

Making valuable connections and bringing businesses together

Workforce Training and Development avenues were defined at a special IAB business dinner



David Gibson CBE (Interim Principal, City College Birmingham), **Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota OBE** (IAB Committee Member & Former Chairman), **Sharon Cameron** (Director of Sales, St Johns Hotel), **Jerry Blackett** (Chief Executive, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry), **Julie Hammond** (General Manager, St John's Hotel), **Dr Arun Bajaj** (IAB Chairman), **Julie Robson** (Deputy Regional Director, Learning & Skills Council West Midlands), **Russell Jeans** (Director of Commercial Services, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry)



Lee Preece (Football Operations/Project Manager, Aston Villa Football Club), **Diane Kendall** (Director of Regions, UK Career Academy Foundation), **Everton Burke** (Vice Principal Curriculum Development, City College Birmingham)



Hari Rai (Board Member, West Midlands Minority Ethnic Business Forum), **Richard Butler** (Head of Inward Investment, Advantage West Midlands), **Misbaur Rahman** (Chairman, Birmingham Bangladeshi League), **Jerry Blackett** (Chief Executive, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry), **Graeme Chaplin** (Agent, Bank Of England)

The many avenues of workforce training and development were defined at a special IAB business dinner, by Julie Robson, deputy regional director of Learning and Skills Council West Midlands.

The dinner, part of the IAB's programme of special events for patrons and Premier+ Partners, key stakeholders as well as representatives from the organisation's committee, was held at St Johns Hotel, Solihull, and guests included locally-based business and community leaders.

Ms Robson emphasised how the skills of employees could be developed through funded

training, accessed through Train to Gain, including short accredited courses in vocational skills areas such as health and safety and customer care.

She said that Job Centre Plus provided in-depth recruitment support through Local Employment Partnerships that can offer a range of measures including pre-employment training programmes - bespoke to the needs of the business - and Work Trials - to assess an individual's suitability for a particular role.

Dr. Arun Bajaj, chairman of the IAB, said: "Feedback for the evening from guests was most positive, particularly as it gave them a splendid opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of key training issues as well as of the work carried out by the IAB on behalf of its members."

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Sukhdev's Catering Services has become a **Premier Plus Partner of the IAB**



Founded in 1980, the company delivers excellent event catering, as well operating three Chandini Chowk restaurant branches - in East London, West London and the Midlands.

Sukhdev Komal, chairman, was welcomed by Dr. Arun Bajaj, IAB chairman, and Russell Jeans, the Chamber's business services director. Dr. Bajaj said: "We have known Mr. Sukhdev Komal and his business over a number of years and are proud of his commercial success, as well as his extensive community work."

"His support to the work of IAB in Birmingham on behalf of members, as well as the wider community, is very much appreciated."

Sukhdev Komal has always been involved in working for the community and is recognised internationally for his support.

Some of his achievements are:

- The Hind Rattan Award for outstanding services achievements and contributions;
- Ambassador for Peace – for individuals whose lives exemplify the ideal of living for the sake of others and who dedicate themselves to practices which promote universal moral values, strong family life, interreligious cooperation, international harmony, renewal of United Nations, a responsible public media and the establishment of culture of peace.
- An award from the Universal Peace Federation an Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace.



L to R: New IAB Premier Plus Partner **Sukhdev Komal**, **Dr Arun Bajaj** and **Russell Jeans**

Events listing for April to June 2009

April

Chamber Member Induction

Date: Tuesday 7/04/09
Venue: Birmingham Chamber House
Time: 9.45 – 11.30
Cost: FREE for Members Only

Chamber Speed Networking

Date: Wednesday 22/04/09
Venue: Costco
Time: 12.00 – 14.00
Cost: £20+VAT for Members & £45+VAT Non-Members

Networking & Vaisakhi Celebration

Date: Wednesday, 22/04/2009
Venue: Mirage Banqueting & Hospitality Suites
Time: 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Cost: FREE for Members (2 per company) Additional places or Non-Members £25 inc VAT

British Chamber of Commerce – 'The Business Convention'

Date: Monday 27/04/09
Venue: The ICC International Convention Centre
Time: 9.00 – 17.00
Cost: Free to Members and Non-Members

May

Chamber Member Induction

Date: Tuesday 5/05/09
Venue: Birmingham Chamber House
Time: 9.45 – 11.30
Cost: FREE for Members Only

Chamber Networking – Birmingham City Football Club

Date: Friday 15/05/09
Venue: Birmingham City Football Club
Time: 11.30 – 14.00
Cost: FREE for members Only

Chamber After Hours at The Living Room

Date: Thursday 21/05/09
Venue: The Living Room
Time: 17.30 – 20.00
Cost: £5+VAT for Members Only

June

Chamber Member Induction

Date: Tuesday 2/06/09
Venue: Birmingham Chamber House
Time: 9.45 – 11.30
Cost: FREE for Members Only

Breakfast Connections

Date: Friday 19/06/09
Venue: Crowne Plaza
Time: 7.00 – 9.00
Cost: £22+VAT for Members of Birmingham Chamber and Birmingham Forward

Non-UK domiciled?

Stephanie Churchill, Senior Tax Manager in Grant Thornton's dedicated Private Client team in Birmingham, offers some tips on the new remittance basis of taxation for non-UK domiciles.

1. Domicile is a concept, which has no definition in law, however most people will take the domicile of their father at the time of their birth. Many second and even third-generation Asian Britons may therefore be able to substantiate a non-UK domicile, even though they have lived in the UK all their lives.
2. Having a non-UK domicile can confer a number of benefits, including eligibility to claim the remittance basis of taxation. Broadly, this means that non-UK source income or gains are only taxed in the UK if they are remitted to (or brought into) the country.
3. Additionally, non-UK situated assets are exempt from UK inheritance tax on death for non-UK domiciled individuals, subject to the concept of 'deemed domicile', which treats long-term UK residents as UK domiciled for inheritance tax purposes only.
4. For people of Indian or Pakistani origin there are ways to ensure offshore assets escape the UK inheritance tax net whilst remaining UK resident, although this can be complicated and requires specialist advice.
5. It is often assumed that everyone falling under the new remittance basis will need to pay the well-publicised £30,000 charge. This is not the case. Although the making of a claim for the new remittance basis triggers the loss of personal allowances, the £30,000 charge is only levied on those who have been UK resident for more than six out of the previous nine tax years.
6. Also, subject to certain conditions, where the person is aged under 18 or where total unremitted income or gains fall below a de minimis limit of £2,000, the remittance basis applies without requiring a claim and allowances may therefore be retained.
7. For everyone else, at an assumed 40% rate of tax on income and 18% on gains, when coupled with the loss of allowances, at 2008/09 rates an individual would need unremitted income in excess of £68,965 or gains over £157,067 in order for the £30,000 charge to be worthwhile.
8. It is the taxpayer's decision whether or not to claim the remittance basis on a year-by-year basis.
9. It is necessary to nominate the funds out of which the £30,000 is paid, which is likely

to lead to considerable practical difficulties due to the highly complex way in which the rules work.

10. Existing accounts, which contain unremitted income and gains may cause problems going forward and therefore it may be prudent to consider setting up a new separate bank account prior to 6 April 2009 into which any nominated funds can be placed.

Non-domiciled taxation is highly complex but with the right planning, a considerable amount of tax can still be saved. Anyone who thinks they may be affected should seek specialist advice as soon as possible in order they are best prepared for the start of the new tax year on 6 April 2009.



Stephanie Churchill, Senior Tax Manager in Grant Thornton



L to R: Mohammed Akram (General Manager),
Imran Afzal Butt (Director)

Over 200 business people from all trades and professions attended the Institute of Asian Businesses 'Networking and Eid Celebration' which took place at the Pearl Palace in Digbeth, Birmingham.

There were keynote speakers from the Health & Safety Executive, Aston University, the Learning & Skills Council West Midlands and Birmingham City Council. Mr Tahir Alam, adviser to the Muslim Council of Britain, gave an explanation of the significance of Eid-ul-Adha, and the entertainment was sponsored by Global Meridian and provided by the SHAAM Group.

The Pearl Palace, which has been refurbished, is now under the management of Imran Butt of Imrans Restaurant based in Birmingham's Balti Triangle and is part of the company's expansion into the corporate banqueting sector.

The IAB, part of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce & Industry, regularly holds business networking events throughout Birmingham recognising the main Asian religious festivals, a number of companies including Wade Ceramics, Prevista City College Birmingham took exhibition stands.

Imran Butt said: "As a member of the IAB, I fully support the excellent work that they carry out on behalf of members generally.

"As a small business looking to grow, particularly in the corporate sector, I am delighted to host this important networking event for members, and welcome such a large business gathering to the Pearl Palace".

Dr. Arun Bajaj, chairman of the IAB, said: "Imran and the family have come up with a successful formula in Imrans Restaurant which, I have no doubt, will be translated into making Pearl Palace one of Birmingham's most successful banqueting suites".

"We are thrilled that so many of our members and their guests came to this venue and made it a most successful occasion."



HOW TO SAVE £10,000?

Since February 2008, the Home Office has increased its efforts to prevent illegal employment. To achieve this, they have penalised employers who employ workers illegally. Employers face a fine of up to £10,000 per employee and in some instances, imprisonment for two years.

Restaurants have been one of the biggest targets of the Home Office and the Border Inspection Agency (BIA). Since the new laws came into effect, the BIA has conducted hundreds of raids on restaurants. It is not just curry houses that the BIA has targeted. According to the BIA website, a TGI Friday's in Essex was fined £10,000. Although £10,000 may not be a

great amount for TGI Friday's, it is for a chip shop. How many chips does the owner have to sell to make £10,000?

To avoid getting fined, the employer should keep accurate records of their employee's status to work in the UK. For instance, if a restaurant employs a non-EU national here on a student visa as service staff, then the restaurant should make sure that the employee is not working more than twenty hours per week.

The biggest pitfall faced by owners of small businesses is that they are responsible for all aspects of the business.

The BIA has given the solution to this pitfall to employers. Employers can appoint representatives to help them minimise, if not completely eliminate, the risks of getting fined. Therefore, the best way to save £10,000 in unnecessary fines is to appoint a legal representative experienced in helping restaurants keep one step ahead of the BIA.

ESTA

On 12 January 2009, the Electronic System Travel Authorization (ESTA) came into effect. Under ESTA, travellers to the US must register with the US Embassy seventy-two hours before their scheduled trip. This registration, which will be valid for two years, can be used the traveller for multiple trips.

The information on how to register can be found on the US Embassy website, which is london.us embassy.gov. It is advisable that business travellers register sooner rather than later for a number of reasons. The first reason is a practical concern. Early registration will help the traveller avoid any delays at the Embassy.

It is also advisable to register early if you doubt your ability to travel under the VWP. For example, people requiring a visa due to a previous conviction have to wait six to eight weeks for an appointment. The traveller will also need to obtain several documents for the appointment. Therefore, it is advisable to plan ahead.

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L to R: Aron Dhunna (Director), Anita Dhunna (Director), Margaret Brewer (Managing Director, Interactive Telecoms)

Taskforce tackles downturn

A West Midlands Taskforce has been set up by Advantage West Midlands to ensure that public sector agencies and business support organisations are working together to address the impact of the economic downturn.

The taskforce will address a number of key themes including

- Workforce retention and rapid response to lay offs;
- Job replacement and retraining following large scale redundancy;
- Enhanced business support through Business Link and the Manufacturing Advisory Service; and
- Financial assistance for companies.

A website has been launched to support the initiative: www.supportwm.co.uk

Solihull teaching pioneers go to top of class



An easy-to-use online teaching system - designed in Solihull to give children support and confidence - has achieved recognition at a major awards ceremony.

The work of Key Stages Online (KSOL), based in Drayton Road, Solihull, was cited for its innovative online learning system www.ksol.co.uk at the prestigious ICT Excellence Awards 2008, on 20th November at The National Motorcycle Museum.

KSOL, a Solihull Chamber member, was a finalist in the 'Best Added Value Service' category and to mark the achievement, picked up a Certificate in the ICT Awards, supported by The Telegraph Business Club and the Birmingham Mail.

Aron Dhunna, founder and owner of KSOL commented: "It was a great honour for us to be shortlisted from hundreds of entries, alongside some major multi-national IT businesses; and an excellent endorsement of the quality and ingenuity of the Key Stages Online product. The system can teach and profile thousands of children at once - but each child has a timetable tailored to their specific needs."

The KSOL system at www.ksol.co.uk is designed to complement school activity and to boost confidence and results for youngsters who may be failing to achieve SAT levels. KSOL also help in improving exam technique for those looking to secure an 11+ place at grammar or independent school.

It pinpoints problems in understanding maths or English, giving personalised interactive online tuition, and tests to cure them. It makes learning fun and rewards success, motivating pupils, and has helped thousands to achieve better results.

In addition, the success of its teaching methods were recognised last November 2007 when KSOL won the prestigious 'Best Business' award at the Solihull Business Awards.

"These two awards reflect the dual strengths of KSOL", said Aron. "The ICT certificate recognises the innovative nature of the software and its ease of use; the Solihull award focussed on the educational benefits to children and parents of using the system. However clever the technology, it is the KSOL team's drive, enthusiasm and passion for good education which I believe makes us special."

KSOL recently celebrated a 91% success rate in its 11+ pupils achieving entry to the secondary school of their choice for September 2008, proof of the effectiveness of the KSOL service.

For more information on the ICT Excellence Awards visit www.ksol.co.uk

The Patrons



IAB Premier+ Partners



Start-up members offered 20 discounted Chamber benefits



Mandy Canny

Birmingham Chamber has created a special programme aimed at helping people launch their own businesses.

Start-up membership will offer 20 free and discounted benefits designed for businesses that have been trading for less than 12 months.

Mandy Canny, manager, business start-ups in Chamber Commercial Services, said: "This service is designed for new businesses and is particularly aimed at people who may be thinking of starting their own business.

It could be particularly helpful for anyone whose job has been made redundant and is thinking of branching out on their own.

Despite the economic climate, now is a good time to go into business and our offer will help people of the financial hurdles during start-up. The new service offers potential savings of over £2,000.

"After an initial joining fee of only £170 plus VAT, all of our 20 services are free or discounted."

They are:

- Three years' free banking with Natwest Bank offering potential savings of over £1,000.
- Free £500 overdraft from Natwest Bank in first year of membership.
- Free Business Mastercard from Natwest for first year of membership.
- Discounted insurance rates with Natwest Business Insurance.
- Free tariff analysis of telecoms systems through Opus and Bluuky.
- Free confidential legal telephone helpline, available 24-7, from Lawyers for Business.
- Free legal health check.
- Discounted legal support available.
- Free utility and consumables cost review.
- Free assessment of IT requirements/systems.
- Discounted managed IT services.
- Free marketing health check from Start2finish.
- Discounted marketing support.
- Discounted website design.
- Money-saving healthcare plan from BHSF.
- Access to Chamber networking events.
- Discounted meeting room and conference facilities.
- Discounted commercial training courses.
- Free online business support package, including HR, book keeping, business planning and health and safety.
- Access to international trade advice.

Chamber chief executive Jerry Blackett said: "We are mindful that one of the most difficult periods in the life of any business is the first 12 months.

"Our new start-up package is there to help, along with many other benefits of being a Chamber member."

For further details call 0121 607 1874 or visit www.birminghamchamber.org.uk/start-up

How Can Chamber Membership Benefit Your Business?

20 ways Chamber membership can benefit your business

- 1 Over 150 events to meet new contacts, build existing relationships, exchange ideas and learn new skills.
- 2 Free coverage on Chamber website (over 700,000 visits per annum) opportunities to up-grade your entry.
- 3 Free on-line entry on members special offers page.
- 4 Free listing in Chamber member directories.
- 5 Free 10 issues a year member's magazine, Chamberlink.
- 6 Nationwide wide networking opportunities.
- 7 Free access to 24/7 confidential, legal advice helpline.
- 8 Free online business support package including HR, book-keeping, business planning and health and safety.
- 9 Save money on language translation, interpretation and export documentation services.
- 10 Free half hour telephone based information service.
- 11 Free access to a business information service.
- 12 Savings on marketing support including mailing contact lists and market research.
- 13 Competitive rate advertising opportunities on the Chamber's website, members directories and monthly e-newsletters.
- 14 Discounted training courses such as Contracts and Tendering.
- 15 Money saving offers on healthcare plans, utility cost reviews, breakdown recovery, factoring and travel.
- 16 Discounted meeting room and conference facilities.
- 17 Lobbying opportunities to influence Government. Giving you a voice on business issues from red tape to skills, transport and regulation.
- 18 Free access to a virtual committee with regular business updates.
- 19 Access to international trade advice, trade missions and exhibitions.
- 20 Numerous sponsorship and promotional opportunities to raise your business profile.

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Ask for further details
Call us today!

Tel: 0121 607 1874
www.birmingham-chamber.com
membership@birminghamchamber.org.uk

R is for RECOVERY

All permanent vacancies registered with Birmingham Chamber Placement Consultancy during the months of April and May will be charged at the special rate of 14%

To discuss a current permanent or temporary requirement or to find out more about our high quality candidates contact me, Helen Gardiner:

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Helen Gardiner
Head of Placement Consultancy



Cllr Mike Whitby
Leader of Birmingham City Council.

The first phase of the Big City Plan consultation has now concluded. During the eight weeks of the consultation, the people who live, work, shop and play in the city had an opportunity to say what they think about this vision for the future of the city centre.

Since the launch of the Big City Plan charter in February last year, community groups and businesses have been getting involved in debate and consultation about the plan.

More than a thousand individuals and many organisations have provided excellent feedback and comments on the Big City Plan issues and options, generating a lively discussion that will shape the development of all aspects of life in the city centre over the next 25 years.

Representatives from the creative sector attended an event hosted by Creative Republic in October 2008 with guest speakers Mike Whitby, leader of Birmingham City Council, and Jerry Blackett, chief executive of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Birmingham Best Practice Club and Wragge & Co each held events for the respective construction and legal communities. Continuing business support comes from Turner & Townsend (construction consultancy, programme and project management specialists), leading urban planning and design practice Urban Initiatives, and Birmingham's largest full service marketing agency, Core Marketing.

Councillor Whitby, said, "By working with organisations like the Institute of Asian Businesses, we can focus the Big City Plan on the challenges of tomorrow and create one of the top 25 most liveable cities in the world. We can bring to bear our creative ideas and develop a sustainable approach that will create employment, training and business opportunities for our citizens. Together we can use our talents and resources to shape and revitalise Birmingham's city centre".

For more information about the Big City Plan, please ring 0121-303 3075 or visit www.bigcityplan.org.uk

Venue tackles credit crunch with innovative ideas

Along with the majority of businesses, IAB Premier+ member Mirage Banqueting, has been affected by the 'credit crunch'.

The venue based in Small Heath, Birmingham, relies on regular bookings for weddings and conferences, but, although the bookings were still being made it was at a slower rate.

That prompted the management team to take a pro-active approach to tackle the problem. The decision was made to host and market their own events.

This would improve cash flow and increase footfall through the door.



The first event was a 'Red Carpet' Valentines Ball which attracted over 120 people and the next two events were aimed at Asian singles, 'Date my Desi Mate' and a '35 Plus' singles night, which were both held in March.

For more information please visit www.miragebanqueting.co.uk or call 0121 773 2007

Mirage Banqueting specialises in weddings, parties and conferences. With a great central location and free parking for 100 cars and a dedicated Events Manager for all bookings this is the perfect venue to hold your function.