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It's a great big YES to employee ownership!

ASCOTTISH equipment hire company has made the move to employee ownership and handed its hard-working team control of the business.

Your Equipment Solutions (Y.E.S) has secured the future of 29 jobs by placing the majority of the shares into an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT).

The Falkirk-based firm is enjoying its 10th year of operation and is on track to achieve another record year in 2022, recently opening a second branch in Dundee. It provides Tool and Pant equipment for hire, into a variety of markets with Construction a large proportion of the turnover but. With such a diverse and well stocked product portfolio also penetrating White Van Man/DIY, Petrochemical and Utilities Markets.

David Johnstone, Founder and MD at Y.E.S, was a Senior Director at HSS Hire before using his expertise to start Your Equipment Solutions in 2012, which has grown exponentially ever since.

Looking to secure the future of the firm while fulfilling his goal of retiring at age 55, David made the decision to hand over the reins to his staff.

David said: *“Your Equipment Solutions has reached an incredible milestone. As founder, I’m at a point where I’ve passed down my vision and purpose to the staff over the years and they have embodied it in everything they do.*

“As clichéd as it sounds, we are one big family at Y.E.S and when looking into my succession plan, employee ownership was the perfect option. I’ve always had the view that if the company does well, the staff should do well too – and this is just one of the ways I can repay their hard work.

“I’m confident that the more than capable team are going to continue the business’s constant commitment to quality products and services as well as its strong values in charity and local community, which is something that wouldn’t have been guaranteed should I have sold the firm.”

Fellow Directors Lisa, Alex and Eddie are similar ages to David and share his thoughts on the future of the business.

(Continued)

Trustee Training

19th January
9.30 - 11.30

Information [here](#).

Gregor Mabbot has been appointed to the company's Trust Board as employee trustee. He says, "David the Johnston family and other shareholders have handed us a phenomenal opportunity by selling a majority stake to an EOT. This is a great business to be part of and it's now up to all of us to make sure YES continues to be a success"

The hire business are Community Partners of Falkirk FC & Stenhousemuir Fc and also sponsor Falkirk Rugby Club and various golf courses and continues to carry out numerous charitable and community-driven initiatives to give back to the surrounding area. "This is extremely important to me and the EOT allows us to continue to develop our support and understanding of what our local community needs and where we can help"

52-year-old David will slowly start to reduce his working hours at Y.E.S over the next three years in a bid to reach his goal of retirement at age 55, leaving the day-to-day running of the business in the capable hands of Y.E.S's dedicated staff.

The company's accountants, Motherwell based Turner Accountancy, introduced the idea of a sale to an EOT to David. Director Damian Turner says, "David has built something quite unusual and very special at Your Equipment Solutions. The EOT is a good fit and will protect that unique culture and provide continuity for both employees and customers."



Turner's Account Manager Andy Gunn agrees. "Y.E.S is a firm full of dedicated, committed staff, so to be able to play a part in handing the business over to them was excellent. It was a privilege to be present for the announcement to staff and see how welcome the news was."

Douglas Roberts of Lindsays provided legal advice for the transaction. He said: "We were delighted to offer our expertise in easing the transition for Y.E.S into employee ownership. It was very rewarding to find a people-led solution for an excellent people-first firm."

Altar pick up more awards!



A superb night was had by the ALTAR Group team at **The Courier** Business Awards on Saturday. These awards are one of the highlights of the business calendar in Dundee and Tayside and showcase the many brilliant businesses in the area.

The Altar team were thrilled to be recognised as 'Highly Commended' in the Social Media Award Category for their work on Fishers Laundry. It's a campaign the team are extremely proud of, not least because of the tremendous results secured as part of an intensive recruitment drive.

There was further cause for celebration for Altar companies **Avian** and **Ginger** when their client **Gillies** won the Dundee and Angus Family Business Award.

Collective Architecture appoints new directorate team



Full Collective Architecture Team in the new Bath Street Studio

Scotland's first employee-owned architectural practice, **Collective Architecture** has appointed four new directors to join Jude Barber in shaping the practice's next chapter

Mairi Laverty, Gerry Hogan, Ewan Imrie and Nicola McLachlan, all of whom have been appointed from within the business, look forward to taking up their new roles within the practice's new Directorate team from 1 November 2022.

Collective Architecture recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and has been 100% employee-owned for 15 years. The practice marked this milestone by launching a new, self-owned and designed studio in Bath Street, Glasgow.

Chris Stewart, Gerry Duffy and Jude Barber have collectively led the studio for more than 15 years – building some of Scotland's most highly acclaimed buildings. Together they have celebrated growing the studio from 12 to more than 40 people, establishing three studios across Scotland.

The opportunity for a shift in leadership comes as co-founders Chris Stewart and Gerry Duffy take new roles across the studio, remaining key and influential members of the team. Chris will be focusing on business development, mentoring and the sustainable design, whilst Gerry will focus on projects and driving technical advancements. Chris was recently appointed to a new and significant role in shaping the next steps for Scottish Architecture, as President of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS).

Chris Stewart said: *"After 25 years of growing and developing Collective, the business is in a strong position and at a point where I can hand over the reins to the new generation of Collective and focus on other elements of the practice as well as my new role within RIAS."*

"Organisations evolve culturally over time, and all the new directors have grown and evolved with our business. They represent the next evolution of Collective and I'm delighted that they will now have the opportunity to lead and guide our studio."

"Whilst I remain at Collective, I will continue to focus on making a real difference to the industry at a time when support and mentoring has never been more important."

"The directorate, and the entire team at Collective Architecture, are dedicated creatives, delivering work that is both ground-breaking and thought-provoking. They will continue to set the bar high within our industry with their vision and design."



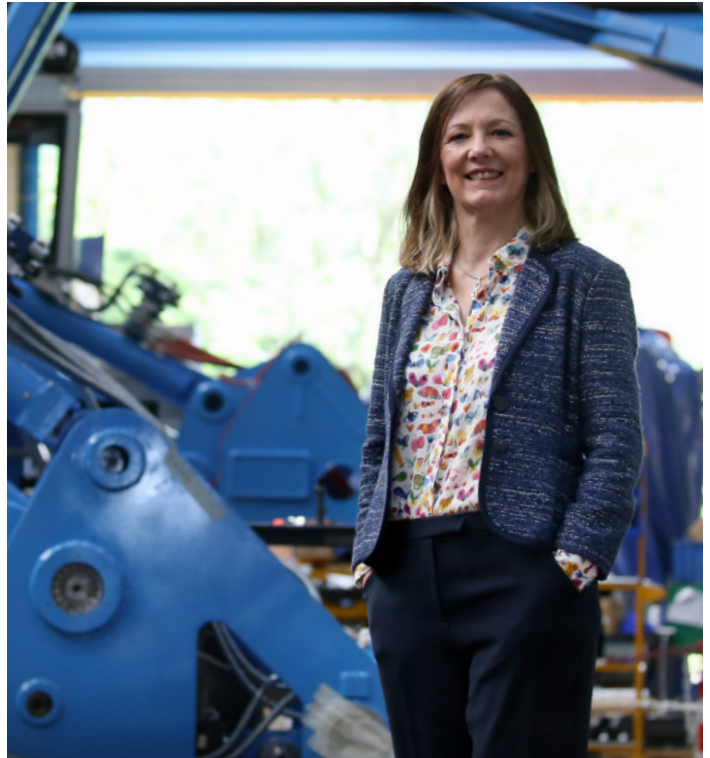
Left to Right: Mairi Laverty, Jude Barber, Nicola McLachlan, Gerry Hogan and Ewan Imrie

OAK News

Well, a lot has happened since the last Ownership Matters! The mini budget has sunk leaving very little trace and we await the new Chancellor's budget with some trepidation. Having just emerged from the Covid crisis, businesses are now facing rocketing energy and fuel bills on top of the increased freight and material costs resulting from Brexit. And of course, this leads to increasing prices on all sorts of products. Many of the companies I'm speaking to are doing their best to mitigate the cost of living crisis for their employee owners. Several have awarded pay rises recently, and others are using the ability to pay the tax free bonus as a helping hand. The news from the Bank of England predicting a recession lasting until 2024 suggests this will be a long haul.

There is hope. Employee owned businesses have demonstrated incredible resistance in the past and will so again. **Cass Business School published a study** in 2014 which compared the performance of employee-owned businesses with non-employee owned peer companies throughout the financial crisis of 2008-2009. The research found that non-EOBs showed a steady and significant decline in turnover, dipping into negative growth rates, while EOBs continued to show positive growth in turnover. The report also found that productivity per employee was higher in EOBs during this period. Interestingly, the results became more positive for EOBs as the recession deepened. Why is this? The researchers believe that much can be attributed to the focus on people that is commonly found in EOBs. Higher levels of engagement and effective communication were identified as key influencers of enhanced performance. EOBs were less likely to cut staffing levels, and this not only reinforced engagement but also meant the company was better able to respond quickly to demands as the recession ended. The structure of the typical EOB was also seen as a strength. Non-EOBs focus on profit margin – this is what funds the dividends and the returns for the company shareholders. EOBs can look to the long term and retain profit in cash reserves to protect the business for longer.

This is all very encouraging for our employee-owned businesses but for most firms,



it's going to be a tough couple of years. As well as the financial and political turmoil, I'm also hearing that recruitment is a real challenge for businesses across all sectors. It was so reassuring to hear from a company in the Highlands that an excellent response to a vacancy was due to the business now being owned by its employees. There can be no doubt that the employee ownership model is a strength, but it won't solve all the problems facing organisations. As ever, if there's anything I can do to help, or if you have anything you want me to badger politicians about, just let me know.

On more positive news, it was a delight to work with the team at Your Equipment Solutions (Y.E.S.). This is a family business where the term "family" encompasses everyone who works there – and I suspect many customers and suppliers, too! One of the key drivers to the EOT for David Johnstone ownership is that he wanted the company to continue its commitment to supporting local communities.

If you haven't already, you can subscribe [here](#) and do alert your colleagues. Also, if you have any stories you think may interest other employee owners, then get in touch!

Yours in partnership

- **Carole**
01786 611066



Employee-owned campervan firm gifts campervan to its staff

Team enjoys staycations in kitted-out VW that would be £1,000 to rent a week

A CAMPERVAN conversion specialist has bought a VW campervan for its employees to use free of charge whenever they would like.

Jerba Campervans purchased a VW T6.1 model which employees have converted for themselves within the factory.

Now complete, Jerba's staff members will be able to book the campervan - which would normally cost around £1,000 per week to rent - for personal trips or holidays at no cost, as long as it is clean, tidy and fuelled upon its return.

With no limitations in mileage for journeys around the UK, the campervan also comes with the added benefit of high-end fittings such as an integrated hob, fridge, sink and storage space. Crockery and camper chairs have also been provided.

Co-founder of Jerba Campervans, Simon Poole, said: *"It is something we have been considering for a while, and we have certainly been inspired by other employee-owned businesses which also offer their staff unique and creative perks."*

"Our team were able to work on the campervan in their free time, kitting it out to their own liking and using it for whenever they plan on going on holiday."

"Everyone is really excited to use the campervan and it's getting booked out quickly. Rob, our youngest member of the team and not yet old enough to drive the van, has already booked to use it as soon as he turns 21."

"We wanted to give something back to the people that help this business flourish, and we thought there would be nothing better for the staff than to have their very own campervan."

The niche perk comes in addition to a number of other investments in the East Lothian firm's workforce, including a dedicated apprenticeship scheme and initiatives such as full sick pay introduced within the Real Living Wage accredited business.

Customer Support Manager at Jerba Campervans, David Miller, 60, was one of the first members of the team to book the campervan for a week's trip in August. He said: *"I really enjoyed using the campervan for my travels to Crinan Canal and other areas across the West of Scotland this summer with my wife."*

"Each job has its perks – but not often as unique as being gifted your own campervan. It will be perfect for long weekends in the warmer months where I can get some more hill-walking under my belt."

"Demand for the campervan has been high, with five members of the team already getting their bookings in for this year. We anticipate that next summer especially will be very popular for bookings - people are already planning their trips a year in advance!"

(Continued)

Digital Marketing Specialist at Jerba Campervans, Steven Ingle, 31, was the first to use the campervan for a friend's stag do in Mull of Kintyre. He said: *"I can't say enough good things about the van. It is very spacious - the pop top roof means there is room to sleep four and we also have the option of taking our dogs with us.*

"I had a great weekend camping with my friends. We cooked fry-ups in the mornings on the integrated hob and it provided us with an escape from the dreaded midges outside in the evenings!

"The campervan is entirely for staff use, so if the weather is looking good and no one has it booked already, it will be brilliant for a spontaneous long weekend trip.

"Not everyone that works at Jerba has the option of owning their own campervan so this provides the perfect solution."

Jerba Campervans was launched in 2006 and specialises in converting and customising Volkswagen Transporter vans for those passionate about adventure and the outdoors.

Converting Volkswagen T6.1 models, the North Berwick based firm is officially recognised by Volkswagen as a Motorhome Qualified Converter, and is the only firm in Scotland to receive this qualification.



The firm became employee-owned in January 2018 and has seen productivity increase year-on-year.

With a dedicated and flexible team, the Jerba Campervans' family adapts to the needs of its customers, creating a house on wheels with the highest UK level of road safety, assuring customers of a safe, and stylish ride.

To find out more about Jerba Campervans, visit www.jerbacampervans.co.uk



£36m ‘superfactory’ brings 400 jobs to Lanarkshire

An Italian supplier to Scotland’s whisky industry has announced plans to consolidate its operations in this country at a new £36 million “superfactory” in Lanarkshire and employee-owned consulting engineers, Grossart Associates, are playing a major role.

The investment by Guala Closures is supported by a £3.3m grant from Scottish Enterprise and follows planning approval for modern 220,000sq ft facility in Gartcosh, Lanarkshire. More than 400 existing employees at three sites in Stirlingshire and East Dunbartonshire will transfer to the site in North Lanarkshire, with construction expected to be completed by the end of next year.

Guala is the only manufacturer of closures to the whisky industry in Scotland and produces bottle pouring mechanisms for customers including Diageo, William Grant and Sons, Chivas, and Edrington.

“This investment confirms the Guala Closures Group’s commitment to developing one of its largest markets and underlines our determination to support customers, employees, suppliers and the Scottish economy,” said Ken Moran, the company’s general manager for Scotland.

“The new plant will benefit from investment in innovative technology, enhancing productivity, process capability, closure functionality, and importantly, to contribute to the delivery of the group’s sustainability strategy and core objectives.”

Located on a 15-acre site at the Gartcosh Business Interchange, the new facility will be one of the largest in the Guala group. The Italian company operates 30 production plants on five continents generating annual revenues of €600million.

Construction is due to start next month and is expected to be completed by the end of December 2023, with operations to begin from January 2024.



Hector Munro - MD Grossart Associates

Councillor Jim Logue, leader of North Lanarkshire Council, said the move by Guala “cements” the area as a place for doing business.

“Guala Closures Group is a multi-million pound international business that understands the enormous benefits of relocating its Scottish arm to Gartcosh Business Interchange.”

Grossart’s MD, Hector Munro says *“We can’t wait to get started on site with this one. This is a fantastic project and it is great to see another development on the Gartcosh Site.”*

Ginger win gold CIPR award

Employee-owned PR & Digital Marketing agency **Ginger**, based in Broughty Ferry have achieved a gold CIPR award for Integrated Campaign, beating off competition from some of Scotland's largest marketing agencies.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations PRide Awards recognise outstanding work, and is firmly established as the most prestigious awards in the public relations industry.

Announced on Wednesday the 12th of October via digital presentation, the award recognises the success of Ginger's combined PR and digital campaign for Visit Angus, a local tourism organisation driving awareness and visitors to Angus County.

The successful campaign drove awareness to a new tourism experience, The Angus Tour. Ginger launched a highly focused, media charm offensive, using engaging press materials, and via press trips with UK national and regional titles, securing a range of broadcast, print and digital press coverage. The variety and diversity of experiences in the area were showcased through influencer trips and engagement. A local ambassadors programme was conceptualised and implemented, with key local champions sought and selected to generate dynamic content pinpointing some of the tour highlights. Audiences were targeted through an integration of organic and paid for social to drive traffic to the Visit Angus website, increase local awareness of the Tour and hone in on visitors from further afield.

Part of marketing agency, Altar Group, Ginger achieved exceptional results driving over six times the original target to the Visit Angus website and generating press coverage that reached over 14.6 million people,

Elaine Fleming, Director of Ginger, said: *"This campaign was a joy to work on and generated exceptional results that we're extremely proud of. There is no better award that exemplifies what makes Ginger so special. We are diverse and create fully rounded campaigns delivered by one expert team. From impactful press coverage to paid for social ads, targeted influencer marketing*



to dynamic content creation - we guide you on the best, most effective strategy and this award is yet another feather in the cap to prove it."

Ginger is a fresh thinking PR & Digital Marketing consultancy offering a bespoke approach that delivers results. We have extensive experience creating compelling multi-channel campaigns that receive tangible results and return on investment – everything from media relations to social media advertising.

YES team up with Falkirk to tend local gardens

The Falkirk Foundation teamed up with their front of shirt partner **Y.E.S.** to provide garden maintenance work for Falkirk & Clackmannanshire Carers Centre in the Falkirk Area on Tuesday.

Workers from Your Equipment Solutions provided their expertise and equipment and were joined by Falkirk Foundation staff and course members, who volunteered to give something back to their community.

The team worked their way around seven gardens in the Falkirk area between 9am and 5pm, doing maintenance work and tidying up for those who may not be able to do the work themselves.

The team were also joined by Falkirk first team players Paul Watson, Jaime Wilson, PJ Morrison and Ryan Williamson who put on gloves and got involved with the work in the afternoon.

Falkirk Foundation CEO Derek Allison said: *"We wanted to grow our partnership with the Falkirk and Clackmannanshire carers and Y.E.S to give something back to our community. As we head into winter we felt that by tidying up the gardens we could make it a bit more pleasant for them when they looked out of their windows. The Carers service identified seven of their service users that would benefit from this and after a lot of planning we have made a small but appreciated difference to them. Some of the young people on our programmes volunteered to be part of this and to give back to their community."*

David Johnstone of Y.E.S. said: *"Community is so important and looking out for the people of Falkirk remains a priority for Y.E.S HIRE. Offering services like basic garden maintenance; mowing the lawn, strimming & cutting back hedges takes time, and this service provides an instant benefit on the surroundings, giving the Carers enjoyment of their outdoor space. We will continue to find ways to benefit the community, getting involved and making a difference where we can."*

Gregor Mabbot, Sales Manager and employee Trustee at Y.E.S. added: *"It's great to be*



able to give up a day of the normal working life to contribute towards the local community. Hopefully our efforts today have left the people who live in these houses with a smile on their faces. It is clear to see that working closely with Falkirk Foundation supports our community and we look forward to doing more in the Future."

Harvey Maps celebrate 5 years of employee ownership



On 1st November 2022, HARVEY Maps celebrated its 5th birthday as an employee-owned business.

HARVEY Maps was founded in 1977 by Susan Harvey MBE and Robin Harvey MBE to provide a professional mapmaking service for the sport of orienteering. Since then, the company has become a market leader in the publication of maps for outdoor pursuits, producing detailed mapping for areas in the UK, Ireland and beyond.

In 2017, and with retirement near, Susan and Robin embraced the idea of employee ownership as a succession solution which gave the company, the jobs and the brand the best chance of continued independent success. Based in Scotland, the company was an early adopter of this model and much has been learned since the early days of employee ownership.

The staff are all encouraged to play a part in the running of the company, and HARVEY Maps has had employee representation at both director and trustee level, ensuring everyone's ideas and messages are heard and the values of the founders and the present-day staff do not go unnoticed.

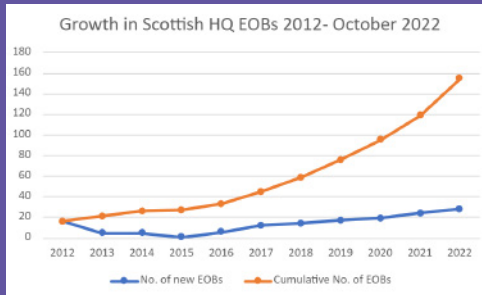
"We are all very proud to be able to celebrate our 5th birthday as employee owners", said Adam King, CEO. "As a group, we have had to deal with the multiple and diverse challenges the world has thrown at us over the past few years, and it gives me immense satisfaction to see the entire team develop and grow with their company's interests at the centre."

HARVEY Maps currently has 11 employees, 2 of which are elected by their colleagues to serve on the employee ownership Board of Trustees, alongside the now retired Susan and an independent chairperson.

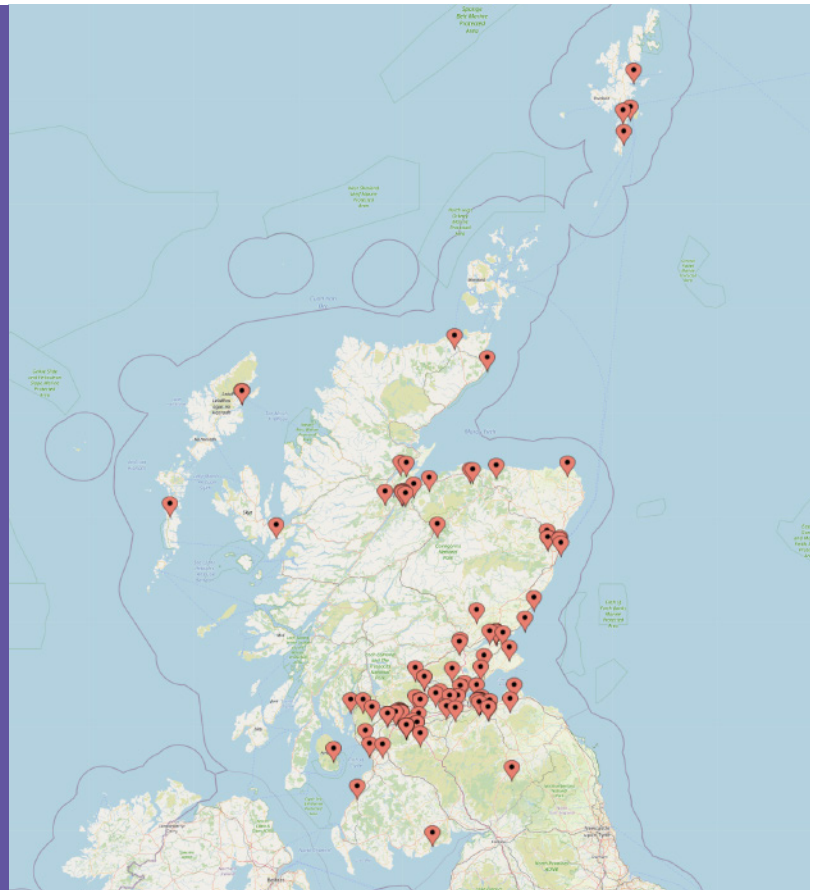
Chris Beacock, Production Manager, is into his second term as an elected trustee and has been involved from the start. *"I have been with the company for a long time now and I was delighted to have the chance to get involved in its governance. For me, the people who work at HARVEY Maps are the company's greatest asset. Having employee representation on the Board of Trustees is hugely important and ensures that the voices of the employees are central to the business."*

Find out more about HARVEY Maps online at www.harveymaps.co.uk

Employee Ownership in Scotland



OA Ownership Associates uk
let's make it happen



Trustee Training - 19th January 2023

This two hour session aims to equip Trustees to fulfil what is a pivotal role within the employee-owned company. The session is in two parts and is delivered over Zoom. You can join for both parts, or if you have already attended Part 1 or a previous session, you're very welcome to join only for Part 2.

Part 1: Information giving – legal duties of trustee, responsibilities, the Trust deed, the Trustee role. 9.30am – 10.30

Part 2: Case Study – group work on a trustee dilemma in an employee-owned company. All groups work on same case study, come together to report on discussions. Everyone says this is tremendously useful. 10.30 - 11.30

To register your interest email carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk