

THE ADVENTURER'S ALMANAC

EDITION 2 - 2019

2018 heralded the start of our Adventurer's Almanac series with the publication of the inaugural issue (funnily enough, entitled 'Edition 1'). Well, a whole year later – can you believe! – the time's upon us for publication of Edition 2.

To jog the memories of those who were here last year (us included) and to acquaint our new colleagues with the past we're starting by enclosing a copy of Edition 1; this should provide some context for Edition 2.

Looking back...and forward

Did you know that the opening date of the Ramada Plaza hotel was 1st November 2008? That's right, the hotel opened a whole decade ago right slap bang in the eye of the 2008 financial crisis!

You may not know, but our Partner, Robert Agsteribbe, was one of the founding shareholders. His vision for The Hotel, The Waterfront and, indeed, Southport has been long held so the events of the last 2 years and the year to come are particularly meaningful for him; we guess some things in life take a little more time but the vision he originally had for this project may now be coming to fruition.

We're now poised to action what, for most of us, is a once in a lifetime opportunity to conceive and create a new brand. As it happens, we've been privileged to do it a couple of times before, and we've learnt that each time has its own particular set of challenges.

We remain committed to meet those challenges head on to deliver on Rob's vision for us and for all those who have a stake (large or small) in this story.

And what better place to do it than Southport, a unique and special place on the UK's extensive coastline that benefits from all that its glorious location has to offer but with a very, very special addition as far as we can see - THE PEOPLE!!

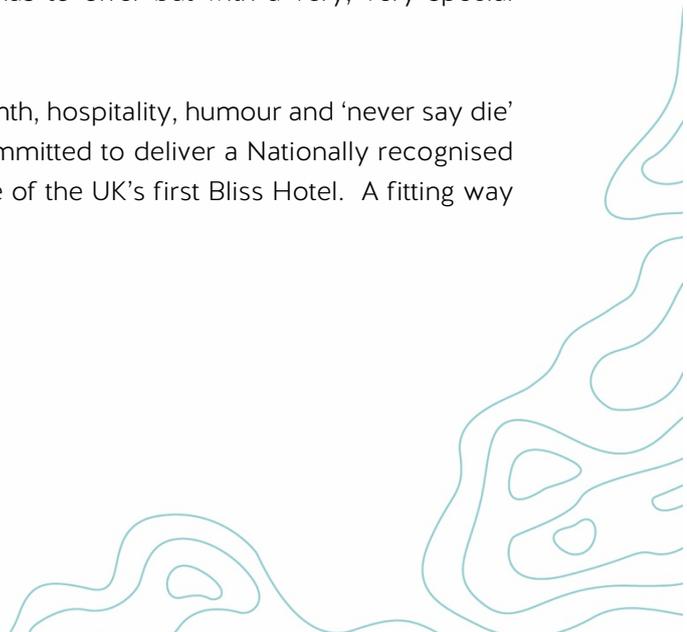
We've been infected with the North West's legendary warmth, hospitality, humour and 'never say die' attitude; it fuels our energies and makes us even more committed to deliver a Nationally recognised leisure destination at Waterfront which will also be the site of the UK's first Bliss Hotel. A fitting way to honour the spirit of this place we feel.

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And it seems we're not the only ones to be waking up to the obvious benefits of the North West. This is illustrated in some simple stats (courtesy of the ONS – we didn't just make this up!):

- UK business revenue has grown by 25% since 2010
- The Knowledge Economy (e.g. IT, software, consultancy, web and social media) saw revenue growth of 38% in the same period
- Knowledge-based businesses are much more mobile and agile in terms of location than those relying on physical resources or infrastructure
- What drives where they're located is availability of skilled and motivated staff – who in turn are heavily influenced by quality of life and what there is to do – the Experience Economy – leisure, hotels, food & drink, culture and so on
- The Experience Economy has seen revenue growth of 71% in the same time frame – people are spending more on **doing** things, rather than **buying** things.

The North West is a big part of the growth in both the Knowledge & Experience Economies with the vibrancy of Liverpool & Manchester and recent high profile re-locations to the Region, including Amazon, TalkTalk, Channel 4 and many more.

So here's to the North West, Southport, the Waterfront, the people and most of all you, without whom none of this would be possible.

What did we achieve in 2018?

We have a recurring comedy theme at 'Bliss Central'. It seems that we always end the year with the conclusion that "next year's gonna be a big year". Well 2018 certainly lived up to that!

We're pleased to report that much of what we referred to in Edition 1 has happened. The big news being that we were the recipients of a new management contract from Sefton to operate STCC from July. Truth be told, that one exercise absorbed most of 2018; although we did also manage to execute:

- Floor 5 Superior Bliss Double rooms and Bliss Hotel branded corridor
- New Waterfront entrance
- Integration of new PMS & EPOS systems, first in the Hotel, now in STCC too
- Negotiations around a new funding facility to execute 2019 works (more on that under)
- Signing on the dotted line to become the UK's first Trademark Collection Hotel by Wyndham, under our own Bliss Hotel brand
- Not to mention an upgrade of the whole Waterfront site, including new planting and a deep clean of the whole exterior – we think it's looking pretty spick & span now

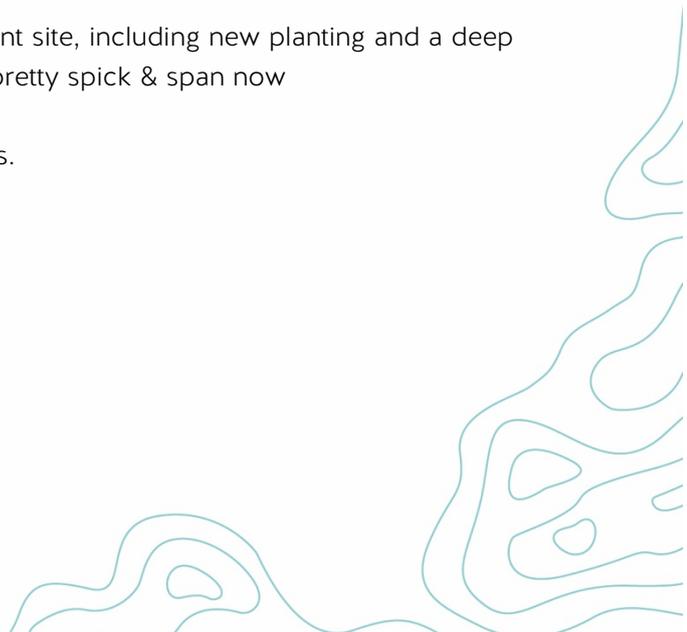
A big thanks to all who contributed to our 2018 endeavours.

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What's in store for 2019?

For starters – guess what it's going to be??? Yup you guessed it.....and probably the biggest of them all to date.

This very week, we've drawn down on the funding referred to above, which helps us to deliver on our bold plans; by now you should have received documentation detailing our **Let's Build a Brand** project.

It's a hugely exciting and ambitious project which we've been working towards since the very moment we took over the operation of the Ramada Plaza in December 2016. A whole freehold acquisition of the Waterfront later together with many, many months of work with branding, teams, systems & processes, not to mention a successful negotiation with Sefton regarding STCC (not for the feint hearted!!!) here we are.

And what a place to be – what we're about to embark on with you, we believe, will be a seminal moment for Bliss and Southport.

As you'll see from the documentation, **Let's Build a Brand** directs a fantastic project team to conceive and create Bliss Hotel. This is the foundation for the next phase of growth in the business; and whilst the Bliss Hotel brand will become real in Southport, we're positioning it to expand to other locations in the UK (and beyond).

The restructure of the team to create a **Centralised Leadership Team** provides the operational platform to deliver scale once we are successful in Southport.

And scale's exciting; apart from anything it provides a range of opportunities for individual growth in the organisation for those wanting to advance their careers. In time, the launch of **Bliss Academy** will provide training and defined development paths for team members wanting to move up the ladder by supporting and facilitating those ambitions.

Another 2019 campaign we're going to launch is the search for our **Original Adventurers**; a select group of representative Bliss target customers who we will meet to see how best we communicate with them regularly, what they're interested in and how they might become Bliss advocates going forward. In return they will form a core group of founding Adventurers who will act as our champions through the development of the company and receive lifetime privileges in return. This in turn ties into the proposed membership, sponsorship and loyalty schemes we plan to launch in 2019.

All of this and still more including a new 'Performance Pyramid' bonus scheme that will include ALL of our people and maybe even the launch of our own in-house radio station (**Blissonik**) – watch this space.

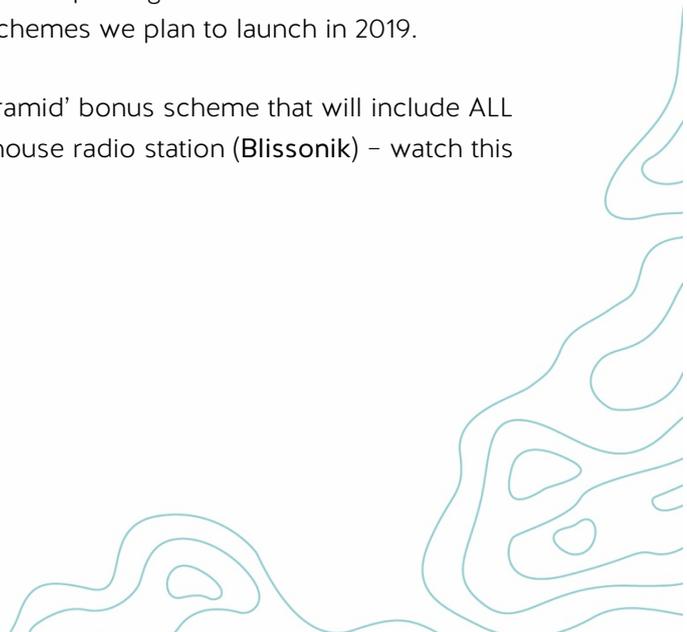
Told you. "2019's gonna be a big year..."

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And finally, a special thanks to...

Each and every one of you who's played a part (large or small) over the course of 2018.

Of course, as is normal with an ambitious and growing company, we said goodbye to some familiar faces this year and hello to some new ones; an inevitable pattern that will continue year on year as our journey becomes both intertwined and uncoupled from those on paths of their own.

We remain eternally grateful to anyone who's been, is and will be part of this great Bliss Adventure, and we wish those that leave to navigate their own horizons the very best of good fortune.

So.....here's to another Big Year!

All the best,

Three handwritten signatures in blue ink, reading from left to right: Daniel, Robert, and Kevin.

Daniel, Robert & Kevin

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