

INSIDE VIEW

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INSURANCE BROKERS

Providing peace of mind for over 85 years

REASONS TO USE A BROKER: UNDERSTANDING YOUR BUSINESS NEEDS...

As a business owner, your contacts are key. Selecting the best suppliers is essential to ensure that your products and services are the best in the marketplace, and consequently that your customers are satisfied.

Naturally, you'll want to work with people who can offer a unique insight to your business needs, and this is where your broker can make a huge impact.

As a fellow SME, your broker not only understands the challenges your business faces but they have been through many of

them personally. This, combined with their expert knowledge of the insurance industry, means that they are uniquely placed to offer advice and protection on risks that could affect your business, your staff or even yourself.

When it comes to arranging insurance for your business, it can be easy to simply renew last year's cover without checking whether there's anything better out there – potentially putting your livelihood at risk. Your broker is completely dedicated

to looking after your needs, ensuring that not only do you have the right cover in place, but that you're quoted a fair and competitive price.

Instead of sourcing insurance cover, you can focus on running your business and rest easy in the knowledge that you have the necessary protection in place.

Why not arrange a meeting with your broker today and see how they could help?

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HOW TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Here is a figure to stop you in your tracks: stress and other mental health problems account for 70 million lost working days every day, according to the mental health at work: developing the business case (2007).

Did you know that according to mental health charity Mind, more than one in five (21 per cent) agreed that they had called in sick to avoid work when asked how workplace stress had affected them?

With figures from Mind also showing mental health problems affect one in six British workers each year, we've put together some of our top tips for you to improve mental health wellbeing in your business.

IMPLEMENT A MENTAL HEALTH PLAN OR POLICY

Creating a mental health at work plan and communicating to your staff will help to create a positive company culture where your employees feel they will be able to talk about their mental health.

Promoting talking about mental wellbeing can also help to reduce prejudice and stigma and increases engagement, making employees feel they can disclose any issues.

Mind has a wealth of online resources to help you and your staff.

ENCOURAGE STAFF TO TAKE A LUNCH BREAK

Promoting your staff to take a break and having a hearty, healthy meal can boost both their physical and mental health. Stepping away from their desks, can help them relax and clear their mind, leaving them feeling less stressed.

Why not organise a team meal or set up a walking or running group in everyone's lunchbreak to bring them all together? Lunchtimes can be a great time for colleagues to connect and build stronger working relationships.

HAVE AN OPEN DIALOGUE CULTURE

Creating an ethos where you have regular one-to-ones and open dialogues, incorporating conversations about mental health make sure that staff's wellbeing is monitored regularly throughout your business.

You can do this by supporting managers to regularly speak to their team members about how they are doing, what could be impacting their mental health both inside and outside of work and adding a process into your appraisal procedure that asks staff about mental health and stress.

NOMINATE A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER

To help identify mental health issues in your workforce, sending a member of your team on a Mental Health First Aid training course will teach them to spot the symptoms of mental health issues, offer initial help and guide a person towards support. The training can also teaches Mental Health First Aiders to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis - and even potentially stop a crisis from happening. Mental Health First Aid have a range of training options, designed to benefit employees, line managers, HR professionals, OH workers and senior leaders alike.

Mind also offer a range of courses for workplace training.

HR ISN'T AS DAUNTING AS IT SEEMS

HR is an area that can weigh on employers' minds. Whilst larger organisations might have HR specialists within the team, more often than not this is a luxury that smaller independent companies don't have access to.

Regardless of whether you are a start-up business trying to put the right foundations in place or an established organisation looking to keep up with best practice, here are our top three tips to stay on top of your HR:

01 STEP

DON'T RELY ON OFF THE SHELF TEMPLATES FOR POLICIES OR EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

There is a wealth of content and templates available online for staff contracts and HR procedures, however our advice is not to rely on this because they are often generic and potentially out of date. Always make sure you create and tailor your documents and contracts.

If you're seeking HR advice from an outside source or freelancer, make sure it is someone who knows your industry inside out, is comfortable with legislative regulations, and can simplify all of this, so you genuinely understand it.

02 STEP

UPDATE YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Often overlooked, an employee handbook is an essential communication for any business. It details the requirements and expectations of your employees and can also provide valuable legal protection for you as an employer.

They are also an essential tool for new starters as they provide a compressive introduction to your business and managers can use them as a reference to company policies and procedures with new members of staff.

The weight of an employee handbook sits with it relevancy and accuracy and keeping it up-to-date will make sure that you remain compliant with the latest HR and best-practice laws. Updating the manual regularly will also stand you in good stead in the event that any action is taken by your employees. Don't scrap your old handbooks however, it is important for you to be able to demonstrate policies and procedures in place at a specific time if an employee makes a complaint.

03 STEP

RECRUIT THE RIGHT PEOPLE, AND DO IT EFFICIENTLY

It can be difficult to find the right people, so you need to know where to look, how to draw in the best candidates, and how to keep the process as cost / time efficient as possible.

Produce your own adverts and look into ways you can use your personal networks to spread the word, and think carefully about where you will be able to catch the eye of the right applicants. Why not get social? When you're looking for new recruits, advertising vacancies on LinkedIn can be a great way to find the right people for the role.

It is definitely worth thinking about seeking professional HR guidance to discuss best practice and who will write your recruitment documentation to save you time, plus avoid you falling foul of equality legislation.

SPRING CLEAN YOUR BUSINESS FOR 2019

NO MATTER WHAT TIME OF YEAR IT IS, IT'S ALWAYS WORTHWHILE TO CONSIDER WHETHER YOU CAN 'SPRING CLEAN' YOUR BUSINESS.

We've put together some hints and tricks to help you brush up on some parts of your business, so you can have a productive 2019.

STEP
01

REVISE YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

When you set up your business you probably had a plan of how it would progress, who your customers would be and how it would run operationally. As your business has grown or developed over the years, the needs of your customer may have changed; you may have a website and be selling items online as well as offline or you may be launching a new product. Now is a great time to review your business plan, see if it is still relevant and update it where you need to.

STEP
02

PRODUCE A CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Are there any areas for improvement in your business? Have you launched a new product and want to gain insight into how your customers have found it? Producing a satisfaction survey to

send them can provide you with some valuable insight, which can help to shape your business plan and retain your customers.

Websites such as SurveyMonkey allow you to easily create a questionnaire with a variety of different question types from multiple choice to star rating, allowing you to gain invaluable insight.

STEP
03

EVALUATE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

Social media is a brilliant way to engage with your customers and gain exposure for your brand. Have some posts you've shared gained you great traction with many likes, shares and comments, while others have fallen flat? Social media sites, for instance Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, provide analytics of how your posts have performed, which could help you to take a more strategic approach.

Does posting at a certain time of day work best for you? Do posts containing photographs receive more likes? Are your infographics being shared the most? Taking the time to look through your social analytics can help you to shape your social media campaigns, so your posts reach your audience and receive the most engagement.

STEP
04

REVIEW YOUR SUPPLIER LIST

Are your suppliers holding up their end of the deal? Are they reliable or is the courier company you use regularly late when making deliveries to your company? Is your internet connection slow or unpredictable?

Once you've pinpointed any problems, either raise them with the supplier and find a way to resolve them or you may want to go elsewhere and find a new company to work with – either way, your supplier list will be clean as a whistle.

STEP
05

REVIEW YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS

Have you ordered in more stock than usual? Are you moving to a new office space? Or have you invested in some new office equipment, such as computers, printers or photocopiers?

Don't wait until your policies are up for renewal, your insurance needs could change several times throughout the year. Keep in regular contact with your broker, as they will be able to advise you if you need to amend your policies or take out new ones to ensure you are fully covered.