

# THE BUSINESS GODPARENT

AUTUMN 2020 | Issue 8



## RED SOFA INTERVIEW

**TERRY KENDHAMMER,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
BUBBLE CREATIVE  
SOLUTIONS**

Marketing advice for businesses.

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## XLEDGER

**POWERING YOUR  
BUSINESS WITH  
REAL-TIME  
INFORMATION**

What it is and who it can benefit.

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## WHAT IS YOUR NEW NORM?

Back in March, we were told to work from home if we could. Then the message was reversed, as the likes of Costa Coffee and Pret A Manger struggled without the office trade footfall. And now it's swung back again to working from home if you can. It's all a bit dizzying, we have to say, and there is going to be an impact on our economy. However, as is often the case with business, though the short-term view is daunting, the potential changes presented by a long-term view may offer relief to some.

And this is why... On a personal level many people are citing improvements they're experiencing to their work/life balance through home working. And if remaining resilient at the moment is a matter of striking the right balance, then businesses are going to need to address some new challenges to make the new balance work for them. Here are a couple of examples...

1. Working collaboratively in an office increases creativity and enhances productivity. It also helps to build the strength of a team through the sharing of ideas etc. So if your staff are continuing to work at



home, what can you do differently to boost creativity, productivity and team working on an ongoing basis?

2. Many employees believe that rubbing shoulders with their superiors will, over time, help them to progress up their career ladder. What can you do, therefore, to give them that sense of purpose to stay and progress within your organisation? What opportunities can you provide for that face-to-face learning?



As always in challenging situations, there is no one right answer. We recommend, therefore, that business owners review their situation with an open mind and seek to adjust to the 'new norm' in ways that can suit both themselves and their employees. By finding a healthy balance, we may all then play our part in keeping our economy moving forward.

**ROGER EDDOWES  
BUSINESS GODPARENT**

## BRINGING THE OFFICE HOME... LONG TERM

We think this issue of The Business Godparent is a superb opportunity to introduce you to Bring the Office Home, a new venture founded by Dijon, who are an award-winning exhibition and live events agency with 40 years' experience in designing, building and installing beautiful structures for some of the world's best known brands. Born out of a desire to adapt to the new business norm, this superb idea has quickly gone from strength to strength.

Early in 2020, as we all watched the Coronavirus crisis unfold with a devastating effect on the live events

industry, Dijon decided that they had a choice to make: to hunker down and wait until the world returned to 'normal', or to adapt, be nimble and draw on their experience, collaborations and networks to fulfil the needs of the new business normal.

As the majority of the UK workforce shifted to working from home, with many expressing a desire to continue to do so long term, the idea of Bring the Office Home Ltd was born. The team now work with one of their long-term partners to produce beautiful garden rooms of the highest quality, which are suitable for year round use.





## EVEN HMRC KNOWS THAT EVERY LITTLE HELPS...

If you're still working from home because of this pandemic, or your business is intending to ask their staff to do so going forward, it's worth checking out what home workers can claim as expenses with HMRC.

### Here's the good news...

With respect to calculating your income tax bill, HMRC allows home workers to claim up to £6 a week in total as an expense for things like electricity without needing any paperwork. They don't repay that sum to you or your staff, of course, but it does reduce their tax bill by up to £1.20 per week for basic rate taxpayers, and £2.40 for a higher rate taxpayer. NB: You are only eligible to do this if you're working from home because you have to, and not just because you choose to. From an employer point of view, of course you can offer your staff a £6 a week allowance for excess costs, which you then pay to your employee and you claim as a cost against your business. This will then prevent them from getting the tax benefit, but we doubt they'll complain.

However, whichever way you want it to work for your business... it's still £312 per year that can be claimed as a business cost that will reduce someone's tax bill. And we like that!

### How do you claim?

The home worker can either claim for it when they do their annual tax return, or on a P87 form which can be downloaded electronically from HMRC's website. If they know they'll be going to work back in the office at some point, it makes sense to claim once their home working stint is over, simply because it means they only have to submit a claim once. For those who are shifting to working from home permanently, however, they can get their tax code changed.



## TERRY KENDHAMMER ON THE RED SOFA

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us a bit about Bubble Creative Solutions?

**Terry:** Bubble is digital marketing agency, formed 17 years ago. We have built up a select team of individuals to give our clients the best experience and a full package solution.

From creating a marketing strategy and plan, we have key experts in house that look after creative design, website design and development, search engine optimisation and AdWords (Pay per click), social media management, video and animation.

**Interviewer:** How has your business been affected by the Coronavirus outbreak?

**Terry:** In the initial stages, there was an element of uncertainty. That said, there has been a rise in companies wanting to get business back to normal and with various grants from the government, this is enabling companies to invest in marketing their business.

On this note, because there is a rise in the use of digital technology, and people working from home, the way we market and communicate our products and services to existing and potential clients has changed dramatically. People who once had shops on the high street are now turning to online solutions for their marketplace.

**Interviewer:** How do you see the future of marketing?

**Terry:** Because of the huge rise in the use of digital technology, this has propelled the way digital marketers help their clients. Previously, where marketing was aimed at more Business to Business, with people working from home, we are seeing a sudden change with marketing working on a more individual basis within the businesses. Ownership and empowerment of employees has risen and this gives way to new ideas being formed within businesses. So the future of marketing is very much persona-type focussed, scenario based, and centred around individual user experience.

**bubble**<sup>®</sup>

"The main thing at this time is to stay visible and engage with your target market. Most importantly, concentrate about your journey and not someone else's"

**Interviewer:** Would you have any marketing advice for businesses overcoming the crisis?

**Terry:** The first piece of advice I would give in any situation would be to pause for a moment. Create a marketing strategy to identify your current position and to see what opportunities may lie ahead. The main thing at this time is to stay visible and engage with your target market. Most importantly, concentrate on your journey and not someone else's.

## POWERING YOUR BUSINESS WITH REAL-TIME INFORMATION



One of the key ingredients for the success of a business is information. It's needed before you start, as you get going, and then ongoing as you seek to grow. Why is information key? Because without it you're steering blind.

### Collating useful information

Of course, good information can come from many places and obviously getting advice and updates from outside trusted partners should be a regular part of your data gathering. However, what is particularly important and useful is information regarding what's going on inside your organisation. And for that...

### We recommend good software

The application we'd like to highlight in this issue is Xledger, a superb piece of software that can enhance your efficiency whilst providing you with critical information on the financial health of your business too. Sound good but a little vague? Here's an example to illustrate what we're getting at...

### The challenges facing an online seller

Picture this: You started your business part time and have seen it grow. When you initially got things going you were happy to just manage all the statistics in Excel. But now you have various members of staff working remotely, you're selling several product lines to people all over the world, and you think things are looking good... but you don't really know for sure.

### What gives?

- You'd like to start seeing regular, informative reports by product and region.
- You want several people to be able to approve an invoice and it's all very manual at the moment.
- You could do with automated reporting because Excel is no longer 'cutting it'.

### You need an integrated reporting solution

Real-time information is the magic gold dust that will free up your time, make decision making easier and faster, and keep everyone who needs to be in the

know... in the know. Xledger is ideal because it can integrate with your online store to give you exactly the full reporting functionality you require, so you can get information at the press of a button. You can then slice it, dice, even put-it-on-ice it if you really want to. The key is... you can have it when you need it. So, in our example, you would have the capability to set up users to be able to approve invoices based on cost centre, project, price, product line etc. AND you would be able to report on that too.

If that all sounds a bit daunting, though, don't worry. At Essendon, we've been working with Xledger for quite a while and would be glad to help you get up and running. We can also provide you with training, and then support you using it ongoing. Just imagine... being able to peruse detailed monthly/quarterly management reports with a cup of coffee in your hand, all at the press of a button. Cheers!

## DISRUPTION TO NORMAL SERVICE, DISRUPTING STEREOTYPES

A guest article from Priti and Amy at the S.H.E. Community Hub



Let's start by addressing the elephant in the room - We know that for many the words 'Health & Safety' are like fingers down a blackboard. We've seen people physically recoil or roll their eyes or search frantically for the person 'responsible' for health & safety at the mere mention of the words. In-fact recently, upon writing a submission for a publication, we were asked to re write a 'Thankyou' message because the inference of the words 'Health & Safety' set a shift in mindset to the reader of a negative association when trying to convey thanks and gratitude.

### Health & Safety is Peppered with Stereotypes

Stereotypes of clipboards, hard hats, tick lists, red tape and endless lists of things you are doing wrong. However, when used independently of each other, the words 'Safety, Health, Environment' all conjure up positive associations- after all, with Coronavirus we all desperately wanted to be Safe, to know that those we love were Healthy and we were in an Environment conducive for working, teaching or learning whilst living through lockdown- it's strange that this is the essence of Health & Safety and I wonder as you read those words did you get 'that dreaded feeling'?

### Introducing a New Way to view Health & Safety in the 'New Normal'

S.H.E. Community Hub was launched due to our social responsibility to share the natural process of staying safe. Many of us, for example undertake the risk assessing process without even realising that, that is what we are doing. During the Coronavirus we saw first-hand great examples of neighbours identifying hazards, assessing the risks and implementing controls.

We also saw the great weight of responsibility companies felt in both staying afloat and continuing to operate whilst also putting on their 'metaphoric hard hat', become health and safety experts, navigate their way through all of the Coronavirus guidance (& constant up-dates) to keep staff, customers, clients, suppliers, contractors and themselves safe, healthy and well. In turn this led us to supporting schools and charities who had limited resources, funds and experience to undertake the 'Real Deal' risk assessments and become Covid-secure which was suddenly expected of them.

### Not because the law tells us, but because it's the right thing to do

We are doing things differently to the norm within our industry. With presence on social media platforms, Community Hubs for peer to peer support and the sharing of best practice, using storytelling to convey important messages, we are aiming to disrupt those negative associations and show that everyone can play a positive role in Health & Safety. It can be enlightening, time saving, momentum building and dare I say it, enjoyable. By making it a choice, focusing on people, integrating core principles and being part and parcel of your company culture, it far outweighs hoping for the best and leaving it to chance.

Join the S.H.E. Community, follow us on social media, visit our website [SHECommunityHub.com](https://shecommunityhub.com) and contact us on [info@shecommunityhub.com](mailto:info@shecommunityhub.com) to find out more and how we can work together.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT – PHIL MIRTO, ACCOUNTS TEAM

### What does a day in the life of Phil look like?

My day starts with checking my emails and preparing the work load for the day, ensuring all client deadlines are met. I will then commence working, whilst dealing with anything that arises throughout the day.

### What do you get up to in your spare time?

As I have recently become a father, most of my spare time is either spent with the little man or cleaning up his trail of destruction.

### What are your top 3 places to travel to?

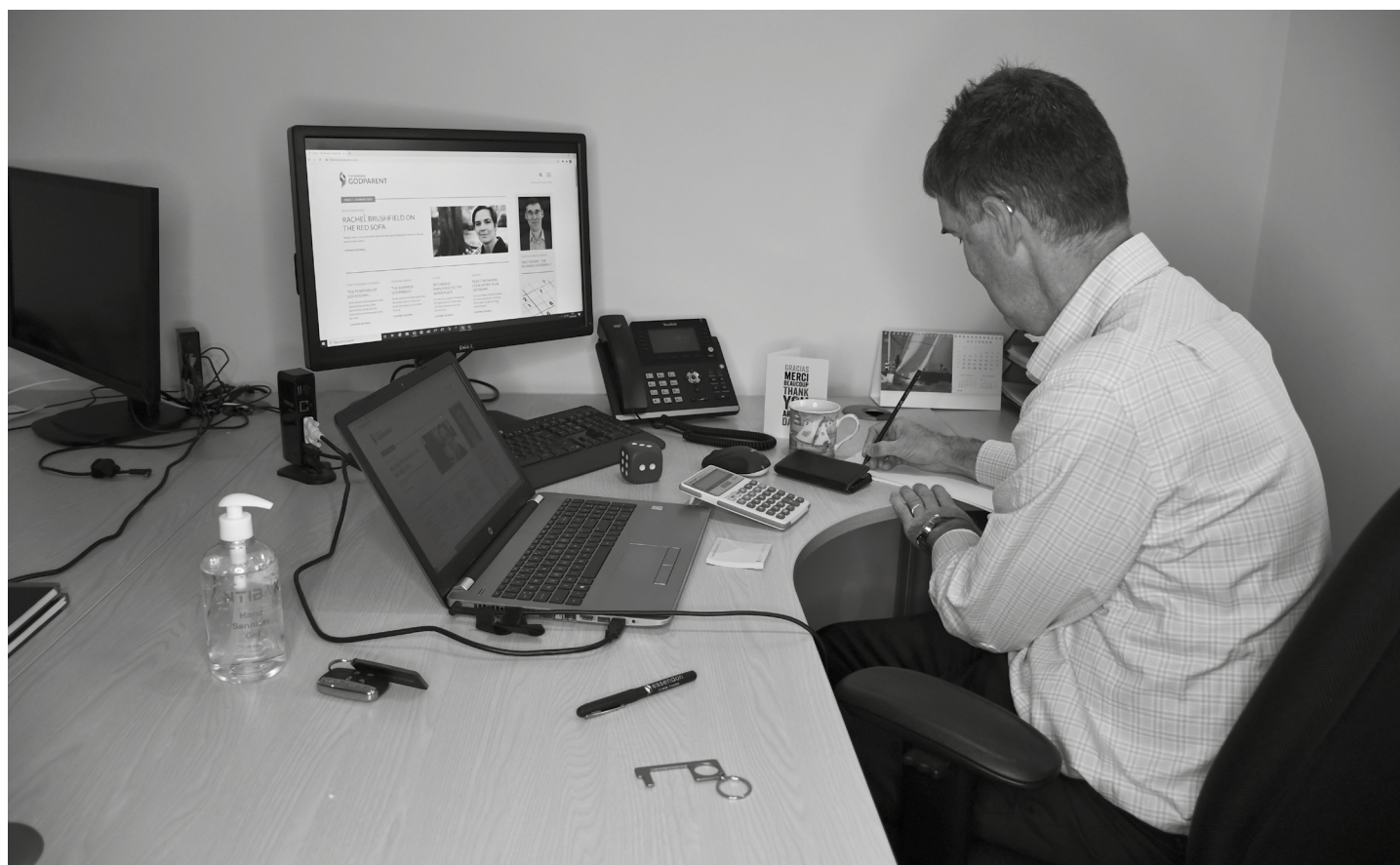
Being Italian, I love visiting Italy for the culture and food. My favourite places in Italy to travel are San Remo, Rome and Naples. A trip to Rome is a must with all the sites to see and the most amazing gelatos. No trip to Naples is complete without a traditional wood fire pizza. Australia is also a beautiful country with so much to offer. I would love to go back to visit the great barrier reef as this was something I was unable to visit whilst over there. South Africa is a place that I have never visited, but would love to travel to one day.

### If given a chance, who would you like to be for a day?

Tough one! Drake off the top of my head.

## MINDBENDERS SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Spot the 6 differences between the two images below



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