



DUCKETTS
TRUSTED ADVISORS

**August 2017
Newsletter**

Guardians of the Galaxy Special.



Forthcoming events

The current (suitably vague) plan is as follows:

- 13th September - Golf Day at Burghill – if you haven't had an invite, ask Maria
- 18th October - Growth/innovation event at Lyde Arundel – this is evolving
- November 17 - Any Questions?
- January 18 - Mystery keynote speaker
- March 18 – Climbing slides, maybe or a tax enquiry "horror stories" from our consultants, Francis Clark ("The Lester Piggott Memorial Talk")?



Age of Confusion v Winter of Discontent

One of the results of the recent election was that a raft of tax legislation got deferred. Had there been a sensible majority, it would have been put back in and waved through by now. Instead, we've got a huge level of uncertainty on a host of technical issues and nobody knows what to do, and that's holding back economic activity. Hence, the Age of Confusion. A recent announcement from the Government said it's all going to be fine/backdated to 1st April, but we still aren't sure.

It's nowhere near as much fun as the Winter of Discontent (1978/9 for younger readers), where the Government thought it was going to run out of money and the resulting labour unrest nearly brought the country to a halt. And the winter was properly cold.



Mr April plays Golf

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted a Golf Day in the Forthcoming Events section. This is not a misprint: Mr April has convinced us that we should run one on the grounds that we need to be more visible if we ever want to land a new client. Worse still, he's determined to throw out the lovely blue folders I had printed in 1999. I'm working on ways to fight a guerrilla rear-guard action, but it's probably more Dad's Army than Rambo.



How safe is your data?

After a series of high profile hacking attacks (and the compliance frenzy that is GDPR), I started to get worried enough about cyber security to try to buy insurance. It turns out to be almost impossible to complete the application form, so I shelved that idea and talked to my tech guys. They convinced me that we are passably secure and the biggest risk is an own goal (somebody letting something into the system by accident). Then a client of ours in Ross experienced a break in where the criminals accessed the bank account via the office PCs. So that had me looking at 2 factor authentication (ie password + secure key). Then somebody else in our knowledge circle was hacked by criminals demanding cash or confidential details would be sold on the dark web. So I'm now thoroughly confused about what to worry about most, despite having access to a series of able professionals. Watch this space.

Making Tax Digital #351

This may be a knock on from the Age of Confusion, but it looks like MTD has been moved back at least 12 months, giving more accountants time to retire. Up until last week, HMRC was all set to move ahead on its original timetable, having duly consulted all interested parties and then ignored them. So, the end is still nigh, but not quite as nigh as it was.



No more meetings

A report for the NHS has suggested that meetings are banned.

A lament in response:

"A world without meetings would be a world without reporting, reviewing or responding, an eternal blank agenda stretching endlessly into a murky future where there are no matters arising, no priorities to set, no actions or next steps, no forecasts, no plans, no risks to register, no learning to learn from, no good practice to yearn for, no stakeholders to consult, no options to consider, no expectations to manage, no ambitions to aspire to, no deadlines to reset and no documents to refresh."

Courtesy of Nick Rumney.

Incidentally, do you know that BBR are now the UK leaders in dry-eye technology?

<http://www.bbropometry.co.uk/blog/post/2017/06/19/New-Tear-Clinic-being-launched-to-offer-specialist-Dry-Eye-treatments.aspx>

Dry eye is another of those irritating age-related complaints.

Is autism rampant among tax professionals?

Whiplash says she passed the test:

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/how-autistic-are-you>

but she may have cheated.



The Government Is Issuing New Guidelines To Tackle "Damaging" Dress Codes

Following a petition signed by over 150,000 people to ban compulsory high heels at work, the government has announced that it is working on new guidelines on sexist dress codes.

The petition was launched after Nicola Thorp, who was working for Portico, an agency used by PwC, was sent home from work without pay for not wearing high heels in May last year. You'd think the Government had more important things to worry about, but then I am a sexist dinosaur (or so I'm assured).

Grow Getters

Somebody overdid the sales pitch on this one (and it wasn't Mr April):

"Are you set for growth? High-growth companies are powered by people who understand what it takes to get set for growth. Individuals with the vision and drive to take their business to the next level. We call these people the Grow Getters.

The top three characteristics of a Grow Getter are :

1. They focus outside the business
2. They invest in planning
3. They don't stress it

Do you have the potential to get your business set for growth?

Download the full report to discover the top 10 characteristics of a Grow Getter and benchmark yourself against our Grow Getters."

I'm ready to sign up.



The Boys in Blue help HMRC

There's a longer article by Whiplash on this story on the blog.

To cut to the chase, one of our white van clients was pulled over by the police (for spurious reasons?) who promptly passed him over to a black economy HMRC officer. He lived to tell the tale, but this is the first time we've heard of this happening. Big Brother paranoia lives on.

<http://chrisduckett.weebly.com/home/are-hmrc-changing-tactics>

Gavin Gets It On – a Success Story

Now Gavin has (finally) passed his exams, I can't decide whether to make him:

- "Cloud Director" (because his head's always in it), or
- "Chief Creative Officer" (because his accounts are fanciful)

Anybody with any further suggestions should e.mail me on GGIO@chrisduckett.co.uk

There may be a prize (free golf day?) for the best suggestion.

The team has also been joined by Jo Dillon and Jodie Bradley, both of whom are working in the management accounting team. Alter egos to follow once I've worked out what I can get away with without getting sued (or punched).

The Gig Economy does tax

News must be really slow at the moment as the BBC has picked up on the Taylor Review. This looks at the way the UK workforce is employed v self-employed. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that it's all about tax. Think Uber. No doubt the Government will level the tax playing field by destroying labour flexibility in the best traditions of (European) short-sightedness. Scott from FC sums it up

<http://www.fctc.co.uk/news-views/blog/taylor-review-into-self-employment-and-the-gig-economy/>

Herefordshire Business Awards

We've decided to sponsor the Medium Sized Business category (20 to 99 employees). As this is the first year, I suspect the awards are going to be undersubscribed, so you've got a good chance of winning. If anybody wants to be put forward for an award, please let me know and I'll arrange it. By definition, all Ducketts clients are worthy of an award, but it's not always clear which one.

www.herefordshirebusinessawards.co.uk

The dinner itself is at the Three Counties on Friday 29th September

Could you get away with saying this?

"Good marketing makes the company look smart. Great marketing makes the customer feel smart." – Joe Chernov



White Gold or Bust

In order to get the BD team in the mood(?), I've been making them watch the (foul mouthed) BBC series White Gold. Unfortunately, Phil has assumed that this is actually a documentary/training film and has been trying to model himself on head salesman Vincent, complete with sales patter, personalised number plate and dodgy Essex accent. Worse still, he keeps talking about "sales funnels", despite the suspicion that his funnel is as leaky as a colander. And we're going to struggle to find any pole dancing bars in Hereford to have the sales meetings. Maybe we should try Ludlow?

Disclaimer

"Anything that doesn't kill you..."

Disappoints me"

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