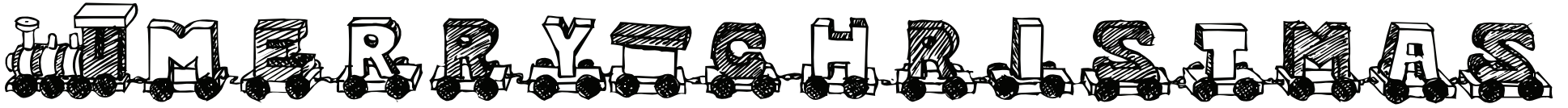


# h CORRESPONDENT

DECEMBER 2006

THE CLIENT UPDATE FROM HARBINSON MULHOLLAND



## Top Tips on How to 'Delight Your Clients'

*Merely satisfying your clients' expectations is not enough in today's business world. You must "delight" clients if you are to stay ahead in the game.*

In the fiercely competitive business world of today, businesses have to fight harder than ever before to win new clients and as the modern consumer is more knowledgeable and less loyal than ever before, he/she is more likely to take the time to shop around for the best deal. As businesses employ individuals with greater skill sets and expertise, the result has been greater and better outputs aided by higher standards and more sophisticated levels of technology. As a result, your clients may be tempted by competitors who can offer them a more attractive service. As business owners, you should be focused on "delighting" your clients and going that extra mile to serve their needs, so that "those temptations" which they may have, will remain idle in their minds.

**So how you can 'delight' your clients.....**

1. **Ensure regular contact** – Many businesses fail to keep in regular contact with clients and only contact them whenever they need to. However, by taking the time out, on a regular basis, to contact your clients whether it be by email, telephone or face to face can make all the difference. It lets your clients know that you are genuinely interested in both them and their businesses.
2. **Reward your clients for referred work** – If your clients refer work to you, it is important to show your appreciation by ensuring you thank them either by sending a card or a small gift. By showing your appreciation, your clients will feel valued and will be encouraged to refer you more work and that will mean

more potential business for you. By doing this you will benefit and so will your clients.

3. **Organise corporate events for your clients** – Invite your clients to a corporate hospitality event such as a summer barbecue, wine and cheese evening or a Christmas party. Clients will be able to mingle with other members of your staff and get to know and understand your business better. By encouraging social integration between your clients and staff will help to strengthen the relationship and build customer loyalty.
4. **Keep your clients informed about your business** – You may think that your clients will not be interested in your organisation but they probably are! Clients will want to know how your company is performing, what you are doing and any recent company news you may have that will be of interest to them. Therefore, you should communicate this to them regularly through annual reports, monthly newsletters and ongoing mail shots.
5. **Provide advice and recommendations without having to be asked** – When conducting work for your clients, it is worth your while pointing out to them other areas of their business that they could change or improve. Clients will appreciate the fact that you are going out of your way to make further recommendations to them and they will believe that you really want to help them to improve their business. It could also mean potential work for another department in your organisation.

6. **Take time to get to know your clients so that you understand exactly what it is they want** – If you feel that you are not 100% sure what your clients are expecting from you, then don't hesitate to be honest with them and find out exactly what it is they want and inform them of exactly what it is that you can do to help them. This may require you to take time out from your days work and to spend time at their premises, to get a feel for their business and for them to get to know you. However, be patient, as it may take time but it will be worth it in the end as your clients will appreciate your efforts and you yourself will ensure that you get it right.
7. **Be proactive** – Being ahead of the game will impress your clients and also give you that competitive edge. This will involve some sort of regular environmental scanning which could entail regular reading of business magazines and business websites to see what is currently happening and what is predicted to happen. By being forward thinking, your clients will rest assured that you are responding to any foreseeable changes in their business environment that could possibly affect them and that you are constantly thinking ahead for new ideas and opportunities.

So as you can see, taking these inexpensive approaches towards the way you deal with your clients could mean the difference between meeting their expectations and exceeding their expectations. However, it is down to you and your team to ensure that this happens!

## Xmas Card Donation

This year, HM is supporting Fleming Fulton School with a donation in lieu of sending Christmas cards to our clients and business colleagues.

Fleming Fulton School offers an integrated programme of education and development for pre-school children to young adults with physical disabilities.

To find out more visit  
[www.flemingfulton.org.uk](http://www.flemingfulton.org.uk)

May we take this opportunity to wish all our clients and business contacts a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2007.



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## People in Focus



Tax Manager,  
Mary-Jo O'Hagan

**Name:** Mary-Jo O'Hagan

**Role:** Tax Manager

**Qualifications & Experience:**

Mary Jo qualified with the Chartered Institute of Taxation in 1991 with Price Waterhouse (now PricewaterhouseCoopers). She has 18 years experience with PwC, the last 8 as a manager in the personal tax department. Mary Jo specialises in all aspects of personal taxation and has considerable experience of professional partnerships, trusts and capital taxes.

**Outside work:**

Mary Jo is married with 3 children. Her interests include visits to the gym, swimming, reading and a good bottle of wine.

**Contact Details:**

[mohagan@harbinson-mulholland.com](mailto:mohagan@harbinson-mulholland.com)

## Quote of the quarter

"He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money"

*Benjamin Franklin*

# Why would you need a Forensic Accountant?

## What is a forensic accountant?

*As the number of business disputes and investigations increase, there is a growing need for assistance from professionals such as forensic accountants.*

Many of you will have already heard the term '*forensic accountant*'. However, how many of you can tell me what a forensic accountant actually does?

The term '*forensic*' is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as '*relating to or denoting the application of scientific methods to the investigation of crime*' or '*relating to courts of law*'.

The first definition is closely linked to that of a '*forensic scientist*' who is responsible for gathering evidence that may contribute valuable information to a specific criminal case.

The forensic accountant actually does the same in terms of financial and business information.

However, it is the second definition '*relating to courts of law*' that is probably closest to defining that of a forensic accountant.

## What does a forensic accountant do?

A forensic accountant is often involved in the following:

- Analysing financial evidence i.e. business accounts, legal documents etc.

- Calculating financial loss.
- Collating and communicating findings in the form of a report.
- Assisting in the presentation of the evidence, including acting as an expert witness to support trial evidence.

## How a Forensic Accountant Can Help You

*A forensic accountant's in-depth knowledge and expertise in accounting will ensure you secure the best possible outcome in your case.*

A forensic accountant can:

- Review a situation and provide recommendations on possible courses of action.
- Assist with the protection and recovery of assets
- Obtain the necessary documentation to support or refute a claim.
- Review the relevant documents to form an initial assessment of the case and identify areas of loss.
- Review the opposing expert's report and identify any weaknesses.
- Assist with the settlement negotiations.
- Attend a trial and give supporting evidence as an expert witness.



Director of Forensic Services,  
Brendan Dwyer

## Types of cases a Forensic Accountant can be involved in

- Fraud investigations
- Fuel smuggling
- Loss of profits
- Money laundering
- False accounting
- Theft
- Professional negligence
- Breach of contract
- Personal injury / fatal cases
- Employment rights
- Matrimonial cases

For further information on any of the aspects of forensic accounting discussed above or to speak with one of our experts about a case, **contact Brendan Dwyer on 028 9044 5100 or email [forensicteam@harbinson-mulholland.com](mailto:forensicteam@harbinson-mulholland.com)**

# Tax Tips For You

## Minimising Van Benefits from 2007/08

**From 6 April 2007**, the benefit in kind for an employee provided with a van for private use will increase from £500 to £3,000. If the employer also pays for the cost of private fuel, the benefit will increase to £3,500.

The employer will suffer an increased Class 1A NIC liability as a result of these changes.

N.B. This benefit will not be imposed on employees who are provided with vans primarily for business use where the private use of the van is restricted to ordinary commuting. HMRC will permit private use of the van provided it is "insignificant". Examples given by HMRC as 'insignificant' are: taking a slight detour to drop a child at school or to stop at a shop on the way to work.

However, using the van to do the supermarket shopping once a week is considered to be 'significant' and therefore the van benefit will be imposed.

If you are an employer who provides vans to employees, you may wish to review the terms on which they are provided to ensure the increased benefit charge arising from 6 April 2007 is not imposed.

## Furnished holiday accommodation

Beneficial tax treatment is provided to the **letting of furnished holiday accommodation in the UK**.

To qualify as a furnished holiday let, each tax year the accommodation must be available for commercial letting to the public as holiday accommodation for at least 140 days. It must actually be let for 70 days and for a period of at least 7 months (not necessarily continuous) it must not normally be in same occupation for a continuous period exceeding 31 days.

Tax benefits of a property being treated as furnished holiday lettings include:

- capital allowances may be claimed on plant and machinery used in the letting
- any loss incurred may be offset against other taxable income
- the more advantageous business asset taper relief rules should apply on any future disposal
- there is also a possibility of rolling over any gain if the proceeds on disposal are reinvested in new furnished holiday lettings or other qualifying assets.

## Last chance to get your 2005/06 tax liability collected through your tax code!

If you are an employee who is required to submit a tax return for the tax year 2005/06, and you owe less than £2,000, HMRC will collect this liability through your tax code, provided your tax return is submitted online by 30 December 2006. If you miss this deadline, you will be required to pay the tax due by 31 January 2007 and you must ensure that your return is also submitted by that date to avoid a late filing penalty!

# Profit Improvement Toolkit

## HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR PROFITS IN ONE DAY

Profit is 'the excess of income over expenditure during a particular period of time'. The word strikes a chord with all of us who run our own business.

Using the Profit Improvement Toolkit we can facilitate a half day or full day session, designed to look at all aspects of your business and identify opportunities for profit improvement.

Together, we can then draw up a timetabled action plan to use profit potential and turn it into tangible returns.

## WHY BOOK A PROFIT IMPROVEMENT SESSION?

Many businesses repeat old patterns. The Profit Improvement Toolkit helps you to stand back from your business and gain a new perspective.

It prompts you to ask – and answer – searching questions designed to improve your profitability. And in doing so, it unlocks potential that otherwise may go unnoticed.

The Profit Improvement Toolkit offers you an innovative approach to improving your business' profitability in one session. As a proven product, it enables you to raise the right questions, with the right people, and find solutions – using the built-in target, action and budgetary implication tools.

The Profit Improvement Toolkit has a proven track record and a pricing structure where you agree the fee in advance and a full money back guarantee if you don't feel that you have received value at the end of the session. What do you have to lose?

## WHAT IT CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE?

The Profit Improvement Toolkit can help you to:

- Assess each area of your business
- Target improvement potential
- Discover fresh approaches
- Understand budgetary implications
- Prioritise efforts
- Create an action plan
- Improve business profits



Partner, Patrick Leonard

## HOW TO PROCEED

Do you remember how good it felt when a successful idea just seemed to happen?

Book a Profit Improvement Toolkit session now and discuss untapped riches within your business.

**Contact Patrick Leonard today on 028 9044 5100 or email [pleonard@harbinson-mulholland.com](mailto:pleonard@harbinson-mulholland.com) for more information.**

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