

The Voice Of Watford



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Let's Start a **Review Coup**

I promise this is not another article about why you should collect reviews. I'm hoping that I have banged that drum so many times you now dream about it! Companies that actively and consistently collect reviews get more business, fact!

However, I do know, some businesses struggle to get them. Not because they don't have any happy customers, but because they haven't been able to get a process in place that works for them.

The truth is, it generally doesn't cross people's minds to leave a review unless they're asked. It's not because they don't think you're great at what you do, it's just they have other things to think about.

If You Don't Ask You Don't Get

If you know your customer is happy with what you've done for them and you don't ask for a review, they probably won't give you one, fact! A simple 'Would you mind giving us a review?' is often all you need to do.

Make it Easy

We're all busy, we all have priorities. Leaving a review is probably not one of them so make it as easy as possible for them. Give them a card with the url of your thebestof feature or your website on, attach an e card

to their invoice, or even put the e card on Facebook with the link underneath. It makes it simple for both getting reviews and ensuring they're verified.

Display Your Reviews Offline

Having framed thank you cards and reviews on your walls not only proves to new customers what a great company you are, it also shows how important feedback is to you. People follow people. They are more likely to want to leave a review if other people already have.

Have a Reviews Widget on Your Homepage

Reviews widgets are a brilliant way to collect reviews. At thebestof, we have one you can hang on your home page (top right is the best place as that's where the eye falls) that not only displays the reviews you've collected on both our site and yours, but people can add a review directly into it. Simple!

Train and Incentivise your Staff

You may be utterly focused on feedback, but if you haven't trained your staff to be, plenty of potential reviews are walking out the door.

If you need any help with collecting reviews just give us a call. You'll soon have a bank of glowing reviews to help all those potential customers choose you.



The People Behind the Business

Harsha Moore, specialist advisor on employment law for employees and employers



Mother of two football mad youngsters under 8, Harsha knows how tough it can be to achieve a balance between career and family life. Husband Paul also has a demanding role, working as an advocate in MIND, so how does Harsha always appear to radiate such calm serenity and never appear to be short of time for anyone? Maybe her involvement in Yoga helps?

Harsha's parents moved to the UK from India in the 1950s and Harsha was born in West London. The family, Harsha has two brothers and a sister, eventually moved to Wembley and she became interested in the law while still at school. Following A Levels she went on to university to study

law and maths but was unsure which particular branch of the law she wanted to pursue until she began to volunteer at Croydon's Racial Equality Council. Suddenly, she found herself dealing with all sorts of problems, not just issues of racial inequality, problems which extended far into every aspect of the lives of the people she was trying to help.

Harsha went on to join the co-operative Camden Law Centre, which she loved but eventually found herself working in a very large organisation specialising in Union Law. Harsha loves working with individuals and SMEs, so gradually she obeyed the impulse to downsize operations and ultimately she established her own practise here in Watford.

At Moore Solicitors Harsha specialises in supporting issues around disability, gender, caste and racial discrimination. She helps individuals who might otherwise feel alone and unsupported, facing bullying or unfair discrimination in the workplace. She also helps employers to put appropriate structures and resources in place to minimise the risk of unfair discrimination, bullying or harassment and thereby reduce the likelihood of tribunals and claims.

Running her own practise clearly

generates high levels of job satisfaction for Harsha and enables her to balance the demands of caring for her family, working as a school governor, finding time for Yoga and occasionally getting away for family holidays or visits to her brother, a GP who works in an idyllic location in Cornwall.

You don't have to spend much time with Harsha however to realise just how important her work is to her.

If you care about your staff, compliance with the law around Human Resources, bullying, harassment or unfair discrimination in the workplace or are suffering from any of these issues yourself, it's good to have Harsha on your side.

**Contact Harsha on
01923 238 427 or email
harsha@mooresolicitors.co.uk**

MOORE
solicitors

Have you made great progress with thebestof?

We'd love to hear about your success and share your story here

Your **FREE** local app



Everything local at your fingertips!

thebestof

Our new local app is all about bringing local events, news, offers & trusted local businesses straight to you.

Download it now for free...



Offer of the month

**Furniture in need of repair?
£25 off with Furniture Medic
Watford and Hemel Hempstead**

We've all got a piece of furniture in our home that we love but that has seen better days. Now is the time to get that chair, sofa, table or other loved but neglected piece of furniture restored to its former glory.

When you spend over £100 with Furniture Medic Watford and Hemel Hempstead you will get £25 pounds off your bill (with this newsletter).

Furniture Medic are experts in furniture restoration and French Polishing.



Give Anthony or Nikki a call on
020 8387 0201
or email fm.watford@ntlworld.com



Our New Achievers Club

Awarding outstanding businesses locally...

**Congratulations Sean Clarke
on the occasion of your
recent marriage!**

And very best wishes for the future from all of us at thebestof Watford.

Sean is the design and creative director at RCD, the family run print and design business based on the Moor Park Industrial Estate, Tolpits Lane Watford.



The Clarke family at RCD Design & Print have been active in the print industry for more than 30 years but they have certainly moved with the times, keeping right up to date with all the latest technology. That's great news for their customers because it provides all the flexibility, customised service, speed and cost savings of modern digital print and design.

RCD are very much in demand from a very wide range of customers; multinationals, large corporations, small businesses, clubs, associations and private individuals, all of whom appreciate the creativity and quality provided by RCD. Their work never seems to slacken off, they are always busy when we visit them with our latest print jobs and design requirements but they are never less than very welcoming, with broad smiles and usually the offer of a cup of tea, if the timing is right!

Here at thebestof Watford we have been delighted to recommend them to a range of our clients and customers, and we have never heard anything but praise for the creativity, quality and competitive cost provided by this great local company.

Contact Sean or Ray on 01923 218 120 or email ray@rcd.uk.com



Working Well

Want to shine in our next newsletter? Share your successes and let Peter & Abby know what bits of thebestof are working for you!



Precious film or tape can't be viewed and gathering dust?

If you have a precious video tape or home movie, maybe of your children when they were tiny, or of old family or friends, the chances are it's gathering dust somewhere and you may not be even able to play it anymore. The technology has moved on and the machine you used to play it on is probably long gone.

If it was really precious, important or valuable to you in some way would you trust someone to transfer it to a more modern format so you could play it once more and keep it safe for the future?

You might be understandably less than keen to send it off in the post to some unknown agency and perhaps risk never seeing it again.

What if we could point you in the direction of a local company that at the latest count had 195 reviews on thebestof Watford? If you took a look at those reviews on our web site you'd see how many wonderful responses they have received and how grateful so many people have been for the service provided by Bushey DVD.

Bushey DVD is a local family run business that specialises in transferring old films and video tapes or any kind and duration to modern digital formats. They will take care of your film and return it to you in good condition along with the new digital version they have made in the format you need to be able to continue to enjoy viewing it.

Literally thousands of people both locally and across the UK have benefited from this great service and the company has won several of our most loved local business awards. So we are confident to recommend Bushey DVD to anyone who has a cherished memory on film or on tape that they would like to be able to re-visit and view again and again.

Call Alan on 01923 369 722 or email conversion@busheydvd.com

Thebestof Watford – get the best from it!

There is so much going on at the best of you'll be surprised to find so much there. On-line with our web site you'll find loads of local events and activities, community and special interest groups, everything in fact from what's on in the church hall to the Watford Colosseum.

There are some really highly recommended local businesses featured there too, many with exclusive local offers.

Our community partners provide a range of services and support and in our community pages you'll find details of all those important local services.

Our local blog section provides a platform for personal views and updates on what's going in our lives and community. And our social media provides up to the minute news, comments and updates from and to the thousands of local people, businesses and community groups that follow and contribute to our posts.

We are all about promoting life and business in and around Watford and South Hertfordshire so why not get involved? You can leave recommendations for local businesses and reviews for those that we feature.

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook where you will see that we are not only featuring and promoting local business up and down the High Street and in and around your town or village but local events, activities and commentaries.

The quality of life in our community is based largely around being able to enjoy and benefit from all the best that is going on, so visit and share with us online at www.thebestof.co.watford



We are looking for...

At thebestof Watford we are on the lookout for other great members.

This month we are looking for...

• Accountant • Great local restaurants • Gym or personal trainer

If you know a business that fits the bill, please contact the team:

01923 418017 | watford@thebestof.co.uk



Out of Office, Not Out of Business

You're finally taking that well earned break. You've completed everything on your list and as you prepare to leave work for the last time before you're off to warmer climes, you'll probably put on your 'Out of Office' autoreply.

It will probably say something like this:

I will be out of the office from (Starting date) until (End date). If you need immediate assistance please contact (Contact Person).

Great! Now you can leave work, safe in the knowledge your customers and potential customers will be looked after. Or will they?

Email is a wonderful thing. It's so convenient! If we suddenly think about something we need at midnight, we can fire an email off and know it will be dealt with the next working day. Except of course, if we get an 'Out of Office'.

I want assistance, not immediate assistance

Let's face it, if we've sent an email at midnight, immediate assistance is not what we want or need.

What we want is for someone to come back to us with answers. Well, if that email is sitting in your inbox for a week while you're finally getting the chance to relax, assistance is not what we're going to get. And if we're a potential customer, likely as not, by the time you're back, we've taken our business elsewhere.

As business owners, we all invest a lot of time and money in gaining new customers. It's awful to think

that after all that effort; a simple email message can undo all that hard work.

One Simple Rule - 'Copy to...'

All the email providers I have ever come across have lots of bells and whistles to help us organise our inbox.

Whether it filters specific email addresses into files, or colour codes them according to who they've come from, we can set up our inbox exactly how we want it. What you may not know is that it can also send a copy of every email you receive to another email address.

Just setting up that one simple rule, copying each email that comes in to someone who can deal with enquiries, ensures that you don't miss out on any potential business.

So, next time you manage to squeeze in a little time off, before you put on your out of office, make sure you're copying all emails received to someone who can deal with the enquiries. Your potential customers will be wowed at the service and your bank balance and sanity will thank you for it!



Meet The Members

We're consistently uncovering hidden gems.
Say a big hello to our local heroes.

Give them a call and say hello!

FASTSIGNS Watford

When you need a sign made fast - call Fastsigns (Watford). It's amazing what Fastsigns in Watford can do and you don't need to be in a hurry to use their services! Specialising in point of sale and 3D signs in a wide range of materials, PVC, stainless steel, acrylic, aluminium, foam; whatever your requirements for signage Fastsigns have the solution.

t: **Call Fastsigns on 01923 439651**



Browns IT Providing IT Support for Business

Make your business work with the help and support of Browns IT, the specialist computer technology, database designers and information technology experts. Manufactures, Business Administrators, Membership Organisations, and Retailers are all beating a path to Browns IT in Watford.

t: **Call Browns IT on 01923 439 661**



Marketing with a flourish at 27-7 Promo

Don't panic! This is fast and fulfilled total marketing services around the clock from this local husband and wife team at 24-7 Promo Ltd. Service include print brokerage, promotional gifts, online marketing services, SEO and video promotion.

t: **Call Steve or Lesley on 0800 470 4866**



Strive Development - Learning Consultants

The Human Resources specialists designing and delivering Training, Coaching and Careers Advice. The friendly and expert team is led by Amanda Winder, a consultant to the construction industry in Graduate Training and Apprenticeship Schemes.

e: **Amanda on amanda@strivedevelopment.co.uk**



Blue Orange Photography - making everyone look their best!

John and Edna Williamson are professional photographers for any occasion including weddings, parties, family portraits and passport photos.

The friendly team cover Watford and South Hertfordshire and also offer commercial photography for conference and events, business portrait profiles, product shoots and of your office or premises.

t: **Call John and Edna on 01923 350 596**



Want to be featured on our Meet The Members page?
Call us on **01923 418017** and let us know!

Dates For Your Diary

Some important dates coming up in the calendar!



11th

**Mar
&**

13th

May

Watford Business & Community

This brunch networking event meets once a month at West Herts Sports & Social Club in Park Avenue, Watford. 10am to 12pm. Everyone is welcome, no membership required.

£12 per person includes a guest speaker and refreshments. All profits of the events go to a local charity or good cause.

e: watford@thebestof.co.uk for more information.

4th

Jun

An Evening with thebestof

A great opportunity for thebestof members to meet and get to know one another over dinner at a local restaurant.

e: abby.dennis@thebestof.co.uk for more information.

4N Watford

Meeting fortnightly every Thursday morning at the **Watford Hilton Hotel 8am to 10am** this is an effective, informal and fun form of networking.

Visitors welcome. £12 for breakfast. Passport memberships enables you to visits 4N groups across the region and nationally.

e: watford@thebestof.co.uk for more information.



Community Partners

For people who go out of their way for the community.

thebestof Watford are members of W3RT Connect, which is a network of local businesses that are serious about taking steps towards corporate social responsibility, want to get involved with the local community and meet other business owners or companies that have similar business values.

As the membership organisation for the local voluntary sector, W3RT started in 1974, as "Watford Council for Voluntary Service" and is in regular contact with hundreds of charities and community groups, who are members of the CVS.

The Trust works in partnership with Watford Borough Council by connecting their CVS members with businesses, through W3RT Connect.

The first year's membership for a business is totally FREE and by joining, it could make a BIG change to not only the local community but to you and your business.

The benefits of becoming a member range from subscribing to a quarterly newsletter highlighting local CSR work and opportunities, networking events, advice and support on your CSR work; introductions to potential local charity partners; you can offer donations or your services to a wide range of local good causes; share ideas and activities with other local businesses and achieve a higher local profile AND get free publicity for good CSR initiatives.

It also means that you can be involved in the Dragon's Apprentice Challenge. An annual programme where young people from local schools and the college are matched with a local charity and given £100 to turn into £1,000 (or more). The budding young entrepreneurs then have to find ways of creating a profit for their nominated charity through fundraising events and initiatives. As a business you can apply to be a mentor (Dragon) of one of the teams.

We were business mentors in the 14/15 programme, and worked with a amazing group of young people from the YMCA raising money for a super charity, Herts Inclusive Theatre. The award winning charity use theatre and drama techniques to help build confidence of the disabled and non-disabled children, young people and adults, who attend their clubs and sessions.

The 2015/16 programme will be starting this September, and the Trust will be recruiting schools, businesses and charities over the coming months.

If you would like to find out more about W3RT Connect, please visit www.w3rt.org/connect to register your interest.



Hi, we are **Peter & Abby**
and we run thebestof
Watford!



We are passionate about Watford and helping local businesses to shine. How? By providing bespoke marketing support and using the bestof toolkit to make them highly visible to local people.

We're here to help so please get in touch! Call us on 01923 418 017

Peter & Abby
watford@thebestof.co.uk

At a glance



At thebestof we go out of our way to provide our members with all the marketing tools that will help them grow locally.

We pride ourselves on being committed and dedicated in working with only thebest local businesses that are recommended by local people.

Focussing on 4 key areas, thebestof has a proven track record of ensuring our members get;

Local Exposure Connections Marketing support Brand Building

We do this through 17 core elements including our reviews facility, our consumer app, our dedicated feature pages for each member and through social media, not forgetting direct email campaigns to our ever growing local database - plus much much more!

Everything we do is about bespoke, results driven marketing, ensuring that our members get what they need, at the right time for them and the good news is that we can tailor everything we do, to your local budget.

We really do what we say we will do;

Bringing trusted businesses and the community together



Did you know...

Consumer review websites are often being slated in the media for promoting bogus reviews or unethical businesses.

Thankfully thebestof is not one of those sites. We're proud that although we're part of a national franchise marketing business (with an award winning website), we are local business people who get to know our members. Before a business can become a member we ask for a minimum of three testimonials. Once they've become a member, the reviews left on their feature page or on the printed postcards (which we supply, collect and upload for them) are credible, as they have to be verified by the reviewers email address.

All of our members have a FREE reviews widget available to them (along with all the other modern marketing tools we share and support them to use). The widget is a short piece of HTML code that we can send to their web developer, so they can showcase their reviews on thebestof to the visitors of their own website. Other consumer review websites charge nearly £100 each month for the widget alone for this (our monthly fees start from £69 + VAT). We hope to see you!



Call **01923 418 017**
www.thebestof.co.uk/watford

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Bringing trusted businesses and the community together