

Membership Guide



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It is with much pleasure that I welcome you to the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group.



As the region's official Chamber of Commerce, accredited by the British Chambers of Commerce, we feel a huge responsibility for the economic vibrancy and development of the region. We are fortunate to be doing business in one of the world's most important economies but mindful that our enviable position requires us to support our members in the Thames Valley region as they strive to grow and thrive in a difficult climate.

Finding and retaining customers and clients is a challenge for us all. It is imperative to engage with the business community, find efficiencies, be better informed, seek the right partnerships and develop people. In short, we all need to be constantly alert to opportunities. With this in mind, you have made the right decision to join the Chamber, participate in our activities and take advantage of the benefits we have to offer.

Our aim is to focus entirely on our membership, its growth and meeting its needs. Chamber staff are here to help, give advice and support whether you are a sole trader or a large multi-national organisation.

At the heart of our values is a single minded desire to see our region's businesses realise and sustain their full potential. We bring a unique and valuable dimension to business strategy.

The eight Chambers of Commerce which make up the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group represent business people who were seeking a collective voice for businesses to influence decisions, to enable their businesses to progress. The Chamber represents over 2,000 businesses across the Thames Valley and is very different to the one that was created over 100 years ago. However, as at its outset, the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group is still very much led by the businesses which it represents.

This guide provides an easy reference to all our services, benefits and how to access them. Please do not hesitate to contact your business manager or customer services to find out more details. We welcome any feedback on the Chamber and if you have any suggestions to make that would benefit all members, please contact your business manager.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Briggs'.

Paul Briggs,
Chief Executive,
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group

Get started immediately!

Step One

Register for the Regus Businessworld Gold Card to access over 1,000 business lounges: call Customer Services on 01753 870500 to request your card - free.

Step Two

Confirm your place at the next "New Members Welcome" evening - free.

Step Three

Start using the Chamber member logo on your website and literature - free.

Step Four

Promote an offer to other members - free.

Step Five

Register online to gain access to your personal online resources www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/register - free.



Step Six

Ensure you have selected the correct business classifications for the directory - you are entitled to three free entries.

Plus if you started a new business and have less than 5 employees, book a meeting with a specialist business adviser who can help with: Business Planning, Sales & Marketing, Funding & Finance and HR.

Contact Customer Services to assist with all of the above on **01753 870500**

Membership Entitlement - A Snapshot by Category

Benefits by category	Essential	Corporate	Business Alliance
Business advice service (1- 5 employee companies and start-ups)	•		
Regus Gold Card – access to 1,000 business lounges	•	•	•
Legal Advice Line – 24/7 access	•	•	•
Legal & Professional Fees insurance	•	•	•
Business directory promotion – 3 entries	•	•	•
Directors' briefing documents	•	•	•
International Trade Services	•	•	•
Quarterly economic survey findings	•	•	•
Website listing	•	•	•
Discounted mailing lists – external and internal	•	•	•
Chamber electronic reports and surveys	•	•	•
Local Chamber events	•	•	•
Microsoft Political Working Lunch with MP and MEPs	•	•	•
Bank of England Briefings	•	•	•
HR Forum – practitioners	•	•	•
Sales & Marketing Forum	•	•	•
Business Leaders' Forum	•	•	•
Facilities & Operations – large company – practitioner group		•	•
Corporate Keynotes Lectures		•	•
Windsor Debates – director level		•	•
South of England Business Leaders Forum – director level		•	•
Promotional page on Chamber website			•
Free unlimited TVCC mailing lists			•
Bespoke project work – named project manager			•
Two free places for named Business Alliance members at all TVCC events			•

Product and Service Guide

GROW

Build Strategic Contacts, Profile and Business



Networking Events – over 250 per year to choose from across the region

- Business networking events including choice of breakfast, lunch or evening
- Special interest groups e.g. Sales and Marketing featuring the latest tools being used to grow business. Other groups listed in Events section of this guide
- Political & Economic Briefings – major businesses typically attend these events although open to all
- International Trade and Global Introductions – for those focussing on international business development or with an interest in investors from overseas markets
- Events for women in business combining networking and learning
- The various audience profiles are explained within the “Events” section.

Marketing

Online Business Directory

- Your business will appear in an online Thames Valley business directory. You can update your entry at any time ensuring that your details are always relevant and current.

Mailing Lists

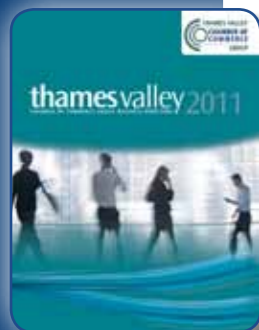
- We can provide up-to-date information on local, national and international companies through our internal and external databases; helping members accurately target their marketing activities. We can tailor a list to your specification and can run searches based upon geographical location, company turnover band and employee size, to name but a few. Members are entitled to up to 50% discount when purchasing data through the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group.

Member to Member Offers

- As a member of the Thames Valley Chamber, you can submit a bespoke offer which is sent out to the desktops of over 3,000 people across the Thames Valley via our e-newsletter: Business Bites, as well as featuring on our website. This service is limited to 40 words or less and is an additional way to raise your profile and drive traffic to your website. Best of all, it's free!

Chamber Member Logo

- You may use the “Chamber Member Logo” on your website, literature or business cards. Please ensure that you follow the branding guidelines available from the Chamber’s Marketing Department.



“ We won new contracts within 3 months of joining ”
Indigo Blue Productions

Advertising and Public Relations

Chamber Magazine “Business Voice” - Editorial

- Editorials are accepted from members for features, new appointments, new investments and company news. As this is always over-subscribed, you will need to ensure that submissions are relevant, punchy, well-written and of interest to the wider business community. View the schedule of features and editorial criteria online before submitting to the Chamber PR department. Please remember that we cannot accommodate all submissions. All new members are listed in each issue of the magazine which is published bi-monthly.

Chamber Magazine “Business Voice” - Advertising

- Members receive advertising discounts from the publisher
- This service is handled externally by our third party media partner, Ten Alps Publishing
- Advertising terms and conditions are between the member and the publisher.

Press Alert Free Subscription: - PR

- There are excellent media opportunities emerging on a daily basis for business people who can offer opinion or expertise. Press coverage can be local, national and international in print, online and broadcast media. Incorporate this into your marketing strategy by registering on our media list and letting us know your areas of specialism or concern.

Press Campaigns - PR

- The Chamber policy unit will often issue joint press-releases with members to highlight particular concerns to business.

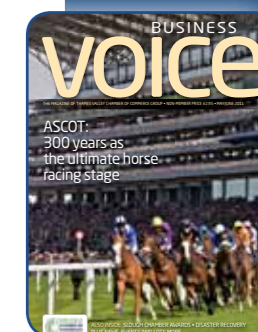
Sponsorship

- Many companies find it more effective to associate their name with themed events or activities. We have opportunities for all budget levels: major event sponsorship; Chamber website; literature sponsor and various other bespoke packages. Look online for opportunities or call customer services for “next step” information. See page 19 for more details.

Speaking Opportunities - Profile

- Speaking opportunities are available to members with relevant expert knowledge. Each event presents a unique opportunity for members to share their expertise, ideas, creativity and best practice with a specific audience. For guidance on which style of presentation and which event will bring the greatest benefit, speak to your Business Manager, or call our Events Team on 01753 870500.

“ The Chamber is an absolutely essential tool for any business ”
Kinnarps



Product and Service Guide

DISCOVER

Access Business Intelligence

Directors' Briefings

You can now access "four-page" briefing documents that provide advice and tips on dealing with business issues completely free of charge. The series covers a wide range of topics including:

- Corporate Finance; Exporting and Importing; Finance; Accounting; Cashflow Management;
- Human Resource Management; Training; Recruitment; Consultants; Employment Law; Remuneration; Pensions;
- Information Technology; Managing IT; Software; Using the Internet for Business;
- Insurance;
- Law: Employment, Business, Court Cases, Health and Safety;
- Marketing: strategy, methods and techniques;
- Premises;
- Selling;
- Strategy; Management and Growth Strategies;
- The Board of Directors; Business Formation;
- Tax.

Free Registration for Special Interest E-Newsletters, distributed monthly

- Business Bites
- International Trade
- All Chamber Events
- New newsletters are continuing to be added please call or look online for an update of available subscriptions.

Briefings for Start-up, Micro and Small Business

Freely available, four-page documents that walk you through the steps to start a new business including:

- Business law and using a solicitor
- Choosing and using an accountant
- Customer care
- Effective PR
- Employment law
- Forming a business
- Insurance
- Budgeting
- Buying a franchise
- Credit control
- Direct mail & advertising
- Effective selling
- Financing your business
- Grants.

FREE International Market Information (Electronic and hard copy)

- City Briefs: including facts about key overseas cities, opportunities, trade visits, main industries and useful contacts
- Market briefs: including economic and investment climate summaries, key facts, useful contacts and primary sectors, export advice
- Guides to Regions: regional overview; economic & investment climate, opportunities, key facts, useful contacts.

International Trade import and export procedures and documentation – FREE Publications

- 101 questions about Exporting
- Guide to International Trade Services.

Publications and Surveys

British Chamber of Commerce reports and survey findings are available to download from the Chamber website. Recent reports and survey titles include:

- Quarterly Economic Survey Results - Economic confidence
- Crime Against Business - Crime
- Skills Productivity, Enterprise and Government Budgets - Skills
- Backing UK Tourism: Destination Recovery - Economic Development
- Building Britain's Future - Economy
- Economic Impacts of Hub Airports, July 2009 - Transport
- Workforce Survey - Regulation & Red Tape
- Exporting Britain - Inward Investment
- Planning for Recovery - Economy & Enterprise
- Impact of the Pensions Act - Regulation & Red Tape
- The Congestion Question, A Business Transport Survey, November 2008 - Transport
- Lost Talent, Not in Education, Employment or Training - Education & Skills
- Business & the Environment, Challenges Ahead - Environment
- Business Travel, Choice or Necessity - Transport
- World's Apart, the EU & British Regulatory Systems - Regulation & Red Tape
- Policy Activities Report:

This report provides a concise summary of background information in all key policy areas. It outlines latest developments, British Chamber of Commerce position statements and actions. Surveys and reports in many policy areas are available to download from the Chamber website.

Special Interest Forums

- Sales and Marketing
- Human Resources
- Technology for Business
- Facilities and Operations
- Property and Planning Groups
- Free subscriptions will alert you to upcoming events – register with Customer Services
- Some forums are specifically for practitioners and some for those with an interest in the subject matter

Economic and Political Forums

- Business Leaders' Forum
- Bank of England Briefings – confidence gauging and interest rate forecasting
- MP & MEP Political Briefings
- Windsor Debates – strategic insight and forecasting
- Strategic transport related developments.

“ *The Directors' Briefings have saved me a great deal of time* ”

Indium Web Management



Product and Service Guide

DEVELOP

Skills, Training, Mentoring and Knowledge Transfer

Skills Development

- In the current climate, it is even more important to focus on the skills development of your people, and have strategies in place for an expected recovery in the future. In this light we promote all aspects of skills within the region. This includes promotion of providers that offer leading edge learning and development. Each of these providers will offer products and/or services appropriate for the needs of Thames Valley businesses.

Formal Accredited Training

- This is available from carefully selected suppliers with discounts that have been negotiated for Chamber members. A "Training Needs Analysis" is currently free and we can arrange this on your behalf. Government subsidies and grants often change and we can direct you with the latest range of support. Call Customer Services for information:

Compliance Training

- Health & Safety
- Customs Procedures.

Business Training

- International Trade and Workshops
- Management Development
- Personal Development
- Sales & Marketing.

Free Seminars

- Regular seminars on a wide range of topics are available. Register to be alerted to free seminars taking place across the region.

Forums - Top Executives share their insights at a range of forums including:

Our forums give the opportunity to share knowledge and best practice as well as developing the skills of your team. The events include:

- Business Insights – open to all members
- Corporate Keynotes – open to corporate members
- Strategic Leadership Briefings – open to Business Alliance members,
- Corporate Member directors or subject matter experts.

“ I’ve met some fantastic people who have helped me with my business ”
Appledore Clinic

New Staff and New Members – “Meet the Chamber”

- Regular evening open networking events held monthly across the region to meet the Chamber team and understand how to use the support and services to your best advantage
- These events are useful for new staff members to learn how to use Chamber products and services and provide an opportunity to network with other businesses in an informal environment.

Business Advice Service

- For pre-start and small businesses with up to 5 employees
- FREE confidential one hour sessions
- Available throughout the region by appointment
- Weekday daytimes in Aylesbury, High Wycombe or Slough
- Evening sessions available by request
- Qualified in their own fields, advisors have a wide experience of helping small businesses
- Expert advice and counselling designed for your needs
- Improving your business plan for future growth or funding approval
- Setting up and running a business
- Buying or selling your business
- Funding options, tax, sales, marketing, insurance, protecting your business

Marketing, IT and Start Up Donuts – the online business resource

Thames Valley Chamber has entered into a partnership with Donut UK business resource website in order to bring members the best possible online resources, tools and content. Small businesses will now be in a great position to bolster their marketing activities, find resources to help with IT issues and information relevant to Start Up businesses. Backed by Royal Mail and Google, the Donut websites – Marketing Donut, IT Donut and Start Up Donut combine the advice and wisdom of 200 experts and provide engaging and informative content online. Small businesses that use the site can access hundreds of pages of practical information, dozens of videos, and a host of online tools and resources absolutely free. They can also post questions and contact experts directly. The Donuts sites can be accessed via <http://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/1157/>

Becoming a registered Donut user is quick and costs nothing, but it opens up a range of additional resources. Registered users also receive our popular monthly business advice e-newsletter – MyDonut. Donut information is updated regularly and checked by a network of hundreds of leading business support professionals and independent experts.

“ I joined to challenge myself in different areas and develop my knowledge ”
Midcounties Co-Operative



Product and Service Guide

INFLUENCE

Strong Economic Business Environment

With the aim of improvement in business conditions the policy unit is committed to supporting the economic environment and will take action or a campaign to create the best conditions for business to thrive. The Chamber is “non-political”.

How the Chamber deals with specific business issues:

- National: for issues that impact on businesses or specific industries across the UK we use the full force of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), which has influence at a national government level
- Regional: representation involves engaging with: regional government; County Councils; regional media; and South of England Chambers of Commerce on regional issues such as planning and investment
- Local: businesses are able to request support for planning applications or local authority concerns from the local Chamber of Commerce. Local Chambers have direct contact and influence with public officials. The request may involve: an accompanied appointment with a local planning officer; a written request for an official response from a government agency; a formal address to a recognised government committee; or a comprehensive media campaign.

Chamber Council – Local Key Influencers

- Each Chamber area has a council of local influential business people. They lobby for an improved local business environment and voice concerns on key issues in the area. Chamber members are able to put themselves forward as a Chamber Council member via elections that take place each April at local area meetings. We can provide you with advice should you wish to get involved. Chamber Councils agree key campaign priorities for the area and these are set out in a ‘Vision Document’ available online or by email from the Policy Department.

Regional Policy Position Statements

- Regional representation comes from the consensus view of businesses across the whole of the Chamber. We prepare “Position Statements” and these documents cover many business issues which are updated regularly as feedback and circumstance changes.

National Representation

- The British Chambers of Commerce represents the views of businesses at a national level. The actions are documented quarterly, in a “Policy Activities Report”. These reports also provide excellent background information on key policy areas. The report is issued quarterly and available for download from the website.

“ *Business Alliance allows us to strengthen our local and regional links* ”

BT

Evidence-based Representation

- To determine the evidence for any Chamber position, extensive consultation, survey work and interviews are undertaken and documented. These reports are available online for download.

Influential Forums for Discussion and Consultation

- South of England Major Business Forum – Major influencers across the South of England meet quarterly to discuss regional issues and build relationships across the South of England.

The Thames Valley Debate - Infrastructure Priorities

- A regional, quarterly opportunity for two-way dialogue with MEP and MP politicians at the Microsoft HQ Campus in Reading. They explain their priorities and business-related activity and the business audience raise questions, concerns and observations. The conclusions and findings are documented in “Business Voice” the regional business magazine. Recent speakers include: Richard Ashworth MEP; Sharon Bowles, MEP; Theresa May, MP
- Local Chamber Councils hold local MP business events providing dialogue primarily but not exclusively on local issues. The policy unit will be able to advise you of forthcoming political briefings.

Bank of England Panel and Briefings

- Held quarterly in Slough, based on pre-set questions, the Bank of England agent measures business confidence. His findings are fed into the monetary policy committee to help determine interest rates. The ensuing confidence report is available from the policy unit or online.

Infrastructure, Connectivity & Transport Forum

- Issues with regional impact on business; rail, aviation, including local and major airport issues, investment and road infrastructure. This forum is open to all interested parties. Contact the policy unit for future dates and to sign up for alerts to future events. This group is for business related issues.

Windsor Debates

- Held within the walls of Windsor Castle, these debates not only look ahead at major strategic issues but debate and challenge exactly what our questioning should be. The emerging views and priorities are documented and form the basis of further consultation to a wider audience. Findings and agendas are available online or by calling the Chamber Policy Unit. Debates held so far include: Globalisation and the Digital Economy; UK Talent; Do We Have the Skills for Tomorrow; Terrorism and Security.

“ *We are able to engage in high level networking with key stakeholders* ”

Learning Skills Council



INFLUENCE (continued)

Inward Investment

Business in the Thames Valley is a success story; one of the most vibrant communities in the UK and home to some of the world's most successful global brands and innovative small businesses. The Thames Valley showcases businesses at the cutting edge of science and technology.

London Heathrow Airport services the needs of a truly international business location which is the first choice outside of London for overseas businesses establishing a UK office.

Each Thames Valley town has something unique to offer people living, working or visiting the region, while the supporting road and rail infrastructure provides access to London and other UK and European destinations.

The region excels across a number of business sectors, with a particularly strong base of expertise in technologies and science. It is often referred to as the 'Silicon Valley of Europe'. A number of successful industry partnerships have put the region at the forefront of some of the world's leading edge technologies, opening up tremendous opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Selected as the favourite location for North American corporate European HQ's, the region provides a familiar business culture with no language barriers. The ability to work with a networked business community that can help grow your organisation in an established marketplace is critical.

Getting off the ground

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group works in partnership with the UK Trade & Investment network of global representatives to ensure support is on hand to help company start-ups from all global regions to set up in the UK for the first time. Newcomers to the region can benefit from meeting potential partners, suppliers and customers at a variety of our regular forums, networking events and conferences.

Introducing the Launch Pad Offer

Launch Pad is a new service co-ordinated by the Chamber to help companies new to the Thames Valley significantly reduce the time and cost in planning, establishing and growing a presence in the UK. How does Launch Pad help overseas companies setting up here?

- Launch Pad is a packaged offer of support for overseas businesses setting up operations in the Thames Valley. It complements existing Chamber and UK Trade & Investment services
- An offer of free & discounted office space and professional services
- Introductions to TVCC members.

To assist those companies we help to set up into the community, they will have the opportunity to receive:

- Invitations to two free Chamber events (escorted)
- International trade and global introductions
- Opportunities for editorial in Business Voice magazine
- Opportunities for joint press releases
- Access to business intelligence.



Product and Service Guide

SAVE

Reduce Operating Costs

Free Resources

Free – Regus Businessworld Gold Card

You can now take advantage of walk-in access to any Regus Businessworld lounge, the value of this alone can give return on investment on the cost of your membership.

- Essential Membership level is between 1 and 4 cards per company
- Corporate and Business Alliance level receive between 5 and 10 per company
- Customer Services will help you register or confirm the number available
- Included: free-Wi-Fi connection, free refreshments, free Business Lounge access, discounts on meeting rooms and other Regus services.

Free – Unlimited Legal Advice

This 24 hours/7 days a week helpline is managed by lawyers and professional advisers, who will give confidential guidance and counselling to members. Topics include: Human Resources, Health & Safety, Tax, Injury, Jury Service, Landlord Disputes and all other legal matters. Queries can be submitted online at www.composite-legal.com or by calling 0871 423 5239. (Calls from BT landlines cost 10p/minute at all times, mobiles and other networks may cost more.) Please remember to quote "Thames Valley Chamber" and your company name for access.

Jury Service Compensation

- If any employee is called for Jury Service, you can claim up to £1,000 to cover the cost of their absence. The first 5 days are not covered. Cover is then paid to a MAXIMUM of £100 per day for the next 10 days, dependent upon salary
- Example – an employee on £25,000 pa and absent for 15 working days qualifies for the maximum £1000
- Call the helpline on 0871 423 5239.

Free – Legal Expenses Insurance - Up to £670,000

This cover begins 3 months from the beginning of the membership

- You can increase your level of cover by calling 0871 423 5239
- Professional Fees insurance is worth over £670,000.

International Trade Advice

Whether you need specific advice on exporting, importing or new market advice we can guide you.



“ *The Regus Gold card has been an invaluable benefit for our highly mobile team* ”
cloudfortyseven

Discounted Resources



Seminars, Workshops and Events

Are all discounted or free for members – for details see the events section of this guide.

Membership Subscription Discounts

These are discounted for payments arranged through direct debit or for subsidiaries of parent companies and registered charities.

Export and Import Documentation

Members get significant discounts on formal documentation training. We offer informal handholding advice when completing trade documentation. See International Trade section on page 16 for more details.

Translating & Interpreting

- A complete, high quality translation service offering over 100 language combinations.

Meeting Rooms from £15/ hour –

Exceptionally competitive and confidential

- Events, training, seminars, meetings or off-site interviews can be held at Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce HQ in Slough.

Credit/Debit Card Processing – transactions covered at discounted rates

- Includes: processing of Mastercard, Visa, Switch, and competitive rate terminal.

Credit Reports

- We provide a profile of potential (or existing) customers, suppliers and partners that enables you to assess your level of exposure. Information provided varies from basic company and financial information to in-depth financial and reports with market comparisons and trends. Discounts are available to Chamber members and all reports are delivered on the day of order. There are 3 types of credit check reports available: Compact – for situations with a low exposure to bad debt risk, Standard – designed to cover mid-exposure situations where a large credit account is under consideration and Comprehensive – a top of the range report for when a very high level of exposure to a particular trading partner is likely.

Discounted Commercial Services and Products

- We negotiate reduced rates with selective suppliers for a small range of products or services e.g business insurance, health plans and energy auditing.
- The Chamber website is frequently updated with current, third-party suppliers, deals and discounts.



Discounted Resources - continued

AXA PPP healthcare Private Medical Insurance

AXA PPP healthcare has teamed up with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group to offer members affordable private medical insurance. AXA PPP healthcare has been providing access to private healthcare for almost 70 years and offer a wide range of plans especially designed to help you protect your most valuable asset – your employees.

Whats included?

- a choice of either:
 - 20% cashback for one year on the groups policy premium or
 - half price Chamber renewal fees for the next three years (providing you stay with AXA PPP healthcare)

Both options are available to new direct customers

- a wide range of options to suit your budget and needs
- a telephone Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all of your employees - even those who aren't covered on the policy
- an extensive list of quality assured hospitals.

The Chamber Business Choice Healthcare package could help to reduce sickness absence by providing early access to investigation and, where necessary, treatment to help your employees make an early recovery and return to health – and back to work.

AXA PPP healthcare also offers two free services for Chamber members:

- **Health at Hand**, available to you and your employees, is a telephone based health information service, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This service is staffed by nurses, midwives, pharmacists and counsellors, offering peace of mind for your team and their families.
- **Personal Business Assistance** which enables the company's key decision maker to stay in touch with your customers, prospective clients and suppliers if you're in hospital or confined to a bed due to ill health.

To activate your FREE services, go online to www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/chambers

Browse our website for more details, contact Customer Services or call 0800 38 77 54 quoting TVC

Westfield Health Chamber Primary Health Plan

This plan is an effective absence and risk management tool and an invaluable employee benefit. What's more cover starts from just £1.10 a week per employee. This is completely complimentary to the AXA private medical insurance and exclusively available to Chamber members. Employees receive money back towards routine healthcare e.g. dental and optical, plus access to preventative treatment and a 24 hour counselling advice line. No medical is required to join and pre-existing conditions are covered.

Purchasing the Chamber Plan for your employees could also help you

- Reduce absenteeism and related costs
- Lower the risk of stress and musculoskeletal litigation
- Recruit and retain staff
- Encourage proactive employee healthcare

For further details, speak to Customer Services or call 0845 602 1629 quoting Thames Valley Chamber.



International Trade Centre of Excellence

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group's International Trade department is one of the leading providers of international trade services in the UK. Located in a catchment area which includes Heathrow airport, we enable thousands of companies to export and import products throughout the world every year. Through the offices of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group, businesses can access a wide range of international trade services, aimed at facilitating successful trade with the rest of the world.

International Trade

Whether you are thinking of taking steps towards trading overseas, or you're an existing exporter looking to expand your markets, the International Trade team can offer advice and assistance.

Working in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce and UK Trade and Investment South East (UKTI), your business could benefit from the following services:

- **Advice and assistance:** on all aspects of trading globally
- **Country & market guides**
- **Overseas business opportunities:** a matching service tailored to your profile
- **Market research:** to assist with identifying potential markets and entry strategies
- **Market visits:** make the most out of trade missions and overseas exhibitions
- **Import and export documentation:** issuing of European Community Certificates of origin, Arab-British certificates of origin, invoices, ATRs, EUR1s and international trade related documents eg ATA carnets and international import certificates
- **Online certificates:**

e-Cert is an online service which enables exporters to apply for Certificates of Origin, invoices, ATRs, EUR1s and associated documents online. e-Cert incorporates regulatory and statutory requirements for each document produced, ensuring rapid certification & authentication to eliminate delays in the movement of goods. A standard and express service is available to customers. The benefits of e-Cert are:

- Save money on couriers, post and staff time
- Save time as the risk of your document being rejected is eliminated
- Be confident that the finished document is exactly the same as you use now
- Use of the electronic software is FREE
- The electronic version costs no more than the paper version
- Scanned signatures are required and are acceptable
- **Materials & publications:** a wide range of export documents and reference materials
- **Events & seminars:** regular market sector and topic led briefings
- **International Trade E-Newsletters:** the latest international trade focused news
- **101 Questions about Exporting Publication**

Translation:

- Translation includes: high quality, flexible translation service, over 130 languages, all types of documents
- Sector specialist translations including technical, commercial, medical and legal
- Translation and typesetting of business cards
- Contracts and user manuals
- Web pages and software translations
- Interpreting and voice-overs for corporate videos.

International Trade Workshops

As experts in international trade, we are well placed to train your workforce on every element of the business. All our courses are delivered by expert trainers and cover most of the procedures exporting and importing companies need to know. Each course can be delivered as an open course or tailored to the needs of your specific organisation and delivered in-house.

- Managing International Distribution Channels
- Developing Services Overseas
- Developing an Export Business Plan
- Overview of exporting
- Overview of importing
- The Power of Export Documents
- Customs Procedures for Importers and Exporters
- Dealing with Letters of Credit
- Inward Processing Relief

Chamber Customs Audit Service

Chamber member, Mike Hodge Associates (MHA) has teamed up with the International Trade Division to offer members who import and/or export a free consultation meeting, to identify opportunities for reducing customs duty costs and improving compliance.

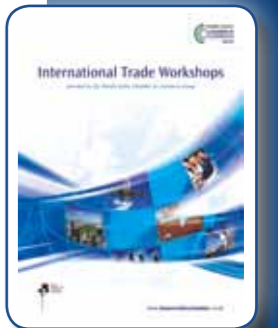
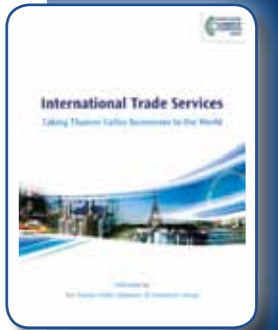
MHA helps clients to minimise the amount of customs duty they pay, recover overpaid duties; optimise processes to ensure compliance with customs regulations and resolve disputes with Customs. MHA focuses on ensuring clients pay no more than the lowest, legally acceptable amount of customs duty, whilst at the same time maintaining compliance with customs legislation.

Official Partners to UK Trade and Investment

We are able to expand the scope of the services that we offer to exporting and importing companies. Where our area of expertise stops, UKTI's begins, meaning that together we are able to offer a complete package which provides a "one stop shop" for all exporters or companies considering exporting in our area. Some of the services available from UKTI include:

- Passport to Export for new and inexperienced exporters
- Market and Sector Research
- Market Entry - international trade shows and overseas trade missions
- Marketing Support.

To find out more information about our International Trade Services browse our website, email export@tvchamber.co.uk or call 01753 870560.



LinkToChina – the business match-making service

British small and medium sized businesses need direct, exclusive, translated, detailed, creditable, timely, free or low-cost information about business opportunities in China and vice versa. Both British and Chinese businesses need in-market local support and turnkey solutions for trade and investment partnership. Most SMEs are facing many challenges between the two countries, such as:

- The time and cost in identifying relevant business opportunities and partners
- Cost in sourcing credible sales leads, quality suppliers, agents or distributors
- The difficulty of accessing valuable market information without eyes and ears on the ground
- The challenge of getting trustworthy advice on commercial, accounting, legal, local regulatory, banking, shipping and other important matters.

LinkToChina provides a unique market led match-making service specifically developed to help small and medium sized businesses overcome these challenges.

Services

LinkToChina can benefit British businesses working with the Chinese market in enabling projects involving export, import, manufacturing, finance, technology co-operation, service industries, advanced engineering, low-carbon/clean fuel economy and inward investment.

It is a business match-making platform for trade and investment projects directly between China and UK. The project enables SMEs in the China and UK Chamber networks to be able to access specific project opportunities directly from businesses of the two markets in a regular basis. Translation, exchange, distribution and feedback mechanisms are services all built into the platform. Business match-making is secure and managed for the selected subscribers of the service in order to ensure commercial confidentiality and privacy. A Fast Track Service is able to accommodate urgent enquiries and market visits.

15 Chinese cities and provinces will take part in the project through the CCPIT network of offices. The project offices will form a much needed local In-market Support for successfully matched partnerships, projects and subscribers of the project.

The two Chamber networks will also use the LinkToChina platform to enable easy access and co-ordination of bespoke and turnkey solutions to professional services and business services for Chinese and British companies when they do business in their partners' countries.

Features of LinkToChina include:

- FREE Registration for Chamber members
- Translated enquiries direct from Chinese companies
- Opportunity to send translated proposals to Chinese companies in multiple locations
- Access in-market support services with Chamber partners
- Access market updates
- Access to professional services and governmental support

LinkToChina Regional Partners

15 regional partners in China provide a network for the in-market support. Locations include, Tianjin, Jinan, Qingdao, Hebei, Shanghai, Nanjing, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Shenzhen, Xi'an, Chongqing, Sichuan, Wuhan, Dalian, Shaanxi.

For further information on how to get involved please contact the LinkToChina Project Office on 01753 870500 or email l2c@tvchamber.co.uk

Events, Forums and Briefings

Forums

- **Sales & marketing:** best practice, new ideas, techniques to help your business
- **Human resources:** legislation, people development, case studies
- **Facilities and operations:** cost management, building management, operational issues
- **Technology for business:** strategy, best practice, case studies, IT, mobile technology, information management, security.

Specialist Groups

- **Regional transport:** local infrastructure issues, environment, public transport
- **Property groups:** construction, affect on local area, legal issues
- **Small business networking:** network & learn over breakfast, or lunch
- **Be your own boss:** key information for any prospective start-up, networking with members
- **International Trade:** best practice, export advice, overseas market information.

Political & Economic

- **Bank of England briefings:** regular essential economic updates
- **MP, MEP dialogues:** over lunch, listen to political opinion and ask questions direct
- **Business Leaders' Forum:** invaluable advice on topical issues eg legal, economy, legislation, finance
- **Windsor Debates:** unique opportunity to influence other business leaders and government.

Leadership

- **Business Insight:** hear from experts in their field & network with major Thames Valley businesses
- **Corporate keynotes:** build relationships over dinner or lunches and listen to compelling speakers
- **Strategic leadership:** exclusive to Business Alliance members, discreet round table for peers to build relationships & exchange ideas.

International

- **International networking:** meet business representatives from other countries
- **Global market in-depth briefings:** learn how to do business in other countries
- **Global market best practice:** plan your exporting with help from the experts
- **International embassy briefings.**

Introducing the Chamber

- **Meet the Chamber evenings:** open networking with members & non-members in an informal setting, held monthly across the region
- **New member welcome evenings:** find out about the Chamber & start building your network.

Local Themed Events

- Our core events programme is a regular series of business breakfasts, lunches and networking that takes place in each Chamber area. Each event features a guest speaker, a member or local representative talking on a wide variety of topics including current affairs, economic issues, local authority updates, new products and innovation, new business trends and best practice.

Social & Hospitality

- Annual golf tournament, Royal Windsor Horse Show, Henley Festival and Royal Ascot.



Policy & Lobbying

Local Chambers – what are they?

We operate via a network of nine local Chambers: Aylesbury, Bracknell, Oxfordshire, Reading, Slough, Swindon, West Berkshire, Wokingham and Wycombe & South Bucks. Each is represented by a group of members voted on each year at the Local Annual Meeting. Chamber Council members are listed on our website together with a vision document for each area. Each local Chamber remains individual in character, and a strong local presence in each region ensures that the Chamber can drive development and progress which is customised to the unique businesses within each locality.

Speak to your Business Manager to find out more about local issues, the activities carried out by the local Chamber Councils and to get in touch with any of the Chamber Council members. Ask to be introduced to the President of your local Chamber.

Vision Documents

This document sets out each Chamber of Commerce's medium term policy priorities, its vision and intended actions to deliver sustainable economic growth. A sustainable environment that businesses can operate in is essential for growth and rapid change. The vision document therefore needs to be able to respond to these changes in priorities and should be reviewed annually. The aim is to create dynamic and vibrant town centre or area with true commitment and effective partnership working.

Campaign Opportunities

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group is the independent voice of business across the Thames Valley and along the M4 corridor into Swindon representing some 250,000 employees from within 2,000 businesses.

The Chamber's policy is driven by our members. Member companies have a direct say in determining our campaign priorities. Our overriding objective is to ensure that businesses are better able to compete both at home and overseas. This region is the place to do business. Its vibrancy and dynamism must be maintained to enable us to keep attracting new businesses and entrepreneurs and to continue creating jobs, providing world-class services and excelling in trade and exports.

The Region's Key Issues currently are:

- Education, Skills and labour shortages
- Transport and road infrastructure
- Planning policy and lack of committed government investment
- Red tape and regulation
- Economic pressures
- Business crime
- Enterprise
- Energy
- Climate Change & the Environment.

For help, guidance and assistance on all aspects of policy, please contact the Policy Department on **01753 870578**.

Membership Levels

Essential

Membership for small and medium companies

As part of a business employing up to 50 people, you are probably fulfilling several roles at once. You need guidance and support to know where to best direct your time, how to grow your business and develop relationships that will last into the future. You will also want to save costs, discover new ideas and business thinking, develop your staff and have a chance to influence the business climate. An overview of all our products, services, partners and how to access them is covered in section 4 of this guide. More than 2,000 small and medium size businesses are already members of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group. They are joined by hundreds of corporate and global organisations from throughout this region and beyond. Every member is supported by a dedicated business manager and assisted by our customer services team, who have one objective, to ensure you get maximum benefit from your investment in membership.

Corporate

Membership for medium to large companies, trading internationally or working within the corporate marketplace

Corporate membership focuses on delivering a range of services that meets the needs of the established larger businesses in the region. There are four key areas: Corporate Networking incorporating exclusive events, MD's Network, corporate hospitality, international introductions and the opportunity to participate in Windsor Debates; Best Practice enabling sharing of insights, expertise and opinions through a range of specialist forums; Strategic Influence locally, nationally and internationally; and Subsidised Services including International Trade, training and key business information. In addition, there are promotional opportunities via Business Voice magazine, the Chamber website, speaking at events and sponsorship. All these benefits are designed to enable the development of long term, mutually beneficial business relationships. All the benefits of Essential membership are also available together with extra Regus businessworld Gold Cards.

Business Alliance

Membership for major companies, all-inclusive, high-level option with a strategic focus

Business Alliance membership comprises a high proportion of the largest UK businesses, many of them national and global players, as well as major public sector organisations from the region. Alongside all the benefits of the other membership packages, Business Alliance provides Thames Valley business leaders with an individual membership and marketing package, a dedicated project manager and a discrete programme of dinners, forums and other activities. In addition, the fee covers attendance for up to two people at every chamber event (450 places per year).



Sponsorship Opportunities

Speaking Opportunities

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group currently organises over 200 networking events each year. We offer a wide range of formats and content, ranging from the Business Leaders' Forum – four short, strategic keynote presentations to a corporate audience, to local Chamber breakfasts where 60-second, individual presentations are the order of the day. Speaking opportunities are always available and members are actively encouraged to use our comprehensive events programme to promote their business.

Each event presents a unique opportunity for members to share their expertise, ideas, creativity and best practice with a specific audience. For guidance on which style of presentation and which event will bring the greatest benefit, speak to your Business Manager, or call our Events Team on 01753 870500.

Sponsorship of any event is available to members. These range from a single breakfast or lunch through to corporate dinners. Costs start at £400 and for full details please contact our events team.

Sponsorship of our core breakfasts and lunches gives you the following:

- Sponsor's hyperlink on email broadcast
- Sponsor's name, logo and hyperlink on chamber's website
- Sponsor's logo on guest list (logo on badges an additional £50)
- 2 complimentary places at each event and introduction in business manager's welcome
- Opportunity to display pop up stand and promotional material list of attendees
- Opportunity to provide gifts for guests.

Sponsorship of a corporate event or business international programme, will give the following specific benefits:

- Sponsor's name & logo in main promotional material
- Sponsor's logo on guest list. Logo on badges an additional £50
- Sponsor's name, logo and hyperlink on chamber's website
- Sponsor's pop up stand and promotional material at welcome point
- List of attendees from the event
- 3 complimentary places at each event
- Opportunity to provide gifts for guests
- Personal thank you from a Chamber representative during his/her dinner speech

Bespoke sponsorship is available for Business Leaders' Forums and Windsor Debates. If you would like more details please contact our events team events@tvchamber.co.uk

- Contact your business manager to talk through the best events and where sponsorship will benefit your business



Snapshot of Chamber Products and Services

Events

Forums

- Sales & Marketing
- Human Resources
- Facilities and operations
- Technology for business.

Specialist groups

- Regional transport
- Property groups
- Small business networking
- Be your own boss.

Leadership

- Business insight
- Corporate keynotes
- Strategic leadership.

Political & Economic

- Bank of England briefings
- MP, MEP Dialogues
- Business Leaders' Forum
- Windsor Debates.

International

- International networking
- Global market in-depth briefings
- Global market best practice
- International Embassy briefings
- International Trade Forum.

Events

Introducing the Chamber

- Meet the Chamber events
- New member welcome evenings.

Local themed events

- Current affairs
- Economic issues
- Local Authority updates
- New product and innovation
- New business trend.

Social & hospitality

- Annual Golf Tournament
- Royal Windsor Horse Show
- Henley Festival
- Royal Ascot.

Services

International Trade Centre of Excellence

Compliance & business training solution partners

Information

- Members only website resource area
- Free quarterly economic survey
- Free reports & surveys
- Free directors' briefings documents
- Free guides to overseas markets
- Free monthly publications
- Business contact details.

Reducing Costs

Regus Gold Card provides

- Free 24 hour access to Regus Business Centres Worldwide.

Chamber advice line

- A free 24 hour, 7 days a week telephone advice service providing expertise and advice on a wide range of legal matters.

Chamber legal expenses

- A free service for members with up to £670k legal fees cover. Cover includes, commercial legal matters ranging from employment and personal injury to tax investigations and criminal prosecution. Plus up to £1,000 jury service compensation.

Chamber card processing

- An all inclusive service offering processing that covers Mastercard, Visa Card and Switch Card transactions with highly discounted rates, competitive terminal charges and no joining fee.

Chamber translations

- A complete, high quality translation service offering over 100 language combinations.

www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk
01753 870 500

Promotional, PR, Marketing & Business Growth

Free: Member resources

- Use of Chamber logo
- Member to member offer
- Directory entry x 3
- Promotion in "Business Voice"
- Chamber website presence
- Business manager introductions
- Membership across Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire & Wiltshire all included.

Marketing resources

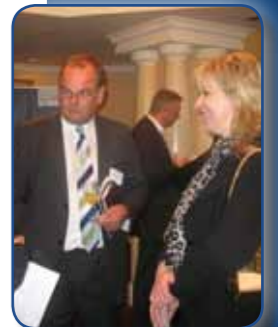
- Bespoke mailing lists
- S&M briefings documents
- Networking – two events a year
- Peer to peer – membership-level choice – "Essential", "Corporate" or "Business Alliance".

PR

- Chamber magazine editorials
- Media response opportunities
- Press releases
- Chamber Council roles.

Sponsorship

- Major event sponsorship
- Event co-sponsorship
- Website sections
- Literature sponsorship
- Bespoke packages.



Networking Hints & Tips

Know your target market

Geography, business sector, size and most importantly, what are their issues.

Make an impact with your elevator speech

Introduce yourself and company, your typical client, their problem/pain, your solution, the results, benefits or outcome.

Scan the delegate list

Identify people you would like to meet, find them and introduce yourself.
Or ask Chamber staff you know to make the introduction for you. Bring plenty of business cards!

Stay until you have connected with a pre-determined number of people

Start with just one or two – as your confidence (and success) grows build it up to five or six.

Best contacts

Think about their needs and how you could help them achieve their needs through new people you meet.

Start a conversation

This can be daunting so talk about common interests, what they want from the event, how long they have worked in their company or been in business, what do they like about their role.

Don't expect early results

Take time to develop relationships and create a network.

Build relationships first

Networking is not about selling, it's about building relationships and people buy people.

Show a genuine interest in other people

You can close more business by showing interest in other people, giving something to them, referring them to others. Offer opportunities such as information, knowledge, recommendations, tips. With no strings attached.

Listen more than talk

Become an active listener and see how you can help them. Try to connect them to your network.

Always follow up contacts

With a simple e-mail or telephone call.

Arrange contact meetings

Who do they know and what are they looking for? Can you connect them to one of your contacts?

Develop networking advocates

Developing a network of people who can say good things about your business is the best way to get consistent and sustainable business.

Finally, just enjoy yourself!

With thanks to Roy Sheppard, conference moderator and speaker, NRG Networks and Success Network.

Network of Local Chambers of Commerce in the Thames Valley



- 1 Buckinghamshire Chamber
- 2 Bracknell Chamber
- 3 Oxfordshire Chamber
- 4 Reading Chamber
- 5 Slough Chamber
- 6 Swindon Chamber
- 7 West Berkshire Chamber
- 8 Wokingham Chamber



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