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## Employee Ownership Learning Event

Wednesday  
17th April 2024.  
10am - 4pm

Only a few  
places remaining.

See [page 11](#) for more  
info.



**Front row:** David Ross, Richard MacDonald, Peter Moran, Fraser Low  
**Standing:** David Deane (BKF), Pamela Ross, Calum Forrester (Azets)

## Historic architectural practice mark 170 years with move to employee ownership

Glasgow-based architectural firm **Keppie Design** has transitioned its entire shareholding to an employee ownership trust (EOT), making it the latest Scottish company to adopt this ownership structure.

Founded in 1854 by John Honeyman, 2024 marks a significant milestone for Keppie, entering its 170th year. Since its inception, Keppie has been at the forefront of innovative Scottish architecture, with world-renowned figures such as **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** amongst the firm's former partners.

Peter Moran, Fraser Low, Richard MacDonald and David Ross acquired the business in a management buyout in 2018. They had been exploring the future of Keppie for some time, recognising the huge personal investment from

the staff that has driven the special culture and hard-earned reputation of the firm. Their priority has been to ensure that these values are protected beyond their stewardship.

Managing Director Peter Moran said: *"The outstanding loyalty and contribution of Keppie employees over the years has earned our practice the reputation it has today."*

*"We believe that the best people to own the future of Keppie are the people who know it best – our present and future employees."*

He added: *"The EOT will provide a platform for our business to grow, with a commitment to continual professional and personal improvement and innovation to*

(Continued)

*ensure Keppie maintains its position as a market leader.”*

The four former shareholders will remain in the business, allowing for a period of stability and business as usual following the transfer to the EOT.

Pamela Ross has been appointed to the Board of the Trust. Welcoming the changes, Pamela said: *“On behalf of the whole team at Keppie we are delighted and energised by the move to employee ownership which secures the business for current and future generations of talented people.”*

*“This exciting new era for the company allows us to further build on our current market-leading position, working on innovative, high-*

*quality projects in an environment which balances creativity, collaboration, and pragmatism, whilst inspiring our staff to reach their full potential.”*

**Graham Cunning**, head of corporate finance in Scotland with accountancy firm Azets, which has been managing the transaction, said: *“Azets are delighted to have advised the shareholders of Keppie on their sale to an EOT.”*

*“Keppie have a strong reputation and rich heritage in Scottish architecture and the EOT will ensure that the Keppie brand will continue. We wish the staff every success and look forward to watching the evolution of Keppie as it transitions to an employee-owned business.”* Legal advice was provided by **David Deane** at Bannatyne Kirkwood France & Co.

## Scott & Fyfe win CEED Internationalisation Award

The Centre for Engineering, Education and Development (CEED) held their prestigious annual awards recently. CEED is an organisation committed to pulling Scottish manufacturing and engineering businesses together to pool talent, expertise and experience in the pursuit of operational excellence. The ceremony was held in Glasgow on 29th February and attended by 640 guests.

**Scott & Fyfe**, employee-owned since 2012, won the Internationalisation award, recognising their growth in exports, entering new markets and developing global products or services and establishing a centre of excellence. The judges said Scott & Fyfe topped the category for their *“expansion of cutting-edge and patented textiles into existing markets and venturing into new ones, customising their products and services through meticulous planning and strategy execution to meet the unique needs of each market, which reflects their clear vision, adaptability and pioneering spirit.”*

Scott & Fyfe’s Managing Director, Michelle Quadrelli was delighted to see the company recognised. She says *“I was deeply humbled and*



*honoured to accept the CEED Internationalisation award, on behalf of our incredible team at Scott & Fyfe Ltd, some of whom were there to join me on stage adding to the significance of the moment. As an employee-owned company, every achievement means so much to all of us.*

*This recognition from CEED is not just an acknowledgement of our efforts, but a celebration of the collective passion and hard work that drive our company forward. I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished together, and everyone at Scott & Fyfe Ltd will be delighted to see our endeavours recognised on such a scale.*

*Thank you to **Ceed (Centre for Engineering, Education and Development)** for this incredible honour and your ongoing support to our business, **NVT Group** for sponsoring the award and every member of the Scott & Fyfe Ltd team for your unwavering commitment to excellence.”*



## Fife family window fitting firm hand over reins to staff in EOT move

The employees of **SRJ Windows** now own 70% of their firm. The company was founded in 1992 by the Macintosh family. Since then, the business has built a reputation across Fife, the Central Belt, Tayside and Perthshire among customers and staff.

And for nearly a decade, the firm has been the main sponsor for **Dunfermline Athletic**, their logo adorning the front of the first-team kits.

Seventy jobs have now been secured, the firm said, after the employee ownership trust was handed control.

The Macintosh family retains the remaining 28.3% of the shareholding. Co-founder Keith Macintosh said staff were “delighted” when the news was announced.

He said: “We have spent the last 32 years building a brand that my family and our staff are extremely passionate about.

“We have been very fortunate our staff are not only loyal, but have constantly adapted to the changing requirements of both our business and customer needs.

“Not only does this new structure reward staff for all of their efforts, but we wanted to ensure that our customers continue to have the best experience of dealing with staff, who are totally invested in and committed to, delivering the best experience of service.

“We had to consider our retirement options and we knew that would have consequences.

“A sale to an external buyer would have been too disruptive and we have always wanted

*the business to remain local, to protect jobs and the identity of the company.*

*“Although an external sale would likely have been a more lucrative outcome for the family, the EOT ownership structure maintains our relationships with suppliers and customers.”*

*Keith notes a number of the new employee owners had been with the company for a number of years.*

*“Colin Wardlaw, our project manager, joined the business 30 years ago as a joiner and is now running the sunroom installation division,” he said. “Gavin Cooch, installations manager, joined the business 26 years ago as a glazier and is now running the windows and doors installation division. “And John Hall, installations co-ordinator, joined the business 22 years ago as a glazier and now co-ordinates all window and door installations.”*



Keith Mackintosh

# OAUK News

Those of us in the UK employee ownership world were awaiting the recent budget statement with bated breath, anticipating that there might be some changes to the EOT legislation introduced in 2014. What a missed opportunity! Indeed, there had been some “leaks” that offshore trusts would indeed be outlawed, and there may be some tightening up of the extent that sellers can influence and control the company post transaction. Some of us who are on the glass half full persuasion were hopeful of an increase in the tax free bonus thresholds. Not a whisper! No mention at all of the EOT in the Chancellor’s statement. There is a good deal of frustration within the employee ownership community, many of whom invested a lot of time into their responses. The consultation on share schemes closed on 25th August, and the EOT/EBT consultation ended on 25th September. That seems like plenty of time to considered submissions and publish results. There is a an announcement on a further set of tax administration and maintenance amendments planned for 18th April 2024. It may be that there will be some positive news then. We can only hope...!

Another busy month for employee ownership in Scotland, with the CDS Learning Journey as well as a whole new set of podcasts released. These are well worth listening to. Martin Stucki’s podcast raises some interesting points. You can read more about his recent research [here](#). Martin’s research echoes a concern I have about employee ownership in Scotland and that concerns leadership succession. Converting to an EOT is a relatively straightforward process. Finding new leadership to take on the reins is much more of a challenge; particularly when that next leader can’t be found from within the business. In his podcast conversation with Glen Dott of CDS, Martin digs into the importance of entrepreneurialism in employee-owned businesses, and explores where that sits in an organisation. Interesting stuff!

Good to welcome more businesses into the employee-owned community. The transition of well-known and much respected architectural practice Keppie Design certainly got a lot of coverage. The employees welcomed the move



The Learning Journey Tour Bus



John Beaumont of Clansman Dynamics

enthusiastically, and I’m told reaction from clients was very positive. There was also the news that SRJ Windows made the move. It’s interesting that we now have three businesses with connections to Dunfermline Football Club; Kip McBay of guitarguitar is a former director, Garry Davidson of International Doors chairs the Dunfermline FC Business Club, and SRJ Windows are shirt sponsors.

There are only a few places left for the trustee training event planned for 17th April. Interest has been high and there is a variety of businesses attending. A great way to learn more about the Trustee role and network with other employee owners. See [page 11](#) for more information.

As we head towards the end of the tax year, there are a number of companies just about to complete their move to employee ownership. More news next time!

- Carole

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# Exciting times at Altar Group

Broughty Ferry creative agency **Altar Group** are celebrating a successful start to the year and opening a new office in Glasgow. The group has secured £500,000 worth of new client contracts since January. New clients include Stargazey Spirits, TSPC, New Gorbals House Association, Carnoustie Golf Links and JAB Recruitment.

Altar Group comprises of three entities — Avian, Blue2 Digital and Ginger — who together provide PR, communications, marketing, web design, and ventures services. As well as expanding into Scotland's largest city, Altar are currently recruiting for new positions and have already hired three new starts this quarter.

The company employs people who live in Glasgow, which helped with the decision to open a new office in Charing Cross.

Scott McCallum, chief executive of Altar Group, said: *"Our client growth is exciting and our expansion into the central belt is a significant milestone that not only strengthens Altar Group's presence but also underpins our commitment to our expanding team. The agencies continue to deliver exceptional work and most importantly results, for our clients across Scotland and the UK. A number of our team are Glasgow based and the opening of the office in Charing Cross is an opportunity to*

## Group managing director appointed

Meanwhile, veteran staff member Nial Chapman has been appointed group managing director. Moving into his third decade with **Blue2 and Altar**, he has experience in digital and marketing management. He said: *"I've been with Blue2 and Altar Group for over 20 years. Over that time we have evolved significantly in the way we support and fulfil our clients' growth ambitions. The continual evolution of how we can best deliver results combined with our commitment to creativity, innovation, and client satisfaction aligns perfectly with my vision for the future. I am excited to lead the team and contribute to the agency's continued success."*

And more recognition for Altar as the company makes it onto **The Drum Recommends**



*foster deeper connections with existing central belt clients, while ensuring we're at the forefront of design and brand activation."*



Top 10 agencies of the month, the only Scottish agency to make the list.

Based on client ratings, this incredible accolade is down to the first-class work that the Altar teams are producing across digital, design & PR with some high profile brands.



## Arjo partners with Highland Home Carers in award winning project

**Pictured:** Coralanne Mainland of Highland Home Carers

**Arjo**, the premium global supplier of medical devices and solutions, has partnered with employee-owned **Highland Home Carers (HHC)** in a successful pressure ulcer prevention pilot. The leading Scottish social care company used Arjo's pressure ulcer prevention approach and the hand-held Provizio® SEM Scanner on supported people identified as being at high risk of developing pressure ulcers – with the rewarding result of zero pressure ulcers developing throughout the project.

The HHC test of change project included the ambitious aim to achieve a 70% reduction in pressure ulcers through early detection. The project involved 28 participants that had been identified as being at 'high risk' of developing pressure ulcers, with 30% having previously experienced them. In addition, a target of a 40% reduction on pressure ulcer related hospital admissions was identified by HHC.

During the project, which has garnered two major national healthcare awards, care practitioners have worked closely with Arjo focusing on real-world usage of the Provizio® SEM scanner. The partnership with Arjo has also led to HHC developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for scanning criteria and next steps following scanning results. Consideration was made for correct transportation and charging of the hand-held device in the community setting.

At the end of the evaluation, none of the supported people involved in the project had

developed a pressure ulcer, which also means that there were no hospital admissions whatsoever. Additionally, HHC reported that District Nurse visits were significantly reduced.

*"We estimate that the study resulted in a 50% reduction in District Nurse callouts. Where previously, Care Practitioners would call District Nurses to look at redness on the surface of the skin, our Practice Support Technicians were enabled to initiate interventions based on a pre-determined score on the device," says Coralanne Mainland, HHC Director of Operations.*

*"The empirical data from the pilot, as well as the two awards, is now drawing the attention of both clinicians and health economists and we have been invited to share our experience at several industry conferences," she continues.*



(Continued)

The success of the award winning pilot scheme could be a game changer for people at risk of developing pressure ulcers at home and for their care providers. Considering the pain, suffering and indignity these sometimes fatal ulcers can cause – with an estimated cost of treating each pressure ulcer between £1,214 - £14,1082 – the health and financial outcomes benefits could be far reaching.

Highland Home Carers operates across the Highland region. The company was founded in 1994 by Nick Boyle and became employee-owned in 2004. Highland Home Carers care for and support people living in their own homes, people often with highly complex health and social care needs, and working alongside doctors, nurses and other health care professionals.

Alongside traditional home care, HHC provides one-to-one support work tailored to individuals' needs. Currently providing a key service for those with complex needs in Fortrose,



at Lomond & Leachkin on the New Craigs Campus, Inverness.

The care HHC provides, allows people to live well as part of their community, avoiding the need for long term hospital or residential home stays, bringing people mental and physical health benefits.

HHC has a staff roster of around 250 people making it one of the largest private employers in the Highlands.

## Merlin Hairy Haggis Marathon

Eight of the **Merlin** team are lacing up their running shoes as they prepare to compete in the 2024 Edinburgh Marathon Festival (EMF) 'Hairy Haggis' Team Relay on Sunday 26th May. Beyond the race, they have also set out to raise funds for two remarkable charities, Alzheimer Scotland and Macmillan Cancer Support. So, what does the 'Hairy Haggis' Team Relay entail? It's an opportunity for a team of 4 runners to take part in the 26.2 mile marathon, split into 4 legs, each runner taking on a challenging and scenic route, cheered on by local and travelling spectators. Merlin have two teams the **Merlin Marvels** and the **Wellbore Warriors**.

The teams have already been training for several weeks, working to get in top shape for the event by taking part in local Parkruns and keeping each other in check with weekly targets. No prisoners here, missing weekly targets on 'Strava,' a GPS mobile phone app, incurs a forfeit of £1 per mile, with the proceeds directed straight to the charity pot. The Merlin Culture Team have set out a variety of additional fund-raising initiatives kicking off with a bake sale held in the Merlin offices. This



raised an impressive £216. All proceeds were split equally between the two JustGiving donation pages. The company has further events planned such as sponsored quizzes, a sweepstake for the Grand National as well as raffles.

A number of local businesses have contributed to the raffle prizes, featuring vouchers, prosecco, fine-dining, a 4-ball golf day, a luxury hamper and other prizes.

# CDS Learning Journey 2024

Around 40 attendees joined this year's Learning Journey; an event designed to showcase employee-owned businesses in Scotland and aimed at business owners considering implementing employee ownership, or employee owners keen to share knowledge and experience. Over the course of the two days, the attendees heard from 6 companies, participated in a workshop on Leadership and Culture and generally swapped stories and perspectives.

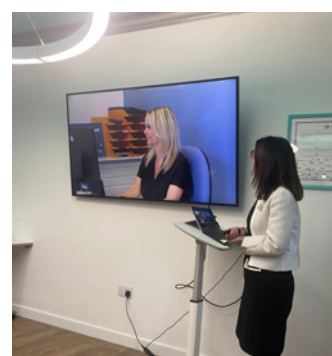
Everyone agreed it was a brilliant event. Destinations were Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire and included tours and presentations from the six

businesses. Each business was at a different stage in their employee ownership journey, and were so generous in sharing their stories with the group. The event also had the benefit of the experience and wisdom of **Dave Routledge**, who spoke at the dinner and delivered a workshop on Day 2. You can read a full report [here](#).

It was an exhilarating, exhausting event providing lots of food for thought. The CDS is hopeful they will be able to repeat the event. If you would like an alert on this, or to learn about other employee ownership events, sign up for information [here](#).

## In my personal view, what were the key takeaways?

- Never forget you're running a business. Designing and delivering strategy, good financial management, hiring and keeping the right people are paramount.
- The employee-owned community is immensely generous in giving their time and experience with companies exploring the model. There is always something to learn.
- Every business is different. There is no one right way to structure employee ownership; each business has to identify and implement what is right for their situation, their market and their people.
- Notwithstanding the point above, there is a lot of commonality in the challenges facing employee owned firms. The importance of effective leadership, a strong focus on engagement, and proactive management of problems were the prevalent themes.
- There is immense value in bringing people together and just allowing them to talk to each other in a non-structured way. Right from the start, the room was buzzing! There was a request to circulate contact details in order for everyone to keep in touch.







## New Podcasts Released!

As the growth of employee ownership continues to accelerate, Co-operative Development Scotland has added 9 new episodes to its podcast series, The EO Podcast.

Listen to these new episodes to hear directly from business owners, their employee representatives and specialist advisers. The series aims to raise awareness of the wide-ranging benefits that employee ownership can offer those

considering a move to the model. Hear direct from employee-owned **Glen Drummond and Charles CA**, **Tangram Furnishers**, **20/20 Project Management**, **Narro Associates** and **Livingston James** and from employee ownership specialist adviser **Ralph Leishman** from 4-consulting, corporate finance partner **Linzi Wilson** from Consilium Chartered Accountants, **Loren Rogers** from NCEO and **Martin Stucki**, former CEO of Transitec Consulting Engineers, and executive MBA graduate from the University of Edinburgh.

Listen to the episodes, and subscribe [here](#).

## Caley Timber support mental health charity

Employee-owned companies have a tremendous record for supporting community and charitable projects. When Highland based **Caley Timber** took delivery of their new 24 plate Volvo FM380 6x2 twin-tyred tax axle rigid truck, they took the opportunity to demonstrate their support for **MikeysLine**.

This charity was founded in 2015 after a tragic number of suicides in the Highlands and supports people in emotional distress and mental health challenges. The Caley Timber truck's livery shows the contact details for the charity, spreading the message across the Highland area.



## Employee-owned Entrepreneurship: key lessons for the employee ownership community

A freshly published report presents the findings from an independent research into successfully growing Scottish employee-owned businesses (EOBs), highlighting crucial lessons for potentially every EOB – and indeed for any business interested in employee ownership.

As every reader will know, Scotland plays a significant part in growing the proud employee ownership community, a movement gaining momentum across the UK and beyond, fuelling the Scottish government's ambition to reach 500 EOBs by 2030. In the years ahead, the growth in EOBs can of course only sustain if and where EOBs continue to be successful as independent for-profit businesses.

As a consequence, like every other business competing in fast evolving industries, EOBs need to (continue to) invest in innovation and take some level of risks to bring new services/products onto evermore demanding markets – and profitably so. In sum, **EOBs need to be entrepreneurially oriented and successful to thrive and sustain.** That's about the “what & why”.

*Definition: a firm's entrepreneurial orientation is its propensity and ability to undertake new market entry initiatives on the basis of entrepreneurial proactiveness, innovativeness, and risk-taking.*

Now, about the “how”, what does this imply in practice? How can EOBs best deal with the internal implications of a meaningful entrepreneurial orientation, with a workforce holding a controlling interest over the company direction? What lessons can be drawn from the experience of successfully innovative and growing EOBs? What specific advice should be given to existing/future EOBs on how to enhance their entrepreneurial orientation, thus future-proofing their own competitiveness as well as their contribution to the economy?

**In response to such major questions, the report provides actionable answers derived from**



Martin Stucki

**analysing the vast data and internal insights gained from particularly successful Scottish EOBs, including via in-depth interviews with a number of EOB-insiders and specialist advisors.**

There are **three key recommendations that should be given proper attention by every employee-owned business:**

- **Recognise entrepreneurial leadership as a critical organisational capability**, and as such invest in the development and continuity of adequate leadership competencies;
- Explicitly **define the key processes supporting the firm's entrepreneurial strategy**, and ensure to uphold their vitality;
- **Review the firm's governance, employee participation, and reward arrangements at regular intervals**, ensuring they remain aligned with, and conducive to, the firm's entrepreneurial strategy.

Additionally, the report formulates some suggestions specifically addressed to the main public bodies supporting employee ownership in Scotland (e.g. Scottish government, Co-operative Development Scotland, Scotland for Employee Ownership). One suggestion probably merits consideration by the broader employee ownership community; an invitation to collectively reflect on the fact that the continued growth in the number of EOBs is increasingly dependent on the success and sustainability of individual EOBs.

Click [here](#) to access the full report.

Click [here](#) to access the employee ownership podcast.

# Employee Ownership Learning Event

Wednesday 17th April 2024. 10am - 4pm

What is employee ownership?  
 Role of the Trust in the employee-owned company  
 Trustee duties and responsibilities  
 How to assess company performance  
 How to be an effective Trustee

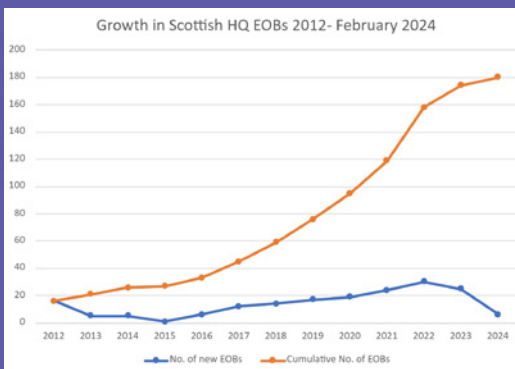
Novotel Glasgow Centre  
 Spaces Limited

**£149 + VAT per delegate.**

**Only a few places remaining**

To register for this event, please email me at  
[carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk](mailto:carole@ownershipassociates.co.uk)

## Employee Ownership in Scotland



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