

# Further Education & Skills News



February 2012

## Virtual world, real risks

**Social media's biggest advantage is also its biggest disadvantage – its pervasiveness.** It has millions of frequent users, which means misinformation or malicious falsehoods can be spread as far and as fast as any positive publicity.

### Why do some organisations fail to manage their social media risks?

Risk management is high on every governor or director's agenda, but

effective control of social media often slips through the net for several reasons.

Quite often, there is a lack of understanding of the risks involved. Sometimes, social media is perceived to be the remit of the marketing director. In many cases, there is no clear strategy or set of policies in place to manage social media risks.

### Questions your senior management team should be addressing

Every board should be asking its

senior management team to address the following questions to help establish the effectiveness of the entities approach to managing social media risks:

- Do we have a clear strategy and policy in place for social media?
- Who is in charge of social media?
- Are we listening?
- Do we have a response plan in case of a social media crisis?

Please see page 2 for details of our seminar on this topic.

## Employer ownership of skills

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills released its report on "Employer Ownership of Skills" in December 2011, with a series of recommendations to support employers in developing a "more user-focussed skills system". The Government have committed £250m to pilot the initiative and to support employers in designing and developing vocational training. If successful the pilot is likely to have a major impact on the way that the vocational skills training sector is funded and organised with even greater focus on colleges and training providers to engage with employers to deliver training that improves skills and enhances the competitiveness of UK businesses.

The Commission found three key

issues with the current system, being:

- 1 public expenditure has been directed towards qualification attainment against government targets, which while increasing participation levels and the volume of qualifications, has struggled to engage employers.
- 2 There are not enough high value training opportunities
- 3 Current employer investment is not ambitious enough for sustainable future growth

While recognising the long term agenda, the Commission identified four proposals to support the initiative:

- 1 Bringing more young people into the productive workforce by funding employers directly for Apprenticeships.
- 2 Incentivise greater investment in adult workforce development

by employers and employees, by moving from qualification-based provider funding to employer-based investments and loans to enhance outcomes and work experience opportunities.

- 3 Review where current policy and infrastructure enable and hinder employer ownership to create conditions for employers to step up and take ownership of skills in partnership with employees and trade unions, colleges and training providers.
- 4 Nurture employers' ambition and capacity for skills development by extending the scope of competitive investment funds to support more collective action by employers working together through their sectors, supply chains and local networks.

Sources: [click here](#)

Grant Thornton is ranked as a top three adviser to the charity, education and housing sectors and we pride ourselves on providing specialist knowledge to them. We would like to invite you to attend a series of seminars focusing on some of the current issues affecting organisations within these sectors. Each of these sessions will address a different issue and you are welcome to attend as many sessions as you wish.

## London

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## Seminar programme

### When social media becomes a liability

Social media's biggest advantage is also its biggest disadvantage – its pervasiveness. It has millions of frequent users, which means misinformation or malicious falsehoods can be spread as far and as fast as any positive publicity. The not for profit world is particularly vulnerable to this and our team of specialists can take you through ways of mitigating these risks and what you need to be thinking about.

### London

#### Wednesday 25 April 2012

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Tax/VAT/Employee issues update

Our tax seminar will provide an update on developments in direct taxes, VAT and an update on employee issues as they affect the sector, as well as providing timely reminders on topical issues.

### London

#### Thursday 24 May 2012

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

## Leeds

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### Financial health of the Higher Education sector

Following the release of the Grant Thornton report on the UK's higher education institutions, our education specialists will report on the findings from the analysis of the financial statements as well as themes coming out of the sector including the tuition fee debate one year on. Discussion will also include topics such as, internationalisation, shared service options and student recruitment.

### London

#### Wednesday 4 July 2012

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Education updates

The session will concentrate on key sector issues and developments within the higher and further education sectors over the past 12 months and offer timely reminders on topical issues

### Leeds

#### Friday 6 July 2012

9.00am Registration and coffee  
9.30am Seminar commences  
12.30pm Lunch

### An update on IFRS

As the migration of UK GAAP to IFRS continues to develop, this session will provide an update on the latest position for the not for profit sector, highlighting key developments, areas of concern and practical issues which need addressing. Specialists from our not for profit and IFRS conversion teams will lead the session with plenty of opportunity for debate.

### London

#### Wednesday 10 October 2012

8.30am Registration and coffee  
9.00am Seminar commences  
5.30pm Finish

### Charity topical update

This session will concentrate on key charity sector issues and developments over the past year.

### Leeds

#### Friday 5 October 2012

9.00am Registration and coffee  
9.30am Seminar commences  
12.30pm Lunch

### London

#### Tuesday 13 November 2012

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés

### Tax/VAT/Employee issues update

Our tax seminar will provide an update on developments in direct taxes, VAT and an update on employee issues as they affect the sector, as well as providing timely reminders on topical issues.

### London

#### Wednesday 5 December 2012

3.30pm Registration and coffee  
4.00pm Seminar commences  
5.30pm Drinks and canapés



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