



LADY LINKS

# INITIATIVE<sup>®</sup>

INSPIRATION & SUPPORT FOR LIKE-MINDED LADIES

S U M M E R 2 0 1 1

SPECIAL OFFERS



[www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk)

**KEEP ME**  
SHARE ME! I AM  
**THE MAG**  
for YOUR BAG!  
mini  **MAG**

BUSINESS • CREATIVITY • LIFESTYLE



**WE LOVE  
TO LISTEN...**

- Do you know an inspirational lady?
- Would you like to share your views or personal experience with our readers?
- Do you have a new product or service you would like people to know about?

**We'd love to hear from you!**

**[www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk)**



# INITIATIVE

Welcome to our Summer 2011 issue in a mini-MAG format that's designed to be... THE mag for your bag!

Lady Links Initiative contains a wealth of bite-size features, case studies, tips and advice covering business, creativity and lifestyle to inspire and support like-minded ladies.

Visit [www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk) to access useful downloads and training details, enter our free prize draw and discover lots more about what Lady Links has to offer.

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## LADY LINKS INITIATIVE UPDATE...

We continue to be pleased with the rate at which the Lady Links Initiative is growing and welcome all the new readers of this issue, which is being distributed through multiple women's networks.

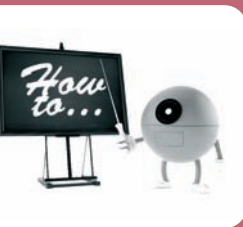


As planned, we have expanded the ladylinks website, where you can now access some great opportunities for training and marketing support which will help you grow your business. There are also several fantastic exclusive deals and the exciting offer arranged with Northern Ballet for you to join us for 'ballet & business' and the Lady Links Christmas party. I hope to meet up with many of you then.

DISCOUNTS  
ON COURSES...

EXCLUSIVE  
EVENTS...

PRODUCT  
DEALS...



Please keep sharing your ideas for content with us to ensure Lady Links continues to provide a regular source of inspiration, support, practical guidance and pleasure.

Kath Wilkinson, Director, FLAIR Creative



## MAIDEN VOYAGE

- A comprehensive service for female business travellers



Carolyn Pearson



# Maiden Voyage

*the social network for female business travellers across the globe*

**Carolyn Pearson, Director of Leeds-based company maiden-voyage.com Ltd, has established an award-winning social network with a difference.**

Based in Leeds, the company specifically aims to serve corporate female business travellers. Its goal is to ensure that business travel is both **SAFE and SOCIAL** so that ladies who use its service will have **peace of mind**, knowing they will no longer be at risk of being intimidated, or feel they have to stay in with room service to be safe. When they take advantage of the services Maiden Voyage offers, Lady travellers can be confident of getting full value from the opportunities their business trips provide.

Perhaps the most important benefits of membership come from having access to the list of recommended Female-Friendly Hotels around the world.

Many ladies are nervous about their safety when travelling to a new city, or perhaps to less-common destinations such as Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe, therefore only hotels that have been inspected and vetted to meet the required criteria are added to the site.

To be recommended, hotels must meet the essential requirements: they must be in female-friendly locations, they must have well-lit main entrances, a reception that is staffed 24/7 and double-locking doors. In addition they must achieve an overall inspection score of 70% assessed across a range of provisions including 'proper' hairdriers, luxury toiletries, good quality ladies magazines and well-lit makeup mirrors. Most of the hotels featured on maiden-voyage.com offer special discounts, room upgrades or spa treatments for maiden-voyage.com members.

The website maiden-voyage.com is free to use and completely secure. As a safeguard to existing members, Carolyn contacts all prospective members personally to check that they are indeed female and that their reasons for applying for membership are valid.

Members come from a very wide range of professions and are interested in diverse activities that enable them to connect up and meet with other ladies who are away on business. Many ladies like to meet for dinner, but some like to explore new cities safely together, take in the architecture, visit the theatre or a gallery or just meet for coffee and cake. The site provides regularly -updated travel-safety tips, member-interviews, competitions, offers and travel blogs.

*Winners Business Travel and Meetings Show Innovaton Awards 2010*

*Winners Virtual Business Awards 2010*

You can book travel on the site through a range of airlines and hotel booking agencies.

Maiden Voyage is also affiliated with a range of luxury and workwear fashion and beauty brands. Look out for maiden -voyage on twitter for all special offers, flash sales and discounts.

*“ I'd love to dine & chat with other business women, rather than sit alone in my room ”*



**Register for free online...  
[www.maiden-voyage.com](http://www.maiden-voyage.com)**

**For more information contact:  
Carolyn Pearson  
Director  
maiden-voyage.com Ltd  
Tel +44 (0)7903 738383**

**Follow us on Twitter  
[www.twitter.com/maiden\\_voyage](http://www.twitter.com/maiden_voyage)**

## 5 Essential travel tips...

### 1. Double-Locking Doors

For our security we have come to expect that hotel rooms have at least two independent doorlocks and often a chain too. But rather than take for granted the fact that the locks will just work as intended, it's better to test these as soon as you enter your room. If they don't it's acceptable for you to ask for them to be fixed or to be relocated to another room, something that you are less likely to do once you've fully unpacked and are just about to retire.

### 2. Business Acquaintances

Do not hold business meetings in your hotel room. Think twice before allowing other people to store their belongings in your room as it's an open invitation for them to come and retrieve them. Use the concierge storing service instead.

### 3. Hotels in the know

Hotels that are female-friendly are aware of the fact that they shouldn't be openly announcing your room number but should discreetly point it out on the accompanying key folder. Likewise it is not good practice to position ladies on the ground floor or close to public entrances. If this happens to you then you should be comfortable asking for an alternative room.

### 4. Storing your valuables

Many hotels offer to store your luggage for you. Sometimes these rooms are not secure and are accessible to any number of people, if you are storing valuables in your luggage, make sure the luggage is locked or secured with a padlock.

### 5. Unexpected Evacuations

Ensure that you know where you leave your hotel key card. If you have to evacuate the hotel in the night you will be able to regain access to your room quickly if you have your card with you.



**DOWNLOAD MORE ESSENTIAL TRAVEL TIPS**  
from Maiden-Voyage online at [www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk)



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Purple Haze  
Hairdryer**  
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Image courtesy of Hair Tools Ltd / Parlux





# 21st Century Yorkshire women have their say!

Savvy Yorkshire women in business had a strong message for the Coalition Government - provide increased and continued financial support for small and new businesses!

The message came from a consultation event run by Forward Ladies in Leeds, the organisation which supports professional women in business.

Led by guest speakers from government, retail and the media, the cross-section of professional women attending gave their opinions on a number of key business topics. They felt that although government cuts had affected business, there were new opportunities, that the coalition government needed to represent local communities better, that women's views should be listened to, and that women should be more accurately portrayed in the media.

Sarah Morgan, deputy head of Gender Equality Policy & Inclusion at the government Equality's Office set the scene about women in the workplace, pointing out that while women make up 51% of the population and 46% of the workforce, only 1 out of 12 directly-elected mayors is a woman and just 2% of FTSE 100 chairs are female.

The audience of 50 professional women voted on aspects of the economy ranging from easier access to finance and more accessible loan schemes for small businesses, to how deep the public spending cuts have impacted on small businesses.



## BUSINESS

Each table was able to directly input to the discussion using palmlet technology - a keyboard linked to a central computer, which enabled results to be collated and analysed on the spot.

When asked the one message the room would send to David Cameron which would make a difference to business, the overwhelming majority voted for more help for small businesses.

Other areas of concern included numbers of women on the boards of companies, tax incentives for SMEs, more help from banks through business loans, less red tape, business mentor support for start-ups and better links with schools to improve interest in business and encourage entrepreneurship among young people.

David Parkin of thebusinessdesk.com led the business discussion and told the audience that the business prospects for this year would remain steady and flat, but that the outlook was more positive for next year.

Sarah Dickens, People Operations and Policy Director of ASDA, was the guest speaker on Equality and Diversity. She said the acquisition of 147 Netto stores is creating new opportunities within the company for female managers. *"However, many women need to be tapped on the shoulder and encouraged to grow their careers, and told "You can do it!"*"

Etta Cohen of Forward Ladies said: *"It is important to get the views of professional women in Yorkshire and to be able to feed them back to the relevant organisations so that we can instigate and lobby for change if it's needed, to improve the profitability and competitiveness of our region, and women's contribution to it. We were also very pleased to welcome representation from government, Asda and The Business Desk."*

**For the full results of the consultation, visit the forward Ladies website:**  
[www.forwardladies.com/news/consultation](http://www.forwardladies.com/news/consultation)

**Forward Ladies**  
Inspiring women in professional life

# ITS OFFICIAL – IN BUSINESS WOMEN COME OUT ON TOP



## Did you know that...

According to Creditsafe Data:

- Just a quarter of directors of UK businesses are female
- The average Director of a UK company is a 49 year old male
- One in every 11 adult males is a director compared to just one in 33 women

## However companies headed up by women:

- Often have more efficient financial processes than those headed up solely by men.
- Are on average 51% more efficient at collecting monies owed compared to companies with male only boards
- Pay their invoices on average 49% quicker than those with just men on the board

## Don't let the side down - Lady Links reader offer:

Credit check every company that you carry out business with to ensure they can afford to pay you

## Access a free trial of Company Credit Reports plus Marketing data

Whatever role you play in your business you can play a part in ensuring that every business you deal with can and will pay you on time. Creditsafe Credit Reports offer online access to:

- Credit Rating and Limit
- CCJ Information
- Director Information
- Payment Data (where available)
- 5 Years Financial Data

Make the right decision every time with a **Free Trial** of Company Credit Reports from Creditsafe. Visit [www.creditsafeuk.com/ladylinks](http://www.creditsafeuk.com/ladylinks) or call 029 2085 5957 quoting Lady Links for more information



# BECAUSE NOT ALL BUSINESS IS GOOD BUSINESS

Some hints and tips to grow your business effectively and safely

## 1 Credit check ALL of your customers – In today's economic climate no company is risk free

In an ideal situation, you'd be able to demand full cash payment on delivery of your products and services. In practice, however, you're going to have to extend credit to many of your clients.

When you extend credit, you are in effect loaning customers your own money. You want to be reasonably sure that you'll get your money back. The best assurance of this is to check each customer's credit history before you give them credit. The key ways to check if a company is Credit worthy include consulting a Company Credit Report which will include Credit Rating and Limit, 5 years of accounts, information about any registered CCJ's and Director information. In addition a consumer credit check on the director of a business can be useful.

You will need to build a credit relationship slowly and carefully. Not every customer deserves the same credit terms; therefore it's best to approach credit on a case-by-case basis.

## 2 Monitor your customers for any changes in financial situation

Pre-sales vetting is an essential guard against risk however it's not only new clients that need monitoring, but your existing customers too. Identifying any changes to their financial situation before it affects yours is critical.

There are a variety of services that will help you monitor changes to businesses as part of a complete risk control package including Creditsafe Risk Tracker. Decide what changes you would like to be made aware of and receive an email alert straight to your inbox.

Market conditions will also help you to evaluate your customers' situation. Specific areas you may want to keep track of might include Credit Scores, P & L, Growth Ratios and Industry Comparisons.

## 3 Check the Media for stories that indicate risk

Information that signifies your customers and suppliers may be at risk, for example redundancies or strikes may not always be openly admitted. However some part of the media will always break the important stories early. Make sure you are fully in the picture so that you can make decisions quickly and ensure you are not affected negatively by your customer's misfortune. Use a system that alerts you to any media coverage that may signify risk taking the work out of your hands.

## 4 Expand Internationally – use the weak pound to your advantage

Exporting goods and services not only enlarges your market, but at the moment it will also give you a large extra income. With the pound being so weak against the euro, overseas earnings are worth more in sterling terms. The products will also be cheaper for overseas businesses, encouraging them to work with you over your international

competitors. Statistics show that business productivity is boosted by up to a third in the first year of exporting, meaning you are more likely to stay afloat when you export.

However remember tip number 1 – this also applies to international companies.

## 5 Keep growing safely – use only pre-credit checked prospects for sales campaigns

Don't waste both time and money pitching to companies who have bad credit ratings and therefore are unlikely to pay you for your services. Having a great deal of orders for companies who may or may not settle their debts means your books will look healthy when they could be in trouble and cash flow will be affected. With pre-credit checked prospects, you will reduce this risk and target only potential customers who will be financially stable enough to pay you for your services.

### LADY LINKS READER OFFER – free trial of Company Credit Reports

Make the right decision every time with a Free Trial of Company Credit Reports plus Marketing Data from Creditsafe.

Visit [www.creditsafeuk.com/ladylinks](http://www.creditsafeuk.com/ladylinks)

or call 029 2085 5957 quoting Lady Links for more information.

[www.creditsafeuk.com](http://www.creditsafeuk.com)

**creditsafe**  
simply smarter

## Protect and Maximise the Potential of Your Intellectual Property

**Do you have a business idea that you think will put you ahead of the pack?** Well, be aware that imitations and rip-offs could very quickly threaten your market position, your potential business development and your chances of recouping development costs. In a world where ideas can easily be transmitted and reproduced at minimal cost, it's essential to secure the commercial rights to any unique business-offering.

The concept of Intellectual Property applies not only to innovative products or ideas. Intellectual Property can include all sorts of information and techniques that you use to run your business. Protecting Intellectual Property may also be an important consideration if you are contemplating exporting, or planning to expand your business abroad.

### YOUR GOOD NAME – THINK TRADE MARKS

Trade Marks are in many ways the face of your business: they enable your customers to distinguish your products and services from those offered by your competitors. They are often the single most valuable marketing tool a company will have, whatever its size. Registration of the mark gives an immediate right to stop someone else using the same, or similar, mark on their rival goods and services.

### BREAKTHROUGHS – THINK PATENTS

When it comes to novel products and processes, patent-protection is what is required. You could rely on keeping the information confidential to protect your product, but without a patent you would lack the right to stop others from making, selling or importing the product or process you have developed.

Patents cover such diverse subjects as agriculture, medicines, games, paints, electronics, and photography - anything in fact from a small detail in an electric switch, to a new form of transport like the first hovercraft.

### OFF THE SHELF – THINK DESIGNS

Usually consumers pick your goods from the shelf in preference to others because of details of presentation such as shape, decoration, pattern, texture and colour. How a product is presented will determine its market success or failure, whatever its other attributes. All elements that contribute to outward appearance are protectable either by design-right or by formal registration. While design-right is automatic, formal registration offers stronger protection and is more readily enforceable by legal action.



### FIRST TO MARKET – THINK COPYRIGHT

When speed-to-market is a top priority, relying on copyright may well be your preferred option. As with design-right, there is an automatic level of protection, so you do not have to fill in any forms or pay any fees to protect this right. Most businesses own copyright in some form. Although many businesses are not directly involved in making money from their copyright, they nevertheless print brochures, publish advertisements and own websites which contain copyright-protected material.

### BUILDING A DATABASE – THINK COPYRIGHT

Databases enjoy rights of their own. The information you collect, sort and record about your markets and your products can be highly valuable, whether it is in the form of customer lists, financial figures or web links. As long as you have created the contents of these databases yourself, copyright will usually protect you against unauthorised reproduction or adaptation.

**But what if you are pulling together all this material from all sorts of other sources? Can you cover yourself for all the effort that you have put in?** Until ten years ago, this was one of the fuzzier areas of intellectual property. As an example, it was hard to argue that compilations of financial figures could be protected as a literary work.

However, a separate right has been designed to prevent anyone extracting and re-utilising your data. It arises automatically and lasts for 15 years. The definition of what qualifies extends well beyond files on your computer. It applies to any collection of works organised for individual access in a systematic or methodical way. To gain this right, you have to prove that you have invested separately in setting up your database, which cannot just be the outcome of your day-to-day activities, so it is worth keeping a record of the time and cost involved.

Once you know that you have this right, you are in a much better position to put a value on a database and charge for its use. If anyone accesses it without your authorisation, you can shut them down and ask for damages. You will have to prove that there has been an unauthorised extraction and re-use of the content of your database. In practice that often comes down to demonstrating that your suspect could not have realistically arrived at an outcome without the use of your data. Any damages awarded will then depend on the scale of the infringement, but even when someone lifts a few key entries from your database, it might be that this causes you significant harm, entitling you to commensurate damages.

## THE FULL IP PICTURE

As we have said earlier, simply relying on keeping sensitive business information secret leaves you vulnerable – if secrets leak, you have nowhere to go for protection. You should use a combination of IP rights to protect your goods at each point on the cycle of development, production and distribution. Taken together, they will give you significant legal and commercial clout.

If you notice anyone infringing your rights, first consider writing them a letter. That often works. If not, you might then take them to court or impound their goods.

For smaller companies, rather than pursuing costly legal actions, it is usually better to reach a negotiated solution. So before going through, possibly unnecessary, legal channels with anyone copying your goods, think about asking for a licensing fee instead. Convert potential rivals into collaborators and you could benefit from receiving royalties for years to come.

## FREE ON-LINE RESOURCES

The Intellectual Property Office is the Government agency responsible for granting patents, registering trade marks and designs, and leading on policy for all IP, including copyright, in the United Kingdom.

We offer a number of useful on-line resources for business, including:

**IP Healthcheck** – Take our free IP Healthcheck, which will help you unlock your business potential and protect your ideas. The tool is simple to use and signposts various sources of help and advice to maximise your intellectual assets cost-effectively: [www.ipo.gov.uk](http://www.ipo.gov.uk)

**Licensing** – Many small businesses own intellectual property which they, or their employees, have created or designed. Some of this technology could be licensed to other businesses or academic institutions, bringing in a licence fee. Licensing is an option for a business that invents or creates a product, for the designers who configure or refine a product's appearance, and for the people involved in packaging and marketing.

**Negotiating a licence** can be daunting, so the Intellectual Property Office has developed a simple on-line guide to the concepts of licensing and how to set-up a licensing agreement.

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/about/about-ourorg/about-contact/events/events-online.htm>

**IP Insight** – Keep up-to-date on all the latest developments in IP by subscribing to our FREE newsletter. You'll be the first to know of any new support for businesses launched by the Intellectual Property Office, details of the latest IP events across the UK and any changes in IP law that might affect you. <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/newsletters.htm>

## NEED MORE HELP?

The Intellectual Property Office has a dedicated enquiry unit who can help you with your queries on IP. Just give them a call or e-mail them;

**T: 0300 300 2000 E: [information@ipo.gov.uk](mailto:information@ipo.gov.uk) [www.ipo.gov.uk](http://www.ipo.gov.uk)**



## START BLOGGING TO MAKE THE MOST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### Where is the best starting-place for a business that wants to exploit the potential of social media?

If you want to bring your website to life and really help your clients understand your expertise, then - according to Victoria Tomlinson, chief executive of Northern Lights PR and author of the free ebook **'Why you can't ignore social media in business'** - the best way to start could well be by writing a blog.

**A blog** - an abbreviation of 'web log' - can either be part of your website or can stand alone, almost like a website on its own. A good blog should be a natural extension to your business - topical in content and written with a touch more personality. You may well have read numerous blogs without registering that is what they are. To blog, an individual or a company 'posts' regular articles with views, commentary, information on topics that will be of interest and useful to its target audience. In business, it is generally best to make the blog a part of your main website to help drive traffic to it and increase Google rankings. If this is not possible, for whatever reason, then include your business website URL in the blog as a weblink.

You want to plan your blog before writing it. Think about your marketing strategy and what issues your customers are facing. What can you write about that would really help them?

At Northern Lights PR, when we write a blog we metaphorically sit a few clients on our shoulders! We think of questions they have asked us, workshops we've run for them and what they struggled to understand, what technology we know they should be using but they can't get to grips with.

If you start with writing to help your clients, rather than writing about yourself, this should set the tone for a really helpful and compelling blog.

As some examples of blog topics, here are some from our clients...

- **Bradford University School of Management** is the north's top business school. Their blog is 'academic views on current business issues' - which gives breadth of topics for their panel of academic bloggers. Topics they have written about include their research; an event the head of the law school attended about integrity in sport; the Bribery Act; a riposte for a TV programme on the value of a degree; and innovation in business
- **The P&A Group of Companies Ltd** is a restructuring and insolvency firm also with a debt collection service. Their team is blogging on football insolvency; fraud protection; who banks are lending to; likely impact of interest rate rises and financial education
- **Eureka! The National Children's Museum** wants to position its experts with policymakers and toy manufacturers. Their team is blogging on the Marmot Review and children's development; the Allen Report and school readiness; how to develop play learning spaces; and healthy nursery menus

If you want to build relationships with your business, write in a way to encourage people to comment. A good piece of advice is to write 'half the conversation' so others want to finish it for you. Ask questions, say what hasn't worked and ask if others have found answers. And if you want others to engage with you, make sure you read other people's blogs, and leave comments on theirs. Using Social media is a two-way process, so engage with others and make it easy for them to engage with you.



## LinkedIn and Twitter – top tips for making them work for your business

### Most business people have now set up a profile on LinkedIn – if you haven't you need to join the new world!

To win business through **LinkedIn**, make sure your profile explains your business and what you do and includes keywords – so that it gets picked up on Google searches.

Remind your contacts that you are there by posting interesting snippets on your Status Update (like Twitter) to promote your blog, pass on interesting articles or ask for help or information.

Look at the groups that your clients and contacts belong to and if appropriate, join these. Follow and take part in the better -quality discussions, help others when they put out requests and build new relationships.

If you have a list of target customers and don't know how to approach them, have you tried doing this through LinkedIn? Do an advanced search and you may be surprised at who you know who used to work in those companies or has good quality contacts there – ask them to introduce you.

**“Twitter is vital for research,”** says Rory Cellan-Jones, the BBC's technology correspondent, “an appeal on it for case studies or pointers on stories always yields plenty of results”.

If you want Twitter to make a difference to your business, you need to be as strategic with it as in the rest of your marketing. Plan ahead – decide what subjects you will tweet on, who will tweet in your organisation, how often you will tweet and how you will measure success.

Think about what would help your customers – tweets about industry reports, product testing, buying trips, sector news?

Research key people to follow – journalists, customers, potential clients, suppliers and set up **Tweetdeck** to monitor what they are saying. You can spot journalist requests such as ‘Anyone got thoughts on financial literacy and who should teach it?’ **Journalists are tending to respond to Twitter responses far more than emailed press releases.**

You also need to monitor what people are saying about your business online – through Google Alerts and Tweetdeck – and be prepared for criticism. Apologise and put right negatives; thank people for positive feedback.

Once you become familiar with Twitter you will find you can make direct approaches to people you would never in a million years contact by cold calls or email – and you are highly likely to get responses.

You do need to spend time understanding and researching who is on Twitter and monitor the tone and style of tweets. But get it right and you could find new doors opening for your business.

Access Victoria's  
free e-book online...  
[www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk)



Follow us...

@tweetettes



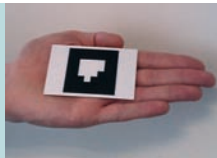
@tweetshire

# AR ... Augmented Reality

As a video production company, Feature Media are always interested in the latest video technology and new delivery channels. This article covers one of the most amazing formats around today. Augmented Reality (AR) is the name given to a visual experience that, while not exactly new, is now starting to show up in more and more marketing campaigns around the world.

As a technology, its potential is simply mind-blowing.

**What is it?** The name Augmented Reality describes the addition of digital content (graphics, videos, sound) to a view of reality, typically provided by a video feed. The idea is when a camera identifies a 'marker' being presented by somebody, the graphics appear as if they are integrated into the real world. This overlaying (or augmenting) of reality has been traditionally triggered by markers that look like the image below. You can see in the second image how we used this marker to trigger an augmented reality Lady Links handbag.



A typical AR marker

The view on screen during the AR experience



As the software behind AR is becoming more advanced, it is relying less on these square markers and moving towards face tracking, recognising textures and other objects such as buildings.

AR differs from QR codes (which are typically used as links to websites or data) in that the overlaid graphics, or video, track the marker as it is moved around the screen.

To experience AR for yourself, you will need a computer, a web connection for online experiences, speakers and any standard camera or webcam.

Try searching YouTube and be blown away by some of the applications people are finding for AR all around the world. We suggest you start with searching for "BMW Augmented Reality"...

## How we have used AR at Feature Media...

Feature Media first used Augmented Reality on the Mailbox Express stand at the Yorkshire Mafia exhibition in March 2011. We created a digital 3D version of the Mailbox logo and linked it to a marker which people at the stand could use to activate the Augmented Reality. The results were fantastic. Watch the video of people's reactions and the brilliant feedback we got here: <http://www.featuremedia.co.uk/augmented-reality.htm>

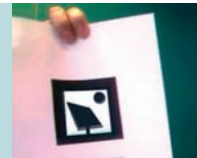
We are now in discussions with both existing and new clients about harnessing the marketing power of this technology.

**The next step for us?** We are testing out a web-based AR component which allows you to pull content from social media and video sites. It even lets you scroll through blog entries by 'tilting' the marker up and down! Amazing.



## Examples From Around The world

One of the best Augmented Reality examples can be seen on the GE website



[http://ge.ecomagination.com/smartgrid/#/augmented\\_reality](http://ge.ecomagination.com/smartgrid/#/augmented_reality)

**Future Applications...** Research is already well underway into 'wearable computers'. One such example is in the form of glasses with screens built in, taking a web connection from your phone to stream the online content. Even more incredible is the potential for new super-thin highly transparent materials being used to create contact lenses with screens built in...

**How can AR Help Your Business?** Marketing and brand-recognition. In a totally unique, engaging and measurable way.

## Want to know more?

You can contact us at [info@featuremedia.co.uk](mailto:info@featuremedia.co.uk) or on 0113 220 5265

# PODCASTS

As a digital film company, Feature Media produce all sorts of film solutions from promotional films and product demos to health and safety and induction films and everything in between. We are ideally placed to guide you in making your own podcasts.



**Podcasts are a great way to begin populating your website and/or your blog with video content.**

Video for the web is not a new phenomenon but it is one that is gathering pace and which, in the modern technology-driven world, can have multiple benefits for business owners. One definition of a podcast is that it's a short (30-90 seconds in length) piece of video, which contains information and advice that could save existing or potential customers time or money.

There must be some frequently made mistakes or bits of information that your prospects or customers keep making or are unaware of? If you could let lots of people know, instead of just the person you're currently speaking to, what would that do for your brand reputation?

Currently 70% of people search for products and services on line. Youtube, although not technically a search engine, is the second most popular way for people to search on line, next to Google. If you posted your own 'video-tips' frequently, what would that do to increase awareness of your brand offering? People would engage with you because they find what you have to say is useful and beneficial to them, and they will come to trust and respect you at a business level.

A secondary but equally valuable benefit to video is that - correctly optimized - it can help to drive traffic to your website. Increased traffic should then translate into a better Google ranking and more sales, and video is one piece of marketing material that can be delivered on multiple platforms - through social media, video sites, your website, a link in a newsletter or e-newsletter, or even just attached to the signature of your e-mail... and if that isn't enough it can be measured easily so you can gauge what return on your investment you are achieving.

Podcasts are a relatively cheap form of video to produce, but some smaller SME's may still struggle to afford them and therefore wish they could create them in-house. This is completely achievable and although the content is often more important than the production values we would give an important warning: if you don't have some basic skills and knowledge in the area you could end up spending a lot of time and effort producing something which doesn't present you or your business in the best light.

If you would like to produce films for yourself, but would like some help please give our **podcast training course** some serious thought.

## TRAINING DAY

# LEARN HOW TO MAKE A PODCAST

**For Lady Links readers we're offering the exclusive price of £275+VAT if you quote this code: LLPODTRAIN**

This includes a **FULL DAY'S TRAINING** which covers:

- Presenting skills – what NOT to do
- How to write an effective script
- The technical bit - Introduction to the equipment
- Recording your podcast
- Editing your podcast
- Adding a royalty-free music track of your choice from our library
- Setting-up your YouTube channel
- Uploading your video & starting to implement your online strategy

At the end of the day you will go home with at least one completed podcast uploaded to Youtube, lots of free how-to guides and tips covering all aspects of the course – together with a brand new HD webcam and microphone, exactly like the one you used on the day.

\*CAMERA INCLUDED



**For details about our next training day please email: [podcasts@ladylinks.co.uk](mailto:podcasts@ladylinks.co.uk) or call 01423 734 380**

**Forward Ladies, the pioneering Yorkshire-based business support organisation set up to encourage women's enterprise and entrepreneurship, is expanding into new areas by taking on licensees to develop its network beyond its strong regional base.**

## FORWARD LADIES LAUNCHES LICENSEES

Founder Etta Cohen, previously business-relationship manager for Yorkshire Forward, established Forward Ladies in response to the government's agenda on women in business, but found the group grew rapidly because its appeal was universal. "It's not an elite organisation where you have to be invited to join, and no-one need feel that their own small business is not valid," said Etta.

"We genuinely try to do something for everyone. We have held social events in spas and shops, and we have also run workshops to help small business owners build up their knowledge and expertise through training and development. Equally we have led a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels, highlighted with dinner with the British Ambassador, and we have organised a trade mission to Hong Kong." With a programme of activities that ranges from diva-dressing to LinkedIn workshops, and from marketing to manicures, Forward Ladies' offerings reflect the dynamic and diverse interests of its members.

Forward Ladies now has a database of 12,500 women, runs 300+ events every year and receives 85,000 visits a year to its website. Members can share their details and advertise on the members' directory, take advantage of special offers and discounts, as well as attending events or supporting other women in doing business.

Forward Ladies has already successfully recruited six licensees - mostly across the north of England. There are plans to launch in London and Scotland in the near future and there is an open invitation for interested ladies to apply for licences in other parts of the country.

The first licensee to be appointed is Tracy Sheldon, who now runs Forward Ladies in Calderdale, Kirklees, Wakefield and Sheffield, alongside her own executive coaching and marketing consultancy.

Tracy has previously held positions as European Director of Marketing and General Manager for AGI Media creative division during a career that has spanned graphic design, manufacturing, business strategy and operations.

"It's an excellent fit for me," said Tracy, "because I can work around the Forward Ladies events and my own consultancy work. It gives me variety in the kind of work I do and my experience is invaluable when it comes to finding the best possible events with the most credible speakers. Plus we all like to have a bit of fun too."

Sue France, former Head of Marketing and PR for the Tomahawk group of hotels, is the licensee for Forward Ladies in Cheshire, Liverpool and the Wirral. Sue has previously worked as a designer of children's wear, as a charity fundraiser and in public relations.

**"The network is very inclusive,"** said Sue. **"We welcome members from all walks of life, whether they are sole traders working from home, part-time workers, women working in business from law firms, accountancy practices and marketing agencies, to MDs and corporate executives."**

Etta said: "There are no criteria for being a member of Forward Ladies. Women make a valuable contribution to the economy and we will welcome all women at whatever stage of their careers, and at whatever age."

There is a financial implication for taking out a licence, but the rewards are generous and there is an opportunity to work hours to suit.

**Further details about Forward Ladies, and how to become a licensee can be found on their website: <http://www.forwardladies.com/become-a-licensee> or speak to Etta Cohen or Anne Crowther on 0845 6434940.**

The current licensees with their areas are:

Huddersfield/Halifax/Wakefield Sheffield	Tracy Sheldon, Brug Consultancy, Tel: 07989 695352
Manchester, Stockport	Lindsey Foots, Tel: 07890 723005
Liverpool/Chester/Wirral Warrington	Sue France, Tel: 07976 384928
Isle of Man	Kate Lord, Tel: 07624 4500749
Harrogate/Ripon/Knaresborough Middlesbrough Skipton, Northallerton	Siobhan McArdle, The Strategy House, Tel: 07787 563286
York	Angela Cameron, The Cameron Consultancy, Tel: 07854 499026





## MARKETING SUPPORT...

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\* See website for full details on materials, delivery, payment terms and full terms and conditions. Design and artwork is not included. Subject to availability. Management reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time.

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1,000 A4 Cont. Paper  
1,000 Comp Slips  
1,000 A5 Leaflets  
2,250 Business Cards  
Can be used as 250 x9 kinds

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
**PRICE: £375 + VAT**



### BUSINESS BOOSTER PACK

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5,000 A4 Cont. Paper  
5,000 Comp Slips  
5,000 A5 Leaflets  
2,250 Business Cards  
Can be used as 250 x9 kinds

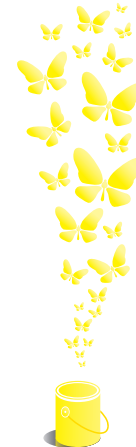
**SPECIAL OFFER**  
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Get your Christmas celebrations off to a magical start with Northern Ballet and Lady Links. Enjoy the world première of Northern Ballet's stunning *Beauty & the Beast* and network in style in the elegant surroundings of Leeds Grand Theatre.

Tuesday 20 December 2011

- ★ Pre-show fork supper with wine
- ★ Premium dress circle seat for *Beauty & the Beast*
- ★ Souvenir programme
- ★ Champagne interval reception
- ★ Post-show dessert & wine
- ★ Mingle with Northern Ballet dancers
- ★ Enjoy a talk from a member of Northern Ballet's Artistic Team
- ★ Glamorous goody bag

**Ballet & Business** is the essential date for your diary this winter. Colleagues and partners are also welcome for this Christmas party to remember.

6.30pm – late

£99 per person

£89 Early Bird offer – book and pay by 7 November

To book please email [rachel.poole@northernballet.com](mailto:rachel.poole@northernballet.com)  
or call Rachel on 0113 220 8000

[northernballet.com/balletandbusiness](http://northernballet.com/balletandbusiness)

Michela Paolacci as Beauty. Photo Jason Tozer.

Northern Ballet building photos courtesy of Jonathan Taylor

ADVERTORIAL



## Northern Ballet venue hire launch Thursday 8th September, 5.30pm

A fantastic free opportunity to view the conference facilities, entertainment spaces and meeting rooms at Northern Ballet's landmark new building on Quarry Hill in Leeds, which has reached the finals of the Best Arts Project category in The National Lottery Awards 2011.

Guests will attend a drinks reception, enjoy a tour of the building, meet members of the events management team and have an opportunity to watch dancers at work. Northern Ballet can accommodate a wide range of events and up to 250 people. Those interested in finding out more about space hire at Northern Ballet or attending the launch event should contact [shaun.daniels@northernballet.com](mailto:shaun.daniels@northernballet.com) or call 0113 220 8000.

All guests will have the exclusive opportunity to watch the dress rehearsal of Northern Ballet's powerful production of *Hamlet* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse following the event.

northern  
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CREATIVITY

# hamlet



Tobias Batley as Hamlet.  
Photo by Jason Tozer.

How would you feel if you arrived home to find everything you had ever known and loved destroyed?

Surrounded by the terrifying events of the Nazi occupation of Paris, and witness to the depths to which man can descend, Hamlet finds himself drawn into a world he can no longer make sense of and surrounded by people he can no longer trust.

Masters of dramatic dance-making, Northern Ballet use powerful dance, gripping theatre and stirring live music to draw you deeper into Shakespeare's famous tragedy than you've ever been before.

**Age guidance 12+ contains scenes of sex and violence.**



Darren Goldsmith as Claudius and Nathalie Léger as Gertrude in *Hamlet*. Photo Dee Conway.

**Leeds, West Yorkshire Playhouse** Fri 9 September - Sat 17 September  
**Sheffield, Lyceum Theatre** Tue 20 September - Sat 24 September

# Does Your Business Truly Offer Excellent Customer Service?

After asking that initial question Rob Young, chief executive of the Yorkshire charity coHearent Vision, prompts business-owners to reflect on whether they are in fact unconsciously failing to meet the needs of a large group of potential customers by not being “accessible to all” – and ignoring a significant potential revenue stream by alienating or excluding people with sight or hearing impairments.

**Socially-responsible organisations want to demonstrate their compliance with equality and health and safety legislation.** However it is surprising that many still associate “disability” and “inclusion” only with wheelchair-use. Research details included in DRC Media briefings on Disability in the Workplace show that only 1 in 13 disabled people are wheelchair-users. An estimated 800,000 people in Yorkshire have some form of sight or hearing impairment – a figure roughly equivalent to the population of Leeds. This means that 1 in 8 of your customers are not seeing or hearing your business message!

coHearent Vision provides support for people with sight and/or hearing loss. Sadly, its staff have listened to many stories over the years about the general lack of awareness that people with a sight and/or hearing loss encounter on a daily basis. coHearent Vision has launched a direct-marketing initiative to make socially-responsible business leaders aware of the implications of this lack of awareness, as well as providing training solutions to improve customer services”.

Business Development Managers Gemma Lennon and Amanda Lowings

-Kitchener commented:

“We know from talking to our clients and from independent research that there is a significant gap in the training market and that distinct business benefits can be achieved. After attending one of our courses staff really appreciate the differences that can be achieved at an individual level – and as one example of the effect on business, it’s amazing how fully-booked a “sensory-aware” hotel becomes!

**“We want key personnel to attend a course and experience the benefits for themselves.** The real significance isn’t always obvious and we find that attending one of our ‘open’ courses is often the best first step.”

Training can be provided in various ways, from sending frontline staff on one of the monthly ‘open’ courses to a full programme of ‘in-house’ training bespoke to the organisation and tailored to the relevant market sector.

Feedback from the courses is consistently excellent: what is offered is a personal and highly-memorable experience. Course leaders Michelle Astbury and Zoe Major have over 30 years’ combined experience of working with those with sight and hearing impairment. Their empathy and true understanding is palpable.

“Michelle and Zoe bring this training to life,” said Amanda. “You really get to feel what it’s like to be one of our clients. You will gain confidence and learn simple skills to help you communicate more effectively and deliver excellent customer service– it’s very rewarding.”

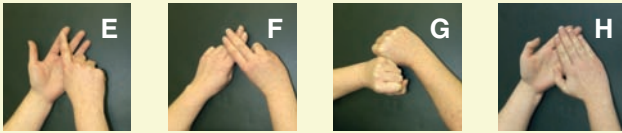
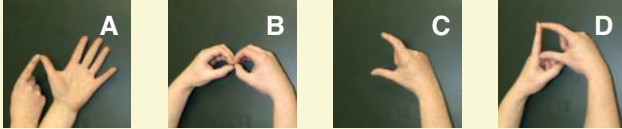
If you would like to discuss how your organisation can become **“sensory-aware”** or want to know more about our courses please contact Amanda Lowings-Kitchener on 07775 444011 or Michelle Astbury on 07775 444017



L-R: Zoe Major, Phil Lee, Michelle Astbury

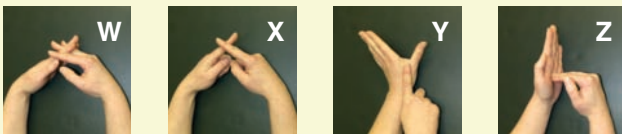
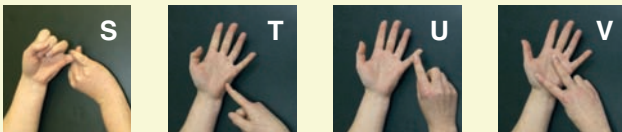
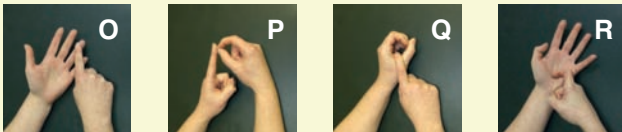


L-R: Amanda Lowings-Kitchener, Gemma Lennon



A—Z Finger spelling  
compliments of

coHearentVision



## Quick top tips to help those with a sensory loss...

- **Large black print on a yellow background helps those with a sight impairment see print easier.**
- Use texture to help those with a sight impairment find what they need, ie. Elastic bands around jars, stickers on files.
- Use a light touch on the arm and speak when wanting to communicate with a person with a visual loss.
- Learn the finger spelling alphabet to communicate quickly with someone with a hearing loss.
- Ask if you suspect someone has a hearing impairment and ask how it will help to communicate rather than shouting louder!
- Use common sense, (think back to your excellent charades skills!), someone with a hearing loss appreciates you even trying.

[www.cohearentvision.org.uk](http://www.cohearentvision.org.uk)

# SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

- Women **Inspiring Action**, *transforming lives*



Soroptimists are a network of 90,000 diverse professional and business women world-wide **“working together to make a difference”**.

Soroptimists’ vision is that they are “committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential,

realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.” Soroptimists are proud to be a “global voice for women”.

The name Soroptimists loosely translates as “best for women”.

Soroptimists tackle a breadth of issues affecting women, at a global and local level, including human rights, education and health. The UK has a flagship project “Violence Against Women – Stop it Now”

**For more information see [www.soroptimist-ukpac.org](http://www.soroptimist-ukpac.org)**

As an example at a national and international level Soroptimists lobby for legislation to help women victims and most clubs support their local women’s refuges.

Soroptimist International is privileged to hold General Consultative Status with the United Nations which means Soroptimists has member representatives who are consulted about issues affecting women and girls.

Soroptimists have fun too, as these images demonstrate:

Soroptimists from London Chilterns Region put on a Fair Trade fashion show. Soroptimists marking International Women’s Day in Cambridge, Karachi and in London (with Annie Lennox)

– more on the news page

[www.soroptimist-gbi.org/blog/2011/03/01/100th-international-womens-day](http://www.soroptimist-gbi.org/blog/2011/03/01/100th-international-womens-day)

[-soroptimists-inspiring-action/](http://www.soroptimist-gbi.org/soroptimists-inspiring-action/)

the women in Karachi are having fun, but they are brave too – they put their lives at risk every time they speak out for women’s rights in Pakistan.

**To find out more about Soroptimists and to find a club near you see the Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland website**

[www.soroptimist-gbi.org](http://www.soroptimist-gbi.org),

telephone 0161 480 7686

or email [hq@sigbi.org](mailto:hq@sigbi.org)

**Register to receive the Soroptimist International newsletter at [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)**





Gayle Edwards

## Perfecting an Attitude of Gratitude

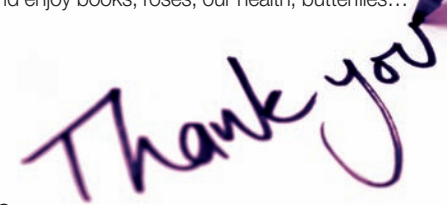
The practice of gratitude as a tool for happiness has been in the mainstream for years. Long-term studies support the effectiveness of being grateful, suggesting that a positive, appreciative attitude contributes to greater success in work, greater health, peak performance in business and in sports, a higher sense of well-being, and even a faster rate of recovery from surgery.

Whilst we can be aware of the many benefits of having an attitude of gratitude, it still can be difficult to maintain. So many of us are trained to notice what is broken, undone or lacking in our lives. And for gratitude to meet its full healing potential in our lives, it needs to become more than just lip-service to thanksgiving! We have to learn a new way of looking at things, a new habit. And that can take some time.

That's why practising gratitude makes so much sense. When we practise giving thanks for all we have, instead of complaining about what we lack, we give ourselves the chance to see all of life as an opportunity and a blessing.

Remember that gratitude isn't a blindly-optimistic approach in which the bad things in life are whitewashed or ignored. It's more a matter of where we put our focus and attention. Pain, challenge and injustice exist in this world, but when we focus on the gifts of life, we gain a feeling of well-being. Gratitude balances us and gives us hope – it creates opportunity and adds colour to our lives.

There are many things to be grateful for: warm weather, colourful autumn leaves, legs that work, friends who listen and really hear, chocolate, fresh eggs, the ability to read and enjoy books, roses, our health, butterflies...



What's on your list?

### Some Ways to Practise Gratitude

- Keep a gratitude-journal in which you list things for which you are thankful. You can make daily, weekly or monthly lists. Greater frequency may be better for creating a new habit, but just keeping that journal where you can see it will remind you to think in a grateful way.
- Make a gratitude-collage by drawing or pasting pictures, similar to a Vision Board.
- Practise gratitude around the dinner table or make it part of your daily routine.
- Make a game of finding the hidden blessing in a challenging situation.
- When you feel like complaining, make a gratitude-list instead. You may be amazed by how much better you feel.
- Notice how gratitude is impacting on your life. Write about it, sing about it, express thanks for gratitude.

As you practise, an inner-shift begins to occur, and you may be delighted to discover how content and hopeful you are feeling. That sense of fulfilment is gratitude at work.

For more information from The Breakthru' Diva please visit [www.breakthrudiva.com](http://www.breakthrudiva.com)

Medikidz is the world's first medical education company for young people. The initiative was started by two doctors who, after working in paediatrics, became frustrated by the lack of engaging education for their young patients.

The 'Medikidz' are five larger-than-life superheroes who explain medical conditions to children through simple, comprehensive and entertaining media in a way they can understand, in their language and at their level. Medikidz is now on a mission to increase awareness of the resources the company has developed, so that children and parents know that medical information such as this is now readily available.

One example is the comic book "What's up with Bridget's mum? Medikidz Explain Breast Cancer", which tells the story of A-grade student Bridget, who is also star of the school soccer team... but since her mum got breast cancer she just doesn't seem to care. She stays in bed all day and doesn't have any energy.

All of Bridget's successes seem empty without her mum's support... Luckily the Medikidz, a group of super-powered action-heroes with attitude, are on-hand to help Bridget get to grips with what's going on! Pump, Chi, Skinderella, Gastro, Axon and their trusty robot Abacus each have their own distinctive abilities and characters to ensure that their particular brand of edutainment is always both banter-driven and medically accurate.

Medikidz produce a range of comic books explaining diseases such as Asthma, Type 1 Diabetes, Leukaemia, Autism and Epilepsy. There are now 35 different titles, and the ambition is to complete 300!



Find out more  
and buy MEDIKIDZ  
comic books online at  
[www.ladylinks.co.uk](http://www.ladylinks.co.uk)





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LIFESTYLE





## Introducing the Plaster Masters

Ornate Interiors Ltd, founded in 1989 in Pudsey, Leeds, manufactures and installs elaborate decorative fibrous-plaster mouldings, principally in stately homes, listed buildings, hotels, churches, and theatres across the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe. Other specialist services include conducting pre-restoration surveys and making works-recommendations for municipal bodies, architects, contractors and surveyors.

The company also carries out traditional lime-plastering and undertakes commissions from the owners of fine homes who either want to re-create the original grandeur of their properties or who want to incorporate an eye-catching cornice or a stunning ceiling centrepiece to living, work or leisure spaces which would otherwise be unappealing.

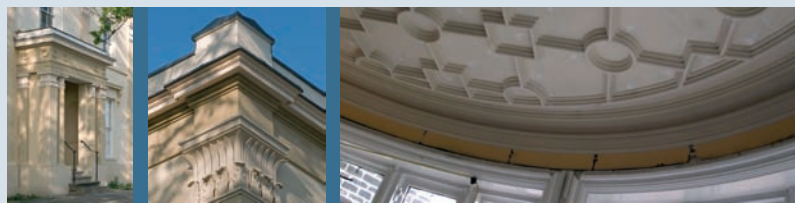
The impact of the company's high-quality work on a new Metro station in Newcastle-upon-Tyne gained recent recognition in the award of the leading industry accolade, the Humber Silver Salver. A second impressive recently-completed project was the installation of stylish and contemporary bespoke bulkheads for 53 luxury bedrooms at Rudding Park, on behalf of contractors R N Wooler who added a sizeable new extension to the property.

Reflecting on their part in the project, Ronnie Clifford, Managing Director of Ornate Interiors, said: "We worked to a tight programme of works, taking just 7 weeks to manufacture and install over 425 casts from glass-reinforced gypsum. We produced these in our Pudsey workshop before transporting them for installation."

Trevor and Keely Wragg, who own Park Hall, a grade-II-listed mansion situated south of Sheffield and built in 1650 by the Chandos Pole family during the early turmoil of the Cromwellian era, placed their trust in Ornate Interiors when they commissioned a comprehensive renovation of the property's spectacular cornices, centrepieces, ceilings, corbels and niches.

"It's a long process," said Keely, "but with projects such as this it's essential to use the skills and attention to detail that only craftsmen can provide."

The Box Tree in Ilkley, one of the most famous restaurants in the North of England, needed a fibrous facelift and the replacement of two of its four decorative Jacobean Lincrusta ceiling panels, which had been damaged by an upstairs-flood. "The key issue was to replace the damaged panels in such a way that they blended in with the two panels that survived the deluge," said Ms Rena Gueller, joint-owner of the property with husband and chef Simon. Moulds were taken from the original designs and then two days of casting followed in the Ornate Interiors workshop. 24 two-and-a-half-foot-square pieces were then transferred to the venue to complete the restoration.



Ornate Interiors frequently encounter problems caused by unsympathetic repairs, and commonly have to remedy 'botched' work. Inappropriate repairs are a common issue because modern cementitious materials have been used. These are generally hard to remove without causing further damage to the existing plasterwork.

The company is introducing a range of plastering courses to be run over the next year. These are intended to instill an appreciation of the craftsmanship involved in restoration work and of the dramatic improvements that can be achieved in the aesthetic appeal of interior spaces from the use of decorative plasterwork.



**Soroptimists are having a last push to raise £1 million.**

**This 4-year international fundraising project helps disadvantaged women and children in Sierra Leone face their futures with confidence [www.projectsierra.org](http://www.projectsierra.org)**

## "A Family and a Future"

### Do you have any unwanted jewellery?

Project Sierra needs jewellery for recycling – any jewellery at all – watches, odd earrings, broken pieces, valuable or not. Please ask anyone you know to have a sort out, and give to a Soroptimist. [www.soroptimist-gbi.org/blog/2011/05/04/last-push-for-project-sierra-1million-target/](http://www.soroptimist-gbi.org/blog/2011/05/04/last-push-for-project-sierra-1million-target/)

Project Sierra is a 4-year partnership between Soroptimist International and Hope and Homes for Children. Funds raised have already helped some of the world's most deprived women and children in Sierra Leone. By strengthening families at risk of breakdown, helping young people living on the streets return home and empowering vulnerable young mothers, Project Sierra is enabling more children to grow up in a caring family environment – giving them the opportunity to fulfil their potential.



*Your support will make a real and lasting difference*

- **£10** will provide a family with seeds and tools to grow their own food
- **£25** will provide a baby care pack
- **£100** will feed two families for a month
- **£200** will provide the fees, clothing and equipment for a child to go to secondary school for a year
- **£250** will help a mother to start her own small business enterprise
- **£500** will renovate a family's home, providing shelter and stability
- **£2,500** will pay 30 children's medical costs for a year



**Donations can be made via the Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland website [www.soroptimist-gbi.org](http://www.soroptimist-gbi.org)**

# STAY SAFE WHEN AT THE WHEEL

Renault commissioned the most popular car ads ever made when they launched the first version of the Renault Clio in 1991. The eight variations on the “Nicole... Papa” theme promoted sales of the model over a period of 8 years, appealing particularly to young women and setting the trend that followed of depicting women as confident, assertive, adventurous and independent - liberated by the availability of relatively low-cost vehicles designed with élan to encourage joie de vivre. An estimated 23 million viewers watched the last tale in the series, in which Nicole left her fiancé at the altar to run off with a rival who had just acquired the “new Clio”.

Other manufacturers followed suit, notably Volkswagen with their “If only everything in life was as reliable...” series, and, more recently Toyota - with the cameos showing various “revenge acts” carried out by young women whose boyfriends disrespect their cars, and by implication their girlfriends as well. Then there is Mazda’s latest ad, which shows a young lady discovering the novel solution of driving her “zoom zoom” Mazda 2 over scaffolding boards mounted lengthways on a builder’s wagon to drop it into the small space left in front - metaphorically raising two fingers to the male workers who had just doubted her ability to park her car.

While the latest Clio still vies for attention, the latest Renault Megane models have been designed to appeal even more strongly to feisty ladies. Under the caption “Best for”, the [evecars.com](http://evecars.com) reviewer says: “Disappearing into the sunset leaving a trail of broken hearts behind.”

However, let’s not get lulled into a false sense of security. A recent survey showed that while more women are travelling by car than ever before, nearly one in three feel uneasy, nervous or even scared at some point while driving alone, or when they have only children as passengers.



## TOP TIPS

- If you are anxious about a mechanical failure or getting a flat tyre, make sure you have current motor vehicle breakdown cover with a reliable organisation. Log their number in your phone and display it on your sun-visor as a backup.
- It’s wise to have your car serviced regularly to reduce the chances of a breakdown, so don’t allow a hectic work-schedule to prevent you booking your car in at the appropriate intervals. Get your car washed regularly as well – and it’s not too onerous to make sure that your windscreen, headlights, brakelights and reversing lights are always clean (and working) in-between visits to the carwash or from a mobile valeting service.
- Check tyre pressures, tread depths and condition regularly and replace tyres when necessary. Ensure your spare tyre is in good condition and ready to use, and that you could change the tyre quickly yourself if necessary. Remember that if you do get a puncture you can still drive on a flat tyre until you reach a safe place to deal with the problem yourself, or where you feel comfortable waiting for assistance. Drive slowly with your hazard lights on.
- Take special care of your phone – it’s your main safety line. Never leave your phone on show (or other valuables for that matter), inviting theft. Some people keep a second cheap pay-as-you-go phone in the glove compartment, with a small amount of credit for emergency use. Make sure you have an in-car charger so that you do not need to take this phone out of the car.



- If you accidentally lock your key and “remote” control in the car and don’t have a spare set with you, then call someone at home on their mobile from your cell phone. Hold your phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at your home address press the unlock button on the spare, holding it near the mobile phone their end. Your car will unlock even if you are a considerable distance from your home.
- There is a worldwide emergency number for mobile phones. If you find yourself out of the coverage area of your phone network and there is an emergency then dial 112. Your mobile will search any existing network to establish the emergency number for you. Interestingly, this number can be dialled even if the keypad is locked.
- Many accidents are caused by split-second distractions from reading the road ahead, so if you need to use your phone always pull over at a safe opportunity. Also never reach down for items that you might have placed or dropped on the floor.
- If your mobile phone is stolen, you can disable it. First check your phone’s serial number by keying in the following digits: \*#06# and a 15-digit code (unique to your handset) will appear on your screen. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe. If your phone is stolen, call your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so that even if the thief changes the SIM-card your phone will be useless.
- Don’t programme your sat-nav with your home address, because if your car is stolen that would give the thief further useful information.
- When you park your car, park as near as possible to the entrance of the building you are visiting. Avoid remote spots especially if they are not in clear view or are badly-lit.
- When you go to your car, stay alert. Always approach your vehicle with the keys ready. Check your car before you get in. Always lock vehicle doors as soon as you enter the car. Never leave keys in the ignition even when you are just filling up at the petrol station, and always lock your car while you go to pay or when you are carrying out any other short errand. Keep windows up any time you need to slow down at traffic lights, for a pedestrian crossing or when you are in a queue.

# Spec or save? You decide.

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## JUNE

### Summer arrives

June 21 is the longest day of the year, and the extra light and warmth encourages the garden to put on an exuberant burst of growth. But this extra light and warmth also means weeds will sprout up seemingly from nowhere. Keep on top of them by hoeing regularly in dry conditions. Herbaceous borders are reaching their early summer peak and the kitchen garden is becoming productive.

#### Top 10 Jobs this month

1. Hoe borders regularly to keep down weeds
2. Be water-wise, especially in drought-affected areas
3. Pinch out sideshoots on tomatoes
4. Harvest lettuce, radish, other salads and early potatoes
5. Position Summer hanging baskets and containers outside
6. Cut lawns at least once a week
7. Plant out Summer bedding
8. Stake tall or floppy plants
9. Prune many spring-flowering shrubs
10. Shade greenhouses to keep them cool and prevent scorch



## JULY

### Summer is progressing

This is often one of the hottest months of the year and a great time to sit out and enjoy your garden. Keep plants looking good by regularly dead-heading, and you'll enjoy a longer display of blooms. Make sure you keep new plants well-watered and hoe-off weeds, which thrive in the sunshine.

#### Top 10 Jobs this month

1. Check clematis for signs of clematis wilt
2. Place conservatory plants outside now that it is warm
3. Water tubs and new plants if dry, but be water-wise
4. Deadhead bedding plants and repeat-flowering perennials, to ensure continuous flowering
5. Pick courgettes before they become marrows
6. Treat apple scab
7. Clear algae, blanket weeds and debris from ponds, and keep them topped up
8. Order catalogues for next year's Spring-flowering bulbs
9. Give the lawn a quick-acting Summer feed, especially if a Spring feed was not done
10. Give woodwork a lick of paint or preserver, while the weather is dry



## AUGUST

### Sultry late Summer

August is usually one of the hottest months of the year - making watering essential. Try to use grey water wherever possible, especially as water butts may be running low if it has been a dry Summer. August is traditionally holiday-time, so you might need to enlist the help of friends and family to look after the garden while you are away.

#### Top 10 Jobs this month

1. Prune Wisteria
2. Don't delay Summer-pruning restricted fruits
3. Deadhead flowering plants regularly
4. Watering! Particularly containers, and new plants - preferably with grey recycled water or stored rainwater
5. Collect seed from favourite plants
6. Harvest sweetcorn and other vegetables as they become ready
7. Continue cutting out old fruited canes on raspberries
8. Lift and pot-up rooted strawberry runners
9. Keep ponds and water features topped up
10. Feed the soil with green manures



## SEPTEMBER

### Progresses to Autumn

September is generally a cooler, gustier month than August and the days are noticeably shorter. While there's not as much to do in the ornamental garden at this time of the year, if you have a fruit or vegetable patch, you'll be busy reaping the rewards of harvest. It's also time to get out and start planting Spring-flowering bulbs for next year. Make the most of the remaining warmth while you can!

#### Top 10 Jobs this month

1. Divide herbaceous perennials
2. Pick Autumn raspberries
3. Collect and sow seed from perennials and hardy annuals
4. Dig up remaining potatoes before slug damage spoils them
5. Net ponds before leaf fall gets underway
6. Keep up with watering of new plants, using rain or grey water if possible
7. Start to reduce the frequency of houseplant watering
8. Clean out cold-frames and greenhouses so that they are ready for use in the Autumn
9. Cover leafy vegetable crops with bird-proof netting
10. Plant Spring-flowering bulbs

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