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First Friday Lunch and Learn

5th February
12noon - 1pm

Another four for Scotland!

A great end to a challenging year with four new businesses announcing their employee ownership!



Renowned architectural practice, [Allan Murray Architects](#), responsible for so many of Edinburgh's newer iconic buildings, completed the move in April. However, the pandemic meant they held onto the news until later in the year. The firm, famous for The Tun, the new St James' Centre and the award winning Boroughmuir High School, joins the many high profile architects who now own their businesses.



[Dunedin Advisory](#), the respected Business

Restructuring specialists with offices in Glenrothes, Dundee and Glasgow also completed the transaction earlier in the year and went public with the news in December. Owner Christine Convy had been interested in employee ownership for a while, and the employees are looking forward to taking Christine's vision forward. You can read more about Dunedin on Page 4.



High end kitchen designers, [Cameron Interiors](#), have studios in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Owner Kirsten Robeson felt that she had been given a tremendous opportunity when her boss offered her a stake in the business. Kirsten decided to "pay it forward" and transfer the whole business to employee ownership, completing the transaction in early December. The staff are delighted and excited

at the move. Kirsten will remain involved in the business but is looking forward to a bit more family time as the new owners take the business into the future.

And last, but definitely



not least, Stirling IT firm [2e-volve](#) finished 2020 with a bang by achieving a long-held ambition to become an employee-owned business. Unusually for an IT company, most of the employees have many years' service. The firm has a superb reputation for servicing a large number of companies in the Forth Valley. Founder and MD serial entrepreneur Craig Lemmon will remain with the company to support the new leadership team, and plans to spend more time on his other business interests, particularly [Miigen](#), an innovative "digital scrap book" for capturing memories.



Chemco go Green!

World leader in protective coatings, **Chemco International**, has taken the next step on its journey towards environmental sustainability by converting the supply of all 100% of its energy requirements to 100% Green Energy.

This has been achieved in partnership with Green Energy UK; which is credentialled as the UK's only supplier of both 100% green gas and electricity, for which it is certified by RGGO and REGO. All energy is generated in truly sustainable ways and therefore no carbon offsetting is required.

Chemco International has, for many years, prided itself on taking the lead and not putting profit optimisation before 'doing the right thing'. Whilst there is a significant cost to the Company in adopting 100% green energy, it is committed to absorbing this cost and so reducing its carbon footprint.

It follows a similar commitment by the Company in 2020 to Zero Waste and since then all process waste has been diverted from landfill towards other channels, such as Recovery and Incineration for Electricity Production.

The next steps for the Company are to convert its vehicle fleet to 100% electric and provide green charging points for company visitors. The process for achieving this, already underway; is expected to be completed by the end of February 2021.

Future aspirations of the Company include the adoption of bio-resins and the complete removal of solvents from the small part of the company's sales that are still solvent based; the majority of Chemco's technologies being solvent-free for many years already.



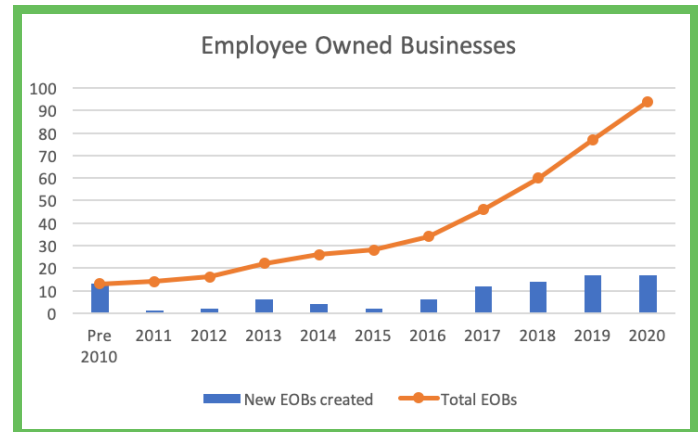
Fiona McElroy

Fiona McElroy, Safety, Health, Environmental & Quality (SHEQ) Manager of Chemco International, commented:

"Thankfully, Chemco International speaks of its environmental achievements rather than simply its good intentions and so I am delighted at the progress made in the past year and in spite of Covid."

OAUK Matters

Happy New Year – let's hope it's a good one with lots to cheer!



2020 wasn't so bad in terms of employee ownership. OAUK saw 9 companies achieve employee ownership during the year which was fewer than anticipated due to the pandemic. Most of the planned transitions will complete in 2021 and I'm confident we'll recover the ground. Glen at CDS tells me that overall there were 17 employee ownership transactions in Scotland in 2020 which is the same number as 2019 – quite remarkable when you consider the challenges of the year!

Scotland's success in growing employee ownership has been noticed worldwide and I was asked to present at an international conference hosted by Rutgers University in New Jersey explaining my thoughts behind the growth. One of the frustrating issues in defining the exact number of employee-owned businesses

is that there isn't a definitive register. With huge thanks to Glen Dott at CDS, Ralph Leishman of 4-consulting and Professor Andrew Robinson at University of Leeds, we concluded there were 94 employee-owned firms in Scotland. This represents around a 5th of the total of employee owned businesses in the UK. This is quite remarkable when you compare the differences in the economies. It was quite pleasing to find that despite Scotland's economy being small in terms of size, it was significantly larger in terms of contribution. I might do a separate webinar to present what I learned- watch this space!

94 is a good number, and it means that we will break the 100 barrier in January if all the planned transitions go ahead. That's a significant milestone on the road towards the Scottish Government's

500 target for 2030.

We do all know it's not about the number; it's about authenticity and passion and purpose. Over and over again, Scotland's employee-owned community demonstrate that in spades. You don't have to look hard to find great examples of companies excelling at what they do. They do the right things right. Chemco is a case in point. Now committed to 100% green energy, zero waste and plans for 100% electric vehicles by February 2021 they are demonstrating that corporate citizenship is a value they take very seriously indeed. Jerba, with their open book management philosophy, demonstrate the importance of transparency and inclusion. Cameron Interiors is now employee-owned because the owner cared so much about the people. Craig Lemmon

of 2e-volve knew for a long time that employee ownership was right for 2e-volve, and patiently waited until the time was right.

OAUK will be striving hard to support all of Scotland's employee-owned firms. Remember our training event for Trustees on Friday 22nd January. More information [here](#). I think I've messed up the First Friday registrations so I'm going to issue a new link. Email me on carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk if you would like to join next event on Friday 5th February.

Stay safe everyone. Wishing you and your dear ones a happy, healthy and prosperous 2021.

- Carole



Dunedin Advisory evolves into an Employee Ownership Trust

Pictured: Christine Convy, Founder (left), Michelle Anderson, Trustee (right)

2020 has been a historic year for the world and the year Dunedin Advisory Ltd decided to forge ahead in making the decision to become an EOT.

Since then, it's been full steam ahead (despite Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions) with staff fully engaged in the goal of strengthening and developing not only the business but their future personal development too.

With offices in Dundee, Glenrothes and Glasgow, Dunedin Advisory specialise in the restructuring and recovery of businesses throughout Scotland who get into financial difficulties and assist individuals with personal debt. The company was formed in 2009 by Christine Convy with a

vision of applying her successful chartered accountancy and insolvency practitioner background into growing a business from grass roots up offering independent consultancy services in the Scottish marketplace. Having established a strong management Board assisting her with operational and strategic decisions, she knew it was good business practice to provide for her longer-term succession plan. Having considered a number of options, Christine and the Board decided the best way to ensure job security and the long-term future of the team, rewarding them for their hard work and loyalty was the EOT route.

Christine Convy (Founder) comments: 'Becoming an EOT has

been many months in planning, with our whole team committed to making it a success. We should have made our announcement late Spring but with the pandemic taking grip in the UK, felt it best to wait until late 2020 before letting everyone know about the positive steps we're taking for the continued future success of the business.

Our team have demonstrated how strong, adaptable, and committed they are – their transition from being office-based to working remotely literally overnight has been incredible. It is a testament to the hard work, resilience and can-do attitude developed over the years – making the business and its people robust and effective.

Weekly team meetings are enlightening with many new ideas being shared. Everyone is ready to support clients coming out of the pandemic and are keen to build upon the strong professional relationships with existing and new contacts.'

She continues 'I repeatedly say how very proud I am of the DA personnel and am delighted that all 17 staff will benefit from the rewards available to them within the EOT.'

Dunedin were delighted with the support from OAUk as they made their employee ownership journey and the excellent advice received from EQ Accountants

(Continued)

and Shepherd and I would encourage Shepherd and excellent business and Wedderburn. anyone who is looking Wedderburn says its people.”

Dougie Rae of EQ to seriously consider “Shepherd and Being in charge of your Accountants comments employee ownership Wedderburn’s corporate own destiny is something ‘It was great to be able to as one of the options for team was pleased many dream of but help Christine achieve her their company. There are exciting new phase in often fail to achieve. The goals and assist another many positives for the Dunedin Advisory’s team at DA are excited company to transition to seller and the employees history through the about the future where Employee Ownership. and the ‘feel good establishment of its EOT, everyone has their say I’m sure the company factor’ that is achieved which recognises and in true collective team will go from strength to strength and now business.’ rewards the hard work spirit - the benchmark is the employees benefit and loyalty of its staff, set high. directly in that growth. Stephen Gibb of future success of an

New Chief Financial Officer for Network ROI



Network ROI continue depth knowledge of IT Keith said “Ross’s Ross said: “I am really building the business project management passion for developing looking forward to for the future with and corporate businesses and joining Network ROI and the appointment of governance. commitment to excellent and developing the financial Ross Haston as Chief Keith Bevan, CEO, customer service make and commercial teams. Financial Officer (CFO) said “Ross brings a him a great addition Having met the CEO from January 2021. combination of excellent to the management and some of the team financial stewardship, alongside Richard at interview I was commercial acumen, and progressive Smith being appointed attracted to work for such a forward-thinking Ross brings over 30 years’ cross industry and leadership experience across a diverse range of sectors which will help propel Network ROI forward in 2021. His fresh perspective and strong track record as a people-focused leader is a perfect fit for employee-owned Network ROI.” as the service delivery manager last month, will help lay the foundations for Network ROI’s future growth and put in place the management structure we need to help us better service our nationwide customer base”.

Having met the CEO and some of the team at interview I was attracted to work for such a forward-thinking company and relish the chance to make a difference. I am thrilled to be part of Network ROI at this exciting time, with its recent investment in a new management team, clear strategic vision and committed team of employee-owners”.

EOT Growth at 2020

Congratulations to in each other and 2020 Business Group working hard on keeping who increased the communication flowing. shareholding of their Employee Ownership Trust by buying out a further tranche of shares and we had a choice. We from the original owners. we could have furloughed Despite a challenging everyone and waited year in which the for the storm to pass or company moved to we could take action to virtual working, the adapt to the situation project management and make it work for us. specialists finished the Almost overnight we year in a strong financial transformed from being position, with higher largely classroom based employee engagement to totally online and levels and the highest virtual delivery channels. ever customer We owned the problem, satisfaction scores. we devised the solution, Chief Exec Tony Marks we made it work. attributes the success That's real employee to collaboration with ownership." all stakeholders, belief



Phil Jefferies



New Appointments

Audio visual specialists Mediascape celebrate their 3rd year of employee ownership this month. The recent election saw Fyona McArthur re-elected to the position of Employee Trustee. Fyona was elected first time round and its testament to her colleagues confidence in her that she was re-elected for a second term.

Fyona is Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality Manager for the company.

2e-volve recently became employee owned and James Travers was appointed as the first employee Trustee. James is the Support Desk Manager and has been with

2e-volve for over 9 years. I asked him to smile in his photo and he told me this is as close to smiling as he gets.

Congratulations to Fyona and James on their elections.



Fyona



James

Meet The EOB



As he was looking to the future for his business, Jerba Campervans owner Simon Poole asked himself the following three questions:

- Where do I want to be?
- Where do I want the business to be?
- How do I realise value for the business?

Simon set up the business with Cath Brookes in 2006. Their aim was that Jerba was always to be a different kind of business. The company refurbishes camper vans to customer requirements and is centred on innovation and valuing people.

Simon attended a Scottish Enterprise event and heard Sean Elliot

tell the story of selling Network ROI to an Employee Ownership Trust. This seemed the ideal solution for Jerba; it was a natural fit for a business that already operated inclusively. And although the employee ownership model was more evolution than revolution, Simon has seen some changes over the past three years. Everyone takes responsibility for getting the job done, and there is little tolerance for any “shirking”. The company takes a lot more care over recruitment now; people must bring the requisite experience for the role. The company is committed to training and developing and Simon is working closely

with employees to build a future management structure that will eventually enable him to be replaced whilst also allowing for further business expansion.

The company prides itself on the open culture and shares almost all information with the employee owners; right down to how much is in the bank. People are paid fair salaries recognising the skills they bring to the organisation and level of responsibility but any bonuses are paid on a totally equal basis.

Despite the Covid crisis, Jerba has done exceptionally well. The only marketing is done via publicity, and a key feature of that publicity

has been the company’s employee ownership.

Says Simon, “Our agreement with our PR agency is that they push employee ownership as well as Jerba Campervans. It’s our way of giving back to the sector. Employee ownership has been very good for us, and for our customers. If we can do our bit to encourage more companies to adopt employee ownership, it’s well worth it.”

Jerba Campervans recently signed up for the Scotland for EO Advocate programme, designed to encourage other businesses to consider the employee ownership route.





How to Run a Successful Annual General Meeting

With Allan Goodbrand

Allan Goodbrand is a retired international businessman and former IoD Director of the Year having served on the boards of public and private companies in the UK and overseas for a number of years. He now devotes some of his time to advising small firms and is currently Chairman of Clansman Dynamics Ltd. an Employee Owned business located in East Kilbride.

It used to be a legal requirement for all companies to hold AGM's without fail but the Companies Act (2006) was amended to remove this for private companies. However, many private and many Employee Owned firms continue to do so, and include this in their Articles of Association making it a statutory matter for them.

In fact, small private entities and EO firms following best practice demonstrated by larger and public companies can only be a good thing in my view. The need for good governance and a bit of formality once a year is surely worthwhile, and it does not need to be overly complicated nor excessively consuming. Just because

a firm is Employee Owned does not excuse it from following proper AGM's without fail but the Companies Act (2006) was amended to remove this for private companies. However, many private and many Employee Owned firms continue to do so, and include this in their Articles of Association making it a statutory matter for them.

part I use to present and discuss the current business situation and outlook, and this is particularly relevant as the AGM might well be held many months after the end of the financial year to which it relates.

Ensuring that this section is run correctly, in line with company rules and with best practice, is the job of the chairperson of the AGM, and it is vital that all members however large or small their interest in the firm might be, are treated equally in this respect.

It is of course up to the company board to decide on any other matters that require a vote. Perhaps there are some proposed amendments or additions to Articles, or some other issues that have arisen such as an item of major expenditure, and these along with the resolutions above must be notified to members in advance of the meeting in line with the rules set out for that company. Generally speaking, the matter of accepting the company's accounts will be an Ordinary Resolution whereas a change to Articles of Association will be a Special Resolution, the voting rules being different in each case.

I always allow for questions and clarifications within each section, especially before votes are taken, to be sure that everyone understands and is

(Continued)

comfortable with what is proposed, whichever way they intend to vote.

The third section is intended to be more of a discussion about current business position, financial performance against a budget or plan, and strategic objectives and milestones for the company.

As always when presenting anything to any audience, it should be done in the eye of the beholder. What I mean

by this is that it is the presenters' responsibility to communicate clearly; even complex matters can be put simply with a bit of forethought. Clarity and conciseness are the bywords here, and remember to highlight key points that you want people to retain. Try to make your presentation the catalyst for discussion, rather than the whole thing being just one-way communication.

It is often the case, especially in larger

gatherings that employees are reluctant to ask questions or participate in the meeting. It is the chairpersons' task to bring people into the discussion and there are various ways of doing this. The chairperson themselves could ask a question of a particular employee or of the group at large, in order to provoke some interaction. Or it might be that asking for written questions in advance will have a similar effect. Either way, this is an

opportunity to have an open forum discussion with employees and to hear their views on matters they might not usually have a chance to air. Finally, I believe the AGM should be treated as a special event, perhaps organise a buffet lunch to follow the session and make it a memorable occasion for all. All employees should leave being better informed, and feel better valued by their Employee Owned company.

Trustee Training & First Friday

As our popular residential courses are suspended due to current restrictions, we are running regular short training sessions via Zoom. These events are open to employee owners who are currently Trustees and non-Trustees who are interested in finding out more about the Trustee role.

The next session takes place on **Friday 22nd January** from **9.30 until**

11.30. The session will be split into two parts and you are welcome to attend one of both:

9.30am - 10.30am: Legal requirements and duties of the Trustee

10.30am - 11.30am: Explore a real life Trustee dilemma

Attendees from previous courses may want to join in for just the second part as a refresher! The course is free to attend.

First Friday

Our regular virtual get togethers continue on the First Friday of every month. These are open to elected employee-owners. The next one takes place on **Friday 5th February at 12noon**.

Email

carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk for the link to join.

**First Friday
Lunch and Learn**

5th February

12noon - 1pm

OA Ownership
Associates uk
let's make it happen

Fail to Plan – Plan to Fail! But its so true!!!

How many businesses say they have a plan in their heads – with the best depth plan of what 2021 suppliers and customers will look like, there might be a few more scenarios to consider as we plan this year, we will be working to make the plans as COVID friendly as possible! Usually we take at least half a day – more with larger on more complex business models to work up in detail what they want their year to look like...and while plans can always change..it doesn't half help if we know the direction of travel and what we are shooting for. Once we have something in place the stakeholders are happy with – and this will be the employees who have to deliver the plan but also includes suppliers and customers - the next stage is to communicate to everyone. You will gain greater engagement if everyone feels part of the journey, if they know what the over-arching goal is and the part they are expected to play in achieving that.

Less than 50% of companies admit to a written plan, and even fewer stick to them. Why? Often they are not committed to it or they don't hold themselves accountable. A good question to ask is if I were to ask all your team members if they could articulate the goals and vision of the company – how many would give me the same answer? If you're not all on the same bus, you won't reach the same destination!

A written plan is important – when I start to work with A New Year is often a new beginning and the time of businesses many of them



COMPLIMENTARY COACHING SESSION



Yvonne Webb

Yvonne is a successful, experienced Business Coach keen to help leaders in employee-owned businesses deliver real value to the employee owners. Yvonne spent 25 years in FMCG companies, namely Coca Cola and Cadbury, where she worked in senior roles with customers such as Tesco, Asda and Amazon, latterly heading up Grocery e-Commerce for Cadbury.

Yvonne now works across Scotland and beyond with businesses who have ambition to fulfil their potential. Yvonne will quickly get alongside your business, work with you to get clear on where you want to go, then support and challenge you on getting there. You may need support with Strategic planning, margins, marketing or it may be the people aspect of your business needs development or presents a challenge.

Yvonne is passionate about supporting people and businesses to be their best. In the current climate Yvonne is offering our readers a **free coaching session** – so if you have something in particular you want support with – or if you have never experienced coaching – and wonder if it might be of interest to your business, then get in touch!

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*"You don't build a business. You build people, and people build the business."
-Zig Ziglar*