



June 2006

Hi

Amazingly this newsletter is still going to over 2,500 people.

Thanks for your continued interest.

Each month new people add themselves to the list and others choose to remove themselves. Details on how to do both are at the end of this email.

Over the summer I will look at ways to divide my lists so that I can send one newsletter to accountants and one to non-accountants. Please bear with me in the meantime.

Contents

- How are things?
- Mentoring - could someone in your firm benefit?
- Business networking tips
- Is your accountant one of the good, the bad or the ugly? – tips and ideas for entrepreneurs, the self employed and anyone who runs their own business
- Recommendations – useful and fun websites/books
- Accountants: What's your attitude to networking in a business context?
- Final thought – a simple request to help me please

How are things?

I find the email newsletters that contain a personal update far more compelling than those that are wholly generic. In the hope that you're similarly minded ...

My principal business activities combine helping ambitious professionals to provide greater value to their clients and helping business people to get more value from their accountants. In this connection I have started a new [blog](#) aimed at helping entrepreneurs, the self employed and anyone who runs their own business.

My talk on '*How to avoid professional negligence claims*' seems to almost sell itself. Feedback to date has been very positive including from one PI insurer who had a number of managers present when I presented the talk at Chartered Accountants Hall last week. The insurer's account managers were very complimentary and the audience of over 60 accountants was very appreciative, which was good given the clash with the football! I have a number of bookings to present this talk over the coming year. I have also recorded extracts for Online Tutors so it will be available on-line too. If you would like a



tailored version of this talk, in-house or at your firm's conference, please let me know.

I anticipate spending much of the summer writing a number of publications that I plan to make available online from September. Some of these will be of value to accountants; others will be of value to their clients. Watch this space.

In summary – life is good and the future looks bright. If you think there may be some way in which I could help you, do please get in touch. I'm always happy to talk.

You can reach me on 0845 056 0536, 07785 243923 or by email: Mark@BookMarkLee.co.uk

Mentoring

In the context of helping ambitious professionals, are you aware of the business benefits of mentoring key staff and potential partners? Some larger firms are able to identify suitably able, committed and established partners from within the firm to act as a mentor. Other firms prefer to engage an external mentor who will bring an independent perspective to bear and will be committed to making the necessary time available. In both cases the benefits to the firm can include:

- instilling a feel good factor in staff and potential partners
- retention of quality staff and potential partners
- enhanced development of key skills
- gains in productivity and the performance of individuals
- better communication and commitment
- more motivated staff and partners

In the 21st century some of the best candidates for partnership are reluctant to stay the course, quoting concerns over 'work/life' balance. They don't want to work the hours they think will be required of them as partners even if their perception doesn't reflect the reality in your firm. Someone needs to work with them so that they stay the course and develop the key skills that will serve them, the firm and their clients into the future. We cannot afford to assume that the approach that worked for those of us who became partners in the late 20th century will be sufficient to retain the next generation of new partners.

If the progress of your potential partners could be speeded up through effective mentoring by someone credible who has been there, done that, sold the t-shirt, please get in touch or check out the [Mentoring pages](#) of my website www.BookMarkLee.co.uk.

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Business networking tips – drawn from my [talk](#) “*Net...ing – taking the work out of networking*”

If we focus only on what we can get from a networking situation we are likely to be disappointed more often than not. On the other hand if we focus on how we can help those we meet two things happen. Firstly the pressure is off and it's easier to enjoy the event. Secondly we are perceived as more interesting – because we are more interested in the people we are with. This is a simple fact of life. As a result we are likely to get more value from the networking event.

Here are THREE questions to ask people you meet when you're networking:

1. *What is your expertise?* You want to know more than the fact they are a solicitor or even an employment lawyer. How would they like you to remember them as compared with the other employment lawyers you meet?
2. *What sort of thing are you working on at the moment?* – This can also help make them more memorable as compared with other people you know in a similar line;
3. *What should I listen out for when I'm with other people so that I can say 'aha – I should introduce them to you'?*

If you obtain answers to these questions, you will have identified how the person you asked can help you, or people you know, because you will know what they do. By knowing what sort of thing they are working on you have an idea of what they are currently doing and at what level, and by asking how you can best identify potentially useful referral opportunities, you are providing some pro-active help, for which they will remember you.

You might want to think about what would be your answers to these questions? You never know; you meet up with one of the other recipients of this newsletter!

Is your accountant one of the good, the bad or the ugly?

If you are an entrepreneur, self employed or run your own business I would welcome your input into a short survey I have prepared. The responses will add to the research I have undertaken for a [new talk](#) and written material that will reveal how you can get more value and greater benefit from your accountant. You can reach the survey using this short-cut: <http://tinyurl.com/h2jjo>.

You do not have to identify yourself to complete the survey but if you do I will gladly send you a complimentary list of some of my top tips to get more value from your accountant. I anticipate that some accountants will be interested in this too!

If you know of any business groups or trade associations that might be interested in booking this talk for their members please let me know.



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Recommendations

Useful websites

<http://www.google.co.uk/alerts/faq.html?hl=en>

'Google Alerts' is a simple and free way to obtain email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic. For example you can use it to generate notifications of when you or your competitors appear in the news.

Fun website

<http://www.digicc.com/fido/>

This will boggle your mind. After reading each window click on the boy in the lower right corner. In the last window type in your numbers in the white box using the keyboard (there is NO cursor). I wish I could claim this was a little bit of Mark's Magic!

Business book

This month I recommend 'Blink' by Malcolm Gladwell who wrote 'The Tipping point'.

One of my favourite lines is: *"If you carry on doing what you've always done, you'll carry on getting what you've always got"*. I somehow manage to incorporate it in many of my skills based talks such as *'How to make more money from your tax work'* and *'How to avoid professional negligence claims'*

Accountants: What's your attitude to networking in a business context?

Finally, there is still time for accountants to provide input to a short survey I'm running here: <http://tinyurl.com/rb4gs>

The survey will only take a couple of minutes and you can complete it anonymously if you would prefer. Alternatively if you provide your contact details you will be entered in a draw to win a free half day of my time. The winner gets to choose whether we spend that time working on:

- Taking the work out of networking;
- How to win more competitive tenders;
- How to avoid professional negligence claims;
- How to enhance the skills of a key person in the firm; or
- Any other issues on which you would like my input and where I can provide value.

You can check out the sort of things I could do to help you on the ['your goals'](#) page of my [website](#).

I'll publish the winner's name in a future issue of this newsletter.



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Final thought

Thanks for reading to the end of this newsletter. [Please forward it to at least 3 colleagues and friends who you think might find it of interest.](#)

Many thanks

Regards

Mark Lee

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Helping ambitious professionals achieve key business goals

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