



TIPPING LOOPHOLE TO BE CLOSED

Restaurant and bar owners will no longer be able to use customer tips to bring employees' pay up to the minimum wage under new rules proposed by the Government.

While many smaller firms pay the correct amount, some larger restaurant chains have been exposed for paying waiting staff as little as £2.06 an hour with the rest of their salary made up in tips. The rules preventing employers from using gratuities and service charges to top up wages to meet the legal minimum are expected to come into force next year following consultation this autumn.

Derek Simpson, joint leader of the Unite union, which has campaigned to end tips being included in wages said: "It is great news that unscrupulous employers will no longer be able to use the tips left for staff to subsidise low wages."

Watch out...

For scam emails purporting to come from HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs), offering a 'tax refund' in exchange for credit card details.

Businesses should be aware of the 'phishing' scam. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) has warned.

"Alarm bells should ring when you are asked to submit your credit card details," says Head of the ICAEW Tax Faculty Frank Haskew. "HMRC never asks for this information, but fraudsters are becoming increasingly savvy and the 'tax document' looks very convincing at first glance."

Less smoothly executed is

a scam email that claims to be from Trading Standards Central UK, promising "One Million Great British Pound Starlings Only".

Trading Standards are telling people to read their emails carefully and trust their instincts. "Our advice to anyone receiving such an email is to focus on what the sender is asking for – for example, bank details or for people to call an expensive telephone line," says Trading Standards spokesman Graeme Preston.

"Do not get involved in correspondence – and if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is."

Forward emails to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk



PHOTOS: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

DID YOU KNOW?

A surprising 42% of UK entrepreneurs have no succession planning in place for when they retire

SOURCE: RESEARCH BY CREDIT SUISSE



...TALKED UP FOR A CHANGE

**MIKE STEVENSON
DESIGN LINKS, EDINBURGH**

When ex-steelworker, hospital orderly, community worker, busker and actor-turned-entrepreneur Mike Stevenson set up a marketing agency 15 years ago, he knew he wanted to do more with it than create effective marketing for clients. Design Links has a client list that includes the Scottish courts, the Scottish Football Association and BP, but Mike also wanted the agency to use its skills to help the community.

Nearly five years ago, Mike became sole owner and managing director of Design Links and he began to put his ideas into practice. He wanted to show community projects that they could communicate much more effectively.

"People are bombarded with messages that they have absolutely no interest in, at best, and that put them off at

“The awards show we can punch above our weight and help others”

worst," says Mike. "Communication needs to be persuasive rather than factual if it is to change perception."

To prove his point, Design Links began a long-term partnership with Craigroyston Community High School, which had acquired a reputation as 'the worst performing school in Scotland'. The partnership developed a marketing strategy aimed at parents, the local community and business leaders to showcase the pupils' talents and achievements. The focus was on changing young people's expectations of themselves and their school. Along with outside events and activities, Design Links put together a partnership between Craigroyston



and private school St George's School for Girls. Again the idea was to challenge Craigroyston pupils' perceptions and spark new ideas.

Last year, Design Links set up a sister arm, Talking UP for a Change, to encourage businesses and public sector organisations to think positively. Talking UP held five events attracting 300 business, sports and public service leaders. The aims included changing how Scottish businesses communicate, positioning Scotland as a world leader and changing management styles. The fifth event involved students from Craigroyston school and St George's demonstrating their musical talents.

TRIPLE AWARD WINNER

The Edinburgh-based agency has been recognised three times for its community work, winning Scottish Small Company of the Year and a Big Tick at a Scottish Business in the Community gala dinner in Glasgow in June. In July,

Mike went to London to collect a CommunityMark award from Business in the Community.

The Big Tick award was in recognition of Design Links' work with the school, while the CommunityMark rewarded its general engagement in the community. Design Links was one of only 21 companies to receive a CommunityMark. Other winners included Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Sainsbury's, KPMG and BT.

Design Links' success is a boost for the agency. "The awards show we can punch above our weight and we can help others to do that too," says Mike.

Looking to the future, Mike says: "We're aiming to work with more companies on staff motivation, green marketing, and marketing in a responsible way."

designlinks.co.uk
talkupchange.co.uk
Turn to page 28 for our feature on social enterprises

Mike Stevenson with some of the pupils his agency is helping (above) and winning the CommunityMark award in July (below)

