

WHAT DO THE CHANNEL ISLANDS HAVE TO OFFER START-UPS?

The Channel Islands are welcoming an influx of wealthy individuals and entrepreneurs starting up new businesses and family offices in the islands. Jason Connolly, director of Next Generation IT, examines what we have to offer.



Most people are attracted to Guernsey and Jersey over other jurisdictions for the quality of life, fine climate, low crime rate, friendly community and proximity to London and Europe. I like living here, with our many beaches, being part of a small community and, of course, it's an ideal place to bring up a family. There are stunning houses to choose to live in, excellent restaurants, great schools, top-notch sports facilities and outdoor pursuits, but there are so many other considerations when setting up a business.

The Channel Islands offer favourable regulation and legislation alongside an experienced pool of staff to draw from, a business-friendly environment, a stable political system and a competitive tax regime.

But these aren't the only considerations in choosing a location; businesses are nowadays so reliant on technology that a major consideration must be the communications infrastructure and IT resources.

COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

The Channel Islands are in a fortunate position as the main hub for transatlantic links and have high-speed communications links into London, Europe and the rest of the world. In addition, the recent success of eGaming hosting has brought a large volume of bandwidth into the islands and we have built a number of high quality data centres. The consequent economies of scale, coupled with our proximity to the major

international hub in London – Telehouse (home of the London Internet Exchange) – provides high quality bandwidth and off-island connectivity at reasonable value, relative to other island jurisdictions.

IT EXPERTISE

The islands enjoy a legacy of highly trained and experienced technical staff from many years of servicing the finance industry, which has attracted and developed high quality IT experts, support staff and programmers.

The good news is that there is now a wide choice of respected and experienced IT providers that start-up businesses can rely on. Because of the close-knit community, IT businesses with a solid reputation and focus on customer service have flourished.

CLOUD COMPUTING

For many years local businesses have led the way by providing hosted desktop as a service, where start-up businesses gain access to all the IT facilities they need from any internet connected device, but without any server infrastructure.

The simplicity of this approach is especially attractive for wealthy individuals moving their family office here. With minimal fuss, cloud computing provides the flexibility to work from the office, at home and whilst travelling. It even provides the practicality of working abroad for an extended period, accessing all the facilities as if in the office but without the need for onsite servers or in-house expertise.

Many of our clients spend their winters abroad, some even aboard their boats in the Caribbean or Mediterranean, safe in the knowledge that we maintain the servers, backups, disaster recovery, antivirus, firewalls, 24/7 monitoring and updates.

Paying a monthly fee for all elements of IT helps with cash flow and budgeting, and has allowed start-up businesses to keep expenses to a minimum, providing a highly flexible system that can quickly grow with their business. Also smaller businesses generally need not employ specialist IT staff, instead partnering with IT service providers to buy in a complete end-to-end service.

CONCLUSION

The Channel Islands have a thriving service industry and know how to look after their important clients, and this is reflected in the excellent service provided by local IT providers. We have world-class infrastructure and cloud services focused on small businesses with high expectations of service and ease of use.

Guernsey and Jersey have a great deal to offer a prospective entrepreneur – beautiful islands, sunny climate, safe environment, welcoming community, friendly business environment, local expertise, progressive legislation, favourable tax environment and world beating technology. So I invite you to come for the lifestyle but stay for the IT service. ■