Business Alliance
Business Alliance is sustained by the guidance, initiative, support and financial contribution of its members.
“Paul, your Business Alliance leads the way in work with major corporates.”

David Frost, Director General
British Chambers of Commerce
Introducing Business Alliance

Business Alliance is unique due to its success in helping to forge strong relationships between participating companies, so that a ‘virtuous circle’ of political and business influence is created. The ‘Business Alliance’ chapter currently comprises a significant proportion of the region’s major businesses and public sector bodies, who find that this option is the most effective way of meeting their objectives, including those related to ‘Corporate and Institutional Responsibility’.

Business Alliance members are typically operating globally, nationally and regionally, and their leaders seek a strategic relationship with the Chamber to improve the business environment, position themselves as industry leaders and make stronger overseas links by engaging with the new ‘Business International’ forum.

“It provides a highly cost-effective way of reminding me that business works through personal contact, not just the technical world in which we live…”

Bill Payne, Vice President, Strategy and Development Managed Business Process Services, IBM Europe

1. Christina Howell, Head of External Affairs, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
2. Microsoft’s Chris Parker, speaking at Tower Bridge, London
Business Alliance is a comprehensive resource for any major organisation. Directors and senior management enjoy a discrete programme of ‘Leadership Dinners’, whilst a diverse range of other activities is open to all levels of management by way of forums, services and products that have been specifically designed to meet their needs and address their concerns.

Business Alliance has revolutionised the way major organisations connect with each other and use their combined weight through forums such as ‘The Windsor Debates’, to shape policy and improve the business environment, an ongoing process that is growing in prestige and effectiveness.

A dedicated business manager drives the relationship between Business Alliance members and the Chamber, designing and implementing bespoke strategies in line with agreed objectives. ‘Project-specific Support’ is backed up by a comprehensive package of marketing tools.

1. HRH The Duke of York, UK Special Representative for International Trade and Investment following his address on globalisation at Windsor Castle
2. Oracle Corporation’s Tim Caiger – aligning real estate strategy with company growth
3. Linda Irwin, Henley Business School and IBM’s Bill Payne leading on the global talent pool and development imperatives
The leadership dinners are held in exclusive and prestigious surroundings, and feature keynote speakers addressing topics related to: leadership and change; strategic planning; market trends; and industry movement.

Held in an informal, intimate environment to encourage open and confidential sharing of insights, expertise and opinion, these occasions often lead to the development of long-term and meaningful business relationships, sometimes resulting in joint commercial or corporate responsibility activities.

“...my time is well-spent in attending well-organised events that provide a perfect environment for making new contacts and re-connecting with existing ones...”

Ian Smith, Senior Partner
PricewaterhouseCoopers

As well as building productive business relationships, Business Alliance members also use the Chamber as a tool to discuss and resolve strategic and tactical issues with the public sector, and to engage with businesses of all sizes and in all sectors.

1. Business Alliance dinner at Danesfield House Hotel, Marlow
2. Thames Water’s Tony Denton and FM Global’s Martin Fessey on designing-out risk
3. BMW’s John Hollis and Jan Figel, European Commissioner for Education & Training, discuss European expansion
“Business Alliance can be counted on to produce the highest quality speakers at its events. The opportunity at a recent lunch to discuss developments in Brussels with one of the most experienced and influential MEP’s was particularly valuable. The lively discussion with the European Commissioner of Enterprise and the Information Society at an evening event in Marlow was equally memorable.”

John Hollis, BMW (GB) Ltd

4. Security of energy supply – under the scrutiny of Aily Armour-Biggs, Global Energy Advisory, Professor Christine Williams and Dr David Gillham, University of Reading and Honda’s Paul Roberts at the Windsor Debates
5. 3M’s Dave Cook and University of Reading’s Dr David Gillham discuss the paradox of innovation and brand associations
The Windsor Debates Influence

A groundbreaking series of events exclusively for senior level business leaders of major public and private organisations who are compelled to address the challenges posed by globalisation of business.

The Windsor Debates are a unique and confidential forum for pooling strategies and solutions and identifying areas for clarification and research.

This rolling programme feeds the views and concerns of leading UK companies into the Government’s decision-making process at both national and European levels, in support of business-friendly policies that might otherwise be overlooked.

1. Business Alliance members launch the Windsor Debates – The Cloisters, Windsor Castle
2. Windsor Castle
3. The Windsor Debate breakout on the steps of St George’s Chapel, Paul Briggs with Dr David Gillham from University of Reading, Peter Thomson, Henley Business School and John Molloy, PWC
Themes for the Windsor Debates derive from the most pressing concerns of our Business Alliance members, which currently include:

- Globalisation and the Digital Economy
- The Challenge of Economic Change: can we deliver the skills for tomorrow?
- Energy and the Economy
- Terrorism and Security

Other topics will emerge as members and sponsors take a lead in supporting and shaping the programme; they will be particularly well-placed to benefit by association.
As the highest level of membership, Business Alliance offers all the benefits and services available to other Chamber members, as well as a discrete programme of Business Alliance events. In addition, it offers the exclusive opportunity to work in partnership with us to meet specific organisational objectives.

Examples of such initiatives include:

- Attracting inward investment
- Support for formal consultations
- Representations to local, national and European policy-makers
- Coordination of people development programmes
- Introductions to international contacts and provision of associated information and support
- Raising the profile of a company, product or service
- Delivering a new or improved marketing message
- Marketing to small, medium, large or niche businesses

“[Business Alliance] allows us to strengthen our local and regional links with other businesses and supports our drive to successfully meet the future needs of SMEs and micro-businesses across the region...”

Peter Cowen, Partnership Director, South East BT
“Through working with Business Alliance, we are able to effectively represent the interest of Vodafone Group Plc locally and regionally. Business Alliance is also an excellent forum for meeting with a wide variety of businesses.”

David Danielli, Vodafone Group Plc

1. Marion Royer works with Business Alliance clients to progress agreed objectives
2. PWC’s John Molloy and Dr David Gillham of University of Reading discuss plans for identifying and fast-tracking the regions’ entrepreneurs and innovators
3. Sir Moir Lockhead OBE, Chief Executive of First Group is introduced to business leaders to discuss their future strategy
4. Business Alliance supporting the Learning and Skills Council’s awards for personal achievement
5. Business Alliance works in partnership with, and delivers Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership’s corporate engagement
The global aspirations of Business Alliance members called for additional services, particularly in identifying and working with transnational partners.

With the support of our members we introduced ‘Corporate Global’ a membership for overseas companies who wish to do business with the UK. It is facilitated by a new Business Alliance programme of events: ‘Business International’.

1. John Coronado, the American Embassy’s Commercial Attaché - talks about Transatlantic opportunities at Stoke Park with Paul Briggs
2. Dr Afnan Al-Shuaiby, Secretary General and Chief Executive of Arab-British Chamber of Commerce at the energy Windsor Debate
3. Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, discusses global cooperation and emerging market opportunities with Christina Howell
5. Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group welcomes its overseas Corporate Global members from Russia, Ukraine and Georgia
The increasing rate of change associated with integration of international trade operations - where distance and culture no longer pose barriers to location of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services - creates additional opportunities that are best served through:

- Cultural briefings
- Overseas introductions
- Overseas market information
- Contractual templates for agents and other personnel
- Translation and interpretation
- Inward missions
- Outward delegations
- Facilitation of peer-to-peer best practice
- International trade documentation

“I really benefit from the ability to mix with other business leaders. It is surprising how many of our issues are similar but then again, we are all dependent on people issues and the global economy...”

Dr Pat Upson CBE, Chief Executive Enrichment Technology Company
Businesses do not operate in a vacuum, and there is increasing recognition that putting corporate responsibility at the heart of normal business practice has a positive effect on the company’s workforce, as well as its external image and therefore the potential for growth.

Commitment to corporate responsibility (CR) can be demonstrated in many different ways. We work with our Business Alliance members to identify how to establish them as CR ‘champions’ by developing initiatives that align with their objectives whilst benefiting the wider business community. A statement of affirmation is provided for marketing purposes.

“We value Chamber membership through Business Alliance scheme greatly, not only because it supports the delivery of new concepts to market and allows us to strengthen our local and regional links with other businesses, but because it allows us to work with the Chamber and the members to deliver products and applications to successfully meet the future needs of SMEs and micro-businesses. We welcome their continued support.”

Peter Cowen, BT

1. Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England explains the backgrounds to interest rate changes
2. Shadow Chancellor for the Liberal Democrats, Vince Cable MP discusses economic and fiscal regulatory responsibility
3. Director General for Energy at BERR, Willy Rickett at the energy Windsor Debates explains the Government’s energy agenda
4. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London - the value of Thames Valley and M4 Corridor proximity to London
5. BT’s Peter Cowen, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group and partners launch one of BT’s many community initiatives - Reading Silver Surfers Club
The financial contribution made by Business Alliance members allows us to run several very important programmes that help our members, our region, and the economy as a whole. These include:

- Carbon Footprint Exchange
- Business Leaders’ Forum
- The Windsor Debates
- Business International
- Corporate best practice groups
  - Human Resources
  - Facilities and Operations
  - Finance and Company Secretary
  - Property
  - Transport
- Supporting the regional economy
  - Entrepreneurship ‘the Business Advice Service’
  - Innovation in business
  - Driving the information, communication and technology agenda
  - Upholding the independent private sector perspective to local, regional, national and European bodies

New initiatives are introduced as common themes and needs emerge.
And there’s more!

- Business Alliance is a company wide membership that entitles all levels of management, and their teams, to engage with us according to their support needs

- One Business Alliance membership may cover multiple sites as an aid to administrative and financial efficiency

- Specific projects undertaken in partnership may be adapted as business demands change

- Core marketing resources are built into Business Alliance as a standard benefit: access to mailing lists; logo on and links to the Chamber website; and opportunities to speak to different sizes and types of organisations across the region

1. Global Crossing exchange forecasts with fellow Business Alliance member, Newbury Racecourse

2. Gavin Kowalski of O2 promoting the benefits of technology

3. Greville Dare, Director and Chairman of the Petersham Group, (the Liddington, Elvetham and Petersham hotels) leading the way on hospitality investment

4. Marion Royer discusses Business Alliance membership
Telephone 01753 870502 for an informal, no obligation meeting. We will then discuss with you the most beneficial and appropriate level of involvement with the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group. The options include:

• Business Alliance Membership - the strategic choice for industry leaders
• Corporate Membership - the practical choice for medium to large sized companies that wish to share insights, expertise and best practice through an exclusive portfolio of forums and services
• Essential Membership - the essential choice for start-ups through to small and medium size businesses with a range of benefits designed to deliver advice and support, and to contribute to growth
Bill Payne, Vice President, Strategy and Development Managed Business Process Services, IBM Europe

“There is a tendency these days when we use the word network, to assume it’s the way we communicate through our pc. It’s too easy in the electronic age to forget the network we make through face to face contact with colleagues, collaborators, competitors and clients alike. The human dimension of contact can never be replaced by the keyboard or mouse!

Business Alliance provides a perfect environment for formal and informal contact, communication and exchange between business leaders. It provides a highly cost effective way of reminding me that business works through personal contact, not just the technical world in which we live.”

Ian Smith, Senior Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers

“Business Alliance is unique for the way strategic networking opportunities are offered as an integral membership benefit. Increasingly time-poor management find that their time is well-spent in attending well-organised events that provide a perfect environment for making new contacts and re-connecting with existing ones. Held in the best venues the region has to offer and featuring thought-provoking speakers, these occasions are always enjoyable, and always useful.”

Peter Cowen, Partnership Director, South East BT

“Chamber membership and particularly the additional benefits enjoyed within the Business Alliance scheme is highly regarded within BT. The undoubted quality of the membership and of the programmes delivered, allows us to strengthen our local and regional links with other businesses and supports our drive to successfully meet the future needs of SMEs and micro-businesses across the region.”

Andy Cresswell, Group General Manager, Midcounties Co-operative

“I have been actively involved with The Business Alliance for about six months after taking over the lead role for our organisation from a colleague. In this short time I have benefited in a number of areas, from the opportunity for general networking and time to consider business issues away from the office at the excellent dinners with like minded people, to focussed support for my personal development. One of the reasons I got actively involved was to increase my awareness of other business streams and challenge myself in different areas. After a long discussion with Business Alliance about my needs I am now an inaugural Governor of the Swindon and Marlborough NHS trust. This was only possible through Business Alliance and I am very excited about the experiences this will give me in the future and hopefully I will be able to bring a benefit to the Trust.”

Peter Marsh, Regional Skills Director, Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the South East

“Being an active member of Business Alliance has given the LSC the ideal opportunity to engage in high level networking with key employers and stakeholders across the Thames Valley. This is crucial to our organisation, as it has provided us with the appropriate forum to hear and respond to the specific needs of employers from across a wide range of industry sectors.

It also means that the LSC has a visible platform to both raise awareness and promote discussions about the Skills Agenda – in particular areas such as ‘Train to Gain’, Apprenticeships, the South East Skills Challenge and the Integrated Employment and Skills programme.

We look forward to building on the strong relationships we have made through Business Alliance.”
Dr Pat Upson CBE, Chief Executive, Enrichment Technology Company

“I run an international business in the nuclear power industry based in the Thames Valley but, frankly, apart from local support services, pretty independent from being there – apart from the proximity to London and Heathrow. I was, however, keen to take Business Alliance membership, and I really benefit from the ability to mix with other business leaders. It is surprising how many of our issues are similar but then, again, we are all dependent on people issues and the global economy, and it helps one keep our industry issues in perspective.

I recommend Business Alliance membership to anyone. It gives an excellent peer support group and the possibility to take part in current debates on key issues; like the energy debate, where I have had an opportunity to bring an insider view to other Thames Valley companies.”

Cllr Roderick Bluh, Leader of the Council, Swindon Borough Council

“I am delighted to offer my support for Business Alliance. One of my goals is to make Swindon the number one place in the UK to do business. As part of this, we are delighted to work in partnership with Business Alliance as an active participant in developing and delivering the Swindon Strategic Economic Partnership. Business Alliance has also been a valuable contributor towards the development of our transport vision to help us deliver our goal.”

Lyn Hill-Tout, Chief Executive, Swindon & Marlborough NHS Trust

“At Swindon & Marlborough NHS Trust we are lucky that we are at the heart of our local community. It is sometimes forgotten however that we are also one of the local areas major employers, and Business Alliance gives us an ideal opportunity to be engaged with the business community. It is of great benefit to us to have the opportunity to meet, learn and share ideas and knowledge with other businesses in the area. This is especially true as we move to Foundation Trust status whilst still remaining firmly part of the NHS.

Our dedicated Project Manager has made the process much smoother, and our individual membership plan will help us to advance our aims and objectives in the future.”

Mike Godfrey, Honda, UK Manufacturing

“Through Business Alliance membership, we are confident that our funding contribution supports the development of programmes and support activities that make a difference.

Additionally as Business Alliance members there are many opportunities for meeting peers from companies both locally and in Thames Valley region - these events can be themed to locally important issues but also involve national and international aspects.

Recently Honda worked with the Chamber on the new Migration Points Based System requirements and specifically on the English test requirements - this positive support contributed to a change to the language test requirements for intra-company transfers which had been a significant concern for our company.

Business Alliance does give a strategic relationship with the Chamber coupled with a dedicated project manager supporting agreed individual corporate aims and objectives - these could range from simply achieving CSR requirements to specific business plan improvements.”