

Webcast partnering for Miura

A CONFERENCING company headquartered in Wales has been chosen as the major European partner for a leading US provider of cutting-edge media communications to businesses.

Miura Conference has joined with the New York-based Stream57 and launched Webcast Global. Stream57 is regarded as being at the forefront of webcasting technology, providing one of the easiest to use, most flexible and best value-for-money systems available.

It is the latest significant development for the Cowbridge-based business, which already provides audio, web and video conferencing to clients such as worldwide restaurant chain Wagamama, and recently opened an office in the Netherlands, joining Miura operations in Ireland, France and the UK.

Miura managing director Tom Stroud said: "Webcasting provides a series of benefits for businesses, including an extremely cost effective way of generating highly qualified sales, reduced travel, sales promotion and marketing

costs, additional revenue streams through pay-per-view webcasts, and the provision of more effective and more frequent communication with key stakeholders.

"It also allows business to extend the reach of traditional events such as AGMs, product launches and annual sales conferences, because the technology enables those unable to attend an event in person to watch on line either live, or at a time that's more convenient."

Webcasting is now an accepted technology in the US and is used by a majority of large companies in some way. Analysts there believe the American market is growing at more than 50% a year, and they predict that the UK and Europe will witness even stronger growth over the next couple of years.

Mr Stroud said: "New technology can often be confusing, however webcasting is as easy as watching a TV programme online, only with a greater degree of interaction possible between the presenters and audience.



JOHN CULLEN

Partner, Harris Lipman

How safe is your property?

Your property may be at risk if you do not keep up the repayments. So the stark warning goes at the bottom of each advertisement for secured lending.

The Government is suggesting that lenders take a more lenient approach, looking at solutions other than repossession. Having reviewed the pre-action protocol for repossession of residential properties, it is not as lenient as all that. It appears to request that lenders take a reasonable approach, giving notice of intention to repossess and not ruling out discussions on any loan restructuring. It also suggests that lenders respond to any proposals from borrowers and, if rejecting, do so in writing within 10 days of the proposal.

When I began my career in insolvency Law of Property Act receiverships were commonplace. The Act gives the lender powers to appoint a suitably qualified individual to collect money on its behalf and arrange for a property to be sold.

This usually takes the control of the property away from the borrower, who has to sit and wait for the property to be sold to see if there is going to be a surplus or a deficit to the lender. If there is a deficit, there is a risk of bankruptcy or, to a company, liquidation or administration.

Of course, the main responsibility of the receiver is to look after the lender. If he decides that the best route is to put the property to auction after the first four weeks, there is little argument as to the benefits of exploring the possible maximum return for everyone. The lender wants its cash.

I am seeing more of this type of appointment. The process can be completed outside a court procedure so there is little influence the Government can have other than its shareholding in some of the larger banking institutions.

Therefore, your properties may be at risk if you do not keep up the repayments. ■

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Gas firm signs deal with UES

GAS distribution company Wales & West Utilities has signed a two-year deal with utility management consultants, UES of Hengoed, to manage its utility costs and reduce its carbon footprint.

Spanning energy, telecoms, water and fuel, the new contract has an annual spend in the region of £5m. The value of the contract for UES is expected to exceed £200,000.

Key responsibilities for UES will include contract procurement and management, validation of bills, monitoring of usage, cost centre allocation and the management of SAP compliant payment data. Carbon footprint will also be monitored with regular environmental impact reports.

Graham Edwards, chief executive of Wales & West Utilities, said: "In common with many businesses, we needed to renew our energy contracts but hadn't expected it to be such a

difficult and time-consuming process.

"Even with high usage levels, we were faced with significant price increases. However, by working with UES we were able to identify a supplier that represented best value for our requirements and we will now be in a position to manage our utility costs more effectively."

"UES has established a firm track record with our business, thanks to the identification of savings in excess of 20% in less than 12 months."

Andrew Diplock, managing director of UES, said: "The new contract is excellent news for us all at UES as we continue our efforts to drive forward our turnover from £850,000 to £2.4m in the next two years.

"We have introduced a 'benefit share' arrangement into our contracts that allows both Wales & West Utilities and ourselves to be rewarded for billing errors resolved," he added.

Office Visions wins Scarlets' contract

SOUTH WALES office design and fit-out specialist Office Visions has secured the contract to furnish the entire new £23m Parc y Scarlets Stadium at Llanelli.

It is the second major contract of its kind for the Cardiff company, which also won the contract to design and fit out the offices, VIP suites and conference areas at Swansea's Liberty Stadium.

Simon Gambarini, managing director of Office Visions, said: "The Scarlets' new stadium fit-out has been the most prestigious contract of its kind in Wales this year and we are clearly delighted to have been selected.

"The experience we gained at the Liberty Stadium played an important part in our success, which was again achieved against strong competition.

"We are now in the unique position of having secured the two most prestigious sports arena contracts awarded to our industry in the last

three years."

Office Visions has worked closely with South Wales company Andrew Scott, main contractor of Parc y Scarlets, to meet the demanding design and fit-out brief.

Mr Gambarini said: "Andrew Scott is close to the completion of a wonderful new sporting facility for Carmarthenshire.

"Parc y Scarlets will be a stunning new sports arena and we are very pleased to have played our part in ensuring its success."

Mike Grindle, managing director of Andrew Scott, said: "This was the most prestigious construction contract in Wales this year and we know everyone who gets the chance to see Parc y Scarlets will see how the rugby region's wonderful vision has paid off handsomely.

"The involvement of companies such as Andrew Scott and Office Visions is also proof that Wales possesses all the expertise necessary to deliver challenging new schemes of this kind."