Summer 2014

LONDON *loves* BUSINESS.COM

LONDON'S BUSINESS LEADERS SHARE GAME-CHANGING IDEAS FOR THE PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTORS

Securing Britain

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

2 SUSTAINABILITY, STANDARDS & SUPPLY CHAIN

LONDON SPEAKS OUT

HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
SAFIA MINNEY PEOPLE TREE
ALISON SEABROOKE CDF
SOPHI TRANCHELL MBE DIVINE CHOCOLATE
NEIL LA CROIX MONDELĒZ INTERNATIONAL
HELEN BROWNING OBE THE SOIL ASSOCIATION
MIKE WRIGHT JAGUAR LAND ROVER
TASS MAVROGORDATO INMIDTOWN

Sponsored by inmidtown bloomsbury/holborn/st.giles

HRH The Prince of Wales

President, Business in the Community

"Being a 'responsible' business goes far beyond concern for the financial bottom line. Running businesses, as you know far better than I, you are very much on the front line. What you do not only drives the economy, it is pivotal in creating healthy, stable and, therefore, resilient communities, without which society really has no hope. If you think about it, that 'stability' in society is what attracts so many investors to this country - if you ask them why they want to invest here, as I do from time to time on visits overseas. But to maintain that stability, it has to be invested in and that is why you play such a crucial role in helping to build resilience and skills in many of our more deprived and struggling communities."

Taken from the address to Business in the Community's Leadership Summit, 6 February 2014

In partnership with

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

LondonlovesBusiness.com's *Securing Britain* series invites London business leaders to share actionable ideas on how to create a brighter future for Britain with government and businesses. Click on the covers on the right to read previous editions online, and sign up for our free newsletter to discover the forthcoming *Securing Britain: Responsible Business* editions.

Sophie Hobson
Editor, LondonlovesBusiness.com

Galvanising conversations that inspire action

Welcome to the second in our *Securing Britain: Responsible Business* series, which follows the Innovation edition. In these pages, you'll learn from some of the UK's most pioneering responsible business leaders about how they believe the private and public sectors can improve business practices across the areas of sustainability, standards and supply chains. We have asked each of these leaders to put forward actionable ideas for how businesses can become more responsible, and what the government needs to do to better support them.

Many of our contributors in the *Securing Britain: Responsible Business* series acknowledge that the need for businesses to become more responsible is not just a moral obligation. It is a commercial necessity for organisations that want to succeed in tomorrow's world. Customers – both consumer and business – are increasingly choosing to buy from businesses that have an ethical edge, over more morally dubious competitors. And political pressure is piling up for companies to behave better.

We believe it's high time for all companies to seriously consider their ethical credentials. And as the online newspaper for London's business community, London*loves* Business.com is the perfect platform for ideas that need to be heard. Our aim with the *Securing Britain* series is to galvanise the conversations that inspire action. So we'll be sending this publication to all MPs, all Lords, and tens of thousands of other businesses. Because it's only by sharing ideas that we can make them happen.

My thanks again to all contributors, and to Business in the Community and inmidtown for their support. I hope you find the following ideas useful – and then take action.

LONDON*loves*BUSINESS.COM

London*loves*Business.com is the online newspaper for London's business community. We aim to further the ambitions of London's businesses, celebrate good business and success, and bring you frank debate about the issues facing London businesses. We are fast becoming the must-read website for London's business community through our mix of the latest business news across all sectors, profiles of London's most exciting entrepreneurs, features exploring the trends you can capitalise on, and London lifestyle.

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Sophi Tranchell MBE
Managing director, Divine Chocolate

Shareholders need to look at the bigger picture

The UK's Fairtrade market is the most valuable in the world. Consumers have shown the way

There's an urgent need for companies to become more ethical – especially from the point of view of food scarcity and climate change. The growing world population is putting a strain on food security, for those who grow our food as well as those who consume it.

But the good thing is that thanks to social media, it's much harder for businesses to hide. There's more pressure for businesses to have stronger ethical and sustainable credentials – ones that bear scrutiny – because people can see better how they act and can engage more deeply with them.

Industry has a role in the growth of Fairtrade but it's been consumers that have shown the way and changed how companies work. The UK's Fairtrade market is the most valuable in the world. In 2012, Fairtrade sales reached £1.5bn in the UK, and sales in 2013 are estimated at £1.78bn. Fairtrade awareness is at a high of 78% and more than 600 towns in the UK have received Fairtrade status.

Building goodwill

When Divine started we were much smaller than we are today and we entered an industry dominated by giants. The fact that we were owned significantly by farmers and that we paid a fair price quickly enabled us to tell a story which won us enormous amounts of PR coverage.

"The UK's Fairtrade market is the most valuable in the world. In 2012, Fairtrade sales reached £1.5bn in the UK – and sales in 2013 are estimated at £1.78bn"

It also won us an exceptional amount of goodwill from people who went out of their way to try to help us. What we've learned in 15 years is that people buy products because they like them. But some of them discover they really like the company behind the product too, which enhances their pleasure at buying that product, which in turn builds goodwill and makes them more loyal.

Sustainable win-wins

There are ways of making a business more sustainable that are straightforward win-wins too. If you're looking at your environmental impact, for example, rethinking your approach to packaging and transportation can help you reduce your carbon footprint and save you money. Other things, such as paying people a fair wage, are more difficult to balance because you have to find the money to do that.

What's interesting in Britain is that companies look at things from a very short-term perspective – which needs to be addressed if we're to improve businesses in the long run. When talking about sustainability, companies need to take shareholders on the journey with them, so they can recognise that it's not only a good investment for the future, but that the business in question has the potential to become pioneering.

We must also think about the true cost of products and how we make people recognise those costs with a more comprehensive sense of sustainability – one that includes public health.

Big businesses have been measuring their contribution to the UK economy for a long time, but they need to find out what kind of burden they are putting on the public purse in terms of NHS resources, for example. The government needs to explore how it can help this happen, perhaps through taxation.

The good news is that solving this challenge can really drive innovation. As a business, you're going to need to innovate, and that will also put you in a strong position for the future.

MY KEY IDEA

We need to look at sustainability, both in the long-term and in the broadest sense, and convince shareholders to look at the bigger picture. Companies should be aware of the public health impact of their business and consider it an important part of sustainability. Innovation is key to driving this and those businesses that invest in innovation will have stronger futures.

SOPHI TRANCHELL MBE joined Divine Chocolate in 1999 as managing director – one year after the company formed. Based in Tower Bridge, London, Divine is the only Fairtrade chocolate company to be 45% owned by cocoa farmers.

Safia Minney MBE
Founder and CEO, People Tree

Mainstreaming best business practice

What stands in the way of making sustainable business the norm – and prevents us from finding a more peaceful way forward for our kids' futures? Is corporate social responsibility helping, or just protecting industry from becoming transparent and accountable?

Our governments sign international agreements on minimum wages and health and safety. They've signed the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. So where is the action that holds companies responsible for their part?

Governments and companies know the social costs of paying poverty. But we continue buying and trading the products of the system that makes parents so poor they even sacrifice the future of the children by sending them out to work at 12 years old. Consumers want social and business innovation. They want their shopping and investment to be a part of the solution – but business and governments stand in the way of the far-reaching changes that makes this possible.

Since the Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh killed over 1,100 factory workers, what have governments done? The fund which compensates the families is run by the ILO, a UN body. Have the brands

Safia Minney MBE
Founder and CEO, People Tree

MY KEY IDEA

Consumers want Fair Trade fashion to become the mainstream. To make this happen governments must ensure businesses know their supply chain, hold fashion retailers and suppliers to existing international laws, and support genuine certified (WFTO) Fair Trade initiatives, including VAT tax breaks for pioneering Fair Trade and ethical fashion companies.

involved in the tragedy done enough to compensate?

Putting your supply chain in compliance with human rights and environmental law is not hard. People Tree started in 1991 and is the first clothing business in the world to guarantee Fair Trade throughout the supply chain. I'm asking business to find its "inner child" – and use the innocence, curiosity and tenacity of a child to cut through the bulls**t and get answers. If People Tree can do it, large companies can do it too.

Setting standards

Harold Tilman, then chairman of the British Fashion Council, called for VAT breaks for ethical fashion businesses to incentivise sustainable practices and help mainstream them. This would go some way to recognising the costs of innovating within the fashion supply chain. We are creating the tools for others to use. Ground-breaking organisations like the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and People Tree just need further funding to bring these things to scale.

The Fair Trade movement gives a real voice to southern producers – representing their members equally to set standards on price, terms of trade, gender equity, environmental practice, transparency and accountability, child labour and safety in the workplace.

Businesses and governments should be wary of labelling systems that serve to dilute rather than raise standards. Consumers are onto them. Consumers are questioning The Better Cotton Initiative, which doesn't guarantee organic cotton as it includes genetically modified cotton. Consumers want to know the exact percentages of fairly traded ingredients that go into products labelled Fairtrade.

To create change takes sustained business commitment at both supply and demand level. In 2007, Vogue Japan changed the face of Fair Trade and ethical fashion with an international collaboration with People Tree, high-profile international designers and celebrated models like Lily Cole and Helena Christensen. Major fashion retailers and suppliers around the world decided to introduce Fairtrade and organic cotton lines. But after the 2008 financial crash, brands pulled out – leaving the new supply chains stranded. The buzz around social business was crushed at the very time when fashion leaders were just becoming alert to responsible triple-bottom-line practice.

Often CSR has meant green-wash and green window-dressing, and has been a barrier to transparency, accountability and legally binding reform. Often it celebrates small donations and funds to social causes rather than engaging companies' responsibilities to clean up their supply chain and deliver genuine social development.

Let's invest in real change now and scale up genuine Fair Trade social enterprises so we can mainstream best business practices.

Neil La Croix

Associate director of Sustainable Supply Chains, Mondelēz International

How to create more sustainable supply chains

Sustainability is about securing a future. Previously, it was driven by a common concern to be more ethical. It's now increasingly driven by practicality.

Sustainability is about risk management. You're managing reputational risk, but for agricultural commodities, you're managing supply risk as well. We need to invest in our supply chains to secure future supplies and to ensure that we are operating responsibly.

But we are not yet at the point where everyone is speaking about sustainability. Some companies are still operating at a corporate social responsibility level, rather than thinking about sustainability throughout their supply chains.

Risks

Supply risks have been well documented for key commodities, due to dramatically increasing demand – particularly from Asia. A risk for agricultural supply is that young people across the world are not going into farming. They don't see it as an attractive option. That means the long-term supply is inherently at risk.

So we need to invest in helping growers develop a viable livelihood, and make farming an attractive career option for youth, by improving productivity and developing communities, as Mondelēz has done with our Cocoa Life and Coffee Made Happy programmes.

There are also reputation risks around land rights, labour, water usage, agricultural chemicals; those risks are increasing as well and becoming more apparent. We have to address this.

What can be done?

Consumers expect companies now to have a sustainable supply chain. So what should businesses do, if they're not yet at a point where they have a fully developed sustainability strategy?

A lot of companies don't understand

Neil La Croix

Associate director of Sustainable Supply Chains, Mondelēz International

MY KEY IDEA

We need stronger links between government aid and British companies running development programmes. Both parties must make more effort to talk to each other and understand what the other is trying to do. Frequently, we're both operating in the same geographical area and the same functional area: improving livelihoods and strengthening communities and the local economy. So government must work in synergy with the private sector to create development programmes that solve problems in the long term, not just today.

their supply chain fully – all the way to primary production. So the first thing to do is map your supply chain. Understand what it is, understand where products are coming from, and research the issues within that supply chain. Know where the risks are, in both reputational and resource terms.

Once you have developed that, you can develop partnerships, as we do. The right partners can help you understand issues more deeply and execute your sustainability strategy more effectively. It's about choosing partners with the right skills for the job. We have partnerships with NGOs, with international finance institutions, international development organisations, and more.

You need a business case for sustainability. Once you know your supply chain and can identify the risks, it's actually much easier to find a business case. We view sustainability as a long-term investment.

"You need a business case for sustainability. Once you know your supply chain and can identify the risks, it's actually much easier"

Government action

The government could help the sustainability agenda. A lot of money can be spent dealing with current problems rather than trying to solve the problems that will arise in the future. We must invest in solving problems in the long term. Governmental development programmes can be far more effective when they're linked up with the private sector.

We need greater cooperation and collaboration between organisations like the Department for International Development (DFID) and the private sector. There needs to be a clear understanding of what each can deliver. This is not really about financial support. It's about DFID creating an enabling environment in the origin country – because for us to have effective programmes which are viable, we need the cooperation of the government in that country. That's where DIFID and the government can play a very powerful role.

For example, we work with the UK embassy in the Dominican Republic. The embassy has facilitated conversations and relationships with the right people there, so we are now investing more than £4m over 10 years to improve farming productivity and better engage women and young people with cocoa-farming careers. And we are starting to see results from that.

We have similar programmes across the world. Our aim is to strengthen the livelihoods of farmers, because that's beneficial to them and us. If work like this is going to succeed, it has to benefit all parties.

Helen Browning OBE
CEO, The Soil Association

Why workplace catering standards matter

When it comes to improving health and wellbeing through the food we eat, the government is finally getting its own house in order. It is not surprising that this has become such a priority. One in three of us now has 'pre-diabetes', and soaring NHS costs (£5.8bn each year from diet-related ill health) are testament to the escalating problem of unhealthy diets. Horsegate was also a powerful reminder of the perils of ignoring food quality and traceability, alongside nutrition.

Public procurement is moving away from a 'least cost wins' model, with more emphasis being placed on environmental and social value, thanks in part to the new Public Sector (Social Values) Act. For example, the government's revised school food standards now apply to all schools including academies, and clearly state that all schools should use fresh, sustainable and

Helen Browning OBE
CEO, The Soil Association

MY KEY IDEA

Workplace catering must become the next frontier for responsible businesses keen to invest in the health and productivity of their staff and their climate impact. Leading businesses like Pearson, EDF Energy and Sainsbury's are joining the ranks of City Hall, Defra, the Scottish government and the National Assembly for Wales in using the Food for Life Catering Mark to show they care about the food on offer to their employees.

locally-sourced ingredients. Over 25% of UK schools are serving food which meets the Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark standards (a well-recognised mark of achievement based on a bronze, silver and gold award framework; rewarding every step towards fresh, healthy, local, seasonal and organic menus), providing assurance of food quality. Hospitals are also now being incentivised to achieve quality standards like the Catering Mark, through special CQUIN 'commissioning for quality and innovation' payments. Over 180 million Catering Mark meals are already served every day, across schools, universities, and even sports venues like Glasgow's new Emirates Stadium.

But there is one area that we can't afford to forget if we are to tackle the crisis of diet related ill-health, and make the shift to a more sustainable food system. Although seldom under the spotlight, workplace catering is the next frontier when it comes to improving the food on the public plate.

190m

days of work absence in the UK are caused by obesity and diet-related ill health

Many adults spend the majority of their waking hours in the workplace and they consume a third of their daily calories there. Obesity and diet-related ill health cause 190 million days' absence from work in the UK. Studies show that workplace health promotion leads to a return on investment of between £2.5 and £4.8 due to reduced absenteeism and reduced staff turnover. This is why companies like Google are going to great lengths to serve healthy, free meals, and why the government's Public Health Responsibility Deal is placing an emphasis on the role workplaces can play in promoting health and wellbeing.

Workplace catering represents around half the total value of UK catering sales. Given that food-related emissions represent 19% of consumption-related emissions in the UK, the collective knock-on effects of workplace procurement policies and eating habits are significant.

It is clear companies and policy makers must step up their approach to workplace catering, and that this will reap rewards for them as well as for employees. Some companies have made a start by signing up to the government's Public Health Responsibility Deal, which encourages businesses to improve employee wellbeing; focusing on food, alcohol and physical activity. However, in the absence of any independent audit process, there is widespread scepticism about whether the deal is sufficient motivation for companies to act. It is time workplaces joined this encouraging 'race to the top', helping to ensure good food is made available to everyone, every day, whoever and wherever they are.

Alison Seabrooke
CEO, Community Development Foundation

Understanding and creating social value

Companies that can demonstrate social value stand to benefit commercially

In recent years, there has been a marked shift in the debate on socially responsible business. At one time "social responsibility" meant setting aside a proportion of pre-tax profit for good causes as a kind of public relations tax. Yet the political fall-out from the financial crisis and the rise of ethical consumerism and sustainable investment have blown this view out of the water.

Instead, new ideas such as "shared value business models", "impact investing" and "triple bottom lines" look at the whole organisation. These ideas go to the heart of understanding the overall social value of a business by looking at how a business applies its core assets – its people, brand, products, supply chain and capital – through its business model to generate value for society and shareholders.

Companies that can effectively demonstrate social value stand to benefit commercially. New rules brought in under The Social Value Act 2012 mandate that all public sector commissioners must now incorporate social value into their decision-making process. The opportunities for businesses that show they can deliver social value, as well as providing a needed service, are potentially huge. But how do you determine social value?

Here at the Community Development Foundation we've been at the heart of the community development agenda for 50 years, and believe that understanding social value starts where it is most

Alison Seabrooke
CEO, Community Development Foundation

MY KEY IDEA

Responsible businesses are no longer defined by the proportion of pre-tax profit they give to charities. Businesses must leverage their core assets – people, products, brand, and supply-chain relationships – through their business models to generate social and financial value. Effective community engagement is an essential part of this strategy.

tangibly felt: in communities that have an actual or potential stake in a company's business. This is where the impacts of a business – employment, investment, and local development – are most clearly visible and most vigorously appraised.

Efforts to develop universal metrics are important, but we see the key question for companies as less a question of, 'How much social value?' and more, 'How are we defining social value and who's involved with us in doing that?'

It is the quality of a company's relationship with its community stakeholders, and its methods of community engagement, that really determine whether or not a company's activities generate social value.

London has many inspiring examples. Take Poke, a small company using its expertise and connections in the digital sector to set up a Tech City apprenticeship scheme. At Poke they bridge the gap between the dynamism of Tech City and the lives of young people in East London. Looking at where things go wrong provides useful learning too. The development industry has some of the closest interaction with communities and perhaps the keenest appreciation of the business case for demonstrating social value. Yet there are many examples of how even the best laid-out social value plans can completely miss the needs of the local community when the community has not been part of generating that plan.

Communities and businesses share huge areas of common interest – but without effective community engagement this risks being squandered. We've developed Love Your Community, a quality mark in community engagement that recognises companies with robust community engagement approaches. For companies to demonstrate social value, they need to show how that value has been defined and created in partnership with communities. Working with communities is not always easy, but the rewards for companies that invest in high quality community relationships have never been better. Businesses must leverage their core assets – their people, products, brand, and supply-chain relationships – through their business models to maximise social and financial value. But it's the communities themselves which provide a key test of whether they are doing this right.

"Companies that can demonstrate social value stand to benefit commercially"

Mike Wright
Executive director, Jaguar Land Rover

Why advanced manufacturing matters

UK manufacturing matters. By creating jobs and boosting innovation, it helps society

Advanced manufacturing is essential for the UK's future prosperity. Our products need to be innovative and globally attractive so we continue to compete with our big-investing manufacturing rivals in Germany, Japan, America, Korea and China.

As we saw during the recent financial crisis, being good at finance and service industries is not enough: successful economies need to make things, to engineer things, to design, to develop, to innovate – whether it's computers, bridges or cars.

There are lots of myths around manufacturing in the UK so raising its profile is essential, both to attract more investment and innovation, and also to inspire the next generation of technologists and innovators.

Advanced manufacturing accounts for 30% of UK exports and we have one of the most productive automotive sectors in Europe – exporting more vehicles than ever before. Crucially, manufacturers are largely based outside London and the south-east so play a vital role in rebalancing our economy across the whole country.

We have seen much-needed progress in UK manufacturing and need to become globally competitive in industrial innovation to continue to be a prosperous knowledge-based economy, creating more jobs, exports and growth.

We can become great again with more help from government, schools and universities. We need more joined-up thinking between industry, academia and the state, which is the foundation of Germany's success. Part of our mission has been to raise the profile of manufacturing and

Mike Wright
Executive director, Jaguar Land Rover

engineering at schools and universities.

The car industry has never moved faster. It's not just a new industrial revolution; it's more a total technological transformation. Our industry makes the most technically complex piece of equipment available to consumers. And of course advanced engineering moves hand-in-hand with manufacturing. Too many people still associate manufacturing with oily overalls and low technology, when in fact, our plants are ultra-high technology, robotised and efficient.

Localising the supply chain

Jaguar Land Rover is now a good example of successful UK manufacturing. We are now in a period of solid profitability, strong sales and growing customer satisfaction. We have recruited 15,000 people over the past four years to support our growth plans.

We source 50% of our car components from UK suppliers including several based in London. Our manufacturing growth also supports the London economy through the purchasing of services in finance, global marketing and consultancy and we operate 80 dealerships in greater London, employing hundreds of staff.

50%

of Jaguar Land Rover car components are sourced from UK suppliers, including several based in London

So how have we become a successful UK manufacturer, exporting over 80% of our cars and bringing in billions in export revenue? We will invest £3.5bn in the design and development of new products and state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in this country this year alone. We now sell in 172 countries and will continue to invest in the UK. Our growth is also due to innovation. We are a comparatively small car company and have to innovate to survive and prosper. We must be nimble and quick thinking, if we are to lead in this high technology and fast-moving industry.

Manufacturing made this country successful. A strong manufacturing industry – intrinsically linked to engineering, design, innovation and development – can make us a world-leading industrial nation again – for cars and many other industries.

A country must make and invent things to prosper. After years of denial, I think politicians and key opinion formers are starting to understand this once again.

MY KEY IDEA

Advanced manufacturing is vital to the UK economy. It creates high-quality and innovative products that are exported across the world. For our industry to grow and thrive, businesses must invest more in innovation. The world faces major challenges such as climate change and finite resources. The companies who can innovate and develop new solutions are the ones who are likely to survive and prosper. Innovation will help our businesses grow faster, be more successful and be better prepared for change, all of which will drive UK economic growth.

Tass Mavrogordato
CEO, inmidtown

Benefits for business, society & the environment

How this business improvement district is leading the way

How can we define innovation and responsible business? After all, innovation happens in spaces that aren't prescriptive – those that are beyond definition. For us at inmidtown, the business improvement district, innovation is about finding alternative models and ways of working that help 560 businesses across Holborn, Bloomsbury and St Giles. It's about finding solutions that address the pressures these different businesses are under.

From waste removal to procurement, we constantly strive for innovative practices that help businesses grow, perform better and have a less harmful impact on their environments. Our highly successful programme, Zero to Landfill, is an exemplar of this. We started by asking ourselves a simple question: how can we encourage businesses to recycle more? In an inner city district where outdoor space for recycling bins is limited, how can we innovate within waste removal?

It wasn't long before our simple question transformed into a stirring ambition: what if we became the world's first capital city commercial district to eliminate the waste we send to landfill? That means ensuring every single one of our 'waste streams' – from glass bottles to confidential files, left-over food to redundant electrical equipment – leads to a truly sustainable outcome. It means returning as much as possible of the district's waste as sustainable product: food waste as compost and white paper as stationery. So what started as a recycling service has morphed into a closed loop solution for waste.

The benefits for businesses are multiple:

Tass Mavrogordato
CEO, inmidtown

MY KEY IDEA

At inmidtown, we help businesses reduce costs, improve employee engagement and become more responsible. We've introduced microclimate initiatives and plan to become the world's first capital city commercial district to eliminate waste sent to landfill. By collaborating with academic institutions and businesses, we've been able to offer innovative solutions.

waste is removed and recycled cost-effectively, stationery bills are reduced, and thanks to our specially developed carbon calculator, businesses have report-ready carbon data. We now have 230 businesses on the programme and, at the time of writing, our ticking carbon calculator showed a collective saving of 1,578,465 Kgs of CO2. In fact, since 2010, we've achieved cost savings of £800,000, and diverted 6,500 tonnes of waste from landfill.

Just as waste is a problem for every business, so too is employee retention. I believe we're still very much in an employee-driven working environment. For increasing numbers of people, knowing that an employer is ethical, innovative and has wider concerns than purely business are important factors when considering employment opportunities. Part of what drives inmidtown's bee-keeping and microclimate initiatives is the impact they have on employee satisfaction and quality of worklife. The experience we've found is that by using space innovatively – such as cultivating a roof garden – businesses can dramatically improve their employees' work satisfaction, in turn giving them a competitive edge.

6,500

Tonnes of waste diverted to landfill since 2010, and a cost saving of £800,000

In Holborn we have the solicitors Mishcon de Reya and Olswang, and the Radisson Blu Bloomsbury Street Hotel at the forefront of this innovation. All three businesses have created roof gardens on their premises and are growing fruit and vegetables which are then harvested and returned to the kitchens before being eaten by staff. As well as providing cost-saving sustenance and a home for beehives, the gardens provide much needed areas for relaxing and taking time out.

Our remit at inmidtown is to provide innovative solutions for the 570 businesses that we represent. But this shouldn't be our luxury alone. All businesses need the opportunity to think differently, and the government can support this by funding more initiatives designed to inspire collaboration and original thinking. Two such ways are through academic partnering, and peer-to-peer mentoring – both of which inmidtown has benefited from. By collaborating with Birkbeck University, University College London and the University of Herefordshire, we've been able to develop technological solutions which may have otherwise been too expensive to consider. Likewise, by collaborating and sharing ideas with other businesses, we've found new answers to old problems.

By its very nature the private sector is more diverse, fluid and fast-moving than the public sector. This is something to be supported and celebrated. Perhaps then we'll become closer to defining what it is to be innovative.

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Centre Of London. Front Of Mind.

How Midtown London became the destination of choice for business.

Midtown London, the district that comprises Bloomsbury, Holborn and St Giles, has everything going for it - an ideal location between the West End and the City, excellent transport links and a supply of first-rate commercial property. It's also home to the legal expertise of Lincoln's and Gray's Inns and the academic genius of LSE and the London College of International Business.

All the district really needed to set it apart was some added vision and visibility. That's where **inmidtown**, the local Business Improvement District came in. Their range of innovative and exciting initiatives to boost sustainability, cut business costs and promote investment has made Midtown London a truly inspiring place to do business. And their carbon saving projects are on track to make it the world's most sustainable, capital city commercial hub by 2015 - an altogether cleaner, greener and better Midtown London.

So, if you want to do business in London's best location, now is the time to follow the lead of tech giants such as Google, Linkedin and Skype and move to Midtown London.

Find out more at inmidtown.org

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