

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

inspire. challenge. support.



FOREPOINT AT THE FOREFRONT

Take one creative business that started life in a back bedroom, then fast forward 25+ years to an award-winning design and digital agency with a 20-strong team, offices in Preston and London, and a client list that boasts some of the leading brands – nationally and internationally.

Today, Forepoint has been ranked one of the top UK agencies by illustrious titles including: Design Week, The Drum and Prolific North. The firm is also RAR (Recommended Agency Rated) rated by clients for client service, creativity/innovation, strategic thinking and value for money.

Forepoint Director, Steve Gill said: "Over the years we've built a very strong business ethos, one that's focused on delivering 'Creativity with Purpose'. The reason we've enjoyed such great success over the past 25 years is down to the fact that we continue to deliver highly creative, highly

effective solutions for our clients regardless of the size or complexity of their business."

Creating an environment for success

There are several principles that are central to their achievements. Forepoint say, "Partnering and collaboration is in our DNA, it's key to our success. By working with brilliant like-minded people, we get the best results."

Attracting and retaining high quality staff is also key. Forepoint have recently moved to an impressive new head office in Preston and one of the main rationales behind its design was to give back to their valued staff, and to create somewhere they can be proud of.

While the exterior looks quietly unassuming, the interior was almost two years in the making. The space has been carefully created to accommodate the needs of the team of creators,

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QUOTE CORNER

"Chris is very innovative in his approach. We also have a trusted relationship with members of the team. We know full well that we could find accountancy services cheaper, but it's the added value, assurance and advice that we receive that makes all the difference."

Steve Gill,
Director,
Forepoint



collaborators, storytellers, thinkers, designers and developers. There are meeting rooms, relaxing breakout areas and social spaces for staff and clients to use as required.

The offices are a beautiful combination of form and function. "We had the opportunity to design the space from scratch, so it was important to design a solution that reflected us and a space that was extremely functional," said Steve Gill. "Part of our success is who we are as personalities."

Business savvy too

Creative firms are, of course, great at being creative, and this is a company that also recognises the importance of a solid, professional business base. That's why they became ISO 9001 accredited in the early 90s - a reflection of their effective quality management systems. A clear understanding of their financial footprint has also been integral.

At SBCA, we're delighted to have a close working relationship with such a dynamic, thoughtful and high quality organisation, and to play our part in creating the right platform for the creativity to happen. One practical application of this is how we helped facilitate the achievement of their vision for the new offices - and we were proud to see such a tangible outcome from our support. Steve Gill commented, "Chris and his team helped tremendously in terms of cash flow and funding considerations."

Chris Bond, Director of SBCA said, "Forepoint go all out to create an incredible solution for their clients - it's all about their pride in the end product. They are at the forefront of what they do and the new building reflects that - it simply oozes creativity!"

Learn more about their work at www.forepoint.co.uk



HOW CAN QUESTIONING HELP YOU?

Have you ever struggled to find the answer to something or create a solution that sticks? Sometimes it can be because you haven't got to the real heart of the issues - and that's where questioning techniques can be so useful. You may have heard of the Toyota Motor Corporation's process: 'The 5 Whys', which was developed by Taiichi Ohno in the 1950s to help with problem solving.

We certainly find that questioning enables us to challenge assumptions and beliefs. I've seen it work very well to help business owners and managers uncover realities that, between us, we can then tackle head on.

Here's a typical example of how questioning could work:

1. Why haven't I got enough cash?
(Because I'm not raising invoices quickly enough.)
2. Why's it taking me so long to get invoices out?
(I keep putting off admin.)
3. Why am I putting off admin?
(Because I don't enjoy it.)

4. Why don't I enjoy it?

(Because it takes too long and I could be doing better things with my time.)

5. Why does it take too long?

(Because it's something I'm not an expert in and it takes time to collate all the information I need.)

From this, we can get to the real nub of the issue and therefore come up with an effective solution. In the case above, it may be to outsource your bookkeeping and/or go on a cloud accounting package.

You can use this questioning technique for yourself or do it with a colleague - or with us at SBCA.

PS If you want to read more about cloud accounting, check out the article opposite.

CLOUD ACCOUNTING

IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS?

Part of our philosophy at SBCA is about helping you have more time and money to do the things you want to do – and cloud accounting can be an excellent tool to help in that. Here's a brief look at some of the benefits, to help you decide if it's the right choice for you.

How will it help my business?

Five key benefits

- Automating your accounts will free up your time by cutting down on routine tasks.
- Cloud accounting allows you to get a 'real-time' view of your financial position, who you owe and who owes you, which you can see at any time.
- Everybody who needs to, can access the information at the same time, no matter where they're based.
- You can be more paperless – you never have to run invoices out if you don't want to and neither do your customers. You can even photograph receipts on mobile devices.
- You may find that cloud accounting allows you to get paid quicker, as you can track when invoices have been opened or not.

Will it also enhance our work together?

Yes. For a start, if you allow us to, we can see an up to date

picture of your accounts – and we can discuss it with you even when we're in different places. You can also split the work with us to suit your budget. For example, you may want to deal with the invoicing, while we deal with your receipts.

What's more, the cloud accounting solution we recommend makes it more realistic for us to offer bookkeeping services more cost effectively – freeing up your time while meeting your budget.

Chris's top 3 tips on cloud accounting:

- Speak to us about the pros and cons – we can tell you whether we think you need it
- Spend time getting it set up right. Ask us about relevant apps or integrations to make your life even easier.
- Get ready sooner rather than later for 'Making Tax Digital' – it's coming!

In the next issue, I'll tell you more about the cloud accounting package we recommend. Alternatively, please do get in touch, and we'll happily discuss it with you.



Chris Bond

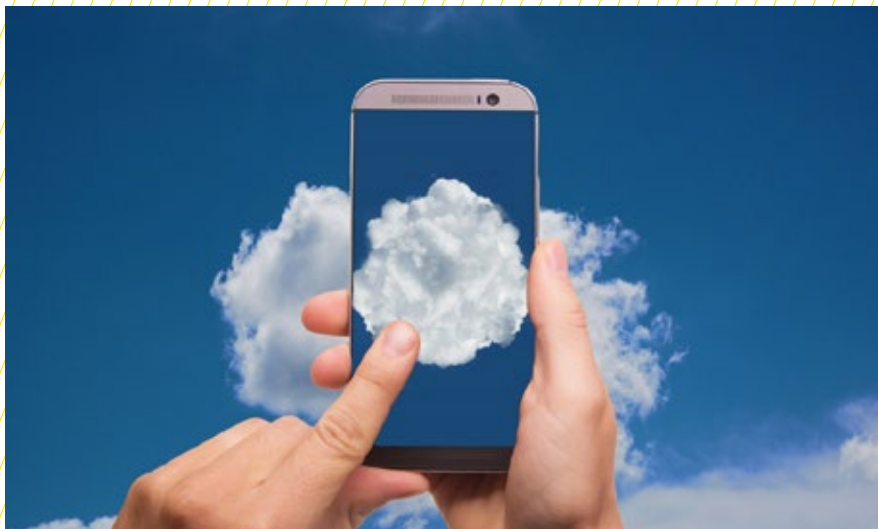
MEET HERBIE, TEAM HAPPINESS MANAGER

Hello. I'm Herbie Bond and over the next few issues, I'm going to be your guide to the lovely people behind the roles at SBCA. Actually, I'm in an ideal position to undertake this important task. I may look like I spend most of my time snoozing but don't be fooled. I usually have half an eye open – mainly for the possibility of snacks if truth be told, but it does mean that I'm pretty on the nose with office life.

So I guess I should start with a bit about me. I'm a Cavapoo – a cross between a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and a Poodle. I'm kind of collecting roles at SBCA. I started off here a couple of years ago as 'the boss's dog'. Then, because I promised not to snore loudly or beg for food too much, I was allowed in more regularly. Though I say so myself, I have proved to be a bit of a hit when it comes to making everyone smile. So, in honour of this, I was given the title of 'Team Happiness Manager'.

If we haven't met already, we no doubt will. I like to meet and greet all our customers so I can make you feel very welcome.

Next issue: Herbie catches up with Donna and demands to know why he's never been invited on one of her camping trips.



EDITOR'S NOTE

WHY?, WHY?, WHY?, ZZZZ

When my daughter Holly first started speaking, like many children, she was always asking 'why?', especially on long car journeys when she had little else to think about.

Why is it raining?

Because there are rain clouds in the sky.

Why are there rain clouds?

Because that's how the weather works.

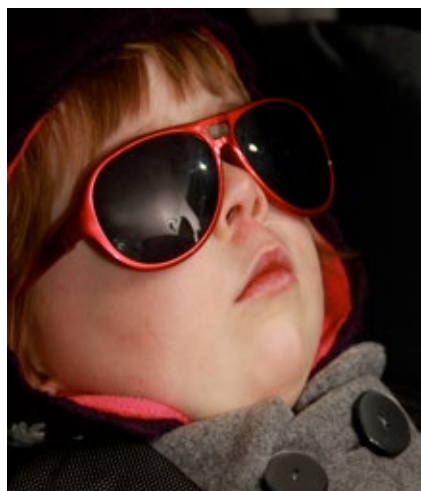
Why?

Because when it's a sunny day, water goes up in to the sky, and it needs to fall down again.

Why?

Eeerrrr, why don't you have a nap?

And so it went on. It often only stopped when she fell asleep in



her car seat and I still have the image in my mind of her little beanie hat slipping down over her eyes as she nodded off.

Why do children ask 'why'? I know why we use questioning in our business. You can read more about why we think it's such a valuable business tool on the previous page. For now, let me answer this question: why introduce an SBCA newsletter? The answer is simple: as a small token of our thanks and in the hope you'll find great value (and enjoyment) in it.

If there's anything in particular, you'd like us to cover, please do email me at cb@sbca.co.uk



QUOTE CORNER

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work"

Thomas Edison

TEAM MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Every month, we ask our team members to nominate a fellow team member for their outstanding work. Here are the results for January, February and March.

January - Congratulations Becky!



"Becky - Is both challenging and supporting. Always has good POPP results! ALWAYS puts clients first."

"Becky - because she always helps me when I need it."

February - Congratulations Alison!



"Always helpful and supportive."

"Always works really hard."

March - Congratulations Jane!



"Being so helpful and caring, and always cheering me up."

"Nothing is ever too much trouble and she always comes in with a smile on her face."

SPREAD THE WORD

We love receiving referrals as it not only means we're doing a great job for you but also that you trust us to do the same for the people you have referred to us.

As a thank you you'll receive a free case of wine or food hamper just for introducing us to a business who becomes a client of sbca.

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