

LTI VEHICLES SUPPORTS A SPECIAL DAY OUT FOR LIVERPOOL CHILDREN

Children from two schools for the visually impaired in Liverpool have enjoyed a day out thanks to the generosity of Liverpool taxi drivers and LTI Vehicles.

Pupils at the Liverpool Royal School for the Blind and St Vincent's School for the Blind and Partially sighted, enjoyed a day out at Camelot Theme Park in Lancashire.

LTI Vehicles donated £1000 to the Liverpool Blind Children's Committee, which each year takes up to 100 children out for an action packed day. Taxi drivers from across the region have transported children in decorated cabs since 1936.



managed by people from within our industry."

David McCoy, secretary of the Liverpool Blind Children's Committee, said the money was gratefully received: "This donation means we can take even more children on our annual trip. In addition to the trip we also collect money all year round to purchase equipment for the schools."

Andrew Overton, LTI Vehicles' market development consultant, said the company was pleased to support taxi drivers in the region: "This is a fantastic initiative and we're extremely proud that it's organised and

TAXIS AND THE WEB REVOLUTION

In London, the radio circuits all have websites and offer their clients many different facilities through the sites. For corporate clients, the convenience afforded by running their taxi accounts on-line is of great importance. For those drivers who are not on a radio circuit, the relevance of the internet might not seem so important. But overall across the country the internet is having a significant and positive impact on the fortunes of taxi firms according to a new study released today. Research by thebestof, a national network of local marketing websites, run by local people, that champion the best businesses in their area shows that small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) plan to grow their businesses by on average 38% in the coming year. However the more web-savvy SMEs including taxi firms have growth ambitions that are twice those of their conventional SME counterparts (41% vs 20%).

The study is based on telephone interviews with 500 small and medium sized businesses combined with an online survey completed by a further 2,583 SMEs. The businesses were drawn from across the UK and from a mix of sectors, and included 55 taxi firms. The research which explores SMEs general approach to marketing, reveals that taxi firms typically spend £3,000 marketing their businesses and 83% of them plan to spend as much if not more on marketing in the coming year. However a significant group are focusing this spend on the web and this spend is delivering results. For instance the internet-enabled taxi firms get 27% of their enquiries from the web.

In general, the study paints a picture of an SME community in a bullish mood. One in five plan to launch a new product or service in the next 12 months and a further 13% will expand into a new area. One in six will merge with or acquire another business and only 3% plan to scale back their operations. Indeed when asked to score their future optimism, on a scale of 1 to 10 the average score is a creditable 7.8.

However, when analysing the businesses which are more web active against those who are not, the study shows that the companies most actively using the web for marketing, expect their business to grow twice as quickly as the SMEs who aren't. These web-aware SMEs are also far more likely to be taking business away from larger rivals too. For instance 58% of the internet active taxi firms describe their competitors as bigger than them, whereas the

less internet active are more likely to say their competitors are the same size as them or smaller.

Nigel Botterill, Chief Executive of thebestof comments: "The first wave of the internet seemed to be all about the major brands and retailers, or businesses like lastminute.com or ebay, whose whole premise is built on the internet. What this research shows is that there's a whole generation of ordinary small businesses - like taxi firms - who have been quietly working in the background, using the Web to steal market share from their bigger competitors."

Nigel Botterill again: "It is extraordinary to see how the internet is delivering so much for some and yet so little for others. We're working hard to try and understand why this is." Part of the problem appears to be a matter of mindset. One in five (19%) reports that they don't feel equipped to take advantage of the Internet. A further 56% simply believe it is the natural domain of the bigger business. The age of the proprietor in charge of the SME is another issue. Nigel Botterill concludes: "Taxi firms need to break out of this mindset. 69% of them turn to the web for their suppliers, so why do they think people looking for taxi firms, aren't doing the same? They need to realise that there are businesses exactly like theirs doing some very simple things to capture business through the Web. It's not rocket science, it's a basic business skill and tool, just like financial management, which they can and must harness."

AGM FOR WAR DISABLED CHARITY

The annual general meeting of The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled will be held at 3pm on Monday 9th November 2007 at The Royal Hospital Chelsea SW3. Nominations must be sent in writing duly proposed and seconded by first post 22nd October 2007 to The Secretary, Paul Davis, 88 Grasvenor Avenue Barnet Herts EN5 2DB.

Due to the extra security would any persons who wish to attend please contact Paul by 5th November 2007 on 07860850102.

SPOT THAT FARE IN A FLASH!

Potential taxi passengers are now using the Taxi Hailer product launched by London cab driver Tony Brady and his business partner, product designer Chris Cullen. The device is designed to benefit both drivers and passengers. Tony explained: "I knew from my own experience how difficult it can sometimes be seeing potential fares. Listening to passengers' tales about how they often struggle to be seen by drivers convinced me that there was a problem that needed addressing".

Taxi Hailer is the size of a credit card and costs £9.99. Its powerful bright orange flashing light is powered by energy-efficient LED technology, and research shows that Taxi Hailer makes identifying potential passengers by cab drivers up to five times easier, even in the very worst driving conditions.

Tony and Chris have already begun to market and sell their innovative new product through their website www.taxihailer.co.uk which sells direct to both the public and corporate buyers. Taxi Hailer are currently giving cab drivers a special one off deal, by quoting this editorial you can buy up to 4 taxi hailers, at a cost of £7.50 each inclusive of P+P, offer limited to postal purchases, cheques or postal orders should be made payable to Taxi Hailer Company Limited, and addressed to Taxi Hailer Company Limited, 362 Gander Green Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM3 9QZ or with a credit card by phone to 020 8644 0129. Offer ends 30th September.

