one of the stars of the cleantech firmament: Sunfire. The company has perfected the alchemy of converting electricity into chemical energy, and vice-versa, with a product line including electrolysis and fuel-cell systems. There is proof-of-concept at the Sunfire demonstration plant, where water and CO₂ are converted into low-cost industrial hydrogen. Sunfire's versatile e-Syngas aims to break our fossil-fuel addiction, while off-grid power and mobile energy generators drive development into remote areas. Sunfire technology even recycles the heat generated in the production process to increase capacity. The firm envisions a world with renewables seamlessly integrated across applications — and the **BV** judging panel likes the sound of that. Sunfire wins the 2020 award for Most Disruptive Cleantech Leadership Team (Germany).

UMR Corem — Most Innovative Pension Plan Solutions | France 2020



FRENCH mutual union UMR understands that economic, technological and regulatory upheavals can create uncertainty — and opportunity. The pension provider, launched in 2002, offers Corem as a complementary retirement solution to promote ethical savings. The plan pools members' savings contributions in bond, stock and real estate investments. Corem's management policy is marked by environmental responsibility, transparency, simplicity and long-term vision. Members accumulate points for contributions, which convert into a lump sum or lifetime annuities upon retirement. In a challenging year, the union reports positive — and improved — financial results. The *BV* judging panel announces UMR Corem as winner of the 2020 award for Most Innovative Pension Plan Solutions (France).

Spotify — Most Disruptive Streaming & Media Provider | Global 2020



WITH 299 million users, Spotify is the world's most popular audio-streaming subscription service. The company has proven the merits of the “freemium” business model, and has paid more than €15bn to rightsholders since its launch in 2008. Listeners can access 60 million songs and the platform has become a vital space for musicians and music lovers. In an industry decimated by Covid-19, Spotify has pledged to match up to \$10m in donations for relief organisations, and promotes fundraising initiatives through the platform. The *BV* judging panel congratulates Spotify, the 2020 winner of the global award for Most Disruptive Streaming & Media Provider.

Banco BPM — Best Corporate Banking Services | Italy 2020



BANCO BPM offers advanced financial instruments, specialist advisory services and internationalisation support for corporate treasury management. It takes the time to understand its clients, and with geographic and industry expertise it can offer tailored solutions to meet specific needs. Banco BPM walks hand-in-hand with its corporate customers, specialising in serving companies that exceed €1bn in turnover. It divides its territorial structure into five macromarkets, and provides industry consulting services that aim to amplify clients' long-term potential. The *BV* judging panel declares Banco BPM winner of the 2020 award for Best Corporate Banking Services (Italy).



Labster — Outstanding Contribution to Quality Science Education | Global 2020



LABSTER has created an educational platform with advanced lab simulations to support open-ended scientific investigation. The virtual lab is used by more than three million students worldwide at secondary schools and international universities including Harvard, MIT, University of Hong Kong and Imperial College London. Labster also offers a range of professional training programmes in safety and lab protocols. The platform has received praise for the engaging gamification and comprehensive curriculum that underscore the real-world relevance of science. Labster has offices in Denmark, Switzerland, the US and Indonesia — and has secured more than \$10m in R&D grant funding. The *BV* judging panel names Labster winner of the 2020 global award for Outstanding Contribution to Quality Science Education.

Twiga — Best Social Impact Retail Platform | East Africa 2020



TWIGA connects more than 35,000 vendors and 13,000 farmers in Kenya through its marketplace platform. Vendors enjoy a range of services and fair prices, while free delivery tracking assures food safety. Suppliers benefit from a guaranteed market and transparent pricing as well as resources, agricultural advisory and credit access via Twiga partners. In 2019, just five years after its launch, Twiga raised over \$30m in investor backing and reported a revenue increase of 500 percent. The *BV* judging panel is pleased to present Twiga with the 2020 award for Best Social Impact Retail Platform (East Africa).

NN Group — Best Insurance Corporate Governance | Netherlands 2020



NN GROUP'S value code of caring, clarity and commitment is reflected throughout its operations. The group provides insurance, pension, investment and banking services to some 18 million customers in 18 countries. NN Group has committed to achieving a net-zero carbon investment portfolio by 2050 and is listed in the top 10 percent of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices for its ESG performance. It merited first place for tax transparency and third for responsible investment from the Dutch Association of Investors for Sustainable Development. As of 2019, women held 36 percent of NN Group senior management positions, and 68 percent of its AUM were ESG-integrated. The *BV* judging panel announces NN Group as winner of the 2020 award for Best Insurance Corporate Governance (Netherlands).

Sweet taste of success as Jelly Drops give UK elderly a necessary hydration hit

LONDON start-up Jelly Drops is helping to boost proper hydration among elderly people and those living with dementia.

These groups have been among the hardest-hit by the pandemic, and frequently suffer from dehydration for the simple reason that they forget to drink. Some 37 percent of older people admitted to hospital are acutely dehydrated.

Jelly Drops are sugar-free water sweets, made up of 95 percent water and electrolytes.

They were developed by 26-year-old inventor, Lewis Hornby, in response to his late grandmother Pat's struggle with dehydration due to dementia. After gaining insights from a month of living in Pat's care home, Lewis developed the product with doctors, dieticians and speech and language therapists.

Jelly Drops is supported by several investors, including a £100,000 R&D investment from the Alzheimer's Society as part

of its new Innovation Accelerator Programme. The company will donate one percent of its profits to the charity.

After 18 months of development and several months of beta testing during Covid-19, the product has officially hit the UK market.

Jelly Drops has been working on trials with a number of care homes across the UK. With their obvious hydration benefits, the sweets have helped to give staff and relatives peace-of-mind about elderly family and friends. The teardrop-shaped sweets come in trays of 24, in six flavours: strawberry, raspberry, blackcurrant, orange, lemon and lime. Each tray equates to 300ml of water. The shape was designed to make them easy to pick up.

Inventor Hornby says initial response has been "fantastic".

"We are very excited to supply the 50,000 people on our waiting list," he said. "We have seen a huge demand from both



Lewis Hornby, inventor

care homes and the families of people with dementia... It's been heartwarming to hear the feedback from our first customers; they enjoy Jelly Drops as much as Grandma did."

Colin Capper, head of research and development at the Alzheimer's Society, said the product was one of the first to be accepted into the Accelerator Programme. "We've been thrilled to support its journey," he said. "Jelly Drops are key to helping overcome the everyday challenges faced by people with dementia, challenges that have been amplified by the pandemic."

It's projected that by 2050, some two million people in the UK will be living with dementia; at present, the figure stands at 850,000. Dementia has been identified as a leading killer of the 21st century, with £26bn spent by governments each year to help those affected.

* More information:
www.jellydrops.com.



The teardrop-shaped sweets come in trays of 24, in six flavours

Thames Estuary freeport plan reveals hopes — and benefits

THE THAMES Estuary Growth Board has set out guiding principles for freeport proposals within the region.

Putting the needs and interests of Estuary residents first, the principles lay out what the board, led by estuary envoy Kate Willard, expects from a freeport.

Freeports have different customs rules to the rest of the country. The government aims for freeports to become innovative hubs and to boost global trade, attract inward investment and increase productivity. As well as tariff flexibility, customs facilitations and tax measures, freeport status will offer wider benefits, such as planning reforms, funding for infrastructure improvements and innovation incentives.

Setting out the criteria is a key step in the board’s activity since the launch of its action plan, The Green Blue. The freeport proposals demonstrate the influence and drive of the board

Maximising the scheme’s potential and opportunities

as it pushes for infrastructure changes that will benefit local communities.

Willard said the Thames Estuary was well placed to become one of 10 freeports proposed for the UK. “It will generate jobs and opportunities for the whole area,” she said, “benefitting communities along the estuary that need it most. The emerging freeport proposals must align with The Green Blue to truly maximise the benefits, potential and opportunities.”

The six principles set out by the board are:

Economic: Proposals need to demonstrate how freeport status would improve productivity, employment opportunities, boost trade, improve skill levels and overall prosperity across the Thames Estuary, and how it would support the Growth Board ambitions of £115bn additional GVA by 2050.

Investment: Proposals must also show the public and private investment that freeport status would bring. This includes the physical and digital infrastructure needed and how investment will support wider issues such as housing.

Innovation: It must be shown how freeport status will drive innovation, and how it will be used to address wider issues such as climate change. Innovative approaches to training and development must be detailed.

Environment: There is a need to demonstrate the opportunity to develop innovative approaches, as well as how the natural



Thames Estuary Growth Board

London City Airport is committed to building a sustainable future for the aviation industry as a whole



The government aims for freeports to become innovative hubs and to boost global trade

environment will be protected and enhanced.

Regeneration: The opening up of new opportunities, including new employment and

training, and levelling-up of the region. Proposals must show how they bring benefits to the Thames Estuary, articulating the economic, social and

environmental benefits.

Community: The need to show support for local communities: raising awareness of opportunities and aspirations.

NOMINATE A BUSINESS FOR ESTUARY PLAN — AND MEET FELLOW VISIONARIES

WITH SUSTAINABILITY playing a key role in the Thames Estuary's Green Blue plan, businesses that put CSR at the heart of their operations, policies and values can nominate themselves for "Estuary Visionary" accreditation.

The Thames Estuary Growth Board aims to rally those who practice sustainable growth, and celebrate their efforts by sharing ideas with other businesses across east London, north Kent and south Essex.

Estuary Visionaries will be championed on the Thames Estuary website, at events where they can share good green practice with like-minded businesses, and as ambassadors integral to marketing the estuary, domestically and internationally.

They will also work with government-backed estuary envoy Kate Willard in her bid to create "the greatest, greenest estuary in the world".

"We are looking for more businesses like these so that we can share ideas, inspire learning, future-proof our environment and stand as an example to the rest of the UK of how to deliver stronger, greener growth," she said.

Businesses already making significant contributions include Bericote Properties, which is building a 2.3m sq ft distribution centre in Dartford for a global retailer.

The firm is also working to re-purpose an old power station to improve the skyline of the estuary, using PV cells on the roof — making it one of the largest green roofs of any building outside of London.

There are other inspiring companies involved. London Southend Airport has improved its surrounding air quality year-on-year, and has sent zero waste to landfill since 2015. In 2019 it reduced its CO2 emissions by 36 percent per unit revenue. Almost 20 percent of the airport's electricity comes from renewable sources.

London City Airport (LCY) is committed to building a sustainable future for the aviation industry as a whole. It has the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 — without using carbon off-setting. In 2019 the airport was rated as carbon-neutral by the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme.

Elvis and Kresse rescue materials that would otherwise go to landfill to make sustainable lifestyle accessories — and donate 50 percent of all profits to charity. All packaging is made from waste products, making them plastic free, and the company runs on renewable energy. They have partnered with Burberry and have saved 250 tonnes of waste from going to landfill.

Ward Security holds an ISO 14000 environmental management system accreditation. It operates a fleet of 90 vans, but limits on speed, acceleration and braking have reduced emissions by 25 percent, while water use has been cut by 18 percent.

** To apply to become an Estuary Visionary, visit:
<https://thamesestuary.org.uk/thames-estuary-visionaries/>*

Clock is ticking, and TikTok's future hangs in the balance

By HEATHER LEAH SMITH

TIKTOK must shore-up a deal to offload its US operations before a divest-or-depart deadline set by US President Donald Trump.

The name should be familiar to anyone who pays attention to market news, as well as billions of youngsters around the world. The company has been caught up in escalating tensions between China and the US.

The short-form video-sharing app is best known to Gen Z, with over 40 percent of its users aged

Deeper conversations are bubbling below decks

between 16 and 24. The app has been downloaded over two billion times, and 800m people worldwide regularly use it to

create or consume entertaining content.

It's an engaged community of (mostly) young people doing typically silly things — lip-synching, dance challenges, comedy skits — but some deeper conversations are bubbling below decks.

Trump began citing the app, owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, as a national security risk and issued an executive order on August 6 that would ban TikTok if the ownership didn't



The app has been downloaded over two billion times, and 800m people worldwide regularly use it



Trump cites the app, owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, as a national security risk

change. He issued a second order a week later, demanding that TikTok delete any data obtained from US users.

TikTok has taken steps to clear its name, establishing a “transparency centre” to counter rumours and initiating a court case to challenge the ban.

It has amassed more than 80m US users, and to many, the platform is a springboard for businesses and brands. The community is considered an important gateway for corporate America to capture the next generation of consumers.

In a recent interview with *Forbes*, John Holdridge, GM of the social content company Fullscreen, attributed the app’s growing popularity to the global reach of its community and the almost eery accuracy of its algorithm,

“We’ve all gotten so caught up in maximising reach by growing a massive fan base through subscribers or followers,” he said, “so it’s refreshing to have a platform with an algorithm that

rewards content above all else...

“It’s pushing meme culture to new heights, giving Gen Z a visible place to be themselves while allowing brands to inspire their fans in authentic, entertaining ways. They are also making real moves to grow user trust, which will ultimately determine the future of the platform.”

Some prospective suitors have been lined-up for the hurried sale of the app, with a Microsoft-Walmart partnership and a consortium of investors led by Oracle heading the list.

The deal, which would cover TikTok’s operations in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, could be worth up to \$30bn. President Trump has repeatedly suggested that the Treasury should see a slice of that action.

But Beijing has just thrown a curve ball: a regulatory update that might exclude TikTok’s algorithm from the sale, making it difficult to determine an accurate valuation.

The Economist likens the

prospective deal to the iconic pairing of IBM and Linux, when the mainstream giant backed a counterculture renegade whose technology now underpins modern cloud computing. The publication predicts that TikTok (and its algorithms for individually curated content suggestions) “could become the Linux of social media — and a model for others”.

All this has given the competition time to charge. Instagram launched a similar feature with Reels and has begun attempting to woo TikTok content creators with lucrative offers.

Rival Triller poached some of TikTok’s top influencers and is raising \$250m at a \$1.25bn valuation. Snapchat saw a boost in first-time downloads in August, up 29 percent YOY, compared with only nine percent in July.

Although some content creators have jumped ship and others begun to hedge their bets on competing platforms, the majority of the community is held hostage, waiting to see how the situation plays out.

Seeking innovators with a hunger for sustainability

Sowing the seeds of success with a Wonderful twist;
HEATHER LEAH SMITH reports

DRINKS and snacks maker The Wonderful Company has a biomass problem — and it’s offering a massive payday to the team that can solve it.

Los Angeles-based POM Wonderful is one of the holding company’s brands, specialising in pomegranates: whole fruit, snacks and juice. The juicing process creates a hefty waste stream, around 50,000 tons of pomegranate husks — or pomace — each year. The pomace has traditionally been sold as livestock feed, specifically for dairy cows, but the company believes an alternative outlet could deliver more value for the business and the planet.

Put on your thinking caps

More value for the business and the planet

and start brainstorming, *BV* readers, because the Wonderful Company is awarding up to \$1m in funding for the most creative and sustainable solutions to its biomass challenge.

This is a search for solutions with data-backed economics and structured scalability for positive environmental and social impacts — and claims must be supported by evidence. Teams

with solid reputations and strong stakeholder relationships are encouraged to apply. Winners must be willing and able to pilot the solution at POM Wonderful facilities.

The competition will be judged by a panel of experts in agriculture, food waste and sustainability, including the husband-and-wife owners of The Wonderful Company, Stewart and Lynda Resnick.

Interested innovators had until October 19 to sign up for an online virtual Q&A. Letters of intent are due the first week of December and full proposals due by January 29, 2021. Winners will be notified and contracts negotiated in April 2021.



POM Wonderful specialises in pomegranates: whole fruit, snacks and juice

A scenic landscape featuring rolling green hills under a sunset sky. A winding road curves through the valley, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and inviting.

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on the
road...

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Royal Enfield outsources production to Argentina as global sales accelerate

AS INDIA'S Royal Enfield motorcycles take the biking world by storm, the Chennai firm has announced that it will begin outsourcing assembly and production to Argentina.

This is a first in the British-born company's modern history. Enfield's partnership with Grupo Simpa goes back to 2018 when it became the Argentinian distributor.

It's a big deal for a company that is as much of a motorcycling icon in India as Harley-Davidson is in the States. The recent company announcement of the joint venture was attended by no less a figure than Argentinian President Alberto Fernández.

Royal Enfield entered the Argentinian bike market with a dealership in Vicente Lopez, Buenos Aires. It has expanded to operate five stores in the country,

Old-school vibe but modern technology and componentry

one of the biggest two-wheel markets in Latin America.

Enfield — affectionately known in biking spheres as RE — has captured the imagination of the market with retro offerings which have an old-school vibe (literally) but modern technology and componentry. Reliable, functional and charming, the recipe has taken Western markets — Britain included —

by storm. Its 650cc twins, the Interceptor and the Continental undercut Japanese and European manufacturers on price and often outstrip them in character.

RE has 31 stores and 40 retail outlets in Latin America. The assembly plant will be based at Grupo Simpa's facility situated in Campana in Buenos Aires.

As well as the 650cc twins, the single-cylinder 410cc Himalayan "all-roads, no roads" slugger will also be constructed. The 500cc and 350cc Classic Bullet singles, which RE India continued to produce since the closure of the British plant in Redditch in 1971.

Enfield was the oldest of the British bike makers, predating Norton and Triumph with its inauguration in 1907, and the marque has the world record for the longest period of continuous production.

HARLEY PUTTERS-OUT IN INDIA AS TAXES AND COMPETITION END THE FIRM'S ASIAN DREAM

AILING Harley-Davidson is pulling out of the world's largest motorcycle market — India.

The iconic US motorcycle brand is less commonly seen on Indian roads than the home-brewed Hero and (internationally popular) Royal Enfields, but it still had an enthusiastic following.

H-D has said it will stop manufacturing at the Bawal plant in the north of the country and scale-back sales operations. About 70 jobs are expected to be lost, and Harley faces £59m in restructuring costs.

The Bawal plant was opened in 2011 but has never really found its feet. Local brand Hero and the ubiquitous Honda machines make up the bulk of the annual 17m scooter and motorcycle sales.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen to attract and retain foreign firms, but Harley-Davidson's decision to pull back follows one by Toyota to halt any expansion in India because of high taxes. General Motors pulled out of India in 2017, and Ford has shifted most of its Indian assets into a joint venture with Mahindra & Mahindra.

India's import tariffs were slashed by 50 percent after protests by US President Donald Trump at the high level, but H-D has struggled to survive. Globally, its sales are down and its iconic status is under threat as it appears to be failing to attract younger riders. It recorded its first quarterly loss in ten years from April to June.

The introduction of the electric Livewire series and the smaller capacity 750 Street models has failed to capture much public attention, or restore the faith of the Harley hardliners who favour "big inch" V-twins.

With Indian sales averaging fewer than 3,000 units a year, H-D has battled for a place in one of Asia's most vibrant two-wheeler markets.



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Your growth matters

By RICHARD THOMAS

In terms of column inches, the biggest news to hit the EV world this quarter has been Tesla's annual shareholders' meeting, Battery Day, in September.

The assembled press quoted Elon Musk as saying Tesla would be selling a fully-autonomous car for \$25k in "about three years". We here at the **BV** Motoring desk are interested in just how he's going to accomplish that.

Improvements in battery technology are an obvious answer, hence the odd name for the annual meeting. Tesla has secured its own lithium deposit in Nevada, enough to supply "all US-made vehicles for the future", according to Musk. It is also developing a new extraction process using table salt and increasing the amount of nickel in its batteries at the expense of cobalt, the mining of which has both humanitarian and environmental concerns (as reported in last Winter's **BV**).

This may or may not be linked to the announcement of cobalt-free battery technology by the University of Texas in July. Along with new battery tech, Tesla will also start recycling batteries in Q4 — and starts next week, at the time of writing. All-in-all, the new developments are set to reduce manufacturing costs by 56 percent and increase range by 54 percent. You would have thought that this would please the



Plug it in!

markets, but many commentators had predicted the announcement of a "million-mile" battery — so on the day Tesla's share price actually dropped.

Musk took a swipe at the idea of grid storage, saying "its utility is less than you think". Given that Tesla makes and sells its Powerwall batteries for off-peak home power storage, you could be forgiven for filing that under "Well, he would say that". He also claimed that Tesla batteries could enable flight by 2023, when they will reach an energy density of 400Wh/kg.

As reported in **BV** Autumn 2019, UK company OXIS Energy is already shipping 400Wh/kg batteries to its customers, including Bye Aerospace, and is aiming for 500Wh/kg by the end of 2020 (pandemic permitting). The firm's current batteries last for 250 charge cycles, but the target for the near future is for 500 cycles, comparable to today's Li-ion batteries.

Airbus recently expressed the view that battery technology is developing too slowly; it is looking instead at hydrogen technology to get zero-emissions long-haul aircraft flying by 2035. However, Wright Electric in the US is still on course to get its battery powered Wright 1 electric airliner into service by 2030. Two opposing viewpoints on the future of battery technology in aviation, but Wright has recently (October 13) received the backing of the US Department of Energy. Its

Advanced Research Projects Agency has awarded Wright Electric a \$600,000 contract to support the development of electric motors and associated systems for commercial electric aircraft.

In other news, the plug-in hybrid (PHEV) has been described by Greenpeace as "wolf in sheep's clothing". Working with environmental pressure group Transport & Environment, Greenpeace analysed real-world usage data and found that, on average, PHEVs emit at least three times the CO2 claimed in official tests. Part of this is down to owners not plugging their vehicles in to charge them, instead relying on the engine to charge the battery on long trips.

Another factor is the cars' habit of switching to the more polluting engine mode when you would least expect it, for example when the windscreen demister is turned on. But it's not all bad news on the PHEV front. In these days of Ultra-Low Emissions Zones (effective in London) and weekday bans on older diesel engines (Paris), PHEVs from some manufacturers are rising to the challenge. New BMW and Ford models will use live location data to switch to battery-only operation within pre-defined zones.

The option has recently been enabled for all compatible BMW PHEVs when they find themselves



OXIS Energy battery and cell



Courtesy: Wright Electric

The planned Wright 1



Scania's new electric truck

in London or Birmingham (UK), even though Birmingham's Low Emission Zone isn't expected to come into operation until some time in 2021. Ford has done the same for its Transit van, a long-time favourite of delivery drivers (and bank-robbers, if you've ever watched *The Sweeney*).

In mid-September, Scania launched its new fully electric truck, with a range of 250km if the 300kWh, nine-battery option is chosen. These can be fully recharged in under 100 minutes using a 130kW charger. There is also a five-battery option with a 130km range that charges in 55 minutes, and a PHEV with a range on battery power of 60km. Anders Lampinen, director of New Technologies, said sustainable, emission-free transport is an increasing requirement for transport companies. "More and more cities have established low-emission zones in centres, requiring alternatives such as electric propulsion," he said.

The trend towards electrification is often bemoaned by petrolheads, who love high-octane, high-performance internal combustion engines. But the performance sector of the EV market is growing, with strong, if not unanimous, support from sports car manufacturers. We covered the 200mph all-electric Evija from Lotus in the Winter issue of *BV*. Ferrari has entered the market with a PHEV, Porsche has the all-electric Taycan, and Tesla the Model S. Jaguar is in there, but its electric offering is an SUV rather than a sportster.

Audi is tipped to replace its R8 conventional sports car with the RS e-tron in three or four years.

Which brings us to Rimac. The Croatian manufacturer of electric hypercars, part-owned by Porsche, is working with Audi on development of the RS e-tron. Now, according to *Car* magazine, Rimac is set to acquire the Bugatti brand from Audi parent company VW Group. Former F1 world champion and electric mobility fan Nico Rosberg has ordered himself a Rimac C_Two hypercar for delivery in 2021, but a tie-up with the famous Bugatti brand would arguably bring even more brand recognition and publicity.

DRIVING EXPERIENCE

Despite all this progress, the CEO of British F1 team and sports car manufacturer McLaren, Mike Flewitt, thinks that full electric technology isn't ready for supercars, although that might be more to do with customer demand. In a recent interview with CNBC, he said: "We think we will move into full EV, let's say, in the second half of this decade. Full EV ... doesn't really work in the supercar segment. We retain an internal combustion engine to provide the driving experience that the car is all about."

The UK government is planning to prohibit the sale of new petrol- and diesel-engined cars by 2035. Somewhat surprisingly, oil company Shell is not only supporting this policy but has called for it to be brought forward to 2030. Needless to say, it has a cunning plan. Shell had been already been installing 50kW chargers across its network of



Rimac C_Two



Shell Recharge EV charger

petrol station forecourts when it installed its first 150kW charger in Battersea, London, last year. It also has an agreement with Ionity to install super-fast 350kW chargers across 10 European countries. And in February of this year, it submitted a planning application for the total conversion of its petrol station in Fulham, West London, to a state-of-the-art, all-electric charging station. The tide is turning.

Last stop, Africa. In Kenya, the installed electricity generation capacity massively exceeds peak demand, and 93 percent of that comes from renewable sources: wind, solar, geothermal and hydro. Electricity generation, transmission and retail companies in the country have been tentatively starting to promote EVs, but they have a way to go to match the efforts in Ghana.

The proportion of Ghana's supply that comes from renewable hydro and solar sources is still less than half — but its installed capacity is more than double its peak demand. Providing a market for this untapped supply and reducing CO2 emissions by 15 percent by 2030 are the driving factors (sorry!) behind Ghana's Drive Electric Initiative. Ghanaian company Accraire is supplying BEVs and PHEVs as well as accessories such as charging stations for home or commercial installation. The low cost of electricity — less than \$0.10/kWh for homes — is another factor encouraging EV uptake, with some people importing their own EVs directly from China.

Car dealers call for increase in governmental support to assist recovery for sector

A MAJORITY of UK car dealers are not in the least concerned about their future prospects, despite the impacts of Covid-19.

A study by Close Brothers Motor Finance — conducted as showrooms began reopening this summer — found that 55 percent of dealers felt “completely confident” about the survival of their business.

But three in 10 admit to worrying about an economic downturn, with the country going into recession, and 13 percent are worried about a second wave of coronavirus.

The motor industry is looking to the government for additional support. A quarter of dealers want

A quarter want a reduction in business rates

a reduction in business rates, and a fifth would like to see the current measures phased-out rather than brought to a sudden stop.

Despite almost a quarter of dealers being concerned about stock availability, only four percent want increased support for manufacturers. About one in

ten would like to see changes to the timeline on the diesel and petrol ban, brought forward from 2040 to 2030.

Seán Kemple, MD of Close Brothers Motor Finance, said government support was vital to the sector’s future, and would aid related industries.

“Emergency measures such as cuts to business rates, the furlough scheme, and frozen fuel duties, have been invaluable,” he said. “Measures which help the motor industry will have a knock-on effect to manufacturing, retail, and unemployment, so it’s crucial that the government, dealers, manufacturers, and finance providers work together.”



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Only four percent of dealers want increased support for manufacturers



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