



WIB Events

Please note these dates for forthcoming events in your diary.

Thursday 10 September 2009

'Members in Focus'
(11.30am - 2pm)
Ramada Hotel,
Shaw's Bridge, Belfast
Key Speaker: Mary Davis,
Managing Director, Special
Olympics Europe/Eurasia

Tuesday 20 October 2009

*'Marketing and Selling for
Survival and Recovery'*
(6.30-9pm)
W5 Lecture Theatre, Belfast
Key Speaker: Michael
McIntyre, Envision
Management Consultants

Wednesday 18 November 2009

'Women's Enterprise Day'
(11.30am - 2pm)
Belfast Castle, Belfast
Key Speaker: Tbc

Tuesday 8 December 2009

'Christmas Networking Lunch'
(11.30am - 2pm)
Ten Square Hotel, Belfast
Key Speaker: Caroline Casey,
Founding CEO of Kanchi
(formerly the Aisling
Foundation)

Thursday 21 January 2010

'Voices Heard 2010'
(6.30-9pm)
Long Gallery, Parliament
Buildings, Stormont
Hosted by Anna Lo, with a
panel of political and private
sector representatives

For further information on these events, or to book your place online, please visit our web site:

www.womeninbusinessni.com
or email Nicki Bayes:
nicki@womeninbusinessni.com



Women in Business events are supported by Invest NI

Supporting your business



Helping to make heard the voices of female entrepreneurs at our event in Stormont were: (l-r) Dolores Kelly (SDLP), Christine Boyle (Women in Business), Anna-Lo (Alliance Party), Dawn Purvis (PUP), Aine Maria Mizzoni (Guardiano del faro) and Barry McElduff (Sinn Fein).

“When written in Chinese the word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters - one represents danger and the other represents opportunity.”

John F Kennedy,
in an address of 12 April 1959.

I am not sure how many of you were around for this speech (I certainly wasn't!) But most of you seem to be taking on board the advice of the late President – seeing our current economic crisis as an opportunity. There has been a recent increase in new members joining the Women in Business Network and we have also experienced an increase in the number of our existing members utilising the services of the network. This could be viewed as a positive result for Women in Business, indicating success in showing that networking is key to the success of your businesses in difficult times. And, you are right to use networking as a tool to ensure that your business wins in the battle of the survival of the fittest. In any case, it is immensely rewarding to see a larger number of you attending more of the monthly events and using the network for the benefit of your businesses.

I believe networking is the best marketing device to use, particularly in the current economic climate when many of our businesses are cash strapped. It is based on an inexpensive endeavour using a simple skill – talking. Tell me of any female who does not excel in the art of conversation!

The Women in Business networking style removes the fear and insecurities of networking and we make an effort to force the ‘lazy’ networker to work hard at our facilitated and speed networking sessions. This has ensured that our members have met potential customers or valuable contacts. Indeed the articles and stories within this publication are proof of the network's success.

We will continue to work on your behalf and I am sure you will agree that the line up for our forthcoming events will provide an excellent platform for you to seek out new business opportunities.

I look forward to seeing you all at forthcoming events.

Christine Boyle, MBE, Chair

Network Events Round up

We have received very positive feedback from members who have attended one or more of our events that have taken place so far this year. Indeed, in our recent member survey, you cited the monthly events as the top reason why you think WIB is an excellent networking organisation.

The events do indeed offer members and their guests a great opportunity to meet one another and make valuable new business contacts. The organised networking activities run at each are designed to help you do this in a fun yet structured way. We also invite along key speakers who can offer valuable business advice or share their own experiences. This year we introduced the 'Members Two Minutes of Fame' slot. This has proved popular and will also be a part of future events. This slot, gives one member the chance to outline the services

or products their business offers.

On top of that, there's usually the chance, while refreshments are being served, to catch up with old acquaintances and make new ones.

Thank you to the hard working team at Redhead for all their support in helping us develop and run a programme of events that appeals to members.

Thanks also to Invest NI for their ongoing support of our events.

Below are photographs taken skillfully by our photographer Jacqui Neil and short accounts of our events from January to June this year.

Voices Heard at Stormont Question Time



Panel members carefully consider their responses to questions posed by members

meet and speak with local political representatives, who also did quite well under the heavy weight of questioning from the floor!"

The panel thanked the audience for their participation and honesty and offered assistance to the network in raising their business-related concerns with the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Members also had the chance to speak to panel delegates and one another over an informal supper that followed.

Set in the impressive Long Gallery in Parliament Buildings at Stormont, this important annual January event gave members the opportunity to question a panel of local MLAs on key business issues facing female entrepreneurs.

Anna Lo, MLA of the Alliance Party, hosted the event. Supporting Anna-Lo on the panel were fellow MLAs Dolores Kelly (SDLP), Dawn Purvis (PUP) and Barry McElduff (Sinn Fein). Aine Maria Mizzoni from

leadership and strategy consultancy Guardiano del faro completed the panel and represented the private sector.

The debate, lively and provocative at times, focused on issues such as support for female entrepreneurs, incentives for new business starts and what local government representatives are doing for locally focused small businesses in the current economic climate.

Our Chair Christine Boyle said of the successful event: "It was great to see so many business women at Stormont voicing their opinions and concerns on the real issues they face in today's business environment. We were delighted to provide our members with this opportunity for them to



WIB Director Edel Doherty (centre) networks with WIB members.

Members of both Women in Business and the NI Chamber of Commerce networked over lunch

Joint networking event at Grand Opera House

In March, over 120 companies were represented at a joint networking lunch-time event run with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce.

The lively event, that took place in the Grand Opera House, was designed to create new business opportunities and relationships across both



business networks. It began with a networking lunch. Following this people participated in an organised 'speed networking' activity and attended a networking

masterclass, presented by our own Board Director, Julianna Sloan.

We were very pleased with the success of the event that

gave our members a chance to network and promote their own businesses along with members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Titanic Motivation offered by Sean Weafer

The historical site of the famous Thompson Dry-Dock and Pump House, once the beating heart of Harland & Wolff during the construction of the great White Star Liners, provided an inspirational venue for our February event.

Our popular guest speaker was international business coach Sean Weafer of First Coach International. Sean told the assembled audience that meeting regularly, networking and taking the opportunities presented by membership of organisations such as Women in Business will play a vital role in ensuring success in these difficult economic times. He offered practical networking strategies during his motivational talk.

Alan Morrow of Invest NI's Entrepreneurship Development Team, who attended the event, said:

"As the economic landscape changes it is essential that entrepreneurs and small businesses in Northern Ireland are in a position to exploit the opportunities presented.

"Small firms are at the core of the local economy, and by encouraging our female-led businesses here to build capability and grow, we can help them to play an even more pivotal role in the future of this economy as they create wealth by improving existing goods and services, developing new products and increasing levels of exports."

Alan Morrow (Invest NI), Christine Boyle (Women in Business), Anna Johnson (Anna's House), and speaker Sean Weafer.



Members listened attentively to speaker Sean Weafer

Network Events Round up

Business Advice Forum 2009

Our annual conference took place in May at Malone House, taking the form of a Business Advice Forum. Given the economic times we're in, we wanted to support female entrepreneurs with a whole range of business advice measures.

Throughout the day a panel of business advisors and speakers from Northern Ireland's top companies and consultancies such as BT, Northern Bank, Manley's and Time Associates were on hand to meet with business women and discuss one-to-one, the key issues affecting their businesses. Advice was plentiful on such subjects as cashflow management, smart technology, recession busting sales, maximizing branding, public sector procurement and online marketing through Facebook, Myspace and Twitter!

Member feedback shows that those who attended were impressed with the

sheer volume of support available on the day: that they could sit one-to-one with a range of consultants and hear up to six speakers, have lunch and this was all free of charge!

Some businesses also had promotional stands on display, including Norwich Union (now Aviva) that kindly sponsored the lunch, making this a very positive small business development experience.

We were delighted with the excellent turn out and the quality and volume of guidance delivered on the day. As Roseann Kelly commented: "Never had so much advice been available in the same place at the same time! We had in excess of 100 business owners meeting with 20 experts and advisors, along with 6 fabulous speakers who spoke on some very topical themes."

Middle left: Carolanne Lowe, Blue Moon Productions, one of the speakers at the event.

Bottom left: WIB Members Dolores Vischer and Alison Armstrong at the Business Advice Forum.

Below: Malone House, venue for the Business Advice Forum.



Getting the Business Advice Forum at Malone House started were (l-r) Roseann Kelly (WIB), Patricia O'Hagan (Core Systems) and Sharon Polson (Invest NI).





An action shot catches Rosemary Morrison showing her great swing.

(l-r) Debbie Hanna (Blackwood Golf Centre), Angela Brady (Stewarts Solicitors), Christine Boyle (Women in Business) announce the competitive matches at the Virtual Golf event.

Virtual Golf, Real Business!

Over 50 members enjoyed the opportunity on a lovely sunny evening to show their golfing talents at our summer networking that took place in June in the indoor golf simulator centre, Citigolf.

The night began with Rosemary Morrison sharing

details of her French Holiday Gite letting business – suitably seasonal – in the ‘Two Minutes of Fame’ slot.

Debbie Hanna, one of Northern Ireland’s top female golf professionals was on hand to guide members through the golf essentials of

grip, stance and swing. As we got to grips with the latest virtual golf simulator technology, a lot of fun was had!

Even during the hotly contested team competitions and over supper, those attending could exchange

information, ideas, contacts and sales leads.

Congratulations to our golfing stars Ciara Lagan and Deborah Ward who won respectively the ‘nearest the pin’ and putting competitions, receiving summer hampers as their prizes.

Food for thought at the Ormeau Baths Gallery



At the Food for Thought event were (l-r) Tracey Hamilton (Mash Direct), Gareth Grey (Tickety Moo Ice Cream), Edel Doherty, WIB, Graeme Finnegan (Grounded Coffee) and Jane McSherry (Calamity Cupcakes)

What a great success this event in April was. Three speakers from different food companies gave us an insight into each of their businesses.

Tracey Hamilton from Mash Direct gave us an inspiring account of how they developed their company’s innovative product range of prepared vegetables. Not only that, but the tasting of the mash, vegetables and sausages was delicious!

Graeme Finnegan of Grounded Coffee was enthusiastic in his delivery, showing his passion for coffee and determination to be successful.

Gareth Grey told us the story of his determination to succeed and deliver delicious tasty ice cream (Tickety Moo Ice Cream) from his farm in Fermanagh to the shelves our multi national supermarkets.

Jane McSherry from Calamity Cupcakes also had a stand, offering us yet another great tasting.

Members networked enjoyably as we nibbled, against the backdrop of some impressive artwork in the Ormeau Baths Gallery.

Creating Opportunities to Promote Member Businesses

As we continue to run our businesses in challenging economic times, Women in Business Directors have decided that a key network aim for the coming months should be to focus on helping you to promote your businesses.

“Feedback from members, through event questionnaires and the recent member survey, indicate that no-cost or low-cost, simple marketing strategies can work best to help us all market our businesses. We want to add to the range of tools and avenues that members can use to highlight the services or goods their business offers, to other members and more widely where possible,” summarises WIB Director Roseann Kelly.

Below is a short summary of the new or enhanced promotional opportunities that will be open to WIB Members.

Revamped member directory section on our website

www.womeninbusinessni.com

As part of the on going project to improve the WIB web site, you will find that the member directory area has been enhanced. Many members report that they use their own web sites as core marketing tools. Be sure to use ours too! It can be a very effective marketing tool.

Our web site directory contains entries for all our members. We are proposing to market

our site more widely and to allow open access to the member

directory section

to the general public. New search facilities will mean that the directory can be used by prospective clients to search by business name or business sector to find the leads or contacts they are looking for.



Remember, too that you can go online to your own listing and amend or add to it. Make sure to keep your entry up-to-date. Why not use the directory to make attractive member to member discount or other special offers?

Members' 'Two minutes of Fame' slots at events

If you have been to a recent event, you will know that the 'Two minute of Fame' slots give one member the chance to introduce herself, her business and services before the event's main speaker takes to the stage. This has proved popular and we plan to build on this. At future events, we will invite two members to each take up these promotional slots. Please contact michael@redheadni.co.uk if you'd like to request a slot at one of the forthcoming events listed on the front page.

WIB Newsletters and Ezines

With over 230 members, and a print run of 2000 copies for our

newsletters that are distributed at events and to other individuals and organisations interested in our network, our newsletters and ezines offer you another free and effective opportunity to let people know about your business.

If you haven't yet considered sending us your good news, or put your self forward for a business profile, why not let us know that you'd like to be considered for a future issue? We'll provide help in shaping your story too. Contact us on 0845 6076041



Forging links with other networks

We've found that the joint events we run with other networks, for example with the NI Chamber of Commerce, are a fun and useful way to widen your business circle of contacts. We will continue to work with other networks where

we can to run joint events.

We also will build on the links we have already established with other female networks, throughout Northern Ireland and cross-border with groups in the Republic of Ireland, including those that we have met previously from Sligo and Dublin. As a network, we are a member of the UK wide PROWESS network of female entrepreneurs and will investigate how this could help promote our work.

Promotional opportunities at our events

Future events will also offer you more opportunities to display information on your business – again totally free of charge. We will make a table available for you to display your company's promotional brochures or leaflets. Where possible, if you would like to erect your own company stand, we will facilitate that too.

Other activities that we are planning that will provide additional member benefits:

Member recruitment drive (with incentive)

The more members we have, the more chances there are for us to network and do business with one another. There's nothing like a personal recommendation from an existing member to help recruit new members to our network. And why should we not offer you a little incentive to help make it more rewarding for you if you can help attract more members?

Look out in our ezines and emails for details of specific recruitment drives – and their incentives - that we will be running in the near future.

Lobbying

As a network, we want to represent female entrepreneurs and to speak on your behalf in a lobbying role where we can. For example, we hope to build on the contacts we've made with politicians at Stormont through our annual 'Voices Heard' conferences. We will try to secure places on the local economic and political agendas for our needs and views. With this objective in mind, we plan to commission a student at one of our local universities to carry out research on the contribution made by female business owners and entrepreneurs to the Northern Ireland economy.

Survey Results

You may recall that we asked you to complete a member survey questionnaire in May. Members were invited to participate to let us know what you think about our network and what it offers and to give us a better understanding of the types of businesses members run.

The survey was carried out for us by member Maureen Tracey, MD of Perceptive Insight Market Research. Many thanks to Maureen for her help in this and for providing a clear, detailed and helpful analysis of the survey findings so promptly afterwards.

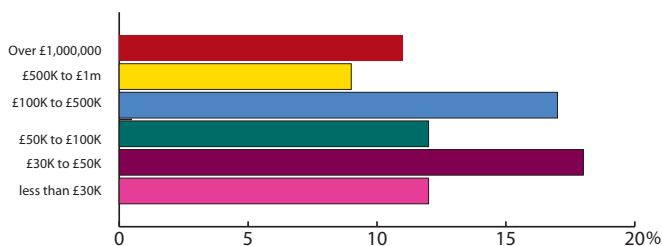
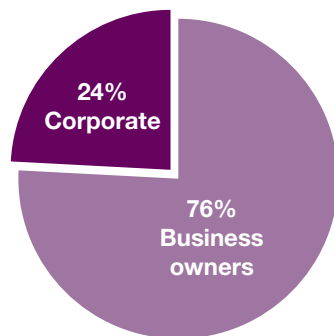
The survey has helped to give us a good picture of your business and where your sales come from, and what you think of and expect from the WIB network. We have already drawn upon the findings in planning for future network activities and will continue to use this data in all our work.

A summary of the some of the key findings of the survey is provided below.

Summary of key findings

About member businesses:

- 76% of members either own their own business or are jointly responsible for a business, while 24% operate in a senior role within a corporate business.
- Business owners are ambitious, with 94% agreeing that they have plans to grow their business and 82% disagreeing that they are reluctant to further develop their business. Corporate members are equally ambitious with 85% agreeing that they are ambitious in their careers.
- 51% of members use an owned, leased or serviced office or site for their business, while 44% operate their business from home.
- The business of members were mainly in the sectors of business services or management consultancy (27%), the creative industries (13%), or personal development (11%).
- Regarding turnover, 49% of businesses have a turnover of more than £50,000, with 37% exceeding £100,000 in turnover.
- 13% of our businesses are Invest NI clients.
- 76% of members work more than 36 hours per week, with 10% working more than 50 hours.



About our business sales:

- 61% of members are exporters - with the Republic of Ireland

New Members

A warm welcome to our new members who have joined Women in Business recently.

Maureen Treacy, Perceptive Insight Market Research; Elaine Johnston, Elaine Johnston Business Services; Mona Boardman, Europa Travel; Liz Lavery, On Music Ltd; Joanne Lecky, Murgitroyd & Company; Fiona Walsh, Professional Excellence; Letitia Gwynne, Motivational Speaker; Samantha Gouk, The Couture Depot & The Craft; Heather Johnston, Complementary Therapist; Louise Craig, McKinty & Wright; Lindsey Williamson, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau; Claire Summers, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau; Grainne O'Malley, Genistar; Jennie Black, Ocean Support Services Ltd; Jo-ann Mckay, Concept Services (NI) Ltd; Julie Collins, Survival Solutions Limited; Susie McCullough, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau; Anne McMullan, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau; Gillian Irwin, Bank Of Ireland; Sharon Crawford, Colony Gift Corporation Ltd; Joanna White, Arthur Cox; Ruth Glenn, Arthur Cox; Emma Jane Flannery, Arthur Cox; Lynsey Mallon, Arthur Cox; Gillian Shaw, Arthur Cox; Frances Thompson, Arthur Cox; Jean Johnston, Serenity Stress Management; Gillian Revill, For Keeps; Mary Martin-Armstrong, Miglio Jewellery; Ladonna Tallon, Citynorth Hotel; Andrea Hunter, Aer Lingus; Sara Bell, Centre Stage Music & Arts; Karen Kerr, Cats Protection; Michelle Rutherford, Ramada Encore; Caroline Gillespie, Radisson SAS Hotel; Tracy Dempsey, Soul Ambition; Lorraine McAleer, Learning Space; Clare Higgins, Partridge Peartree; Ruth Lynch, Partridge Peartree; Maria Kennedy, Partridge Peartree; Anne McVicker, Women's Tec; Rosaleen Thompson, Almega; Kathy McKenna, Construction Register Ltd; Lee Mulholland, Construction Register Ltd; Nicola McDade, Construction Register Ltd.

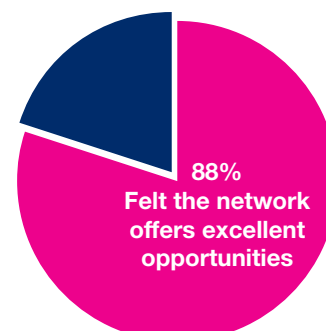
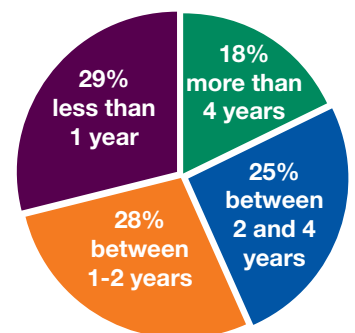
You may contact any of these new members through the WIB Members online directory on www.womeninbusinessni.com

(56%), and Great Britain (46%) being the main export markets. 37% want to explore export opportunities.

- In marketing their businesses, members preferred to use word of mouth (78% use this to a large extent), networking (55% to a large extent) and their web sites (67% to a large extent).
- The recessions seems to have limited impact on members with over half (51%) experiencing growth over the last 12 months and the majority (80%) expecting growth over the next 12 months.

Your perceptions of and satisfaction with WIB:

- 18% of respondents have been members of WIB for more than 4 years, 25% for between 2 and 4 years, 28% between 1-2 years and 29% for less than one year.
- 84% of respondents were



happy with the events provided.

- 88% of members felt the network offers excellent opportunities for networking.
- 78% of respondents feel that network membership offers good value for money.
- 88% felt the network provides support and encouragement.

Business Support Programme

Women into Business project update



Work has been underway during the year to advance the Women into Business project. The project, run by the Women in Business network, is a programme dedicated to encouraging and supporting the progression of women hoping to enter or re-enter the workplace, through employment or self-employment.

The programme offers advice, guidance, friendship and a dynamic package of practical and specific services to help women returners throughout Northern Ireland make the transition.

Project web site

At the centre of the Women into Business project is its new web site. Final work is just being completed before the new site will be launched in September.

Women who sign up to the project can use the special portal created to help them succeed in their exciting new career. As well as a social online networking community, users can avail of a range of interesting tools and support systems such as, online discussion forums, newsfeeds, E-Learning and mentoring opportunities to share their experience and gain valuable information, hints and tips from other members.

A wide range of fresh, has been developed specifically for project use online by women wishing to develop their personal or business skills.

How WIB members can become involved

The Women into Business project will look to our network and members for support. For example, there is a need for work placements and business mentors. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, or if your business might be able to offer work placements, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

info@womenintobusinessni.com Tel: 028 9022 4006

The Women into Business project is supported by:



Booster Programme



The Booster Programme is a key element of Invest NI's Investing in Women initiative and aims to facilitate the growth of businesses owned by female entrepreneurs. 36 women participated in the programme that ended in June. Booster covers key developmental issues such as building sales pipelines; strategies for growth; team building and financial management. It is a programme of six one-day interactive workshops which form the building blocks for an action plan that will accelerate the growth of the business.

Invest NI are looking for more ambitious female business owners who seek to explore the potential to grow their business through export sales. The programme will commence again in September, and applications for it are now welcome.

For further information contact: Bev Hurley, Tel: 01223 421 470; or Alan Morrow, Invest NI, Tel: 02890 698161 Email: alan.morrow@investni.com



Growth Programme

The Growth Programme can help you develop your business by giving you access to experts in areas of business you are less experienced in. Targeted specialist support in those areas which could make all the difference to your competitiveness. And this support will cost you nothing.

If your business has the potential to increase production, workforce or sales and has reached VAT turnover, you could be eligible for this innovative programme. The support is tailored precisely to your needs, so that you are getting the right expertise for your business. You'll be assigned a Business Advisor who will guide you every step.

In addition, businesses with further growth potential may qualify for more intensive support. These companies can receive one-to-one mentoring specific to their own requirements, over 12 months with the end objective of becoming an Invest NI client.

For general information, visit the website: www.growthni.com
To set up an appointment with an advisor, the helpline number is 0800 027 0639.

For further information on the range of other support measures offered by INVEST NI, visit: www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk or www.investni.com

Belfast City Council Business Programmes

The Council provides a range of programmes to help businesses in Belfast enhance their own competitiveness and growth potential.

Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions Programme (BITES): BITES is a business development initiative designed to help businesses reduce waste and energy, boost profits and help the environment.

Franchising Initiative: This initiative is aimed at helping entrepreneurs and businesses to start or expand their businesses through franchising.
Strategy in Business Initiative: This programme helps small businesses to develop the practical skills necessary to think strategically and develop plans for future growth. There are practical group skills development workshops and each participant is also allocated an experienced business consultant to help them address barriers to growth and help move the business forward.

Sales Growth Programme: Aimed at improving the selling skills of business owners and managers.

For up-to-date information please visit:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/businessprogrammes/
or contact: Lisa McCartney, Economic Development Officer.
mccartneylisa@belfastcity.gov.uk

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships / Innovation Vouchers

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) is a UK-wide programme that helps businesses and organisations to improve their competitiveness and/or productivity through the better use of the knowledge, technology and skills that reside within Higher Education institutions, Research Organisations and Further Education Colleges. Projects vary in length between 12 and 36 months.

If your business could use £4000 to solve a knowledge problem, then the Innovation Vouchers might be for you. The Innovation Voucher initiative is new to Northern Ireland and is jointly administered by Invest Northern Ireland & Enterprise Ireland. The Initiative aims to help small enterprises establish links with the regions' Universities & Colleges to solve knowledge problems and can be redeemed against work completed by the College to the maximum value of £4,000. Application forms can be completed online at: www.innovationvouchers.com

For further information on both KTP and Innovation Vouchers with the Southern Regional College, contact: Teresa O'Hare, Southern Regional College, oharet@src.ac.uk Tel: 028 38397778



Grafton recruitment group announces new brand



Pictured from left to right are Grafton's Nancy Brown (WIB member), Emma Zeeman (MD of Grafton ESP) and Claire Reid (International RPO Director).

Member Nancy Brown has sent us news of her company, the international recruitment group Grafton, and its latest business development, which she hopes will be of interest to our members as their own businesses expand.

The Grafton Employment Group has unveiled a new recruitment outsourcing and HR consultancy brand targeting both Irish and global markets, in a move designed to deliver a major long-term expansion of the Irish-based international group.

Grafton ESP – standing for employment solutions portfolio – will be based in Northern Ireland. Its managing director is Emma Zeeman who is also HR Director of The Grafton Employment Group.

The new division, provides services which were previously delivered under Grafton Recruitment and sister company, SpenglerFox. The new brand's recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) service is targeted at large organisations with a range of recruitment needs that could

benefit from utilising the expertise of an outside provider.

Grafton ESP's HR consultancy is aimed at organisations who are interested in creating more efficient HR processes or who require one-off projects such as development programmes for their workforces or resourcing reviews. The benefits of using an outside provider for HR Consultancy include: having a dedicated team of HR professionals, cost savings and gaining efficiencies. Our HR consultants are qualified, experienced in HR and recruitment solutions and most importantly passionate about delivering a high level of service.

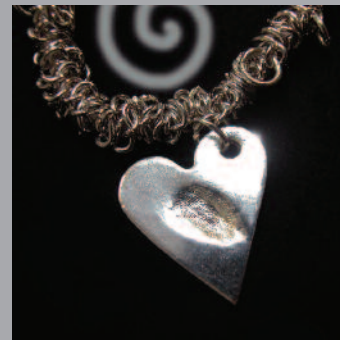
"We believe this is the right time to launch Grafton ESP because the current situation is giving companies the time and opportunity to review and re-engineer their HR practices," commented Emma Zeeman (MD of Grafton ESP).

For further information visit www.graftonesp.com or for a consultation phone Grafton on 02890556350.

For Keeps

Hold onto a piece of time forever

Gillian Revell, who joined our network in April, runs For Keeps, a creative jewellery design company specialising in bespoke jewellery. Her business offers customers the chance to keep the fingerprint of a beloved child, grandchild, niece or nephew in a beautifully hand crafted piece of silver. These valuable personal pieces can then be incorporated into a unique necklace, bracelet, key-ring or cu links.



One of the silver fingerprint charms, that For Keeps creates.

Gillian shares how her own business idea came to her: "For Keeps has been my delight and business for about a year now. I am a 'creative' and love looking online at new jewellery, beads and items available. My curiosity was piqued when I read about a pure silver clay produced in Japan. I bought 30g to 'play' with and was disappointed, as it wasn't easy to use.

Accidentally I let a bit dry out with a thumb imprint that I fired anyway and then thought it made a rather lovely silver ornament.

"I mastered the silver clay eventually and the idea evolved into a silver charm for my sister when baby Conor arrived. Interested clients have been asking for their children's silver fingerprints ever since - right up the age of 22! I love producing the charms for mothers as gifts or for themselves to keep close to their hearts.

"For Keeps has snowballed of its own accord and I have a website where all details can be found."

Gillian joined WIB a short time after, "finally having the courage to resign from a 'no-fun full-time job' to start out on my own - yes mid recession too!"

She added: "I am so impressed with the communication channels and the professional support on offer from WIB. It's invaluable to have this kind of help available and the team have been so friendly. Invest NI representatives are usually present at WIB events and to have a mentor at any given moment is a great boost to your confidence. I have also lined up a very useful contact in an Accountant I met at a WIB event."

For further information visit Gillian's web site: www.forkeepsni.co.uk

Serenity Stress Management

Serenity Stress Management is a new company, set up by member Jean Johnston. It offers a variety of training courses to help companies reduce the cost of absenteeism due to stress related health problems. From September, Jean also plans to run training modules for individuals to book themselves onto, at workshops throughout the province.

Jean has developed the training programmes herself. She has 30 years experience in the corporate world, with the majority of her career being spent as general manager within the time management and security industry. She holds a diploma in Systematic Kinesiology, as well as being a certified EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) practitioner, specialising in stress and emotional related issues.

Jean tells us that stress and mental health problems are known to account for 40% of absenteeism, and without stress management and genuine support for employees returning to work, stressed staff often turn into the long-term 'unworkable' population. According to a recent report by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, the cost to employers of mental ill health at work is a staggering £26 billion a year.

"Stress in the workforce can lead to: absenteeism, high staff turnover, poor time keeping, disciplinary problems, reduced productivity, harassment, accidents or errors," Jean comments.

"Serenity Stress Management training can be tailor made to suit the specific needs of an organisation, or they can choose from the modules already available," Jean explains.

"The Serenity Stress Management training could save a company money by providing employees with the key skills to manage stress effectively, resulting in a happier, highly motivated and productive workforce," she added.

For further information, contact Jean: 028 9042 2667 / 079 1905 4554, info@serenitystressmanagement.co.uk

Your Business News

Aer Lingus News

Andrea Hunter is delighted to join Women in Business. As Business Development Manager for Aer Lingus in Northern Ireland, Andrea's role involves working closely with local SMEs. "I find Women in Business most beneficial to my role within Aer Lingus, with the many facilitated networking events, seminars and newsletters on offer, WIB provides a great opportunity to meet other like-minded businesswomen."

In just 17 months since launching their first base outside the Republic of Ireland in Belfast International Airport, Aer Lingus has rocketed from zero to over a million bookings and in doing so proved the ongoing success of the operation in Northern Ireland. Andrea comments: "Aer Lingus are committed to delivering a combination of low fares and high-value service, for both the corporate and leisure traveller. Aer Lingus offers convenient departure times on daily services between Belfast and London Heathrow. With the added benefits of seat assignment, online check-in facilities and a frequent flyer programme - it is clear to see why Aer Lingus is so popular with business travellers in Northern Ireland."

The airline is to start service on a new route, from Belfast to Tenerife, on 22 Sept with a 3 times weekly service. This will complement our Lanzarote service providing Northern Ireland families and holiday-makers with more choice for winter sun!" Andrea said.

For more information on routes and services, visit www.aerlingus.com or email andrea.hunter@aerlingus.com



LighterLife

Member Jackie Adamson launched her successful LighterLife weight loss business in September 2005 and two and a half years later moved to bigger premises. In 2008, she employed an Associate Counsellor in Portadown, Natalie Rush, to support her thriving business.



Natalie Rush

Natalie, who was one of Jackie's first clients, lost over eight stone and has kept the weight off for nearly three years. She talks here about her LighterLife journey.

"I was a big girl from a young age and throughout my life I was a serial yo-yo dieter. I put on a lot of weight during both pregnancies and had tried every diet imaginable. I didn't want to be an embarrassment to my children and I was also



worried about my health. I'd even considered a gastric band operation but was then introduced to my local LighterLife Counsellor, Jackie. She helped me to come to terms with the reasons why I overeat, how to deal with my feelings and my relationship with food.

"Since losing over eight stone with Jackie's help I have the confidence, fitness levels and mind and body strength to do anything. I recently took part in the Lough Neagh Cycle and completed 76 miles.

"LighterLife had such a positive impact on my life that I decided to become Jackie's locum. It's a very exciting time! I now have so much energy and realise how much there is for me to do and achieve - I have a new zest for life which I never had before!"

Jackie, who was the first to become a trained LighterLife Counsellor in Northern Ireland, would love to hear from any member who has a stone or more to lose and would like her help. Ring her on: 07886953846

Art work by Deepa Mann-Kler

Member and fine art painter, Deepa Mann-Kler, is finding a growing market for her largely figurative paintings. Powerful and vibrant, her pieces reflect contemporary issues facing society today.

deepamannkler@gmail.com or ring 07882344993.

portfolio of her work, exhibitions, awards, commissions and press coverage. Vist it at www.deepamannkler.com

Her website includes a full

Deepa Mann-Kler by one of her vibrant artworks

Deepa's medium is oils on canvas, and she uses her own photographs to compose and explore a piece. Deepa has been awarded the Daily Mirror/Olympus Young Photographer of the Year Award and has completed many corporate and private commissions. Her work is in private collections in Japan, India, Ireland, Belgium, France and Northern Ireland. She has exhibited in China, Germany and Northern Ireland.

Deepa would be happy to discuss a commission, or to add your name to her mailing list. Email her at



Safety from the credit crunch

by Julie Foy,
Aviva Risk Management Solutions



WIB were delighted that Aviva Risk Management Solutions (as Norwich Union – its former name) supported our network by sponsoring the May WIB Business Forum. We hope that this will be the beginning of a strong working relationship that will benefit both our organisations.

Risk Adviser Julie Foy offers members advice on the importance of looking after health and safety issues on a tight budget.

In these troubled financial times there is a temptation for health and safety to be put on the back burner as resources become stretched. Neglecting

it though is the ultimate false economy given the impact an accident can have on a business, both in terms of disruption and financial penalties.

Happily protecting your organisation needn't cost the earth. Consider:

Using free of charge risk management resources.

For example, there are over 200 fact sheets that can be freely accessed on my organisation's website. Each provides useful advice and information on a particular risk management topic including safety, security, fire and business continuity issues – To see what is available visit

<http://www.aviva.co.uk/risksolutions/riskadvice/>

Signing up to free eBulletins to keep up to date

Instead of trawling the internet to keep up to date a good eBulletin will do this for you. The fortnightly NetRisk eBulletin highlights key risk management developments and subscription is free – visit www.aviva.co.uk/risksolutions to sign up.

eTraining options which are ideal for those with limited time available

Annual licences for Aviva Risk Management Solutions' health and safety eTraining package are available for £29.95+VAT. It covers the basic principles of health and safety, accident investigation and reporting and fire safety. Further information is available from http://www.aviva.co.uk/risksolutions/training/e_training.htm

If you need more safety support, the training and consultancy services Aviva Risk Management Solutions offer might be the answer. Our beginners one day course 'Getting Started' covers the basic principles that small to medium sized businesses should follow to ensure compliance with legal requirements for health and safety.

If you need more hands on support we can help there too. Our competent person support service, for example, allows you to access the support and assistance of a health and safety consultant who will devise a tailored programme of support that will ensure your company's legal compliance.

For further information about Aviva Risk Management Solutions visit www.aviva.co.uk/risksolutions or call 0500 55 99 77.

Alison takes on new pet care business

WIB Board Director, Alison Armstrong, has added a new business string to her bow. As a business consultant Alison is no stranger to helping develop successful organizations, and she has teamed up with Bronagh O'Neill to help expand and develop Petchek, with a view to bringing this service to new and exciting levels.

In existence for six years, Petchek is a fully insured dog sitting and pet caring service. "We offer a service that is designed to take most, if not all of the worry and stress out of having to leave your pet at home for whatever reason, whatever length of time," Alison says.

The team visits pets of all sorts – not just dogs – in their own home, to feed and care for them, take them on walks and whatever else is needed while their owners are away, perhaps to work or on holiday, or indeed if they have to go into hospital. There are now three fully equipped and modified vans catering for clients and animal needs. Alison adds that Petchek also acts as a Pet Ambulance and Taxi service, if an animal needs to go to the vets or groomers, we will facilitate this.

"Having always loved animals, of whatever size and type, it is a fantastic and very exciting opportunity to be able to help this company grow and develop their business and bring it to a new level. It was too good an opportunity to miss. Our plan is to franchise out the service – and to help establish a network of Petchekers beyond the Belfast and North Down area where we mostly operate. Our goal is to have a brand recognisable throughout Northern Ireland...and beyond!" Alison explains.

"Even though this is a completely different market place, I can draw on my 25 years of business experience. It is true to say whatever area of business we are in, to draw on experiences gained in other sectors and to learn from difficulties and challenges there, is what diversification is all about," she added.

To find out more about the services Petchek offers, contact Alison or Bronagh on 07973870962, the mobile Petchek number. Email info@petchek.co.uk or visit their web site www.petchek.co.uk



Alison, Bronagh and the Petchek team, with their clients in tow.

Member profiles



The Importance of Memories

by Jacqui Neill



A photograph Jacqui took at one of her favourite places, New York.

Photography by Jacqui Neill – we understand the importance of memories!

Member Jacqui Neill, whom many of you will know from seeing her at events as our official photographer, gives us an insight into how her business has developed over the last four years.

Jacqui set up Jacqui Neill Photography in April 2005, after 18 years as a secondary/grammar school teacher. For the first two and a half years of self-employment, working from home, Jacqui focused on making contacts to build a client base. In June 2008, with her successful business growing, she opened her photographic studio in Ballyclare. Jacqui's photographic work encompasses a broad range of areas including weddings, family portraits, portfolio and fashion, commercial/PR and social functions.

Recently, Jacqui has developed an enterprising initiative in partnership with two other Ballyclare women.

"In these days of cut backs and careful money management, it is important to encourage people to spend money in your business. Having been a member of Women in Business for four years now, I've learned many important lessons that could help – this year's is to be

resourceful, flexible and innovative.

"As part of my photographic business on the Square in Ballyclare, I offer a portraiture service, but I wanted to add something to it that would make our portraiture different from what other photographers offer. Now, as you can imagine, there are many things I could have done. But in light of the fact that my neighbour on the Square is a hairdresser and one of my client brides is a beautician, the answer seemed obvious. We got together as a little consortium and now offer the opportunity for clients to have their hair and make-up tailored to suit the look they want. When they are happy with the look, they come next door to me and have their photograph taken. We take lots of shots, varying from full length to head shots, close-ups and waist high. Our offer has been a great success so far. We have had young and older alike enjoying their look and making it a lasting memory in the form of their photographs.

"We all know that things aren't always easy in business, but there is tremendous job satisfaction in bringing a smile to peoples' faces when they see their photographs – they look great, feel good and tell others!"
Contact Jacqui on 93340688 or e-mail: jacquineillphotography.co.uk

Feedback Mystery Shopping

by Barbara Lamb



With a business closely focused on customer service, Barbara Lamb, Director of Feedback Mystery Shopping Ltd, explains why she may be the envy of many.

"More than ever before, especially in today's current economic climate, customer service is critical. Our clients are those who care about their staff, customer loyalty and sustained sales. In short, our clients are those who care about the service their customers receive," she said.

From estate agents to hotels and restaurants, Barbara's army of shoppers offer objective, relevant and actionable feedback that enables businesses to see through the eyes of their customers.

Describing the service her company offers, she explained: "We work very closely with our clients to agree and understand the full scope of the exercise, from locations and products to the profile of their typical clientele. The one thing we will not discuss is the day or time our shoppers will visit. This anonymity ensures

we capture a true and honest reflection of their business.

"We individually profile and match every shopper to every venue to ensure they are undetectable and can maximise their experience. These collective experiences provide a tailored review of measurable results; a benchmark to move the business forward.

"I absolutely love my job," she added. "Identifying and rewarding outstanding employee behaviour is the true gem of mystery shopping. I enjoy the challenges set by our clients, but most of all I get a real sense of satisfaction when the end results are improved services and increased sales."

Barbara had first joined Women in Business some time ago, but rejoined a year ago. She comments that: "Since I rejoined I have found the WIB events very worthwhile and I have made good contacts through them."

Contact Barbara on 90876807 or

e-mail barbaral@feedbackmysteryshopping.com

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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If you would like to join the network, or find out about any aspect of its work, visit our website or contact Nicki Bayes: 0845 6076041 Nicki@womeninbusinessni.com



A gite in France? visit www.yourfrenchcottage.com

Member Rosemary Morrison recently launched a new web site to promote and provide full information on the two delightful gite properties available through her new business to rent in south west France.

As a very special first year offer, Rosemary is offering WIB members and friends a discount of 10% off the web price for La Rue Doree, or 20% off the web price for the new property La Colline.

If you fancy an autumn or winter getaway, or if you're already planning next year's holiday, visit: www.yourfrenchcottage.com