

IF YOU WANT TO STOP IT KICKING OFF DONT MOVE THE GOAL POSTS



STEVE NOBLE, REWARD FINANCE GROUP'S MANAGING DIRECTOR, NORTH WEST, ON WHY WE SHOULD ALL KEEP THINGS SIMPLE, CLEAR, AND CERTAIN.

Well, it was quite a storm over the idea of a European Super League with the city of Liverpool demonstrating some polar opinions. There was outrage on the blue half of Merseyside at the thought that the folks across Stanley Park should race away to chase this pot of gold and untold riches, whilst Liverpool FC's owners made a miscalculation of epic proportions about how unhappy their 'customers' might be.

Before anyone shouts at me for referring to supporters as 'customers', it enables me to make a comparison to business, so bear with me.

Legends of the game such as Bill Shankly, Matt Busby and Jock Stein all made emotive statements with a variation on a theme that football, without fans, is nothing, and the last 12 months of playing in empty soulless stadiums has only served to reinforce this fact. I'm a man of simplicity, and whilst it's not all about nostalgia and doggedly holding with old traditions, there are some basic aspects that transcend time and technological change.

Bill Shankly talked about making the people happy.

In the world of business and football, and the seismic events we are still coming to terms with, most people are happier when things are simple, clear, and certain – this is both in the way they run their companies and what they want their

customers to experience. Add in choice, and you have a winning formula.

Amazon, as undoubtedly one of the most valuable businesses on the planet, is certainly a pioneer in taking this to another level through technology. At its heart it allows the customer to easily and simply have a clear choice from a range of products, at a price he/she can easily compare and, once purchased, it provides certainty of a quick delivery.

So, how on earth does this relate to the world of raising finance in a post COVID era? The team at Reward Finance Group passionately believe that trying to keep things simple and straightforward, with a speedy delivery, are key requirements.

Naturally, price matters within reason, but it should not be the defining decision. Why else would millions of us buy an Apple laptop at £1,500 when you get a laptop that does many of the same things for about £250?

When a business requires finance, it needs to consider several factors – the amount required; how easy it might be to obtain; what ongoing requirements it entails; does it provide enough to cover future plans; is it something the business can afford; how quickly can it be delivered?

Whilst financial services play a significant part in driving the UK economy, there are large parts of the SME market that labour on, juggling cash and using their own resources, because of some inherent fear

that having funding (debt) in your business is somehow a bad thing. But business owners often consider how much more potential the business would have if they had access to additional working capital. The last 10 years plus have seen more choices created than ever before for alternative finance, rather than being restricted to the "big boys" on the High Street. Let's face it, the High Street is changed forever, and so in my view, is the world of business finance.

With so much choice, Reward's advice to SMEs is for them not to be overwhelmed or frustrated by complexity, 'box ticking' or fancy tech – but to talk to their Accountant/Adviser. Together they can focus on the amount they might want and then find a solution which meets those needs, rather than letting an 'off the shelf' product drive them down a certain path.

After all, when you go onto Amazon and search for an item you want, you don't put the model number in and work back from there, do you?

The 'Big Six' football owners should listen to the fans (their 'customers') who want things simple, clear, and certain. It's a formula that works well across all sectors, from delivering parcels through to providing finance, and it is certainly one that Reward Finance Group has built a successful business upon.

Hopefully, our clients and their advisers believe this approach puts us in the Premier League when it comes to lending.

Reward Finance Group helps childhood dream become a reality for leisure operator.

Reward Finance Group was introduced to Carol Gerrard-Hughes by Liverpool-based Matthews Sutton Accountants to ask if we would consider funding the improvements to the Forest View pub and caravan site in Oakmere, Northwich.



“When the banks would not support me, I was close to putting everything on the market and selling up. However, Reward saw the passion I had for the site and Russell Holt and the Reward team worked tirelessly to provide me with the funds to turn my childhood dreams into reality.”

We went to meet Carol to hear her story. She told us that she had fallen in love with Forest View after her parents bought a caravan, when she was six, and the family spent weekends and school holidays there. At 13, she started washing up in the pub, then worked behind the bar and, ultimately, finished up running it.

She set her mind on owning Forest View but realising her ambition has not been easy. Having bought the tenancy for the pub and the site in 2007, she was advised by pub operator and owner, Scottish and Newcastle, that they were planning to sell the site to a housing developer in 2009. To prevent this from happening, she moved quickly and bought the whole lot from them.

As well as the pub, the site has 45 static caravans and 26 touring pitches.

Recognising the potential for Forest View, which overlooks Delamere Forest, Carol was keen to make a significant investment in the site. Her plans were to extend and refurbish the pub, build a new toilet block, create 20 more touring pitches, provide additional electrical points for the caravans, as well as landscaping and tidying up the site to further enhance its appeal.

Despite the equity in the site, none of the banks would lend her the money to carry out her plans.

Having been impressed with Carol's enthusiasm and tenacity, as well as her plans for the site and the additional revenue this would generate, Reward quickly provided the funds.

With the works now complete, Carol is already reaping the rewards with all the static caravans occupied and the touring pitches fully booked for this year. Planning permission has also been granted for an additional 27 tent pitches.

“When the banks would not support me, I was close to putting everything on the market and selling up,” Carol said. “However, Reward saw the passion I had for the site and Russell Holt and the Reward team worked tirelessly to provide me with the funds to turn my childhood dreams into reality.”

“My parents and two siblings spent some wonderful holidays and getaways here and, from being my second home, it has now turned into my real home for my husband Mike and our six children. I am also delighted my eldest daughter Sophie is my new business partner, and I am very

excited about the future, now that it is secured.”

Reward's Business Development Director for the North West, Russell Holt, added, “The money we have lent to Carol has been invested wisely as it has transformed the site, making it a real destination for holidaymakers, especially with the rise in 'staycations', and a great place for people who live in the static caravans.

“The pub has traditionally served those on site but, now the improvements have been made, it will definitely attract people from the local area too.

“By being flexible we were able to provide Carol with the funds quickly to ensure the pub and the site fulfil their true potential, resulting in an extremely successful business.”

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