

W I N T E R 2 0 2 1

inside view



## IN THIS ISSUE:

Helping SMEs to grow

What not to do with your marketing

Six myths about Environmental Insurance

What are your business New Year's resolutions?

Rockin' around the Christmas tree.  
Are you sure it's safe?

  
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# Helping SMEs to grow

## Everything you need to know about the Government's new scheme

**“Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating jobs and prosperity across the United Kingdom.” These are the words of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, as he launched the Government's new £520m Help to Grow scheme.**

The initiative aims to give SMEs the tools they need to innovate, grow and help drive the UK's recovery from Covid-19. To do this, there are two strands:

1. Help to Grow: Digital – which aims to encourage SMEs to adopt digital technologies that are proven to increase their productivity
2. Help to Grow: Management – which offers training to help SME business leaders to increase productivity, seize investment opportunities and grow their business

In this article, we look at both strands and how your business can benefit from them.

### WHAT IS HELP TO GROW: DIGITAL?

Help Grow: Digital has two elements and is set to run for three years via a phased approach in several waves. The first wave launched in December 2021.

#### DIGITAL HUB

The first element is an online hub with free and impartial online support that SMEs can tap into to discover how digital technology can boost their business' performance. The aim is to help SMEs to:

- Identify their digital technology needs
- Assess technology purchasing options
- Implement new technologies in their operations

#### TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

The second element of Help to Grow: Digital will provide eligible SMEs with

a grant token for 50% off the cost of pre-approved, technological solutions up to £5k. These grant tokens are valid for 12 months and can be redeemed with approved vendors.

To qualify for a voucher, your business must:

- Be registered in the UK at Companies House
- Employ between five and 249 employees
- Have been trading for more than 12 months
- Be buying an approved product for the first time

Eligible SMEs will be able to claim a grant token for one technological product only for wave one and won't be able to use it to buy a product that they already own or have a subscription for.

The three technology solutions launched as part of wave one are:

- Accounting
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- E-commerce

To register for Help to Grow: Digital, **click here** to enter your Companies House registration number. The Government will then get in touch when software becomes available, and how you can apply for the 50% discount.

#### WHAT IS HELP TO GROW: MANAGEMENT?

Already live, the Help to Grow: Management programme aims to give 30k SMEs access

to business expertise on leadership, marketing, employee engagement and financial management.

Leading business schools across the nation are offering 50 hours of tuition, including one-to-one support from a mentor, help with developing a business growth plan, peer-learning sessions and access to an alumni network. What's more, the programme is 90% funded by the Government, meaning you'll only pay £750.

Help to Grow: Management is being delivered in partnership with the Small Business Charter and, by heading to its **website**, you can sign up for a 12-week course near you.

If you're thinking of applying, attendees need to be a decision maker within your business and your company must:

- Be based in the UK
- Have between five to 249 employees
- Have been operating for more than a year
- Have at least one link of management in the business structure

Charities are not eligible for Help to Grow: Management.

As the UK finds its feet after the pandemic, the Chancellor says, "Help to Grow will fuel our plan for jobs and boost productivity in all corners of the UK and turbocharge our economic recovery".



# What not to do with your marketing

Marketing and advertising your brand can help to get your story out there, attract new clients and increase sales.

However, sometimes an advert or campaign can get you noticed for all the wrong reasons.

If you're using marketing channels to raise awareness about your business, don't fall foul of these faux pas.

## A MATTER OF FACT

John Lewis launched its new 'Let Life Happen' advert in October 2021, promoting its Home Insurance product. The ad featured a young boy wearing his mum's lipstick and clothes, as he danced around the house to the tune of Stevie Nicks 'The Edge of Seventeen'. Kicking his shoes off and hitting ornaments, smearing paint on walls, as well as knocking some on the floor, throwing glitter around, he caused havoc as he went.

While at first glance, the ad might seem fun and light-hearted, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) found it to be "potentially misleading and confusing". This was down to the fact that John Lewis' accident damage cover is available as an add-on to its Home Insurance product, rather than as standard, and only covers accidental and not deliberate damage.

As a result, the retail giant pulled the advert. It also contacted every customer who bought a policy during the dates that the advert aired to make sure they understood its inclusions and exclusions and check if they were happy with it.

Before any adverts or marketing drives go live, make sure your facts are correct and check that nothing could be misleading or interpreted in a different way by a regulator or customer. It's worth getting a few pairs of eyes on your ads and campaigns to be extra certain that your message is crystal clear.

## PICTURE (NOT SO) PERFECT

As the saying goes, a picture tells a thousand words. Using eye-catching imagery in your marketing can be a way to stop people in their tracks or during a scrolling session on social media.

You may see an image on Google, Instagram or Facebook that you feel will portray your message perfectly. It might be tempting to save a copy to use in a campaign. However, you could get caught out by copyright infringement.

After Stemtech Health Sciences, Inc. used microscopic photographer Andrew Paul Leonard's bone marrow stem cell photos without permission on their website and in other marketing collateral, a court ruled in Leonard's favour. He was awarded \$1.6m (almost £1.2m) in damages.

There are sites out there, such as Canva, which have a **bank of free images**. Canva offers both free and paid subscriptions with more than 250k templates and 100+ designs to choose from, including social media posts, flyers and videos. It can be an easy, cost-effective way to make your marketing stand out.

If you choose to invest in a visual media platform like iStock, Getty Images or Shutterstock be careful of the images you choose. There are often editorial images on these sites, which are for use by newspapers,

magazines and media outlets. They can't, however, be used to advertise a product or service.

## USE HASHTAGS WISELY

Hashtags are an important part of social media marketing. They can be used to target a specific audience, raise your brand's awareness, boost your Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) or the organic reach of your posts, as well as allowing you to join in on trending topics.

If you're coming up with a hashtag for a marketing campaign or event, always check what is trending at the time your social media posts are going live.

Unfortunately, this is something that US baked goods company, Entenmann's, didn't do. They Tweeted about not feeling guilty about eating tasty treats, using the hashtag #notguilty. However, the Tweet was ill-timed,

as the #notguilty hashtag was trending that day as Casey Anthony was acquitted of murdering her two-year-old daughter. Entenmann's apologised saying that their Tweet wasn't referencing the trial and that they hadn't checked what hashtags were trending.

Some hashtags that companies have used have gone viral because they've included an unfortunate double entendre. We'd advise reading any hashtags you create aloud a few times. It doesn't harm to get one or two or even a few members of your team to read them out loud as well, as someone may hear something you haven't.

When done right, marketing and advertising can be a great string to your business' bow. However, if you're ever in doubt, don't post or publish.



# Six myths about Environmental Insurance

RSA highlights common misconceptions about environmental cover

World leaders have struck a new climate change deal – the Glasgow Climate Pact – after the two-week COP26 summit in Glasgow in October and November. It is the first ever climate deal to explicitly state that the use of coal (which has been deemed the worst fossil fuel for emitting greenhouse gases) will be limited, or “phased down”.

With a heavy focus on environmental issues and increasing regulations, businesses need to be more mindful than ever. What you may not be aware of is that not all pollution events are fully covered by standard insurance products. We’ve teamed up with RSA to highlight some of the key misconceptions about Environmental Insurance.

## MYTH 1: “ALL PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE INCLUDES ENVIRONMENTAL COVER.”

Unfortunately, this is a myth. In reality, pollution cover under in Public Liability Insurance doesn’t provide adequate protection for all pollution incidents.

Covers **not** provided under a standard Public Liability policy include:

### GRADUAL POLLUTION

Not all pollution events are ‘sudden and accidental’ or ‘catastrophic’. Pollution events are just as likely to happen as a result of gradual pollution.

### STATUTORY LIABILITY

Work that is carried out at the request of an environmental regulator or debts incurred for work undertaken by regulator on your behalf wouldn’t be covered under a standard policy.

### OWN SITE CLEAN-UP

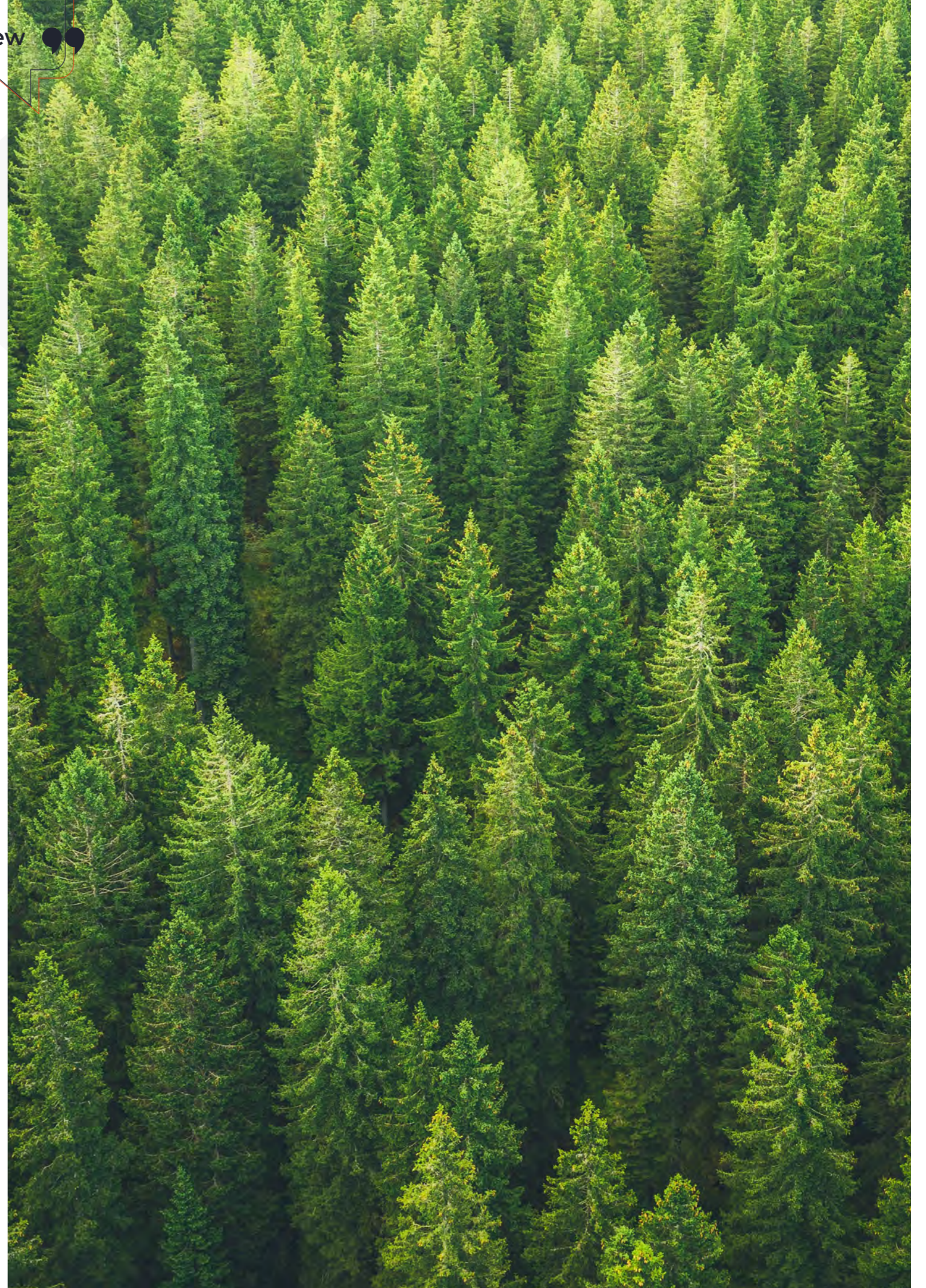
Own site clean-up from a pollution event is not covered under Public Liability Insurance. Meanwhile, it is estimated that 70% of claims paid under environmental policies are for own site clean-up.

### ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

Much of the UK’s flora and fauna is not ‘owned’ by a private entity. Government authorities are charged with protecting the ‘non-owned’ environment. Therefore, environmental damage to ‘non-owned’ flora and fauna would not trigger a Public Liability policy.

### HISTORIC POLLUTION

Under UK law, a land occupier or owner can be held liable for pollution on their site that they didn’t cause, even if it happened years ago.





However, historic pollution is not covered by a Public Liability policy.

**MYTH 2: “WE ARE NOT A POLLUTER.”**

It’s a common misconception that Environmental Liability is only for heavy engineering, chemical and manufacturing activities. You may not see your business as a potential polluter; however, environmental damage can be caused from the most unlikely pollutants. Water can become a pollutant when it is discharged into a river at high temperatures or laden with silt. Milk and alcohol spills can degrade the quality of surface water, causing fish to die.

The Environment Agency says around 57% of serious incidents that have been recorded were from so called ‘low risk’ trades. These sectors include light engineering, warehouses, retail outlets and commercial offices.

**MYTH 3: “THE POLLUTER PAYS.”**

Many businesses rely on the fact that under UK law the polluter is the one that pays for historic pollution. However, this is not always

the best approach, as problems can arise when:

- The polluter can’t be found or has gone bankrupt, at which point the owner or occupier of the property can become liable for clean-up; or
- You own land that was previously occupied by a recently privatised industry, for example by gas companies, the water industry or a local authority. Recent case law suggests that the successors to these companies or legal entities won’t be held liable for any pollution they caused

**MYTH 4: “INSURERS ONLY PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL INSURANCE TO LOW RISK BUSINESSES.”**

This one is false. Environmental Insurance can be taken out by businesses undertaking a wide range of activities, including commercial properties, product assembly, storage and distribution, manufacturing and chemical storage.

**MYTH 5: “YOU NEED A SURVEY FIRST.”**

The streamlining of the underwriting

process means that surveys are not always required; often policies are placed on existing information held by a business and/or once the application form has been completed.

**MYTH 6: “ENVIRONMENTAL INSURANCE IS TOO EXPENSIVE.”**

By working with our friends at RSA, we’re able to provide environmental cover at competitive prices. As well as policies that cover clean-up

costs and third-party damages, your business can benefit from emergency response and legal and technical support to manage short and long-term exposure.

**As your broker, we can source bespoke cover that meets your business’ requirements.**

**To talk through your Environmental Insurance needs, get in touch with our friendly team today.**



# What are your business New Year's resolutions?

**New Year's resolutions are great, that is, if we can keep them. Unfortunately, statistics reveal that 80% of all New Year's resolutions have already been broken by February. This is mostly because the ones we set ourselves often aren't attainable, even with the strongest of willpower.**

Setting unrealistic goals, or resolutions, can set you up for failure. It can be disheartening when you don't reach a target. That's why, as a business owner, it is worth setting yourself realistic goals to measure your company or organisation's performance by. The New Year provides a great opportunity to think about how you can refine and renew your business processes and operations, so you can go out with a bang in 2022. We take a look at some business New Year's resolutions that are achievable and measurable to help you get started.

## REVIEW YOUR MISSION

It's good to re-evaluate your business plan, company mission and unique selling points (USPs) at the start of each year in order to ensure that you, your employees and your customers are up to date, on the same page and working towards the same goals.

## CREATE MEASURABLE GOALS

One of way of making sure your business resolutions are achievable is to set SMART

goals – that is ones that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Timed. Think clearly about what you want to achieve and the timescales in which you want to accomplish them.

Ensure your goals are practical and make sure you also include how you'll measure the progress and success of a goal, so you can regularly evaluate if you're meeting it or if you need to refine things a little. Try not to leave timescales open-ended, working to a deadline can keep you and your team on track.

## REFLECT ON YOUR BUSINESS EXPENDITURE

Take time to look over your business expenditure and try to identify areas in which you can cut costs. Maybe you're leasing equipment when it would be cheaper and more efficient for you to buy it outright, or vice versa? Now's the time to make some changes to free up your budget.

## DELEGATE, DELEGATE, DELEGATE

It can be tempting to take on everything yourself to ensure it's done correctly but allowing others to carry out time-consuming tasks can leave you with more time to concentrate on growing your business. Review your employees' roles to see if certain tasks can be delegated across your workforce to free up extra hours for you and key members of staff to focus on achieving your business goals.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of us put social media on the backbench when things get busy, however, this can be detrimental to your customer engagement, marketing strategy and digital presence. If your business currently doesn't have the funds or capacity to accommodate a full-time social media guru, you can take advantage of a content planner, such as Hootsuite or Tweetdeck, which allow you to create and schedule posts months in advance, so you're covered during the busier periods.

## DRAFT UP A TIMELINE

Make a simple list of what you want to accomplish during the year and note them

down on a timeline, broken down by each month. Doing this alongside more concise goals can be a great way to get both an in-depth perspective and a broader overview of whether you're staying on track throughout the year.

## CHECK THAT YOUR INSURANCE IS UP TO DATE

Last but not least is your insurance cover. Your business needs constantly evolve as you grow, and so too should your policies. Over the last two years, there has been a huge period of change for businesses. Whether you've expanded your premises or moved to a new one, created a new product or started selling online, take the time to consider if you've had any changes throughout the past year, or two, that would impact your risks.

**For help with this, get in touch with one of our specialist advisors. We can evaluate your existing cover and recommend any changes or a policy which may be more suitable to your future operations.**

# 2022

# Rockin' around the Christmas tree. Are you sure it's safe?

## Christmas songs offering irresponsible advice

### And finally, for something completely different, and a little festive!

If you're like us, our festive feelers have heard nearly every Christmas song and it's nigh on impossible not to join in on the fun when somebody hums one. In fact, it usually only takes a few words to get you singing away. Watch.

Jingle bells, jingle bells...

'Tis the season...

Last Christmas...

If you didn't start singing along, either you're very strong willed or are perhaps a secret, or not so secret, Scrooge.

While you're playing your favourite festive tune, you may not have noticed the irresponsible advice some of our favourite songs dish out.

However, all jokes aside, Christmas can also be a dangerous time and most houses and businesses will have new risks that you probably won't even think about. So, we're asking you to think about your safety and the safety of those around you – family, employees or members of the public. As your broker, we're here to support you at Christmas, and all year round.

On to the festive songs, we've highlighted a few that don't offer the most sensible guidance, just in case you didn't know...

#### **ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE, BRENDA LEE**

We're all for rockin' around Christmas trees in winter-time—why else would we have our tree up in the office or at home? But there is such a thing as too much rockin'. It's all well and good until your rockin' and jiving tumbles the tree, which falls on the cat, which knocks over that antique vase you were left by Aunt Pauline. Or worse. Our motto: please rock responsibly.

#### **DECK THE HALLS, BING CROSBY**

Decorations are our thing and —whisper it— one of our employees may have just curated the single largest front garden Yuletide extravaganza special exhibition in the county (deep breath) ... But decking the halls with boughs of holly is prickly business and who knows where to stop? No better way to get your cantankerous old uncle out of the armchair, mind. Again, though, deck with care.

#### **SANTA BABY, EARTHA KITT**

On Christmas Eve, fathers of the world, unite! Coming together, donning their red costumes, tucking into a mince pie and a bit of milk to fuel whatever contraption requiring an extensive assembly you bought your child and





immediately regretted. Sound familiar? For those dedicated Dad Santas, hurrying down the chimney is going that extra mile. Our recommendations: don't go down chimneys at all, actually, but if you have to, don't hurry – it's probably a tight squeeze and those mince pies aren't doing anything for you.

#### **I WISH IT COULD BE CHRISTMAS EVERYDAY, WIZZARD**

OK, this is a tricky one. Christmas every day. Pros: eat as much as you like, it's the holiday season. Think of all the presents to open. Every single morning. Also, Christmas films all year long. Cons: an empty wallet or purse, every day. Health may suffer from extravagant consumption. Can your wheelie bin really take all that wrapping paper until a week on Tuesday? Turkey? Again? We're with the cons on this one.

#### **WALKING IN THE AIR, ALED JONES**

This one just doesn't make sense. We have tried and we have tried and we have tried, much to the detriment of one of our Account Managers. There's just no walking in the air. Not only is Aled Jones' song the most irresponsible advice around, but it also makes all the gents in our office try to reach those super-high notes, this time to the detriment of the rest of the office. Please don't try this at home.

Enough of the silly stuff, Christmas truly is a special time and hearing these songs for the first time of the year, on films, in shops or on the radio, makes it all the more magical.

Remember, your risks may increase at this time of year if you have extra stock in your warehouse or expensive gifts in your home. If you feel you could benefit from additional insurance this Christmas, get in touch with our friendly team.





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inside view



NEXT UP: SPRING 2022

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