

# Watford Chamber Magazine

Business Link Hertfordshire is dedicated to serving the needs of local small and medium sized businesses. Over the last 12 months, Business Link Hertfordshire has provided information, advice and training on 34,000 occasions to over 12,500 Hertfordshire companies and individuals. It aims to ensure that its services are accessible to both individuals looking to set up a new venture, and existing businesses looking to grow.

Each year the number of local businesses using the service increases. This year is likely to be no different as Business Link Hertfordshire's proven track record and wealth of experience, ensures that the maximum number of local companies can benefit from its support.

This year, Business Link Hertfordshire will focus on an Information, Diagnostic and Brokerage (IDB) service. This will support local businesses in the county by providing essential business information and structured business diagnosis to help them gain an objective and realistic view of their business and its performance. Business Link will also act as impartial brokers for solutions provision to quality-assured providers. This will ensure that businesses gain the best possible free, independent advice and then access to the most suitable business support available.

**For example, Business Link Hertfordshire can provide access to services on:**

- Starting a business;
- How to access finance and support to address other business financial issues;
- Improving the skills of owners, managers and staff;
- Addressing people issues;
- Complying with government regulations;
- Improving sales, marketing and/or e-business positioning;
- Improving the way the business operates - the business processes;
- Re-invigorating older, more established businesses - and revisiting business strategy.



Following on from the information and diagnostic stage, Business Link Hertfordshire will direct businesses to the best service provider in their area, and can help them access the latest funding streams offered by the government. Indeed, many of these funding streams can only be accessed via Business Link.

## How Can Business Link Help Your Business

**In essence, the Business Link mission is to:**

- Provide independent, impartial information and advice;
- Help businesses diagnose and understand problems and issues;
- Help develop and prioritise action plans for improvement;
- Direct businesses to government-funded initiatives where appropriate;
- Introduce businesses to quality providers of services they may need in order to help implement action plans.

Business Link Hertfordshire will be an access channel to business improvement services, many of which are heavily subsidised or free of charge.

Jill Barnes, Director of Business Development at Business Link Hertfordshire commented: "Business Link Hertfordshire will ensure that businesses in our area are given clear access to the best possible selection of business services. The service not only ensures that there is a greater focus on access to impartial advice but it also further opens up the business support market to competition, ensuring that it becomes more demand-focused."

For further information, or to arrange an appointment with a business adviser, please call Business Link Hertfordshire's information line on **01727 813813** or log-on to the website at [www.mybusinesslink.co.uk](http://www.mybusinesslink.co.uk)

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Spring  
2005

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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