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Insight

SPRING 2015

**THE
TOUR**

Sky's the limit

IT'S LIFT-OFF FOR BURGER BAR



WIN!

AN IPAD
MINI



COMMUNITY

Global success
just reward for
karate group

NEWS

Reality stars
launch station
parcel point



OUT&ABOUT

WITH
INSIGHT
EDITOR
PAUL
SMITH



We visited Okinawan Karate School in London

Many miles were clocked up delivering this issue's tour as we visited five tenants in the north-west of England.

From Liverpool to Warrington, then on to Wigan, Salford and Stalybridge, *Insight* encountered businesses as varied as airplane-furnished restaurants, train-themed bars and an American-inspired brewery.

Meeting tenants is incredibly insightful and their passion for business shines through. Flick through to pages 4-6 to discover how a bike ride shaped one business idea and how a combined passion for travelling created a new venture for an out-of-work couple.

On pages 2-3 catch up with the latest small business and Network Rail news, while page 7 will keep you up to date with the latest major railway station developments from across the country.

We've spoken to tenants who are using social media to raise the profile of their business to great effect – find out what advice they have for you on pages 8-9. You can also follow us on Twitter now – @Insight_NR

Our striking image across pages 10 and 11 introduces you to Sensei Mohammed Qwareeq, who is using a Network Rail arch to transform a local community through martial arts.

We meet building surveyor Christopher Dawson on the back of this issue, where you can also enter our competition to win an iPad – it could be the perfect tool for your business.

CONTACT US

If you have a story to tell or a question about the magazine

Email: drop us a line at insight@abcomm.co.uk

Twitter: Join the conversation using our new Twitter handle @Insight_NR

Call the editor: 020 7922 5687



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SENDING A PARCEL? IT'S A DODDLE

Network Rail has teamed up with Duddle – an online shopping collection and returns service – to launch 300 stores inside railway stations.

More than 30 stores are live in locations including London Waterloo, Milton Keynes, Manchester and Birmingham, with plans for a further 250 units in the next two years.

Tim Robinson, chief executive of Duddle, described the service as a vital resource for busy commuters and small businesses.

He said: "Commuters are among the most time-starved people in society and often find themselves returning home to a 'sorry you were out' card. Our stores aim to make commuters' lives easier by providing

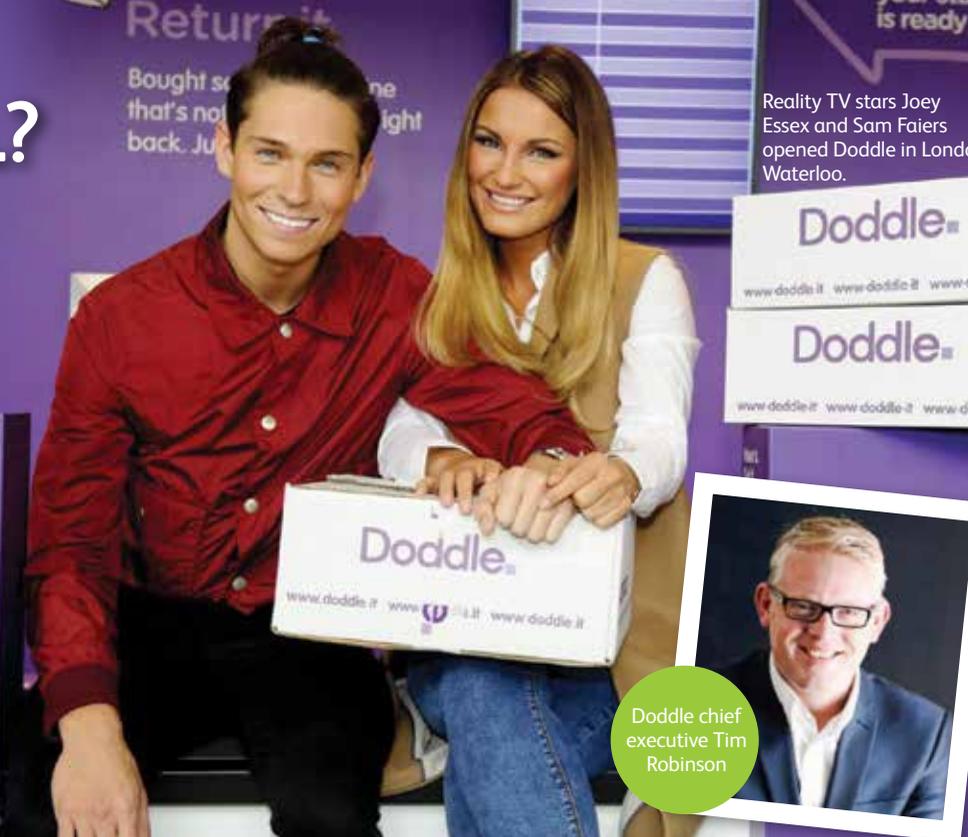
them with a more efficient way of collecting or returning parcels while on their way to or from work.

"We have even installed changing rooms in our larger stores, so people can try items on and send back unwanted items straight away."

A team of experienced staff advise customers on packaging, pricing and shipping options and the opening hours are tailored to travel patterns in each location.

Small businesses can open an account at their local Duddle store and benefit from consolidated pricing across four carriers, giving them access to the best rates.

High-profile retailers have already partnered with Duddle, including ASOS, Amazon and New Look.



Duddle chief executive Tim Robinson



BREAKTHROUGH FOR RECHARGEABLE TRAIN

Battery-powered technology has returned to Britain's rail network after a gap of more than 50 years.

The modified Class 279 Electrostar can run at 50mph for 43 miles without a top-up, powered by 80,000 AA-size rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

A trial period by Network Rail began in January on the Abellio Greater Anglia service between Harwich International and Manningtree in Essex.

Depending on how

successfully the trial period is viewed, it could ultimately lead to a fleet of battery-powered trains running on Britain's rail network, which are quieter and more efficient than diesel-powered trains, making them better for passengers and the environment.

James Ambrose, Network Rail principal engineer, said: "We're always looking for ways to reduce the cost of running the railway and make it greener too. This project has the potential to contribute significantly."

SOCKET FIRE SPARKS

Tenants are reminded to be aware of the dangers of using and overloading multi-socket boards following a devastating fire at a Network Rail business premises in Glasgow (right).

The blaze was caused by an electrical fault that occurred as a consequence of a four-way extension lead being overloaded.

Ken MacDonald, Glasgow site manager, said: "Although there is the capability to plug in four appliances at once in some extension leads, this doesn't mean it's always safe to do so.

"Different electrical appliances use different amounts of power and, if overloaded, the risk of overheating and fire increases significantly."



STAY SAFE WHEN USING EXTENSION LEADS

- Check the current rating of an extension lead before plugging in appliances
- Never plug in appliances that together will exceed the extension lead's current rating
- Only use one extension lead per socket
- Never plug one extension lead into another
- Use a multi-way bar rather than a block adaptor
- Check regularly for danger signs, including sparks, smoke, scorch marks, melted plastic and a smell of burning.



"IF YOU WORK HARD, YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE YOU WANT TO."

NEWS

AUTO-ENROLMENT REMINDER

Keeping abreast of changes in regulation and having sufficient insurance is essential for small businesses.

A significant regulation that will impact SMEs this year is auto-enrolment. Under the new law, employers have to automatically enrol their staff into a workplace pension.

There are different deadlines throughout 2015-2017, as well as fines for non-compliance. Visit www.thisismoney.co.uk for more.

RETAIL CRIME COSTS UP TO £600M

The impact of theft on UK retailers has reached its highest level in a decade, according to this year's Retail Crime Survey from the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

The cost of retail crime is now up to £603m, with the cost of the average theft up 35 per cent to £241 per incident.

Online fraud is also on the rise.

Helen Dickinson, director general of the BRC, said: "Criminal activity against UK retailers continues to have wide-ranging consequences for businesses."

Visit www.brc.org.uk for more information.



YOU'RE HIRED!

Network Rail is offering 200 young people the chance to join its award-winning apprenticeship scheme this year.

The scheme is open to anyone over the age of 17 and provides the chance to gain valuable qualifications and skills to build a career in engineering.

Joe Milne, who joined the scheme in 2013, said: "If you work hard, you can go anywhere you want to."

Visit the networkrail.co.uk careers section for more.

Insight TOUR

NORTH-WEST ENGLAND



COVERED: 71 MILES

The north-west population is just over 7 million

In 1830, the world's first train station opened in Manchester

Animated characters Wallace and Gromit live in Wigan

2008

The year Liverpool was named European Capital of Culture



Hangar Number 4



A passion for travel and a love of world foods led Simon Grimes and wife Emma Catterall-Grimes towards a new business venture.

Out of work, the couple started with a blank piece of paper and wrote down subjects they'd like to forge a career out of. The result is world burger restaurant Hangar Number 4.

It was their Network Rail arch that inspired the property's airport-themed décor.

"We wanted to open a burger restaurant and when we saw the arch, we thought wow, this looks like an aircraft hangar," said Simon.

"It was the arch that inspired us because next came the idea of

having 10 world city destinations, which form our burger menu."

Simon and Emma spent a year travelling together. Along the way they sampled food that has inspired the flavours that make up their menu.

Emma said: "Our most popular burgers are the Paris, which is a beef pattie topped with brie and caramelised chutney, and the Frankfurt – a 6oz burger topped with smoked sausage, smoked cheese and mustard."

The décor includes part of a Cessna Citation II jet, once owned by Formula 1 star Jenson Button, while food is served on an airplane trolley, cutlery is the same as you'd get in British Airways first



WARRINGTON

class and you can drink beers from the restaurant's highlighted destinations.

Simon added: "It's passed our better expectations so far. We think we've possibly built a franchisable business."

facebook.com/hangarnumber4
Twitter: @hangar_4



Don't always mould your idea into a place, let a place inspire you.



Top Gun Flight Simulator,

With Ian Brookes, who owns the business with partner Susan Brookes...

What is your business?

We offer a fully immersed fighter pilot experience using a jet fighter simulator. Flying is a passion of mine and I built a simulator a decade ago, which I used to enjoy with friends. It snowballed and got to the point where people wanted to use it but couldn't because I was at work. Three years ago I decided to take the plunge and open as a business.

How does it work?

Customers wear RAF-issued flight suits, helmet and an oxygen mask, which doubles as an intercom.

The default simulation begins at RAF Anglesey and takes in the Snowdonia Mountains, the Menai Strait and the Welsh Valleys.

Tell us about the aircraft...

The main jet is a Delfin L-29, which is a fighter trainer that has the

markings RED 47 and used to fly with the Romanian Air Force until it was decommissioned in the late 1980s. I had to transfer it from being a real aircraft into a simulator, which took about three years to do.

What's the best thing about your Network Rail property?

It looks like an aircraft hangar so it fits perfectly and is a great space.

Have you been surprised by your success?

If I knew that eventually weekends would be fully booked up to a month in advance, I'd have taken the plunge sooner. We get people of all ages – airplane enthusiasts, Top Gun fans, all sorts.

www.topgunflightsimulator.co.uk

STALYBRIDGE



Track Brewing Co



Director Sam Dyson shares his story...

"My business is a microbrewery producing new world and traditional English beers in cask, keg and bottle.

"There are more than 20 bars in Manchester serving my beer, with supplies also in Leeds and Sheffield. It's early days but it's all about expanding and soon my beer will be in bars in Nottingham and Chester too, as well as in bottle shops across the UK.

"The idea came about when I cycled 20,000 miles across America. My expectation was that there would be poor-quality beer wherever I went – but the opposite was true. In places such as Colorado, Portland and Montana, there were breweries producing amazing beer and people of all ages drinking it pretty much straight from the brewery.

"Microbrewing has been around in the UK for decades but these guys were bringing something extra and I wanted to do that myself.

"For now, my target is to produce a core range and produce it well every time. I have 2,500sq ft of space in my arch and the height of it is perfect for my tanks. Eventually I'd like more tanks and to introduce a bar on the premises too."

Twitter: @trackbrewco



MANCHESTER



Tick Tock Unlock

Solving a series of puzzles to escape a room within 60 minutes – that's the concept of Tick Tock Unlock, a business recently moved into an arch at Chadwick Court in Liverpool.

Owned and managed by Sam Hussain, Shez Anjun, Ali Khan and Zainab Saeed, it has already found great success in Leeds – and has now ventured to Merseyside.

"We've reached number one for things to do in Yorkshire on TripAdvisor," said Sam. "Across the UK we've generated lots of interest and have been thinking of expanding for a while. Once we saw the arch in Liverpool, we didn't have to think twice. I love it – it's a great space."

Sam spent time living in China where escape games are popular and that provided her inspiration.

"You are in a room with up to six people – friends, family or colleagues – and you have to get out within 60 minutes using brain teasers, objects and clues," said Sam.

"We've a lot of corporate visitors as its great for team-bonding. We've found a gap with families too as it's something teenagers and adults can do together.

It's rewarding when you see customers enjoying themselves."

Twitter: @ticktockunlock
facebook.com/ticktockunlock



WIGAN

Wigan Central

Pictured above are bar staff Ben Hussain and Ali Khan and Lou Taylor.



With an arch dating back to the mid-19th century, the interior of Wigan Central – a real ale and cider bar with a railway theme – is the perfect nod to days gone by.

The brainchild of husband and wife team Patsy and John Slevin, and managed by another husband and wife team, Gina and Dan Buck, the bar is proving a hugely successful venture since opening last December.

"It's gone far better than expected so far," said Gina. "Wigan has been crying out for a dedicated real ale bar and the enthusiasm of our customers is great."

Wigan's two railway stations are yards away – indeed real-time departure information is displayed in the bar – but décor is based on the old Wigan Central Station, which closed 50 years ago. A huge station clock hangs above the arch, while the bar is akin to a train carriage.

"The interior fits perfectly with the arch," said Gina. "It's a pretty unique place and it's gone down well with a variety of customers from local residents to students and fans of real ale. We also get plenty of train enthusiasts in – the place has really taken off."

www.wigancentral.bar
Twitter: @wigancentral



An artist's impression of Birmingham New Street



ON TRACK

Between 2014 and 2019, Network Rail is investing £38 billion on major developments at stations across the UK.

One of the main projects is in the West Midlands with the transformed Birmingham New Street station and Grand Central shopping complex moving a step closer to completion.

Contractors have removed more than 6,000 tonnes of concrete from under the newly built atrium – which covers the size of a football pitch – allowing light to shine on the new concourse for the first time.

This is a significant landmark for the project,

which began in 2009. The multi-million pound transformation is scheduled to be completed ready to launch in September.

Chris Montgomery, Network Rail's project director for Birmingham New Street, said: "The completion of this work marks a huge milestone for the project.

"Building the atrium roof and removing such a large amount of concrete from the centre of the building was a huge feat of engineering."

During the summer, the new concourse will be fitted out with waiting rooms, shops and public facilities as the final touches are put on

the seven-year project. The redevelopment of Birmingham New Street will transform the retail experience of passengers.

More than 1,000 jobs will be created at anchor store John Lewis to the south of the station, in the hope of stimulating regeneration in the area.

Grand Central development director Richard Brown is excited by the prospects of the station's revamped retail offering.

"Grand Central will be the jewel in Birmingham's retail crown," he said. "The work that has been going on behind the scenes and on site is truly incredible."

AROUND THE STATIONS

Queen Street station in Glasgow is preparing for a multi-million pound redevelopment. The proposals form part of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) and will include a wider expansion of the Buchanan Galleries shopping complex, improved passenger facilities and a new concourse design.

Work on Crossrail's surface section in outer London, Berkshire and Essex is now one-third complete as Network Rail undertakes a £2.3 billion upgrade of the existing rail network to deliver the project. Improvements will step up later this year with a number of stations in outer London being completely rebuilt.



SMALL BUSINESS ADVICE

Popup Bikes owner Dipak Patel, centre, with Mattie Christensen and Mike Gibson.



THERE ARE 15 MILLION TWITTER USERS IN THE UK AND ITS USE BY SMEs IS GROWING RAPIDLY. MANY TENANTS USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO RAISE THEIR PROFILE AND BOOST SALES, AS TWO OF THEM TOLD INSIGHT...

See how it's done

Follow Hotsauce Drinks
 Twitter @hotsaucedrinks
 Facebook facebook.com/hotsaucedrinks

Follow Popup Bikes
 Twitter @Popupbikes
 Facebook facebook.com/popupbikes
 Instagram instagram.com/popupbikes



Hotsauce Drinks trio Michael Lovedale, Hugo Abisset and Mike Gormley.

Follow *Insight* on Twitter @Insight_NR – a new account enabling you to connect with fellow tenants and find out what's happening across the business. The *Insight* Twitter account will keep abreast of important news for SMEs, share business advice and interact with Network Rail tenants. Follow us today and share your social media tips.

#GOOD FOR BUSINESS



Michael Lovedale of Hotsauce Drinks, a spirits wholesaler based in Glasgow, has been using social media since the business began in mid-2012.

"We started off posting occasionally on Facebook and Twitter," he explained. "As we began to grow and bring more people into the business, we found somebody who was keen to help us explore social media more regularly.

"In a small business like this, we all have to do lots of different things but between us we post something every day."

Hotsauce Drinks sells spirits to niche businesses, mainly cocktail bars. "We're a wholesaler with around 2,500 products, often exclusively available through us

in the UK. Social media allows us to reach customers, letting them know about new products and maintaining a personal touch."

On Facebook and Twitter, Hotsauce Drinks regularly post images of its products, some of which look rather exotic. "It's all about fun for us and social media lets us show our humorous side far better than a website would," said Michael.

While Michael uses social media to stay in touch with his business customers, Dipak Patel at Popup Bikes in Manchester – a cycle café with a repair service – talks directly to consumers using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

"We're so much more than a coffee shop," said Dipak. "We offer bike repairs and servicing as

well as bike parking," said Dipak. "I track where business comes from and social media has definitely helped us make a name for ourselves since we opened three years ago."

One new customer has been following @PopupBikes since 2012 and has just brought her bike for repair. "She saw our interactions with customers and knew we'd be able to help her," said Dipak.

"For most of our customers, they start seeing us on social media and then find out the details of our services from our website.

"We use a lot of photos, whether it's of the specific repairs we're doing, the cakes we're selling, or showing people how we use our space to park their bikes for an hour, a day or long term."

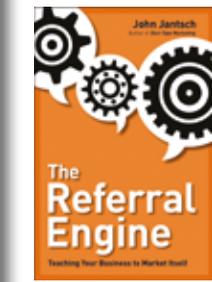


Social Media Top Tips

Michael, from Hotsauce Drinks, said: "Think a lot about your tone of voice before you start using social media. It has to match the positioning of your business. We are deliberately fun to differentiate ourselves from other suppliers."

Dipak, from Popup Bikes, said: "Work out which customer uses which channel – younger adults use Instagram, 30-40s use Twitter more and everyone uses Facebook. Our channels are all connected and the interaction with our website gives customers the information they need."

This issue's hot picks are three books to help small business owners get ahead



Waterstones
£9.99

The Referral Engine, by John Jantsch

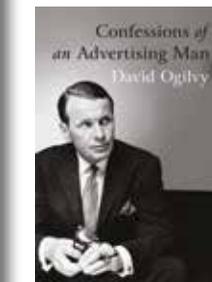
Marketing expert Jantsch explains how to create new customers through the power of positive referrals, without needing a huge budget. Jantsch argues that the power of glitzy marketing campaigns is on the wane, with word-of-mouth referrals driving business today.

Amazon
£11.99



Shape up Your Business, by Sophie Cornish and Holly Tucker

A 30-day plan for business success from the founders of notonthehighstreet.com and authors of the Sunday Times bestseller Build a Business From Your Kitchen Table. Advice includes maintaining a work/life balance while continuing to grow your business.



Amazon
£10.99

Confessions of an Advertising Man, by David Ogilvy

A business classic first published in 1963, said to have changed the way the public thought about advertising. It also covers people management, corporate ethics and politics. Ogilvy's ideas for advertising your business remain relevant to this day.

Pinar, far right, with husband Mohammed Qwareeq



FLYING HIGH

Arch provides a base for students' global karate success



The creative use of space by Pinar Cinar's Okinawan Karate School business in a Network Rail arch in London has helped its students become global winners in the sport.

Since moving to the arch in Forest Gate two years ago, Pinar has worked tirelessly with her husband Sensei Mohammed Qwareeq to make the space the perfect place to teach local children martial arts.

Over the past 12 months, Okinawan Karate School's students have won seven

medals for England at the European Championships in Italy and another 13 at the World Championships in Poland.

"We've created a purpose-built space to teach martial arts," said Pinar. "We've insulated the property, levelled out the floors, kitted it out with jigsaw mats and mirrors for lessons, opened a new reception area and created a wall of fame to celebrate our students - we want the place to belong to them."

COMMUNITY

Pupils aged between 3 and 16 attend the centre for classes five days a week

and the centre has established itself at the heart of the community, bordering the boroughs of Newham and Waltham Forest.

"The centre has brought so many different people together," added Pinar.

"We offer youngsters the chance to do something other than sit in front of the TV and pick up bad habits.

"The local school teachers and our pupils' parents love what we do because it's a place to go to be active and be safe off the streets.

"It fits very well into the local neighbourhood."

MY INSIGHT

Work hard and be determined. If you invest time in your customers so that they become like friends, you'll be offering something personalised and unique.

MY SUCCESS

The key to our success is playing an active role within the community and caring about the quality and level of your work.

CONTACT US

We want your business stories. Email insight@abcomm.co.uk and tell us why you should be featured.

Discussing the diversity of his role as a chartered building surveyor in property, construction and maintenance is north-west based Chris Dawson

BUILDING SUCCESS

What does your job entail?

A large part of the role is property refurbishment. We work closely with business space whose role is to enhance the infrastructure and the properties we have, to improve the standard from previous years and to generate income and attract SMEs.

What skills do you need?

A large part of my role is communication and dealing with other stakeholders. Managing expectations is another key area within property – sometimes people want more than we can actually afford. I also need a good knowledge of building conservation because I'm dealing with historic assets.

What's your biggest challenge?

It's the volume of work and what you've got to deliver. I enjoy it; the work is interesting and diverse.

Describe a recent success...

We had a site in Birkenhead where an adjoining property

owner had been fly tipping contaminated waste on to our land, with a potential liability for our business estimated at between £6 million and £25 million. We obtained a court injunction to stop this.

Is there anything you're particularly proud of?

There are two heritage projects I've been involved in – Helsby and Frodsham railway stations. Both projects were shortlisted for National Railway Heritage Awards last year. The stations were built around 1849 but had been derelict for more than 20 years before we restored them successfully.

QUICK-FIRE CHRIS

Hobby: Walking and photography. I like my cameras and I'm a keen photographer – mainly of historic buildings.

Sport: Football. I'm an Everton fan but it hasn't been

the best of seasons so far.

Music: I'm a soul music fan but I listen to most things. I also quite like Sam Smith.

TV: I enjoy watching The Voice. I like the concept that those taking part are judged purely on their singing.



WIN!
**AN IPAD
MINI**

ANOTHER AWARDS SEASON HAS BEEN AND GONE BUT HOW MANY OF THIS YEAR'S BRIT AWARDS WINNERS CAN YOU IDENTIFY?

Send your answers, with your name, place of work and contact number via email to insight@abcomm.co.uk or tweet us @Insight_NR. You can also post your answer to *Insight* editor, AB Publishing, Unit B, Gemini House, 180-182 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3TQ. Hugh Mote won the brand new Hudl 2 tablet in the last issue.

