

LEADING QUESTIONS

New arrangements for the source and allocation of sales leads to Cherubs Partners have been made, which along with re-appointments to the MPA board of directors will be subject to membership scrutiny at an EGM to be held in late January. We answer some key questions here.

Members of the MPA in general, as well as Cherubs Partners, were drawn into debate in mid-December when arrangements to work with a start-up venture, Babycloud Ltd, were not concluded as expected.

The outcome of board and management meetings was a decision to change to an alternative source of leads, Emma's Diary, offered by Baby of the Month Ltd/Barrett & Coe Ltd.

The Cherubs brand was to have been sold to Babycloud Ltd, but is not being sold to the new providers. MPA retains the brand, and Cherubs Partners can continue to work as normal with all resources and with their existing leads up to March 2017.

During the board meetings about the changes necessary, the MPA Chief Executive Officer has continued to be Clare Louise FMPA, who had announced her intention to leave and take up a CEO position with Babycloud Ltd. The MPA board decided (not unanimously) that she should be excluded from some meetings as there could be a conflict of interests.

At the time of going to press Clare Louise remains CEO.

A decision had to be taken before the end of the calendar year to make, or accept, alternative arrangements for the Cherubs leads contracts and avoid possible costs to the association. A motion was proposed to vote between the Babycloud option and the B&C alternative. Three directors opted to resign and the remaining seven-member board then voted 5:2 to accept the B&C offer.

The full details of discus-

The official notification to members issued by the board on December 15th, signed by chairman Steven Ramsden LMPA:

I am writing to announce a number of key changes within the MPA Ltd, and to update you on the position re the sale of the Cherubs brand to Babycloud.

As you know, the MPA Ltd had recently reached agreement to sell the Cherubs brand, with completion due in early December. However, we have subsequently been able to secure a new and improved offer, which we are delighted to announce has now been accepted by the MPA Ltd in place of the Babycloud offer.

One of the tangible advantages to the MPA Ltd of transferring to the newly agreed scheme is that the MPA Ltd will receive a regular on-going income. In addition to this there will also be a wide ranging array of features including a full support structure, which will be available for the benefit of all members joining the scheme.

The existing contract that we have with Bounty will come to an end in February 2017, and is currently loss making and unsustainable in its present format.

We are therefore delighted that we now have the option to transfer our partners to the well established Emma's Diary data scheme run by Baby of the Month Ltd/Barrett & Coe.

These leads will be supplied directly to members of the MPA Ltd by Baby of the Month/Barrett and Coe, and the full transition of lead supply from Bounty leads to the Emma's Diary sourced data supply will take place in March 2017. This means that the MPA Ltd will continue to supply leads to our current Cherubs partners until then, ie up to and including the February lead supply, with a view to switching the lead source in March 2017.

Hand in hand with this change comes a new marketing, training and sales project which will involve Baby of the Month/Barrett and Coe and the MPA working together throughout 2017 and beyond. This will create a ground breaking, industry exclusive initiative for the benefit of the whole MPA membership, as well as those partners already within the Barrett and Coe family. I cannot stress enough, this will benefit all members who are able to take part.

Baby of the Month/Barrett and Coe and the MPA Ltd will continue to work as independent organisations, but we will draw on each other's strengths to support both of our full membership bases in ways that have not previously been possible, and for the ultimate good of the industry.

With such fundamental changes under way, a number of our current board members have taken the opportunity to move on to pastures new and to concentrate on their own businesses. I would like to thank the following individuals for all the tremendous hard work they have done for the MPA Ltd, and as always I would like to extend the grateful and everlasting thanks of the board for their extraordinary commitment over the years:

Paul Wilkinson, resigning Chairman of the Board and regional director

Collin Davies, resigning regional director

Paul Inskip, resigning regional director

I am truly honoured to advise you that I have now been appointed Chairman of the Board, to take the MPA Ltd into uncharted and exciting new territory, and to drive forward what I believe will be a whole new future for the MPA Ltd, and all of its members.

I understand and appreciate that this announcement will raise a number of questions and I can assure you that we will be announcing full details in the MPA magazine in early January. I am also writing separately to all Cherubs partners to outline the new scheme in more detail.

As I write this, I am very conscious that our office is due to close this afternoon for the Xmas break, and will be open again early in the new year. I wouldn't want anyone to feel that we were out of contact over this period, so please do feel free to email me directly at info@steveramsdenstudio.co.uk and I will take your questions.

sion as minuted during the meeting of December 8th will be given when minutes are approved by all the directors present. This magazine does not publish board minutes and relies on the CEO or chair to provide any report of activities and decisions.

The directors who resigned on Thursday December 8th were Collin Davies LMPA (Wales) who abstained and resigned after the vote, Paul Inskip LMPA (South East) and the chairman Paul Wilkinson FMPA (Central) who both resigned before the vote.

The directors remaining are Steven Ramsden LMPA (Northern), Ray Lowe Hon. FMPA (London & Essex), David Thexton LMPA (North West), Paul Cooper FMPA (Qualifications), Martin Leckie LMPA (Scotland), Nick Bayley LMPA (Wessex) and Steve Walton FMPA (Midlands, who has subsequently resigned).

Steven Ramsden was elected as interim Chairman and asked by the board to inform Cherubs partners, including those who will lose leads in part or full as a result of the transfer to B&C, and arrange for the new contracts to be sent out.

The board decided at a meeting on Monday December 19th to hold a meeting in early January to fix an EGM date in 'late January' as determined by the period of notice required.

Members will be sent notification and information by email or post, giving the purpose of the EGM. The outcome of the EGM will be reported in the March/April issue of this magazine.

– David Kilpatrick HonFMPA
Editor

