

Surviving in these Tough Times

With all the doom and gloom that is thrust at us daily from the media, being in businesses and being positive is even harder to contemplate.

Southland businesses like many others will not be immune to the downturn, however, unlike our northern counterparts we seem to be better placed to ride out this recession and at this time anyway we are no where like in the position that we were during the 'Asian crisis' in the 90s. At that time Southland's unemployment was 4.6% where currently it is just under 1% this is even a drop from October 08 when it was 1.4%. However cracks are appearing and in some quarters it could be said that there is a false sense of pride in showing a defiant and almost illusionary appearance that all is well - until it is too late and jobs are lost and livelihoods disappear.

Surviving the tough times not only requires forward planning but also an openness to seek assistance when needed. Planning for a downturn helps you to maximise opportunities and prepare your business to survive and thrive in all circumstances. When a downturn threatens, you need to take decisive steps to understand the situation and what it means for the future survival of your business.

Keep control of your cash

Finance and funding for future success. When times are hard, cash is king. Commentators suggest that the companies who emerged from the last recession as sector leaders typically had an average net debt-to-equity ratio of about half that of their less successful competitors before the downturn hit. The winners also held more cash on their balance sheet than the companies that were hit hardest.

Clear Communication

Managing Stakeholders for long-term success. Managing your stakeholders effectively in challenging times is crucial to executing a winning strategy. Good communication is critical.

Streamline Operations

Managing operational capability for sustainable success. Flexibility is critical in improving your operational position in a downturn. Now is probably not the time to save money by cutting back your marketing budget, but it is the time to make some hard-nosed decisions about what it is you are going to spend that money on.

Leading for Success

Leading your team to triumph through tougher times. Anyone can manage a company through good times, but now, more than ever, it's important to take the time to step back from your daily tasks and ask yourself whether you're equipped to lead your team to success through challenges and uncertainty. Managing in a downturn may be difficult for many of today's business leaders, who have built their careers through years of economic growth. Natural attrition may have removed experienced managers from your business.

Be Prepared

Prepping your business for peak performance in any scenario. Nobody holds the crystal ball for the future. Clever companies plan ahead for any scenario. When a downturn threatens, businesses need to take decisive steps to understand the situation and what it means for their future survival. Planning for a downturn maximises the opportunities available, enabling the best prepared businesses to come through the bad times reenergised and fit for the future.

Seek the Opportunities

Identifying possibilities for sustainable growth and success. Economic downturns present opportunities for companies prepared to look. During the last recession, more than a fifth of companies in the lower quartile in their industries jumped to the upper quartile. Recessions reshuffle the decks more than boom times and research shows that gains made during challenging times tend to endure.

2 websites that are worth a look at are www.business.govt.nz and www.bizhealth.co.nz. We have also put up some interesting papers in our information Zone at Chamber's www.commercesouth.com courtesy of WHK a Economic Survival kit 'Surviving the Economic Downturn', and The Business Performance review kit' also if you need it, hope not, under employment we have put up our Quick Guide 'When a redundancy happens'. R j Hay.



The role of the Chamber of Commerce Southland is to influence and inspire business vitality in the Southland region and to help you to be the **'Best you can be'** in business

ISSUE 93

MAY 2009

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CHAMBER WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS:

- PumpCrete
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Watch for profiles of these new members
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Meegan Davis

triplejump

As life happens. We'll be there.

The best time to plan for the worst is when everything is going well...

Let's face it. None of us expect a serious illness or disability, or to die prematurely.

So it makes sense to consider what the impact could be if something did happen and to prepare a plan for how you could cope.

That's where your Triplejump adviser will help you assess the potential for the unexpected to jeopardise the success of your business or the financial security of your family.

Meegan joined the insurance industry 1992 in Brisbane Australia where she formed her own brokerage business with two business partners. She returned to New Zealand to settle in Southland in 1996 to continue in the Financial Services industry. Meegan's experience in the industry spans 17 years in roles as an Insurance Adviser, Director and General Manager.

Triplejump Southland was officially launched in March 2009 and operates from the Menzies building in lower Esk St. Meegan is supported by Jo McSweeney who oversees the day to day operation of the Triplejump office.

Becoming part of the Franchise network was a very exciting step for Meegan because she believes Triplejump is the market leader in Wealth Protection and Best Practice. It is important to Meegan that her clients feel secure in knowing that as their lives and businesses change over time, so will their wealth protection needs and she will be there to help them each step of the way.

Triplejump Southland : Menzies Building, 3rd Floor, 3 Esk Street West, Invercargill
Ph : 03 214 5170 meegan.davis@triplejump.co.nz

ROOMS FOR HIRE:

We have an interview room available for use for offsite meetings. This is free to members.

We also have a training room available for hire.

Rates for this are on the back page, or contact us for more details



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Lindsay and Glenys Smith have been operating the Dog House Boarding Kennels since 1978. They have been involved with showing, breeding, hunting and judging dogs for 30 years. They are competent caring dog handlers.

Weimaraners, bred under the Hundestall prefix are the breed of dog that Lindsay and Glenys love and breed. They also own a very loved German Shepherd and in the past were very involved with Toy Poodles, giving Glenys plenty of experience in the clipping and grooming of dogs. She has carried this on in the form of a dog grooming business, experienced in grooming all breeds.

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Special rates are offered during off peak periods for dogs that have to board for 4 weeks or more and for 2 or more dogs, belonging to the same person.

To book your dog in to The Dog House Boarding Kennels, phone Lindsay or Glenys Smith on 03-230-4715.

The Dog House Boarding Kennels

Roslyn Bush RD 6, Invercargill, New Zealand
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E mail: glenys.smith@clear.net.nz



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Chamber Benefit Changes

Westpac has recently reviewed the merchant service fee structure for your Chamber member benefit. While increases in the rate structure are inevitable, the package offered to chamber members remains a substantial and competitive benefit.

From May 1st 2009 the following rate structure will take effect:

EFTPOS card/Electronic (face to face)

Average transaction size is less than \$150, 1.55% (from 1.75%)

Average transaction size is greater than \$150, 1.55% (from 1.45%)

Manual processing (face to face) 3.10% from 2.70%
Westpac wrote to members during April to inform them of these changes.

Coming up next in our IRD Tax Info Series...

STARTING A BUSINESS.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT GST

Both of these seminars will be of benefit to clients, perhaps you are dealing with now.

These sessions will be held on
Monday May 25th at 4pm

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS Duration 1.5hrs
Thursday May 28th at 4pm

LEARNING ABOUT G.S.T. Duration 2.0hrs

These are **FREE** sessions but bookings are essential

Contact Russell Taylor on

03 948 4018 or 029 948 4018

For bookings or more information



Inland Revenue
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Keep an eye out for the exciting range of functions arranged for you in 2009

NEXT UP

Getting the Best from Your Team

Improving on top performance

May 27

Calculating Holiday Pay & Wages

This seminar includes the provisions of the Holidays Act.

July 21

Managers Training for Health & Safety (Half Day Course)

Mon June 15 + Mon Oct 19

Creatively Managing the Workforce

Develop and implement more modern employment arrangements, reference to part time, casual or flexible working time.

Wed 3rd June

See the full training schedule at

<http://www.commercesouth.com/bfit/traing/tsoverview>

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Service Tenancy

It is not uncommon for Employment Agreements to contain clauses for the provision of accommodation for the employee. This is particularly common in farming situations in Southland.

This article considers issues that arise in relation to this "Service Tenancy" under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 ("The Act").

Service Tenancies are fully covered by the Act, but have special rules covering rent paid in advance and a notice served to quit the tenancies.

The minimum period of notice required to be given by a Landlord or a Tenant to terminate a Service Tenancy, where either party is given notice to terminate the contract of service or that contract has been terminated is 14 days. Or in simple terms if you quit or get fired you have 14 days to get out of accommodation provided.

It is possible for the Landlord to terminate the Service Tenancy by giving notice less than 14 days if the Landlord believes on reasonable grounds that the Tenant will cause substantial damage to the premises.

Difficulties do arise when an employee has been fired from their position but refuses to leave the property. In these circumstances the employer should apply for a possession order pursuant to clause 64 of the Residential Tenancies Act.

It is important for an employee to realise when challenging the validity of a notice to terminate a Service Tenancy that the Tenancy Tribunal cannot be concerned with the lawfulness or otherwise of the termination and is only concerned with the validity of the termination of the tenancy. Or once again in simple terms if an employee believes that their employment has been terminated in an unjustified manner they cannot challenge this in the Tenancy Tribunal. The appropriate forum to raise issues in relation to an unjustified dismissal is under the Employment Relations Act 2000 either through mediation or by application to the Employment Relations Authority.

The "legitimacy" of a termination of employment and the termination of a service tenancy are separate and distinct and should be dealt with in the appropriate forum.

Should difficulties arise when handling a service tenancy we suggest you seek legal advice as soon as possible so you do not inadvertently breach either the Residential Tenancy Act or the Employment Relations Act.

Please remember, this information is designed as a guide only and shouldn't replace the advice of you legal professional. We welcome your comments: damien.pine@awslegal.com

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Chamber Members and other invited guests gathered together for a fantastic BA5 event, hosted at DRIVETECH at Longbush on Monday March 23rd.

Brian and Jackie Frew really took the opportunity to showcase their Driver Training operation in fine style.

The BBQ was perfect for a sparkling fine late summer get together, with most of the goodies on offer actually coming from the Frews' beef farm operation. Fantastic.

A group of about 35 people heard of the various courses and driver endorsements that DriveTech offer, not just to business and industry, but individuals too.

DriveTech staff were on hand to show visitors around the recently expanded training facilities and Brian gave some details about their businesses move into Otago, with the establishment of an operation based at Mosgiel.

The Frews have found that they had become a convenient referral service for companies who may be seeking drivers for a particular operation.

This has developed into an in-house employment division. A great time and money saver for employers seeking staff.

An interesting aspect of DriveTechs business philosophy, is the introduction some time ago, of the "About U" bus service a pick up and drop off service for disabled people in the community. As Brian said on the night, for the small price of some diesel, it's a good feeling to be able to offer this sector of our community some more independence.

If you couldn't make it to the DriveTech BA5 function, take a look at their website at www.drivetech.co.nz or feel free to phone for a chat, or even call in.

The Frews will be more than happy to put the kettle on for a chat.

Thanks again Jackie and Brian. A great BA5 event.

DriveTech Ltd

156 Longbush South Road, Invercargill
Phone: (03) 230 4326
Freephone: 0508 2 DRIVE
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THE SOUTH ISLAND





SIT WORKFORCE

Article by Paul W. Elliott, Manager, SIT WorkForce
- Industry Training Centre

The Great South Basin has been a focus for Southland in the energy sector for the last 40 years in one form or another.

The recent round of activity in licence allocations, seismic data gathering operations and onshore developments raise the regions business interest again although this is tempered by the current uncertainty surrounding the state of world's current economic health and future.

A mature regional oil & gas industry, is the sum of its component parts, that is those parts being defined as the individual service companies already well established in a community which may range from mechanical, hydraulic and electrical companies through to the individual rental homes, motels, supermarkets and transport companies. In other words, a healthy community is already operating to well serve an oil & gas industry anywhere world wide – a community just waiting for the oil & gas to be found and developed. Aberdeen is perhaps the greatest example of a fishing port shifting focus to an oil and gas industry, a transformation undertaken within just a few years.

Having spent the last 25 years in all of the centres listed above, I have seen these critical businesses and operations aspect of these communities work well to support operations conducted in oil & gas exploration and infrastructure installation and development.

In my new role here in Invercargill as Manager of SIT WorkForce, the Southern Institute of Technology's Industry Training Centre I have a major shift in my focus from that of my operational past. From the 'other' side of the fence to that of oilfield operator, my focus is now on providing a base to serve a future regional oil & gas industry in terms of training and the potential supply of a specialist work force.

The move by SIT to address the area of training and work force has not been without question from some sectors as to why such a centre should be established without an established and mature oil & gas industry being present. By looking to other world communities and the role those communities play in supporting such an industry, the greatest area of growth has been in risk management and risk mitigation. Training personnel to address risk in a planning stage, identify and quantify the risks, plan the mitigation strategies and train for the monitoring and response of risk is now critical path in all aspects of training and employment. All of this is managed under the broad mantel of Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) training.

By looking at the Southland region and the maturing oil & gas industry where the operators, shareholders, clients and in some cases regulatory bodies in the future will be working to already established international standards, then the provision of a regional industry training centre serving established and mainstream industry at this early stage of oil & gas development begins to make a lot of sense.

Continued on Back Page...

The 2009 Annual Chamber Golf Tournament.

Was held on March 27 at the Gore Golf Course and once again there was a high level of interest in the event from members from throughout Southland, with golfers travelling from as far afield as Bluff. 18 teams entered comprising 72 golfers.

With the emphasis on enjoyment, teams included experienced full time golfers as well as beginners.

The weather again came to the party apart from a brief spell of rain mid afternoon.

Hokonui Gold - won the coveted title for the 2nd time in 3 years with a nett score of 46.25, then proceeded to lose the ABN Ambro Craigs trophy for the 2nd time in 3 years. it was last seen on the Howl at the Moon bar about 10.30pm. Should anyone locate the trophy please contact Nick Jeffery.

2nd were Abn Amro Craigs 48.25

3rd Mallochs 49.5.

Numerous other prizes for longest drives, closest to the pin, best gross score and 6 other ambrose prizes were also given out courtesy of Scenic Circle Hotel and the Mataura Licensing Trust who kindly donated to this event

This was a great opportunity for businesses to promote themselves and entertain their clients.

Thanks to all participants and businesses who continue to support this event and thanks to our sponsors mentioned above and the gore golf club for hosting us.

Julian Morris Convener



profit global



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This month the HSBC Global Economics team provide a continuing commentary on the way they see the global economic situation developing. Their summarised forecast is that the global economy still in danger, despite a huge policy stimulus and some tentative signs of economic stabilisation. However, collapsing profits, deflation and financial nationalism remain as big threats over the course of 2009.

Which history?

If recent history were a reliable guide, we could look forward to a quick end to the economic crisis, at least in the US. Downswings typically last only a handful of quarters and are then followed by reasonable recoveries. Other countries haven't always fared quite so well: UK downswings, for example, persist a lot longer. Nevertheless, given the US experience, it's no surprise that consensus forecasts continuously suggest recovery is just around the corner.

We believe, though, that recent history is misleading. Already, the pace of decline in industrial production in the world's richest nations is on a par with the early months of the Great Depression and, as such, is far worse than seen in typical post-war downswings. Given the huge policy stimulus launched over the last 18 months, this is a disturbing result. Our forecasts reflect this ongoing weakness. For the global economy in 2009, we are lowering our GDP forecast from -1.4% to -1.9%. For the developed world, we now expect a 3.0% shrinkage compared with a fall of 2.5% previously. The emerging world still expands – just – but at a paltry rate of 1.7%. The crisis can be broken down into three main categories: the original banking crisis, a more recent collapse in the demand for credit and what we call a geographical seepage. The dynamics associated with the crisis suggest the need for a healthy dose of scepticism in the light of recent, slightly less discouraging, signs in the US. Indications of stabilisation in US consumer demand and the housing market need to be seen in context of hemorrhaging corporate profits, collapsing industrial production and rapidly rising unemployment elsewhere in the world. Capacity utilisation rates are at historic lows, inventories are, in many cases, at extraordinary highs relative to sales given the attempts by companies in recent months to de-stock aggressively and, for policymakers, the growing fear is deflation. Even if Tim Geithner's plans to bolster the US financial system prove successful, the US Treasury Secretary knows there is still a long way to go. Trust in the financial system will take years to rebuild and, in the meantime, households and companies will be looking to pay off debts and rebuild their assets.

It's quantity, not quality

That central banks are embracing various forms of quantitative easing is telling. Quantitative easing is being embraced most obviously because official interest rates are already at, or close to, zero and cannot, therefore, fall any further. But the willingness to do so also reveals something about central bankers' innermost fears. Once deflation takes hold, it is not easy to get rid of. It is the economic equivalent of dry rot (as Japan knows only too well). Of course, not all deflations are the same. Some deflations fall into the "good" category, being no more than terms of trade improvements associated with, for example, lower import prices or improvements in technology. These deflations lead to higher real wages and profits, leaving the suppliers of both labour and capital happy and smiling. Others, though, are more worrisome, threatening higher unemployment, lower profits and heightened insolvency. We examine some of the main risks associated with an outbreak of deflation. They include rising real debt burdens, indiscriminate redistributions of income and wealth, heightened sovereign default risk and, most worryingly, nominal rigidities associated with wages and interest rates. Deflation is, like inflation, ultimately a monetary phenomenon. Quantitative easing can work on two separate counts: either the stock of money can be boosted or, alternatively, the velocity of the existing money stock can be increased. Either way, the central bank tries to pump credit into an economy by bypassing a moribund banking system. The big problem now lies in identifying how much quantitative easing to do: because most variants involve purchasing government securities, the danger is that previously trustworthy signals of inflationary expectations, such as so-called breakeven rates, begin to malfunction. The scope for policy mistakes is, therefore, high. We think those countries which aggressively pursue quantitative policies will have to pay a price in the form of currency depreciation: as a result, we favour the euro over the dollar.

Redistributing the problem

A decidedly odd aspect of the crisis is its increasingly bizarre geographical distribution. The countries at the epicentre of the crisis – the US, the UK, Spain and others which had overheated housing markets – are certainly weak, but not as weak as many others. Why have countries with limited housing bubbles and with, apparently, an absence of over-leveraged financial institutions, ended up in such trouble?

The collapse in demand which began in the autumn of last year has led to a massive reduction in industrial sales, most obviously of cars and trucks. Inventory/sales ratios have soared as a result. In a desperate attempt to get rid of inventories, companies have slashed production. In a world of outsourcing and off-shoring, however, falling demand in one country may have a disproportionately large impact on production in other countries. The US and UK, with small industrial sectors, are relatively insulated from this effect whereas the likes of China, Taiwan, Germany, South Korea and Brazil are more heavily exposed. More worryingly, a new form of financial nationalism is fast developing. Capital injections into western banks come at a price. Governments and taxpayers understandably want banks to lend domestically in response but, with persistent funding shortfalls as a result of the collapse in securitisation and the weakness of interbank markets, higher domestic lending is often accompanied by reduced foreign lending. It's no longer simply households and companies hoarding cash: we're now seeing nations playing the same game. This is particularly disturbing for emerging markets which have relatively small banking systems and which, as a result, have become heavily dependent on cross-border bank lending, often provided by western banks. A combination of western government lending "guidance" and rising risk premia in financial markets has led to a collapse in some forms of cross-border lending. For example, syndicated lending to emerging markets fell sharply in the final quarter of 2008 after years of rapid growth.

The lessons for asset allocation

We've already noted our preference for the euro over the dollar. To take a lesson from the 1930s, the euro is more a Gold Standard currency. A stronger euro will do the eurozone no favours but that is the price of pursuing a "hard money" policy when others are not. We continue to enthuse about high grade corporate bonds even though we recognise that, for many investors, the market remains illiquid. Government bonds need to be watched carefully: deflation should keep yields low as, indeed, should quantitative easing but, increasingly, markets may be skittish about sovereign risk. Meanwhile, although equities may offer the occasional rally, we're not convinced about their capacity to offer decent long-term returns. We suspect investors will increasingly treat equities like high-risk corporate bonds. That means a return to a 19th Century world of higher dividend yields, leaving us underweight in equities in our recommended portfolios.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SOUTHLAND

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Business People working together for the Southland Economy



Continued from page 6.

Southland industry, SIT and the Southland Energy Consortium have seen the need for an Industry Training Centre which may be defined by; The need for Southland Industry to have a co-ordinated training approach in providing induction HSE training for multiple worksites and industries.

The need for a locally based training provider serving onsite and offsite training to eliminate loss of productivity through reducing the travel time for and associated costs for personnel leaving the worksite.

Provide a high level HSE training structure to serve advancing industry including the needs of incoming international energy companies.

SIT WorkForce established at SIT's Tay Street campus will serve these definitions in four stages, integrating the growth of the centre with the needs, growth and demands of industry.

The first stage of SIT Work Force development is in the collation of existing courses provided by SIT's various faculties under one entity, in other words, to continue to provide existing courses under the centre format. This process commenced in September 2008.

The second stage is serving Southland industry with what training is required and although without specific focus on the oil & gas sector at this time, the needs of any developing energy sector operations are being met.

The third and largest of the four stages is to create a training centre capable of providing internationally accepted standards of training for industry in general and the energy sector in a purpose built facility. On completion of this facility, resources and facilities offered will form approximately 85% of the final industry training centre model serving the oil & gas sector.

The focus of this centre at this stage remains on HSE.

The fourth stage is to have the completed centre providing all required training for a dynamic oil & gas industry. This may include training in such advanced areas as gas separation processes and control room operations amongst others.

Looking to other examples of relatively recent shifts in global communities from more traditional industries to supporting an oil & gas industry provides Southland with a unique template full of 'lessons learnt' on what may be the correct path to take and perhaps more importantly the timing of any such development.

YOUR MAGAZINE

Are there any subjects or topics you would like to see covered in your monthly Chamber of Commerce Newsletter?

We strive to keep each edition topical and informative, but are also keen to know what you think.

Suggestions for topics relating to your business, in any form, are very welcome.....

Tax, Employee Management tips, Overseas News, Wages and Payment structures, Handling Workplace Issues and so on.

Feel free to drop us a line by email or call
Ross at the Chamber Office.

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