



**transforming** businesses »

## » Do you run a business? Or does your business run you?

At DK, we believe that owning a business should give you freedom – the freedom to do things the way you wish, to make a positive impact in your region and on the economy in general, and the freedom to allow you to spend time doing that which is important to you.

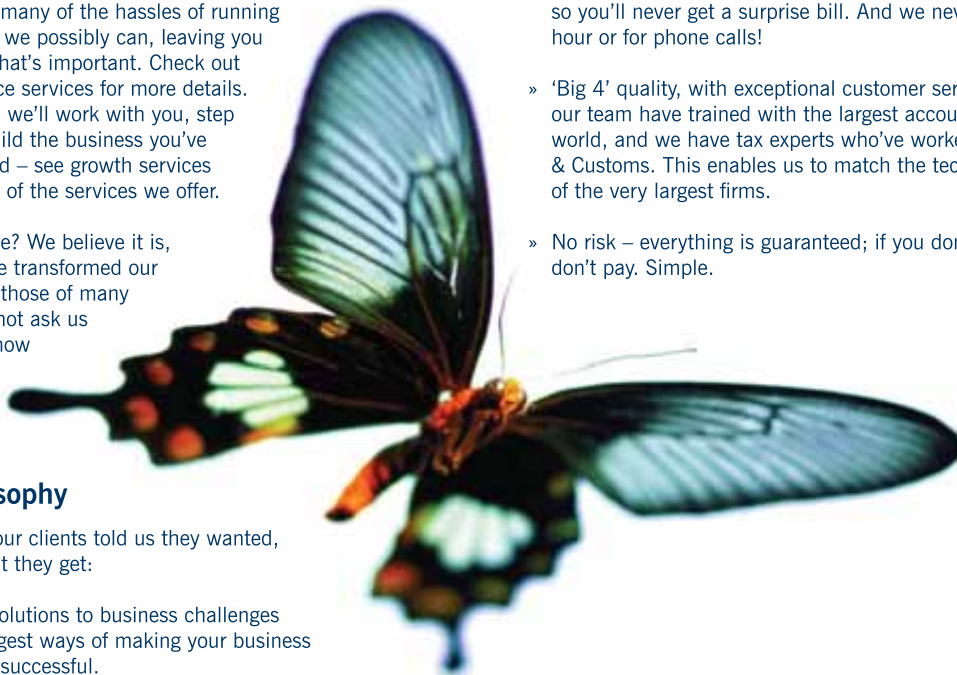
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But it often isn't like this. However passionate you may have been when you started, many people find the enthusiasm drains away as the daily grind takes its toll. And it's lonely. Who else understands what it feels like to be caught between the ever-increasing demands of customers and those of the team you employ? There seems to be less time in which you need to do more things, just to stand still, never mind getting back on track to achieve the vision you had when you started.

It doesn't have to be like this. Your business can give you more life. Let us show you how.

At DK, we'll do two things for you. Firstly, we'll take away as many of the hassles of running a business as we possibly can, leaving you to focus on what's important. Check out our compliance services for more details. And secondly, we'll work with you, step by step, to build the business you've always wanted – see growth services to get an idea of the services we offer.

Is this possible? We believe it is, because we've transformed our business and those of many clients. Why not ask us to show you how we can do the same for you?



### » Our philosophy

This is what our clients told us they wanted, so this is what they get:

- » Proactive solutions to business challenges – we'll suggest ways of making your business even more successful.
- » Fast response – your time is valuable so we'll return phone calls within 2 hours and prepare accounts within 30 days.

- » Low tax – what can be done will be done to lower your tax liability.
- » Value for money – we're not the cheapest, but you get what you pay for – and we believe the amount by which the value delivered exceeds the price charged is greater with DK than when using a cheaper provider.
- » Your success is the way we grow – if you're happy and your business is prospering, that's mirrored in DK – so we care passionately about serving you to the very best of our ability.
- » No surprises – we agree the price of all our services in advance, so you'll never get a surprise bill. And we never charge by the hour or for phone calls!
- » 'Big 4' quality, with exceptional customer service – many of our team have trained with the largest accounting firms in the world, and we have tax experts who've worked at HM Revenue & Customs. This enables us to match the technical capabilities of the very largest firms.
- » No risk – everything is guaranteed; if you don't value it, you don't pay. Simple.



## » Our services

Our services are split between three different categories, each described below. The categories are just for convenience – in reality you'll most likely receive a mix of all three, based on your own unique requirements.

## » Compliance services

These are the 'relief from hassle' services that you probably expect from an accountant. There's plenty of bureaucracy involved in running a business – let us give you some relief and free your time to focus on what's important to you! We'll deal with your legal obligation to file accounts and tax returns, audit those accounts as required, make sure your bank gets what they need before they need it, keep your company records up to date, run your payroll, help you set up systems that give you a 'dashboard' of information to run your business, prepare cash flow forecasts and business plans and so on.

Increasingly, it's becoming essential to have reliable, timely management information in order to control and grow any business. Many clients have found that the easiest way of achieving this is by outsourcing their entire finance function to us. We are able to maintain your accounting records on our computerised systems, giving you the information you need in order to run your business such as profit and loss analysis, cash flow projections, debtor analysis and so on. Outsourcing in this way has many advantages, relieving you of the hassle of hiring and retaining bookkeeping personnel and removing the challenges of holiday or maternity cover, leaving you free to focus on running your business. Clients are often pleasantly surprised by how cost-effective this route can be; it's often cheaper than they may have paid for another accountant and an internal bookkeeping team.

## » Business growth services

If you want somebody to help you build the business you've always wanted, you've come to the right place. We've built a whole suite of tools which we call business growth services designed to help you make rapid progress. We know your business is unique, and we'll never impose a 'one size fits all' solution. Each project is tailored to fit your unique situation.

Examples of the services we can provide include:

- » Sales & marketing – every business needs an effective sales and marketing function, but many shy away from this area and leave it to chance. This is hugely dangerous. We'll show you how to build a marketing function that delivers terrific results.
- » Strategic planning – do you really know where your business is heading, or are you at the whim of your market? Do your key employees and shareholders share the same vision? If you don't know the answers to these questions, cracks can very quickly appear in even the most successful businesses. Let us work with you to build a practical strategic plan that guides the entire business – not a weighty tome, but a guide you will refer to every day.

- » Benchmarking – finding out how you compare to your key competitors is hugely valuable. Using one of the largest databases in the UK, we can show you where you're ahead, and perhaps even more importantly where you're behind the best in your sector. This gives real focus to your business plans.

- » *OnePage* business planning – as used by 70% of the top 500 companies in the world. We've built a one-page plan that contains all the key information we need to run our business and those of many of our clients. To run a successful business, you need more information than even the best accounting system can provide – and that's where the *OnePage* plan comes in. Let us show you how.

- » Corporate finance – this means making sure that your business has enough money, and that it's of the right type. We'll help you plan what's needed and then, through our network of contacts and our own financial services company, we'll source the money.

- » Systems – to build a real business, you simply must have systems to ensure that it's done right first time, every time, without you having to be there to enforce quality. At DK, our team of experts can design and install computerised systems that cover every aspect of the way your business works, freeing your time and increasing the value of your business.

- » *BoardView* – let us attend your board meetings, acting as an independent sounding board or chairman – you choose. Many clients have found that our objective input is invaluable. We've seen what works and what doesn't in thousands of businesses – let us bring that experience into yours.

- » Succession planning – if you own a business, you'll need to get out at some point – we're experts in this field. The key is to start thinking about how you're going to finish as soon as possible, even if it's years away – it will change the whole way you view your business.

## » Financial services

We can offer you a 'one stop shop' as we have our own on-site independent financial advisers. From raising money (personal or business), through protecting your income and your dependants to financing your eventual exit from the business, talk to our expert advisers.

## » What our clients say

The following pages contain six case studies of work we have recently performed for clients.



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MicroAgard

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## » Openhouse Products Limited

*“I have been quoted as saying that Dufton Kellner changed my life. I meant it when I said it and it still rings true today. They are one of the few companies that I can wholeheartedly say – use them.”*

As the managing director of a family-run company, the concept of partnership is extremely important to Brian Jones.

Openhouse Products Limited was formed in 1991. The firm manufactures and supplies a vast array of bespoke products to a range of industries, with heavy emphasis on the emergency services. Their clients are mainly UK based, serving a number of European customers as well.

Family values are at the core of Openhouse Products. Brian's wife Helen is Financial Director, his son Andrew is head of the design department and daughter Samantha, who is studying for a degree in marketing, applies her expertise to the promotion of the firm. With Helen's sister acting as resource manager, and Helen's brother as operations manager, the senior team at Openhouse Products really is as close-knit as they come.

According to Brian, the system works. “We have our ups and downs like everyone else,” he says. “But on the whole we really enjoy it. The other option is being in business with people that you don't know you can trust. Our employees are like part of our extended family.”

Trust is one of the aspects of his relationship with Dufton Kellner that Brian values. When the firms first met, Brian felt that the relationship was instantly a partnership. “I believe in chemistry and fate. Things will conspire to work for you at the right time, as long as you are prepared to recognise it when it comes along. We were proactively looking for a firm like Dufton Kellner, with people prepared to sit us down and talk frankly to us, just as readily as we were prepared to listen.”

Brian first encountered Dufton Kellner after they were recommended to him by his bank. Brian and Helen had begun to realise that they were quickly outgrowing their existing accountant when they needed to put together an application for a business mortgage to enable them to buy a new factory.

Since then Dufton Kellner have been involved in all aspects of the business, offering sound, up-to-date advice on the firm's accounts and taxes. One of the things Brian has found most beneficial has been the advice offered on running the business. He attended meetings and seminars with Dufton Kellner in which the firm looked at the best ways to improve the business, and also Brian's personal business outlook.

“When you go from a business that you set up in the garage to employing 33 employees you have to change your attitude. We have gone from strength to strength since meeting Dufton Kellner. The best thing you have is your ears so it's good to sit down and let someone else give you advice.

“Dufton Kellner helped me to understand the skill of working on the business instead of working in the business. The business is like a fourth child. We've got a lot invested in it, and not just finances. It's easy to get involved in the day-to-day running of the business, and forget how to be an MD!”

As a self-confessed straight-talking person, Brian asserts that if Dufton Kellner weren't providing the best service, he wouldn't be using them. Instead he endorses them entirely.

“I have been quoted as saying that Dufton Kellner changed my life. I meant it when I said it and it still rings true today. They are one of the few companies that I can wholeheartedly say – use them. We definitely have no aspirations to change.”





## » Christlematic Engineering Limited

*“Dufton Kellner take the whole business into account, and genuinely care about getting the best from it.”*

Chris Johnstone first met Stuart Kellner when Stuart was working for Chris's old accountancy firm. When Stuart left the firm, Chris valued his advice so highly that he decided to seek him out in his new practice and re-engage his services.

Ten years later, Chris is still employing the services of Dufton Kellner to prepare the annual accounts for his firm Christlematic Engineering Limited. Christlematic manufactures precision machined parts, kits and complex assemblies to the specification of his extremely varied client base. From hydraulics to cameras, Chris supplies parts to a plethora of various clients. He even once made 300 perspex model hand grenades for an Italian artist.

On top of the annual accounts, Chris also meets with directors from Dufton Kellner on a monthly basis for general business advice. Chris implicitly trusts the firm with his business.

Despite being a small firm and so not required by law to have an annual audit, Chris decided he wanted to get a thorough view of his business financially, and so Dufton Kellner director Andrew Biddle commenced the audit process.

“The main outcome of the audit was an enormous clearout for the firm – literally,” says Chris. “Andrew advised us to take steps to reduce our inventory and to avoid carrying so much stock. It has lightened the load for the business in so many respects. We have lots more space now that we aren't keeping stock for customers.”

This purging of stock seems an unusual outcome of a financial audit, until the tax implications are considered. “We were paying tax on stock that we didn't need to have on the premises. I've been with accountants who are just interested in the money. We would give them our books, and they would focus on the tax compliance, and that would be the end of it. Dufton Kellner take the whole business into account, and genuinely care about getting the best from it.”

According to Chris, Dufton Kellner are different to any accountancy firm he has been with before. “They are personable and approachable, and aren't cold like other accountants I've known. I wouldn't have stayed with them if they weren't value for money. They go one step further for their clients, with little touches like sending birthday cards. They are genuinely keen to guide me and look after my business.”













## » Bebington Glass and Glazing

*“They have a very professional attitude and are very approachable. The personal service they offer is fantastic.”*

Kay Ruddy is managing director of Bebington Glass and Glazing. The family-run firm has over 30 years of experience in the replacement window and glazing industry.

The firm was founded in March 1978 by Kay’s father Peter Finlay, who opened a small shop in Bebington. Kay joined the firm in 1989 as an office junior, gradually taking responsibility for the accounts and payroll and eventually moving through different roles at the firm, including office manager and director. When Peter retired in 2004, the firm identified the need for a managing director. “We decided to go for the female touch,” says Kay.

Kay, and the other company director Danny McMillan, decided upon Peter’s retirement that they needed some advice with regard to the logistics of running a business, as they had never had direct experience of this before. Peter had been receiving advice from Dufton Kellner for several years on his retirement, his personal finances and on the company, after they were recommended to him by his bank. He had often urged Kay to liaise with them about different ways to improve the business.

“I was very cynical,” said Kay, “always asking ‘how much will this cost?’ My dad asked me to give it a shot, and I’m extremely happy we did.”

Kay and Danny became involved with Dufton Kellner’s Making It Happen programme, which required them to attend monthly meetings with directors from Dufton Kellner to discuss the various ways in which the business could be improved. The programme covered all aspects of the firm including finance and marketing. Dufton Kellner even arranged for a mystery shopper to visit Bebington Glass and Glazing, without Kay or Danny being aware.

“It was great because we could get honest feedback from a customer’s perspective on areas where the business could be improved,” says Kay. “When you’re involved with the business day in, day out it’s easy to lose sight of how the customer sees the firm – you can’t see the wood for the trees. It definitely worked and had a knock on effect – our profitability has increased.”

After implementing these winning strategies, Dufton Kellner still take care of the firm’s general accountancy needs. Kay and Danny meet every other month with Stuart and Andrew from DK who focus on the performance of the business and, according to Kay, offer truly impartial advice. They also prepare Bebington Glass and Glazing’s quarterly management accounts.

“They have a very professional attitude and are very approachable. The personal service they offer is fantastic, and it applies to everyone at the firm. It’s consistently high quality. The fees they charge aren’t the cheapest we’ve come across, but we know we’re getting very good value for our money.”



## » Chapelgate Ltd

*“We can ask them any question and they come back to us armed with knowledgeable answers, and always as quickly as possible.”*

Karl Bergh is one of three shareholder directors at Chapelgate Ltd, a firm of property developers based in Birkenhead. Chapelgate was established in 1992, alongside a construction company Karl and his colleagues had established in 1989. By 1999, as Chapelgate was flourishing, they decided to sell the construction company to concentrate more on the field of property development.

Dufton Kellner acted as their accountants from a very early stage in Chapelgate's history, and provided a service that Karl and the other two directors were extremely happy with. However as the business grew, they began to receive advice instructing them to change accountancy firms to one of the Big 4 global accountancy giants. The general consensus was that a growing firm such as Chapelgate should use a large accounting conglomerate.

Following this advice, Karl and the other directors engaged the services of a Big 4 firm for a short while, before moving swiftly back to Dufton Kellner. “It wasn't that we didn't get a good service. However, Dufton Kellner provided an equally good service. I think that the smaller independent firms try harder for their clients, and can give a more personal service. It's a bonus that we found them a little more cost-effective too.”

Dufton Kellner look after the annual audit, accounts and tax computations for Chapelgate, and also prepare personal tax returns for the three shareholders. Whilst they have the facility to source all of their bookkeeping and payroll needs in-house, Karl adds that Dufton Kellner provide a fantastic support network to bolster this capability.

During Chapelgate's lifespan, Karl and his co-directors have been through a series of acquisitions and disposals, seeking Dufton Kellner's advice each time. On one occasion Chapelgate purchased a freehold of around 90 flats with a view to refurbishing them and selling them on, which Dufton Kellner assisted with throughout the entire process.

“They seem to have a comprehensive understanding of the industry,” says Karl. “We can ask them any question and they come back to us armed with knowledgeable answers, and always as quickly as possible.”

“The whole team are friendly, and are particularly approachable and efficient with matters such as tax planning. It's great to know that they are proactively looking after our needs, without us having to ever chase them.”













## » Delta Environmental

*“I was most impressed with the way they worked closely with the corporate solicitor, forming a fantastic vital support network.”*

Gary Hodgson established Delta Environmental following several years of experience working within the air-conditioning and refrigeration industry. The firm designed, installed, serviced and maintained air conditioning systems for commercial and retail customers and property developers. After trading for twenty years Gary decided to sell Delta Environmental to a national facilities management firm, and turned to Dufton Kellner for help with the process.

The business had been growing at a gradual pace, with Gary solely running the business at first, and subsequently bringing in a service and maintenance manager and a new installations manager to allow Gary to concentrate on the sales that would further expand the business. In Delta's final five years of trading the firm gained momentum, and began to overtake its similar sized competitors.

Gary began to notice a trend in the sector, as smaller firms were swallowed up by the larger national corporations. Delta Environmental were caught in a complex middle-ground, being bigger than their regional counterparts, but smaller than the national air-conditioning companies. Gary realised that if he continued to trade in the current capacity he would have to downsize to effectively compete with the regional firms. Alternatively he could strive to expand the business quickly into a national player.

Gary identified a third option. As he wasn't prepared to go through the period of financial discomfort that expanding the business would entail, Gary decided that instead he would sell the business to a larger firm capable of taking his company to the next level.

Dufton Kellner were recommended to Gary by his bank, who referred to the firm as being able to provide sound financial advice to local SMEs, with particular experience in providing advice on sales and acquisitions. From his experience, Gary now believes that exit strategies are a specialist niche of Dufton Kellner's.

“They held our hand throughout the whole process,” he says. “They were happy to have meetings at extremely short notice as and when we needed them. There were three other minority shareholders involved in the company at the time, and Dufton Kellner trod a very fine line in providing impartial advice. Everyone seemed to get the confidence they needed from the way they handled the situation. It was a fraught process with many highs and lows.

“I was most impressed with the way they worked closely with the corporate solicitor, forming a fantastic vital support network. They also broke things down into packages of information that could be understood by non-financial experts. They put in a lot of time and effort when it was needed and I think if I'd have gone to a bigger firm I wouldn't have received that level of client focus.”



## » Deva Disposables

*“Across all levels they provide the same service, with every member of staff. They are a pleasure to talk to.”*

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When you run a business supplying all manner of disposable products, you begin to recognise the value in things that are worth keeping. A reliable and personable accountant is one of those things, according to Jane and Julian Speed.

Based in Saltney near Chester, Deva Disposables distributed a full range of disposable items to the catering trade across Cheshire and beyond, including Chester Zoo and Manchester United Football Club. Husband and wife team Julian and Jane Speed acquired the company in 1999 and sold it almost eight years later in 2007.

According to Jane, Dufton Kellner were integral in book-ending the process, helping them through the acquisition of the company, and its eventual disposal. They also prepared annual accounts for every year the firm was in operation. It was the high level of consistency offered by the firm that impressed Jane. “The continuity was wonderful,” she says. “The accountants always made themselves available for us, and we were secure in the knowledge that we could pick up the phone at any point and talk to the relevant person about any issues whatsoever that we were having. One of the remarkable things about the firm is their phone response manner. They are a pleasure to talk to and are happy to point you in the right direction for your query. As a firm they work very well together.”

When Jane and Julian first acquired Deva Disposables, Jane felt that there was a lot to learn to achieve the right level of financial expertise. “Julian was in his element, as he has always worked in a similar capacity, but I was a little raw on the financial matters so I attended some of their motivational classes. Over the years I learnt so much under this tutorship, and from the rest of the team. Dufton Kellner even taught me how to prepare more valuable accounts which actually reduced my audit bills - and their fees. The fact I didn't feel as though they were keeping me in the dark in order to squeeze every last penny out of me is reflective of the level of service they provide. We had management accounts prepared by Dufton Kellner on a quarterly basis for a period of time. They didn't once make me feel intimidated, as I had experienced with previous accountants.”

Although they have sold the business, Jane and Julian intend to retain the services of Dufton Kellner for their personal tax returns, especially since Dufton Kellner saved them a significant amount of Capital Gains Tax in the final business disposal transaction. “We ended up paying a lot less Capital Gains Tax than we thought we would,” says Jane. “They saved us a hefty sum. Across all levels they provide the same service, with every member of staff. They are a pleasure to talk to.”









» For more details of how we can help you transform your business, please visit [www.duftonkellner.co.uk](http://www.duftonkellner.co.uk) or call us on **0151 342 6405**.

We'd be delighted to meet with you to find out about your business and your plans for the future. No charge, no commitment, no hard sell – just a chat, at your premises or ours. Please do contact us today to find out how we can help you build the business you've always dreamed of.

- » Business Growth
- » Sales & Marketing
- » Strategic Planning
- » Corporate & Personal Tax
- » Financial Accounts & Audit
- » Succession Planning
- » Corporate Finance
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**KELLNER**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Barnston House  
Beacon Lane  
Heswall  
Wirral  
CH60 0EE

Tel: 0151 342 6405  
Fax: 0151 342 8953  
Email: [post@duftonkellner.co.uk](mailto:post@duftonkellner.co.uk)  
[www.duftonkellner.co.uk](http://www.duftonkellner.co.uk)



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