

One-stop shop for all advice

THREE consultants have joined forces to offer affordable and sensible services for company owners wanting the competitive edge in today's tough market.

Tim Hackshaw, Jeff Talbot and Fay Millar all have different areas of expertise which combine to help businesses increase sales and profit, widen their public profile and maximise their online potential.

They have launched Business Resource Associates Ltd (BRA), a one-stop shop for all business needs, from advice on business plans, budgeting and growth through to web design and public relations.

It is aimed primarily at the small and medium business sector. Business people can pick which services they want and be told the cost. They can opt for long-term services or hire BRA for one-off projects.

Tim Hackshaw, who has more than 20 years' experience in sales and marketing, said: "We know small and medium businesses owners don't always have the money to spend on consultants."

"Even when they know they could do with some outside input, they are daunted by the prospect of engaging someone."

"BRA brings many of the services a business might need under one roof."

BRA is based in Sussex with contacts in Worthing, Horsham and Brighton. For more information call **01403 710040** or visit www.businessresourceassociates.ltd.uk.

PICTURE: TERRY APPLIN

DIESEL-FREE: Robin Knight with his tuk-tuk vehicle



Robin's cool way to sell his ice cream

MEET the ice cream man who doesn't use a van.

Robin Knight, who lives in Hove, decided to convert a tuk-tuk when he discovered that vans are banned from many public places because of their diesel motors.

He spent 18 months and thousands of pounds developing an ice cream maker that could run on battery power.

Mr Knight said: "I was walking round Portobello Road in London

and my two boys were asking for ice cream but we couldn't get one anywhere.

"I went up to see the powers that be and they said the reason was that they couldn't have any diesel engines around food areas.

"The finished tuk-tuk is very eco-friendly as there are no carbon emissions. It is small and nimble and you can go anywhere without worrying about polluting the atmosphere."

Mr Knight, a former construction worker originally from Australia, believes he is on to a winner, despite a slow start operating from a patch at Brighton Station.

He said: "Unfortunately, the station isn't the perfect place and business hasn't been great. But I have had a lot of interest from schools and other organisations asking if I can go to their events in the summer. I also had someone asking if I could build them their own ice cream tuk-tuk."

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Hospitality in skills drive

by **SAM THOMSON**

THE hospitality industry is teaming up to solve the problem of finding and holding on to highly-skilled staff.

A number of top hotels in Brighton and Hove have already joined a new Tourism Forum to share ideas and work closely with organisations such as JobCentre Plus and the Learning & Skills Council.

The forum meets quarterly and is designed to provide members with all the latest information relating to employment, training and services as well as a chance to network with like minded businesses.

Any organisations wishing to join the forum must sign the Tourism Charter, which outlines their commitment to employ individuals from under-represented groups and develop the skills of existing staff.

The charter is accompanied by a certificate of recognition, which can be displayed in places of work.

Each business which signs up will receive an annual monitoring visit to ensure that it has met its charter commitments, with those that pass being awarded a

new certificate for the following year.

The forum is chaired by Claire Mitchell, of Engage Employment Solutions Ltd, who hopes that every business in Brighton and Hove involved in the tourism and hospitality industry will become a member.

She said: "We have got a skills shortage in the industry and, while we have a plethora of employment and training initiatives that business can take advantage of, the problem is that they are often marketed in a language that businesses can find hard to understand."

"There can also be a lot of bureaucracy to get to the funding, which can put organisations off. By using the forum to pull everything together we have a much better chance of improving the training, recruitment and skills within the sector."

● For more information and a copy of the charter, visit www.engage-solutions.org.uk/node/24.

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BUSINESSES SIGNED UP TO THE CHARTER:

- The De Vere Grand
- The Hilton Metropole
- The Thistle Hotel
- The Holiday Inn
- The Old Ship Hotel
- The Vienna Group (Queens Hotel)
- The Ramada Jarvis
- Hotel Alias Seattle
- Hotel du Vin
- Jurys Inns
- myhotel
- The Royal Albion
- The Lansdowne Hotel
- The Royal York Hotel
- Brighton Pier

Organisations providing support:

- Engage Brighton & Hove Forum
- JobCentre Plus
- Brighton & Hove City Council's Economic Development Team
- Learning & Skills Council
- City College Brighton & Hove

On top of charity exercise

A TEAM of graduates from a defence company has helped raise thousands of pounds for charity.

The staff from Crawley-based Thales UK were loaned £100 and

challenged to come up with the most innovative way of collecting cash.

They raised more than £12,000 for Marie Curie Cancer Care by doing things such as bag

packing for supermarket customers, shoeshining on the Manor Royal Industrial Estate and Crawley Police Station, and making balloon animals.