

GODPARENT



RED SOFA INTERVIEW

**JAMES ROWELL,
ADVENT MANAGEMENT**

James is here to talk about Advent Management who support businesses with process design

PAGE 2



BUSINESS

DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2025 - DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND

A guest article from Alison Moffatt, Bubble Creative Solutions

PAGE 3

SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS: STAYING POSITIVE AND RESILIENT

There appears to be a lot of doom and gloom within the small business world at the moment but despite the perceived knocks from the new Government, it is my belief that an entrepreneur cannot be beaten. As a Business Godparent, I will continue to be your sounding board during the New Year; you don't have to do things alone.

As a starting point, read this excellent newsletter (well, I would be biased!) and get some positive tips on being successful, sustainability, processes and marketing trends. Enjoy!

**ROGER EDDOWES
BUSINESS GODPARENT**



Roger Eddowes
Founding Partner

BUILDING A LEGACY: WHY FAMILY BUSINESSES MUST LEAD ON SUSTAINABILITY

For generations, family businesses have been the backbone of the UK economy, contributing not only to economic growth but also to the communities they serve.

Unlike large corporations driven by short-term profits, family-run businesses often take a longer-term approach, considering the impact of today's decisions on future generations. This perspective uniquely positions them to embrace sustainability as a core value, ensuring their legacy is one of responsibility, resilience, and long-term prosperity.

At Essendon, we understand the importance of family businesses and how difficult it can be to adopt these sustainable processes. That's why we work with businesses of all sizes to help them understand their financial processes. Let us handle your accounting needs so you can focus on what really matters.

Why Sustainability is Essential for Family Businesses
Sustainability has evolved from a corporate buzzword

to an essential component of business strategy; in 2025 and beyond, consumers, regulators, and investors who interact with your business increasingly want you to demonstrate a commitment to reducing your environmental impact. The expectation also extends to enhancing social responsibility and upholding ethical practices, which can be quite overwhelming.

Recent surveys highlight this shift:

- **Willingness to Pay More:** A 2024 YouGov survey found that 64% of British consumers are willing to pay up to 10% more for sustainably packaged foods and drinks (source: business.yougov.com)
- **Consumer Concerns:** The same survey revealed that 85% of consumers are experiencing the disruptive effects of climate change in their daily lives, influencing their purchasing decisions (source: pwc.com)

For family businesses, embracing sustainability is not just about compliance; it's an opportunity to build

a reputation as a responsible and forward-thinking business that will satisfy these new trends and go on to stand the test of time.

Practical Steps for a Sustainable Future for Family Businesses

Here are some practical steps that you can implement to make your family business more sustainable.

Consider Eco-Friendly Operations

Transition to eco-friendly operations where possible. There are some energy-efficient practices you can implement that may be simpler than you realise - you could use LED lighting or optimise heating systems. This reduces operational costs whilst having an environmental impact.

WELCOME SOPHIE



Sophie recently joined Essendon, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and expertise gained from over 10 years of experience in both industry and practice. Her diverse background enables her to provide valuable insights and support to clients, ensuring that financial processes run smoothly and efficiently.

In her role at Essendon, Sophie will be responsible for overseeing bookkeeping, VAT, and management accounts processes. She will work closely with clients to help them maintain accurate financial records, stay compliant with regulations, and make informed business decisions. We know she will be a key asset to the team.

Outside of work, Sophie enjoys spending quality time with her daughters. She can also often be found exploring the outdoors while walking her beloved dog.

MEET MORE OF OUR TEAM MEMBERS ON OUR WEBSITE



JAMES ROWELL ON THE RED SOFA



Interview: Good morning and welcome to the Red Sofa. Today we have the pleasure of welcoming James Rowell from Advent Management onto the Red Sofa, who helps businesses to improve operations to delivering constant service. Hi, James and welcome.

James: Thank you for inviting me here. It's a pleasure.

Interview: So James, please give us a bit of background to Advent Management.

James: Well, it's about process design and when I think about it, when I was even a boy, I was thinking about processes, watching my mum, setting washing on the line and making sure it's straight and catching the wind just like a yachtsman might do with their sails.

More recently I was a university lecturer teaching operations and process management and so on. I had spent some time in Istanbul and then came back to the UK and decided that I needed a new career.

So I decided that my focus was going to be on process design and helping companies improve how they deliver service to their clients and customers.

Interview: Advent language uses the strap line 'Process Performance Profitability.'

This is a two part question. What type of businesses tend to benefit from your services? And how do businesses identify a need for change?

James: Gosh, that's a tricky one. It's quite a wide one. First of all, every company, every organisation has processes, whether they be big or small, one solo entrepreneur through to a corporate organisational processing and making things happen.

Some of that happens internally, how they work with their people and what they do inside their business operation. And obviously that impacts either directly or indirectly on their customers and clients.

And that's why I think it's important for them. And can you remind me the second part of the question?

Interview: How do businesses identify a need for change?

James: Thank you. That's a really good question too. Sometimes it's because they've realised that they're in a chaotic situation and they're not servicing their customer very well at all and really need help to sort it out.

They haven't got time to think about it because they're doing the job other times and other clients have been where

they've been in a growing situation and realise that their processes won't support the growth that they have. It would mean that they're just, just have, for example, more administrative people to manage the volume and that's not going to be useful or profitable, use that word. Over time as they grow and that's when they might call me in.

Interview: Could you provide us with a couple of scenarios where you've assisted businesses with change? From looking at what their initial inquiry was and the service strategy that Advent undertook and how this benefited the businesses and their customers

James: I think I'll start with a fairly early project I worked on, it was a small company, they would perceive them their business was going to be growing, it had grown already and they wanted to review the processes there, which is one of the things we would do as, you know, reviewer processes, because they perceived an issue with them growing as they planned and realising that they just need more staff to manage it all or administrate it all and realise that that wasn't going to be useful and effective.

DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2025 - DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND

bubble³

Guest article from Alison Moffatt - Bubble Creative Solutions

The digital world around us is changing rapidly. This is having an impact on all areas of business and digital marketing is no exception. With the amount of digital noise in various industries, how can we stay on top of digital marketing trends in 2025?

Keeping Up with Digital Marketing Trends

Whatever industry your business operates in, it is so important that you are always thinking about the digital world, what is trending and how you can incorporate this into your marketing strategy. Everything is so fast moving in 2025. Not keeping on top of these trends could be damaging to your business.

At Bubble, we are here to help. We work in the digital marketing industry day in and day out. We understand how overwhelming it can be to navigate this industry, especially if it isn't something you are looking at daily.

We are sharing what we believe to be the top digital marketing trends for 2025.

Digital Marketing Trends for 2025

Digital marketing trends come from various sources, they are a combination of new technologies, an analysis of user behaviour and influencer marketing trends. In 2025, it is all about brand culture and how building overall brand voice and growing your brand awareness will contribute to the success of your digital strategy. Here are some of the top trends that are set to soar in 2025.

AI... Everything

Through the last 2-3 years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become available to the masses. Not only can AI be used to generate both written and visual content, but it can also be used for various business functions. Brands are leveraging AI to analyse vast datasets, predict

consumer behaviour, and deliver tailored messaging, enhancing customer engagement and loyalty.

AI is predicted to grow even further through 2025 – at the moment, it seems almost limitless in how far it will grow. Who knows what the world will look like by 2026?

It is important to proceed with caution when it comes to AI. Although it is a great way to save time, investing too heavily in certain aspects of marketing can mean you lose your brand's personality and make your marketing content too generic. And – as technology grows through the year, there is a concern that all websites will end up looking and sounding the same.

TIPS TO MAKE YOUR SMALL BUSINESS A SUCCESS IN 2025

When starting out, knowing where to focus to make your small business a success can be difficult.

At Essendon, we work with businesses of all sizes as their business godparent, providing help and advice and being a great accounting partner.

Throughout 2024 and into 2025, everyone is feeling the pinch. What are the best ways to invest your budget? And where can you rely on third parties? To help you out, we have provided our top tips on how to make your small business a success in 2025.

7 Top Tips to Make Your Small Business a Success in 2025

Throughout our time working with different businesses, we have gained insight into different industries and business types. With this in mind – here are our 7 top tips for a successful small business.

1. Buying from you needs to be easy

In 2025, everyone is busy – and that includes your customers. One of the biggest steps to success is ensuring that buying from your business is easy. Don't make your customers jump through hoops to complete their purchase.

If your sales can be completed online, ask for only the information you require; don't make the forms longer than they have to be. You should also offer as many different ways to pay as possible. PayPal, ShopPay, Stripe, Klarna, etc., are great options.

You should also make sure that your "Buy," "Book," and "Proceed to Checkout" buttons are all easy to see and within the perimeters of your website screen – sometimes, a scroll is all that separates someone from making a purchase.

If your small business relies on in-person sales, make sure you are doing all you can to make it easy for your buyer. Choose an accessible location, think about parking or travel, and make sure you are set up to take card payments as well as cash.

All of these elements will encourage your users to buy from you, and the easier you make it, the more successful your business will be.

2. Analyse your Spending

You don't have to be a qualified accountant to analyse your spending. Make sure you're keeping tabs on where your money is going, and cut out the things

you no longer need. This could include subscription packages for software, shipping costs, wholesale rather than retail, etc.

At Essendon, we can help you categorise your spending to determine what is required and what could be cut.

3. Stay on Top of the Latest Marketing Trends

The most successful businesses grow with the world around them. You need to know who your audience is and where they are. To do this, you need to stay on top of the latest marketing trends. That way, you can maximise your marketing efforts on the channels they are using and avoid wasting time trying to boost yourself on the wrong platform.

It's also important to consider each trend, space and platform and make sure that it fits with your brand values. Yes, your audience might be there, but if your brand occupies that space, then are you going to be giving the right impression.

EMPLOYMENT LAW – CHANGES TO THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS BILL



Guest article from Sue Parady - Face2Face HR

Part of the Labour Party's manifesto for the General Election last July was about significant change they wanted to make to employment law. In October we got the first sight of the Employment Rights Bill.

Below I highlight the main takeaways and also look at what wasn't included in the Bill but had been mentioned in the manifesto.

For full details about each of these takeaways visit the full article:

1. Unfair dismissal as a right from 'Day One' policy
2. Ending fire and rehire
3. Ending 'exploitative' zero hours contracts
4. Increased responsibility for protection from sexual harassment
5. Justifying flexible working request responses
6. Expanded bereavement leave
7. Parental and paternity leave changes

8. Neonatal care leave
9. Enhanced dismissal protection for pregnant employees and new parents
10. Statutory sick pay 'waiting days' changes
11. Collective redundancy consultation
12. Written statement of particulars of employment

What's missing?

These things have been mentioned but have not yet appeared...

- There's nothing about a 'right to switch off'.
- There's nothing reviewing current family leave arrangements.
- Perhaps most significantly, there is nothing about changing employment status arrangements.

All these things may well come later, we'll have to see.

Ensuring Compliance: Practical Steps for Businesses

To stay ahead of these changes, businesses should:

- Conduct a thorough review of existing contracts and policies.
- Provide training for managers on new employment rights.
- Stay informed about legislative updates and timelines.

Timings and Next Steps

Now is the time to review your policies to ensure they align with upcoming changes.

If you need support navigating these legislative updates, we're here to help.

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MINDBENDER

WHAT LINKS THESE WORDS TOGETHER?

- Side
- End
- Times
- Periodic
- Knights of the Round

Words that come before "table"

UPCOMING KEY DATES

4 April

Deadline for registering to payroll benefits and expenses online for the following tax year.

5 April

End of tax year.

6 April

Start of a new tax year. New tax rates come into effect.

31 May

Give each of your employees a P60 for the previous tax year.

Want to maximise the potential of your business? Contact the Business Godparent now to steer you in the right direction.

Call today on 01908 774320



The Business Godparent
is a publication of
Essendon Accounts & Tax