

From the experts...

Paul Yates-Smith from Sussex Business Bureau sheds light on the benefits of networking...

Business Networking, what is it all about?

Why should you get involved and what are the benefits of Business Networking?

Business networking is an oft used term, but what does it mean and what exactly does it entail? Well that can be different for each and every one of us depending on the goals we set out to achieve.

Networking regularly allows you to meet other local business people in order to promote your products or services, which can be very productive. In the local community countless businesses are built and developed by this method alone, ignoring traditional mediums such as newspaper advertising. This in itself proves the value of Networking. The most important prerequisite is to forge strong personal relationships with others. Secondary to this is choosing the right group to visit where you will be welcomed and actively supported by the existing members.

Reciprocity, it isn't all a one way street. Networking isn't just about self promotion, it's about working together and helping one another. When you introduce a colleague or friend to another member it is known as a referral. These are a key part of any developing relationship, regardless of the group you meet through. Referrals are not to be given lightly or indeed simply by right, they are to a certain extent to be earned. The best referrals are those where others are motivated to help you and your business, not when they have to.

At the Newhaven Chamber Breakfast group you will be able to develop strong long term relations and ask the members for help with any aspect of your business. As an established group, all the members attend to help each other whilst promoting their individual business interests at the same time.

Meeting every Wednesday morning at 7am more than 25% of the chamber members regularly attend. Come along and try it, you never know you might just find a new customer or a new supplier to improve your business.

Sussex Business Bureau offer business services to support a wide cross section of businesses in the south east. Services include call answering, virtual PA, an office service, audio transcription, business addresses and diary management.

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Southern Business Awards

Newhaven business Cash Bases has won the award for Innovation in the annual Southern Business Awards that were held at the Grand Hotel, Brighton, on Friday 3rd September 2010, hosted by Fred Dineage and Debbie Thrower.

There was some excellent entertainment by singing waiters and a superb meal after a champagne reception, with a disco and casino at the end. The award nominees had all won local business awards covering the area from Portsmouth to Hastings including Horsham.

Bookings start early for the annual Chamber Christmas dinner

Join us for our annual dinner full of festive fun at Woodys Bar & Grill, on Friday 3rd December 2010, 7pm onwards. Everyone is welcome, members can bring partners and guests. A full menu from the excellent chefs at Woodys will be published shortly for you to choose from and there will be a raffle on the night for the Chamber's chosen charity the Sensory Room. Booking is essential.

For further details or to book please contact the Chamber office on 01273 517544 or email at office@newhavenchamber.co.uk

Follow the Chamber

You can now follow the Chamber news, events and discussions on LinkedIn by searching for 'Newhaven Chamber' in groups.



If you would like to submit an article or item of interest for inclusion within New Horizons please contact us on office@newhavenchamber.co.uk. Editor: Richard Excell 01273 516401. Contributors: Paul Boswell, Paul Yates-Smith, Claire Murray, Melissa Thompson.

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new horizons

The official newsletter of the Newhaven Chamber of Commerce



Working together in
business & community

Volume 2, Issue 2 - October 2010



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The outlook is bright

Chamber President Paul Boswell reflects on the encouraging signs of thriving business in the high street.

It's been an exciting and challenging past few months for the Chamber. Whilst many of our members are still having to cope with the economic climate, we have seen others expanding or opening new outlets. One of these is the new 'alworths' store which recently opened in the High Street.

It's fantastic to see a new store come into our town, and I for one think that it will do a lot to bring much needed customers back to the town. There are however, still quite a few empty retail units in the High Street and I hope that before long, these will be taken up by shops keen to ride on the 'feel good factor' which I sincerely hope 'alworths' will start to encourage about our High Street.

Members of the committee have been talking to businesses around Newhaven, learning about them, and explaining the benefits of being in the Chamber. Communication with local government and services were areas that many felt they were experiencing difficulty with. We have good working relationships and close links with the local MP and town council, as well as numerous professional organisations and business support groups.

By joining the Chamber you stand a greater chance of getting your voice heard. Membership is only £75 per year. It's fantastic value for money for the reasons outlined above, never mind the networking opportunities, member to member discounts, busy weekly breakfast club and evening training seminars the Chamber offers.

December sees the Newhaven Christmas market on Saturday 11th December on the high street with everything you could possibly wish for on sale from Christmas trees, decorations, lights, turkeys, hot chestnuts and mulled wine. There'll be Christmas carols sung by a local choir and the Maestro Academy Players will be playing Christmas songs and carols as well as raffles and charity stalls. We'd also like to invite you to join us at our Christmas dinner on Friday 3rd December at Woodys Bar & Grill for some festive fun. For further details or to book please contact the Chamber office on 01273 517544 or email us at office@newhavenchamber.co.uk Look forward to seeing you there.

Calling all members

New Horizons, the Chamber newsletter, will be going quarterly with the next issue due in January 2011 with issues following in April, July and October 2011.

We would like to invite all Chamber members to submit articles and news for inclusion in the newsletters. We are particularly keen to hear about your achievements, experiences, new staff appointments and expert advice for other Chamber members as well as news on any local community groups, activities and events. There are also opportunities to purchase advertorials and include marketing leaflets from Chamber members in each issue.

Please contact Kathy Ward at the Chamber office on 01273 517544 or email us at office@newhavenchamber.co.uk

From Woolworths to alworths

Alworths MD Andy Latham talks about the challenge of opening a new high street store and helping to fill the gaps left by the recent recession.

The new branch of alworths opened its doors to Newhaven on Friday 17th September to great applause from the local community and business leaders alike, 18 months after Woolworths closed its doors for the final time at the same site.

Newhaven is the 14th store in the newly established variety chain, created by ex-Woolworths head of stores and concessions development, Andy Latham. Having worked for Woolworths for 28 years,

shopping and a place for a variety retailer on the high street.

Fast forward 10 months and Andy had found a private investor, assembled a team of 15 head office staff (nine of whom were ex-Woolies) based in Redhill, Surrey and named the new general retailer 'alworths', created from his own initials. The first store opened on 5 November, 2009 in the



Andy Latham,
Managing Director,
alworths

prices, including branded toys, games, DVDs and a huge variety of pic 'n' mix. Throughout the year it offers different seasonal lines and there's also a wide choice of stationery, cards, party accessories and gift wrap. For the home and garden, it stocks an assortment of practical and decorative products, along with haberdashery and branded household convenience purchases.

Alworths is committed to bringing great value products to high

involved in community events. Recently, the store in Evesham took part in the Relay for Life in Evesham to raise money for Cancer Research UK and the Tiverton store donated water to walkers of the Leat. The store in Newhaven has also just agreed to sponsor a trophy for Tideway School's awards evening in November. He also encourages customers to feedback to their local stores,

opening stores in a recession is a dangerous move, but Andy has a different view: "It has been a perfect time to launch alworths", he said. "Not only does the UK high street desperately need an element of regeneration, but customers have not been able to find the products



Andy was devastated when the company went into administration in January 2009. However, despite Woolies' demise, he still firmly believed that there was an opportunity in the fact there was still a need for traditional high street

former Woolworths site in Didcot, Oxfordshire, employing 35 people (half of whom were ex-Woolies employees) on what would have been the 100th anniversary of Woolworths.

Since opening in Didcot last November, alworths now has 15 stores (including three in Scotland and one in Wales) employing over 180 people, with plans for a further five stores by the end of the year. Target locations are local high streets in small to medium-sized towns and cities across the UK. Andy believes that an advantage he holds over his competition is that he knows, from his experience with Woolworths, where the good locations for Woolworths were and the plan is to open up to 100 stores by 2015, in these key sites.

Alworths' core customer can be described as 'adults who have kids in their lives', and the kids themselves. Customers who will pop into the store to pick up a few home essentials, a toy, CDs and pic 'n' mix all in one shop. In store there are a great range of products at value for money

streets up and down the country. Many of the ranges are more aspirational and contemporary than the merchandise you would have found in a Woolworths store, especially the home adornment and gifts sections. It also stocks the big branded toys such as Barbie, Monopoly, and character toys from key toy brands such as Hasbro, Mattel and Tomy and Vtech. For the more day to day it also carries a range of £1-type household essential goods.

Ultimately, alworths is a family store with everything you'll need for the family at value for money prices. The store environment is designed with families in mind too. Alworths aims to make shopping fun, with a bright, welcoming environment that's uncluttered and easy to get about. You can see right across the store, making everything much easier to find.

Andy is also extremely keen for his stores to play a big part in their local communities and actively encourages the store trading managers to get

especially if there are products that they want to buy and feel are missing.

When asked about why Newhaven was chosen as a location for an alworths store Andy Latham said: "Newhaven was always a profitable

"EARLY INDICATIONS SUGGEST THAT NEWHAVEN IS GOING TO BE A STRONG STORE FOR US - WE REALLY HOPE THAT THE STORE BECOMES AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY."

store back in the Woolies days and we believe that it will be again for alworths. For many high streets, the demise of Woolies was the final nail in the coffin but with investment from companies like alworths and other retailers, we hope to encourage people to return to their High Streets. We are trying to be that destination shop - if we can get people to visit alworths in Newhaven to buy their everyday essentials, gifts and toys, then hopefully people will also shop in other retailers in the town - the knock-on effect can be very positive."

Some people would argue that creating a new general retailer and

they need in their local towns. It has also opened up opportunities to get some good deals with landlords."

The Newhaven store, situated in the high street has created 12 jobs for the town under the leadership of Trading Manager Shirley Tucker. Shirley is an ex-Woolworths colleague, who used to manage the Seaford

branch. She said: "I was delighted to receive the call from alworths and I didn't hesitate in accepting the position. I'm looking forward to the challenge of managing the new store and establishing alworths in the Newhaven community."

The store has now been trading for four weeks and to date has been performing above expectations. Latham concludes: "Early indications suggest that Newhaven is going to be a strong store for us - we really hope that the store becomes an important part of the local community."

Alworths in Newhaven can be found at 14 High Street, Newhaven. www.alworths.com