

Mandy joins creative team at bluesky

Mandy Errington, former marketing manager at East of England Co-op, has joined creative marketing team, bluesky, as senior campaign manager.



NEW ROLE:
Mandy Errington.

During 13 years at the Co-op she was responsible for strategic marketing direction, including the recent Love your Co-op TV and advertising campaign.

Steve Brown, managing director at bluesky, said: "Mandy brings a new dimension to bluesky – a strong affinity with the regional market, as well as a pedigree in the likes of CRM, TV and radio.

"These are all areas that will benefit our clients."

Consulting firm secures contract

Norwich-based US2U Consulting beat three other companies throughout the country to secure the six-month contract with Cambridge-based Sepura PLC to provide management development services.

Sepura PLC is a global leader in designing and developing hand-held mobile radios, which are used by the police, ambulance services and the military in more than 100 countries.

Chief executive Gordon Watling said: "Further developing our management talent is absolutely critical to our company's future success."

Financial advice firm gets award

Norwich-based independent financial advisers Almary Green have won a major accolade at a prestigious industry awards ceremony.

The company won the Good Advice Award in the Best Tax and Estate Planner category at the Investment Life & Pensions Moneyfacts Awards 2011 last week.

Almary Green's managing director Carl Lamb said: "We are all delighted to have won this award and we feel this is a perfect way to mark our 10th anniversary.

"That makes it particularly special for us."

Van milestone for franchise

A Norwich-based firm has delivered its 299th and 300th vans to Walsall and Dartford as part of a franchise agreement.

The Agency Express franchise – which puts up and maintains around one in five of all estate agency boards in the county – has an ongoing agreement with Renault dealer Holden to give "franchisees" the tools they need.

This includes a brand new Renault Master Van.

The company was set up in 1998 and now has 90 centres all over the UK.

Camouflage business is hoping for more visibility

By ANNABELLE DICKSON

Dom Hyde's products are by their nature difficult to spot.

But the Norfolk-based camouflage design company founder, who was inspired by an interest in war films and birdwatching, is hoping his firm will gain greater visibility in the market place after winning a grant to help him expand.

Now Mr Hyde, who set up Hyde Definition from his home in Hempsall in 2008, is also hoping his business could take off if he wins a competition to design the US government's new military camouflage pattern worth millions of pounds.

While he is still waiting to see if his pattern has caught the eye of the US government, the £4,295 grant from Knowledge Norfolk, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, will allow the business to slowly grow and produce more fabric and develop more clothing.

The company is still small, with only three staff members including himself, his wife Rachel and former US Army sergeant Lawrence Holsworth. This year's anticipated turnover is £30,000.

Mr Hyde said his interest in camouflage started in childhood.

"I had the usual interest in war films," he said. "I joined a military modelling club and I was also interested in bird watching. It grew from that. I learned how hard it was to spot birds on the ground."

He experimented with his designs



Picture: STEVE ADAMS

NOW YOU SEE HIM: Norfolk businessman Dom Hyde of Hyde Definition.

on his home computer. In 2009 he used his savings for a first print run of the fabric and also developed a garment range.

Mr Hyde said pursuing the venture had been quite a steep learning curve, but he was hopeful it would take off.

"Selling it at trade shows and on the internet showed it was viable," he added.

"I had a small, but loyal following.

Interest ranges from hunting, birdwatching and paintballing not to mention police and military usage.

"We are now quite pleased, we are trading with individuals and we have interest from military and law enforcement agencies.

"We have entered the pattern in a US competition.

"They are looking at changing their pattern at the moment. We are confident we will get to the next stage

of that."

Hyde Definition was chosen from 21 applications by Norfolk Knowledge's Innovation Panel as part of the Vital Rural Area project within the EU's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Norfolk Knowledge was set up to help small businesses based in Norfolk.

■ **For more information go to www.norfolkknowledge.co.uk/innovation.aspx or call 01603 591816.**

Housebuilder moves into renewable energy

House builder Abel Homes has launched a new division to help householders take advantage of the government's Feed-In Tariff and cut their carbon emissions by fitting photovoltaic cells on their roof.

Abel Energy will be headed by Chris Abel, who is also construction director at Abel Homes, a family-run firm based at Little Cressingham, near Watton.

In 2010, Abel Homes completed 41 new homes, posting a turnover of £8.7m, employing 17 people, working alongside local contractors.

Mr Abel, who lives in an Abel Homes-built eco-home in Drayton, near Norwich, said the new team will bring years of construction expertise into a sector largely made up of start-up businesses with little experience in the property sector.

"The company has been fitting a range of green energy devices to its new-build homes for some time, and so the move to offering a PV panel fitting service to existing homes was an obvious one," Mr Abel said.

"The argument for fitting photovoltaic panels is compelling, given the generous feed-in tariffs currently available from the government, which are both indexed and guaranteed for 25 years. But many people are still concerned

about choosing an installer who will not damage their roof and cause problems down the line.

"Abel Homes has been building houses in Norfolk for 20 years, and being locally-based and family-owned, it is a name which engenders a lot of trust.

"In addition, we have been building roofs all that time – so there's not much we don't know about a roof!"

Installation can require planning permission where a home is in a conservation area and/or is listed, and in certain other circumstances.

Abel Energy will be offering a free planning advice service, drawing on many years of experience dealing with Norfolk's planning authorities. The company will advise whether planning permission is needed and help the householder through the process if it is.

"Renewable energy has to play a big part in our future, both to reduce our reliance on scarce fossil fuels, and to reduce soaring energy bills," Mr Abel added.

"Abel Energy's aim is to make tapping into that power a painless process, and one which will enhance the value of people's homes as well as earn them cash through the Feed-In Tariff."

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