

h CORRESPONDENT

SPRING 2005

THE CLIENT UPDATE FROM HARBINSON MULHOLLAND

REACH YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL



“Have you reached your true potential? Do you know what your potential could actually be?”

What if you could be even more successful? What if you could reap even more rewards from your personal and working life?

Stepping out...

Your **comfort zone** is the place where you feel no fear or anxiety. Once you establish

where your comfort zone is in a certain situation, you stay there in an attempt to avoid any of these unpleasant feelings. However, the only way you are going to reach your full potential is that you are going to have to step out of your comfort zone. It is only your fears that hold you back from most of what is possible for you.

Step out and try something you have never done before. Travel to work a different way, leave the office early or take up a new hobby. Sing in the pub karaoke, volunteer to speak at your company's seminar or learn a new language.

All of these things, whether they are small or big will help you step out of your comfort zone. The more often you step out, the more you stretch your mind and allow yourself to entertain new ideas and take on new and even bigger challenges. This is a powerful and more fulfilling way to live and work.

Steps to reaching your true potential

1. Believe in yourself.

Believe that you are an individual who possesses much more than you ever tap into. It may be easier to play it safe. However, by doing this, what are you and others missing out on?

2. Look on every challenge as an opportunity.

It is the struggles and obstacles in life that make us what we are, the mistakes and failures that make us grow and learn by experience.

3. Step out with a positive attitude.

A positive outlook is infectious. If you wake up with an attitude that today is going to be an exciting and fulfilling day, it is more than likely to turn out like that. The same goes if you wake up thinking this is going to be an awful day, it probably will be. Whoever heard of the successful pessimist?

By taking these simple steps, you will find that you are the catalyst to your own success. By setting yourself new goals and new challenges, you can make life exciting and give your working life and personal life some action leadership.

Whether you are a client, a business associate, a banker or a solicitor, your team at Harbinson Mulholland strives to help you step out of your comfort zone and improve and grow your business to its true potential. Join us in saying **“Business is great and we are hungry for more!”**

NEW!

HM Calculators

– online and giving you instant results

Our new website service provides a number of easy to use calculators. Use these to help you check and plan your finances and financial decisions. For example:

- Do you want to be a millionaire? Find out when you hit the big time...
- Starting your own business? Calculate when you will reach breakeven point...
- Ensure you don't give the taxman 40% of your wealth when you die, using our online IHT calculator...

Other calculators include:

- Loans
- VAT
- Savings
- Car Benefit
- Payslip
- Stamp Duty
- Profit

Seminar for Solicitors:

How to Maximise your Potential and Increase your Profits

Thursday 28 April 2005, Malone House, Belfast. Registration and breakfast from 7.30am. Seminar from 8.00am-9.00am.

Solutions to the most important issues you face in creating and sustaining a profitable practice in today's increasingly competitive professional environment.

- How to **increase your profits** and free up your time
- The steps you can take TODAY to ensure your complete peace of mind when it comes to **Anti Money Laundering Compliance and training**, including regular updates in recent developments/legislation
- High quality **IT solutions** that will improve your time and resource management, as well as the security of your information, explained in a manner we can all understand
- The **Top 5 marketing tips** for solicitors which will improve your practice development efforts overnight
- **People solutions** - motivating and improving your most important resource, your staff

E-mail emcbride@harbinson-mulholland.com with your details.

PEOPLE BUY PEOPLE FIRST

“You can train someone in the skills but you have to recruit the right attitude to ...begin with!”

People are at the front line of most businesses. Whether your business is a sole trader, partnership or limited company, it is the people we deal with that affect our buying decisions more and more.

The customer-facing employees are often the first experience a customer has of your business. If a staff member you are dealing with is rude or even if they dress in an inappropriate way, this will influence your customers' perception of your company.

So, how effectively do you and your employees represent your company?

To rank among the most successful organisations, your company should have a customer-focused culture and image which permeates the entire organisation. This will allow you to attract and recruit the 'right' people for your team. If you then continue to develop and reward their skills so that they are happy in their work and motivated, this in turn creates value for your business.

Let me give you an example.

Who would you give your money to?

The supermarket in town where the sales assistant has been rude and unhelpful to you in the past or the supermarket on the outskirts of town (1 mile further away) where the sales assistant knows you by name and is always eager to help you?

When it comes down to it, price is not always the deciding factor in a customer's

buying decision. Look towards your employees to create your competitive advantage.

“It is the talent, knowledge and commitment of their people which will help organisations to keep ahead of the competition.”

You expect your employees to perform at their full potential..but how do you go about ensuring this?

You must ensure that you are taking the steps necessary to develop, retain and reward your employees. You must ensure that you continue to develop their skills as they are vital to the competitiveness and success of your business.

Wendy McCulla is heading up the new 'People Performance' service line in Harbinson Mulholland. You can make your people a sustainable source of competitive advantage by recognising their potential and training and coaching them in continuous development.

Elements of People Performance Service

- Training needs assessment for your staff
- Executive coaching for you and your senior management team
- Tailored ongoing people development in line with your organisation's strategic goals
- Mentoring programmes

What are the benefits of 'People Performance'?

- Enhanced skills of the workforce



**Wendy McCulla,
People Performance Manager**

- Improved morale in the workplace
- Increased productivity and profitability
- Reduced staff turnover
- Reduced absenteeism

A better skilled, more motivated workforce means greater productivity, lower absenteeism and higher profits.

To find out how you can improve the performance of your people, contact

Wendy McCulla on 028 90445 100 or email wmculla@harbinson-mulholland.com for a free consultation.

“Quote of the Quarter”
"Let your hook be always cast.
In the stream where you least expect it, there will be a fish." (Ovid)

'Surfing' the Net without proper security can destroy your business data (and you won't even know it)

Lee Surgeoner, IT manager with Harbinson Mulholland, the only Microsoft Certified Partner Accountancy and Consultancy practice in Northern Ireland, takes a look at the security issues that surround businesses today.

Security, confidentiality and integrity are buzz words people like to associate with their businesses. However, are these just words?

With the rise of broadband connection within businesses in Northern Ireland, a computer system without the appropriate layers of protection can be compromised in a matter of seconds. In fact, it is safe to assume that if your computer connects to the internet and does not have a form of anti-spyware software installed, it probably already has malicious software giving away details about you and your data to the outside world.

Ignorance is not an excuse when it comes to the security of your business and its confidential information. Today, the modern PC has more than just viruses to contend with. As time has passed, increasing use of the Internet as a means to communicate and transfer data between customers and organisations means that even browsing a web page without the appropriate levels of protection can destroy your personal information or business data.

This is not a statement to scare you; this is a plain and simple fact. You can see for yourself how this is done. The IT team in Harbinson Mulholland give demonstrations to clients on how easily your information i.e. credit card details can be obtained with the click of a web page!

As the owner of your business, you are legally responsible for the integrity of

the data you hold, not to mention having the reputation of your business to consider. Your customers should be secure in knowing that your business takes information security seriously, thereby enhancing their own protection and confidence in your business.

So, what are the dangers that lurk beneath the surface of your business and how do you combat them?

- 1. Browsing the internet without appropriate layers of protection.** You need more than just antivirus and firewalls to survive modern day threats such as malware and spyware that will damage or collect business data and send it to the outside world.
- 2. Lack of the appropriate policies for use of facilities such as internet and e-mail.** Software alone cannot protect you from the possibilities of virus infection or staff misuse. You should

remember that it is your responsibility to ensure your staff as well as your data is protected. Internet policies should be put in place.

- 3. Your staff are a threat by sending and receiving non business data** such as pictures, movies and media.

Not only wasting company time and resources but also potentially transporting viruses unknowingly into the company network. Education of staff is needed and restrictions on various applications can be put in place to reduce certain risks to your network.

Contact Lee Surgeoner on **028 9044 5100** or email lsurgeon@harbinson-mulholland.com today for a **FREE IT security and system review** with advice on how to safeguard your confidential information.

TAX PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEW TAX YEAR

As the new tax year begins, you should review the planning opportunities available to you.

ISAs

The ISA limits are set to remain until April 2010 which is good news for those wanting to avoid tax on their savings and investments. A brand new tax year means you can now invest another £7,000 in mini or maxi ISAs. The mini-cash ISA limit remains at £3,000.

Tax Credits

Remember to check if you are entitled to tax credits for 2005/06. Claims are based on your income for the previous tax year (2004/05). Make sure you don't miss the deadline of 5 July 2005.

Pension contributions

Any contributions you make to your personal pension schemes and retirement annuity plans are eligible for income tax relief. Remember that contributions are also deducted from your income when calculating your entitlement to tax credits

so it is possible to obtain a double tax benefit.

Gift Aid

If you wish to donate to charity, ensure that your charity operates the Gift Aid scheme and that you retain records of your donation. Not only does this mean that the charity receives extra benefit from the Inland Revenue, higher rate tax payers can obtain a reduction in their income tax.

Car Benefits

The limits for taxing company car benefits increased with effect from 6 April 2005. This means that most employees will pay more tax on their company cars. It is worthwhile reviewing the car and fuel benefits to ensure they are still tax efficient.

EIS & VCT Investment

40% income tax relief remains available on qualifying investments of up to £200,000 in Venture Capitalist Trust (VCT) shares. This enhanced rate of relief is only available on investments made

before 6 April 2006. Individuals investing in qualifying Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) companies may obtain tax relief at 20% on investments of up to £200,000 and may also defer certain capital gains.

NOTE – Consult your Financial Adviser before taking action. The above tip details tax incentives which may not be suitable for everyone.

Employers – Remember Your Deadlines

The various deadlines for PAYE/NIC end of year procedures are as follows:

19 May 2005

Submission of forms P14, P35 and Construction Industry Scheme returns.

31 May 2005

Issue P60 forms to employees.

6 July 2005

Submission of P11D and P9D forms and provide copies to employees.

Submission of Form 42 (share schemes).

19 July 2005

Pay Class 1A NIC.

19 October 2005

Pay tax due under PAYE Settlement Agreements.

Remember...register for online filing for PAYE returns and receive £825 tax free!

The Inland Revenue is offering cash incentives to encourage small businesses to submit their returns online. Employers with fewer than 50 employees who file online will receive tax free payments as follows:

2004/05 £250
2005/06 £250
2006/07 £150
2007/08 £100
2008/09 £75

Ensure you register in plenty of time in order to meet the deadline for submission on 19 May 2005. You may register at www.hmrc.gov.uk or by calling 08457 143 143.

PEOPLE IN FOCUS

Name:

John Horan

Role:

Manager in Harbinson Mulholland, heading up the Anti Money Laundering Compliance, Training and Support service line. John currently advises a range of clients on how to comply with the Anti Money Laundering Legislation and Proceeds of Crime Act. This comprises full training programmes, systems compliance and a client support helpdesk.

Qualifications & Experience:

A member of the Institute of Money Laundering Officers, John is recognised throughout the UK law enforcement and

banking industries as both an expert in the investigation of money laundering and a top trainer on compliance with the Proceeds of Crime Act.

A detective for 24 years, the last 10 years of which were as a financial investigator specialising in money laundering.

Outside HM:

John is married with two daughters, both of whom are keen equestrians and therefore leave him little time for hobbies. Despite this, he is a history buff and still fits in time to enjoy the odd pint of real ale.

Contact Details:

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Anti Money Laundering Advisor

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