

organic&natural business

WINTER 2023 VOL. 20, ISSUE 4

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Planet Organic refocuses

Renée Elliott talks to *Organic & Natural Business* about returning Planet to its purpose-led mission. Page 14.



What gets your vote?

Now is the time to vote for your winners in the *Organic & Natural Business* Product Awards. Page 18.



Festive forecasts

Predictions for the trends in this year's festive sales period. Page 24.

OTB reveals new name and plans to drive organic following vote to become a CIC

After members voted for the Organic Trade Board (OTB) to become a Community Interest Company (CIC), the organisation has revealed its new name and the next consumer-facing campaign to target a new category of shopper.

The OTB revealed last year that it was making plans to transition to become a CIC to allow it to have more opportunities to access funding. Members were asked to vote recently, which was successful, and it means the organisation will now be able to be known as a not-for-profit.

Going forward, the OTB name will go, and it will become UK Organic Association, more commonly referred to as UK Organic. At the same time, the organisation has revealed plans for its next consumer campaign, which instead of targeting eco actives, will now focus on organic considerers – a large group known to number around 18m in potential reach.

Cristina Dimetto, who was General Manager of the OTB and will take on the role of Managing Director of UK Organic Association, told *Organic & Natural Business* why the move had been made: "OTB is legally at the moment an LTD but has always had any profit reinvested in the work we do. We felt the conversion to CIC would be the best solution because it would reflect what we do, which is raising awareness and working on behalf of the industry and at the same give us not-for-profit official status.

"And at the same time, it would open us up to different funding opportunities that

are not available for LTDs. Government funding, foundations, private funders that want to invest in specific projects. As a CIC, that can be open to us."

And some of the limitations on the OTB by not being a not-for-profit will be removed by becoming a CIC.

"There are a lot of opportunities for not-for-profit but as not legally being one meant it was difficult to access those. Simple things like software is available to not-for-profits but we have to pay for it, and although we were operating as a not-for-profit, we couldn't access things like that. The change better reflects the work we do, and we also hope it will attract more members to join us," Cristina added.

Members have now voted, and the move has been approved, so the next steps are for it to be sent to Companies House for approval. When this happens, the OTB name will go, and the new name will then come into operation.

Cristina explained: "We need to change our name as Organic Trade Board has always been tricky for the industry and we cannot have the word 'trade' because it's a CIC. UK Organic Association makes sense as it



represents the organic sector of the UK, but it will be known mostly as UK Organic."

Tied into this will be a shift in projects.

"We decided not to focus anymore on delivering marketing reports, the Soil Association is already doing a great job with theirs and there is no point in duplicating. Us Using Kantar data, it was raising more questions than it was answering. Nielsen [data used by the Soil Association] and Kantar are recording different data. The difference in market value creates confusion so we have to explain ours doesn't include things like textiles and out of home. But it creates more confusion, and we need to focus on the future," Cristina explained.

"The market report is a picture of the past, what happened last year, and now we need to focus on now, on consumers and how they behave so we are looking at consumer reports and surveys to have a better understanding and be able to plan out our

Continued on page 4 ►

This working life

There are various avenues of supply for independent retailers, and with many having their own ranges, print solutions for the likes of labels can be an important consideration. Here, we find out more from DTM Print's UK Sales Manager, Guy Boxall.



Name: Guy Boxall
Company: DTM Print
Position: UK Sales Manager

There is a lot to consider as an independent retailer in terms of the stock range on your shelves. Not only are there a range of wholesalers to work with, many retailers also order directly with suppliers, and that's before you consider that many wholefood stores also have their own ranges of products.

It is this latter aspect which requires supply of a different kind in the form of labels, and this is where DTM Print comes in, a business that is dedicated to supporting the needs of smaller, specialist retailers. And heading up the sales in the UK is Guy Boxall.

Guy joined the business in June 2021 in a role that was effectively working as an account manager for DTM's partners (VARs) in the UK and Ireland, handling incoming sales enquiries and following them up.

"Having mostly worked for large corporates, I was very pleased to join a smaller, family-run business," Guy explained. "From when we first met, it was clear to me that decisions were made carefully and quickly, with excellent customer service being the number one objective. There is none of 'the computer says no' or the need for head office in Japan to consider a new proposal with the answer of 'maybe'. DTM Print is a very forward, positive and innovative company."

And in terms of Guy's background and how he came into the printing industry in the first place, he explained: "After studying at university, I joined the civil service. This lasted for one year – it was too slow and frustrating with internal politics. I left and started my own business as a distributor for Omron, before working in the electronics industry in product sales and marketing with Omron, Hypercom, Casio and OKI Corporation. I have worked for three Japanese and one American corporations – every company a great business to be part of. OKI asked me to join them to launch a new product, which was my first opening into the printing sector in 2015. DTM Print was my customer at OKI."

And how did his career progress through the years to take him to his role at DTM?

Guy recalled: "After graduating, I had two career objectives. To further my education, and to enjoy my day-to-day job, earning a reasonable salary. I went on to do part-time study in the evenings to achieve an MPhil and EngD. This took eight years, but certainly advanced my knowledge about technology and business. I had my own technology business for seven years, which I sold in 1995 to Omron Japan (then working with them for a further nine years). Having your own business is the best 'classroom' on sales, profit and cashflow! My next positions came more accidentally with a job being offered to me, or as a result of a business merger."

In terms of his current role at DTM Print, this is a multi-faceted one.

Guy went on: "My role has many hats! Primarily to increase sales, which has been challenging for everyone in the recent economy and world situation. But also, marketing, technical support with our partners, organising trade shows and the day-to-day administration in our UK office. As the sole UK employee, this last one is not so difficult!"

"Every day is different. I enjoy my sales role, where I really understand the solutions we are providing and demonstrating

its benefits to a customer. Giving great customer service and communicating well with our business partners (suppliers and customers) and working as the sole UK representative of DTM Print, with such good support from our head office in Wiesbaden, Germany."

With such a varied role, what is it that Guy finds motivates him in his job?

"Winning orders and hearing positive feedback, and overcoming difficulties when they happen," he commented. "This might be showing a customer how to produce what they want with a particular printer or giving one-to-one online video training. DTM Print offers the complete package of colour printing, finishing, a huge range of label media and a three-year warranty on almost everything."

"Besides that, I also enjoy being in touch with end users, the people that use our printing solutions to create amazing products. What drives me is helping businesses, no matter the size (one-man operation, start-ups or large companies), to find the printing solution tailored to their specific application and requirements. It's always interesting to learn how our printers support businesses in becoming independent and more flexible."

And going further, what have been Guy's biggest achievements in his career?

He added: "Quickly developing excellent relations with our partners and establishing our UK office, and meeting 'Eddie', the edible ink printer, and realising the potential for this very clever direct to food solution. The only limitation is time – I need an eight-day week!"

And how will DTM Print develop for the future?

"Strengthen our existing partners as much as possible, further improve our UK customer service with our new CoverSwap plan, and in 2024, adding a few more partners where I see a gap. Focusing on our printing solutions which are unique to the industry and increasing our project business," Guy finished.