

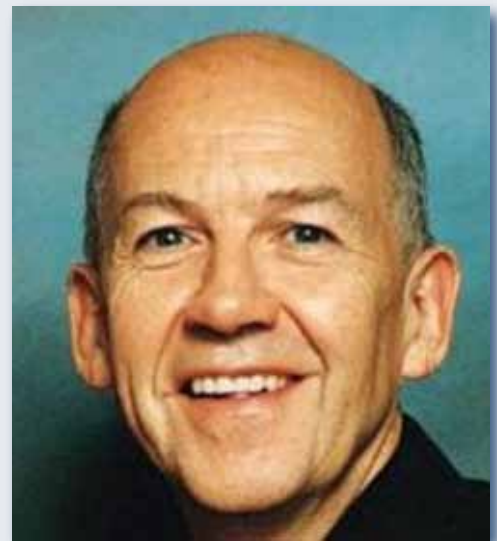
February 2012



The Voice of the Black Country

Newsletter of the Federation of Small Businesses, Black Country Branch covering Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell & Dudley

GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAIN



with Barry Mapp

On 8th February we are thrilled to welcome FSB member Barry Mapp, who is perhaps best known as one of the top trainers in the UK for Mind Mapping and Creativity.

Barry will be posing many questions:

Perhaps:

- you find 'memory' lets you down in the short-term or in the long-term
- you find your brain goes blank, slow, awkward, off-track when performing important tasks especially when speaking to a group (so you revert to a reading from a script)

At our meeting Barry will show that by understanding your brain:

- you can be creative
- you can improve short and long-term memory following simple principles
- you can learn to engage your brain more effectively when presenting to groups or to your team
- you can learn to see the wood from the trees through learning not to overload your conscious mind with too much detail.
- you can learn to multitask when appropriate, but also see that one of the key saboteurs to effective working for complex tasks is trying to work on too many things at once.

As an entrepreneur you already understand that to be successful in business you need to keep working on the business not just in it.

However, here there is a 'disconnect'. You probably fail to grasp that the most important 'capital equipment' in your business lies between your two ears and that much of the software you're running in your head (that you uploaded when you were at school) is no longer fit for purpose. As Barry will show in his presentation, not only is it useful to get to know your brain and its 'hardware' strengths and limitations, but it's also empowering to know that (if you want) you can 'rewrite' the software.

So please come ready to share any of your brain hardware/software issues and Barry will seek to help solve these for you in this session! www.barrymapp.co.uk/

DIARY DATES

The next branch meeting will be held at The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley, DY1 1RD with a complimentary hot buffet and refreshments

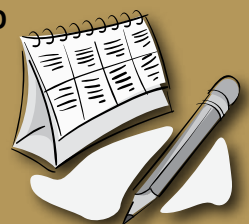
8th February 7.30pm - Barry Mapp - Get to know your brain

Future meeting:

14th March 7.30pm - T B A

11th April 7.30pm - David Bryce - Business/Retail Crime Prevention

For up to date meeting information <http://www.fsb.org.uk/staffs-and-west-midlands/events-diary>



LAST MONTHS SPEAKER....



Maureen gave a general introduction to Social Media and how it is evolving to make the internet a 2-way communication tool that businesses can take advantage of.

The presentation started by looking at blogging and how business can use it to create new web content in a fairly informal way, whilst focussing on business objectives.

We then looked at some of the most popular Social Media portals, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube and Google+. The presentation included an overview of each one, how it works, how business might use it and how to decide whether it is relevant for your business.

One key element, particularly for local business is "Google Places". Do you have a Google places listing? Yes, you probably do, even if you didn't create it yourself, as Google will have set up a default one for you. It will only be a basic listing though so Maureen's top tip for local businesses is to find and claim your Google places listing, then fully complete your profile. Then ask your customers to leave feedback on your listing – it will help to improve your local search rankings. See www.google.com/places for more information.

Maureen also talked about the importance of video. Did you know that Youtube is the second most popular search engine after Google? People are increasingly searching in Youtube for product and service information and a good video can often communicate your message more effectively than words and images alone.

Using Social Media can be time consuming so Maureen talked about the need for a plan (just like any other marketing activity) and some easy ways to get started. She also talked about ways to monitor your online "presence" so that, if anyone is talking about you, you will know about it!

Social Media is a real opportunity for many businesses to build their contacts, get feedback and ideas from potential customers, and also enhance their Search Engine ranking to drive more traffic to their business website.

Contact Maureen for a copy of WSI's Social Media Tips sheet.

Email: maureen@wsibestnetsites.com

Tel: 01332 850618

Or visit www.wsibestnetsites.com for further information



Premier Training Services

Are you looking for a training and consultancy team that you can really trust? Who will always offer you competitive prices, quality services and excellent customer service. A company who likes to think that they will go the extra mile to ensure your complete satisfaction? Then look no further than Premier Training Services.

Originally founded in 1996 by MD Bob Waller, a highly qualified and experienced food technologist, the company originally started providing consultancy and training services to SME's in order to assist them in achieving the BRC (British Retail Consortium) standard. This was found to be most successful in particular for companies wishing to achieve this accreditation in order to generate increased business from

the larger super markets but who did not have the resources to employ a full time technical manager. Many of these customers have gone on to great success and this is a service that we are still providing today.

Lesley Williams joined the company in 2002 and, supported by a very hard working admin team of Paula, Pat and Lorna, looked after the customer service and business development side of the business. Our clients now include local councils, NHS Trusts, colleges, manufacturing companies and retailers, we also have a very strong presence within the care sector and even football and cricket clubs. We are extremely grateful for the business of our many long standing customers and offer rewards for loyalty together with discounts wherever we are able. We provide an extremely diverse portfolio of training courses from Food Safety to Personal Safety and Managing Violence and Aggression to Fire Safety Awareness. Bespoke courses are also available tailored to your exact requirements by our team of qualified and professional trainers, all of whom have academic qualifications together with occupational experience of the topics that they deliver. Please contact us for further information as all calls will be very welcome. Discounts available for FSB members, please quote reference AD220. Alternatively, take a look at our website if you have any interest.

Email: admin@premiertrainingservices.co.uk

Tel: 01384 639400

Fax: 01384 639401

Website: www.premiertrainingservices.co.uk

DON'T FORGET

Got an employment problem?
Ring the **FSB Legal Helpline**
BEFORE you take any action
0845 0727 727

Your Spotlight here!

For an opportunity to promote your business to over 3,000 Black Country Members send your Spotlight to Michelle McAuliffe, branch secretary, email: michellemac@blueyonder.co.uk or phone: 07951 831351



Welcome to FSB Conference 2012

The FSB annual conference 2012 is to be held at the Scarborough Spa Complex from March 22nd to 24th 2012. Booking details are online.

The FSB website <http://www.fsb.org.uk/conference2012> will help keep you updated and tell you everything you need to know about the workshops, exhibitors, guest speakers and more.



Local FSB Member shortlisted for national award

A Wolverhampton-based independent invoice finance expert, and FSB Member, has once again been shortlisted for a national award.

For the second year running, Select Business Finance is a finalist in the "Best Asset Based Finance Broker" category at the Business Moneyfacts Awards, to be held in London on March 29th.

Chris Jones set up Select Business Finance in 2008, following a 22 year career in banking and asset based lending. Over the last 4 years he has helped nearly 100 local businesses to review their finance arrangements.

Chris says "In spite of all the negative comments in the media regarding "Access to Finance", there are still many options available to viable businesses. Whilst the Banks have undoubtedly become incredibly choosy, I use a network of niche, independent funders who have maintained a consistent appetite to assist SMEs"

In addition to Invoice Finance (factoring and invoice discounting), Select Business Finance can also arrange Asset Finance, Trade Finance, and business loans – all through its network of independent finance companies.

Chris adds "The key advantage of dealing with these independent funders is that I am able to deal with the person who can make a decision, rather than a faceless credit committee. They make lending decisions based on old fashioned principles, as opposed to following a Credit Policy drawn up by people who never actually meet with business owners".

Select Business Finance has offices in Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury and offers a FREE review to FSB members. Chris Jones can be contacted on 01902860053 / 07879056456 or email chris@selectbusinessfinance.com.

The Business Moneyfacts Awards 2012

29 March 2012, The Lancaster London Hotel
<http://www.moneyfactsgroup.co.uk/Awards/Bmf/2012>

You may be able to save up to £50,000

Regional employer NICs holiday for new businesses

The Regional Employer National Insurance contributions (NICs) holiday is available to new businesses for a limited period and subject to meeting certain conditions. New businesses may be able to qualify for a reduction of up to £5,000 of the employer NICs that would normally be due - for each of the first ten employees they

take on. This means a potential aid to business of up to £50,000.

Click [here](#) for full details.

Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley are all in a qualifying English region.



HM Revenue & Customs

FSB Legal Information Website

In addition to complete online guides to employment law and taxation matters, there is an extensive selection of fact sheets and free legal documents covering employment law, business law, health and safety and taxation, as well as topical legal news items. If you are about to employ your first employee, there is a section dedicated to ensuring you are aware of the main employment law and tax implications. You can also use this site to consult Abbey's lawyers and

health and safety and tax experts, or to book an Employment Consultant if you require fee paying legal services.

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/legal-information>

Employment Matters - IMPORTANT

Please note that it is an important condition of your legal expenses insurance policy that you seek and act on the advice of Abbey Protection Group Limited's Legal Helpline (telephone number **0845 0727 727**) in any employment matter.

The Perils of Social Media in the Workplace

Employment Tribunals are seeing more and more cases that revolve around the use of social media like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Social media can obviously be valuable marketing and networking tools but they have to be used carefully.

Recent Tribunal decisions on Facebook have gone both ways.

An employee of Apple who made very critical comments about them was found to have been fairly dismissed. There was a clear policy and the company jealously guarded its reputation. The fact that he only shared his thoughts with his "friends" did not mean that he could rely on his right to privacy as they could then be shared with all of his "friends' friends." In effect it is safest to treat anything said on Facebook as a public comment.

On the other hand an employee who commented on Facebook that she felt as if she was working in a nursery was found to have been unfairly dismissed. The employer had overestimated the likely reaction of a customer and not all of the comments were clearly about work.

Facebook can also raise other issues, such as whether an employee might have a claim for bullying or discrimination if a colleague was no longer their "friend" and whether a prospective

employer could be liable for discrimination or breaches of the Data Protection Act if it takes into account information on Facebook when making recruitment decisions.

In a recent case about LinkedIn, an HR Manager claimed constructive dismissal after he was disciplined for ticking the box that said he was interested in other career opportunities and including his CV on his profile. The outcome of that case is awaited.

LinkedIn allows users to build up a network of contacts and when someone leaves there can be a dispute about whether the employer or the employee "owns" those details and is entitled to use them. This has already led to at least one lawsuit in the USA.

The lesson for employers is to have, and enforce, a clear written Policy over the use of Social Media including what is and is not allowed and who "owns" any contacts if the employee leaves.

Richard Ennis is a specialist Employment Solicitor at FSB member firm Rees Page Solicitors of Wolverhampton and Bilston

Contact Richard by e-mail

rennis@reespage.co.uk or

telephone 01902 577714

NEW MEMBERS

Ace Forming Ltd	Kingswinford
Axiom Dental Lab	Kingswinford
Charles Cantrill Ltd.....	Wednesbury
Essential Touch Ltd.....	Dudley
Finch Publishing Ltd	Wolverhampton
GAF Property Services Ltd.....	Wolverhampton
Hayers Dental Surgery	Willenhall
Jones Memorials (Dudley) Ltd	Dudley
L & C The Communications.....	Wolverhampton
R S M C O Ltd	Dudley
Ramco Engineering Ltd	Dudley
Smart Car Valeting UK Ltd.....	Bilston
The Gallery.....	Dudley
Townsend Poultry Ltd.....	Wolverhampton

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David Dunn, Treasurer
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Barrie Blackmore,
committee member
01384 839196

Development Manager–
Staffs & West Midlands
Karen Woolley
01332 517176

karen.woolley@fsb.org.uk



Credit Crunch Survival Tips

With the credit crunch now affecting virtually all businesses, cash flow control and keeping down employment costs are essential. Use the FSB website to access and download fact sheets and documents prepared by Abbey Protection Group's lawyers to help you survive the credit crunch.

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/legal-information> then click on *Member Log In*, enter your log in details then click *Access our legal information and documents HERE* then left hand column click *Credit Crunch Survival Tips*.

Please click on either cash flow issues or reducing employment costs to open up a list of items stored under that topic.

Please note that you must always remove the Abbey Legal Protection logo from the top of the documents before using them to send out to third parties.

Service
to help
SMEs
slash sickness
absence costs



A free health advice service has launched for SMEs in England to give them vital help and support to reduce sickness absence. The recent independent review of sickness absence found that all too often the sickness absence system pushes people away from work and employers, especially those who do not have their own occupational health services. This makes it very hard to get independent, bespoke advice for more complex sickness cases.

Free advice and information for your organisation on all health issues affecting your employees...

<http://www.health4work.nhs.uk/>

DON'T FORGET

Got a problem with HM Revenue & Customs?

Ring the **FSB Legal Helpline** first,

BEFORE you take any action

0845 0727 727

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Barry Mapp -
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SHOW YOU'RE A MEMBER

Don't forget to use the FSB logo on all printing and advertising material by using the logo which you can obtain from the FSB website:

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/default.aspx?id=24&loc=general>

You will need your FSB membership number from your membership card to log in and follow instructions on how the logo should be used.

