

GRTU NEWSTRING

Black Friday (Page 1-2), Satabank—an update (Page 3), Get Ready Scheme (Page 4), New Cash Notes (Page 5), Valletta Pedestrianised Zones (Page 7), Calendar of Events (Page 10)



Another Success for Businesses

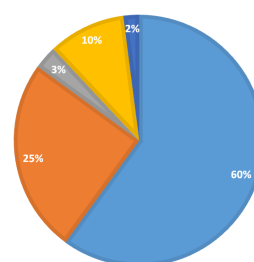
A survey conducted by GRTU with 100 respondents, representing over 150 outlets and businesses has confirmed what a big success this year's Black Friday was with 85% saying sales were stronger over Black Friday of last year and any other shopping day.

This year was also the first time for 17% of the respondents to participate in the Black Friday activity. Those that reported less sales on the day are almost entirely found within sectors that are not normally associated with Black Friday or sell Business to Business. Even here however 25% of those that did not participate are either seriously considering or surely participating next year.

GRTU CEO Abigail Mamo said that "From our survey results, we can confirm that there was an increase in sales of around 25% on average over last year's Black Friday, amongst the businesses participating. It is also clear that this is a result of both increased preparation by business owners with marketing and price incentives as well as greater consumer awareness".

HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE THIS YEAR'S BLACK FRIDAY SALES TO LAST YEARS?

■ Much Better ■ Better ■ Same ■ Worse ■ Much Worse



“From a business perspective it is clear that no stone has been left unturned with more resources deployed at shop level and extension to their shop opening hours made. Good preparation also at the GRTU level helped in making progress on challenges outlined last year. Traffic situation was reported as greatly improved and we thank the authorities for their cooperation. Plans in this respect have already started in order to prepare for what has become the most important shopping day of the year”.

Business have adopted offers and discounts on the day. Those answering GRTU’s survey said that their offers varied between 15% and 70% off and some even included special gifts and buy-one-get-one free offers.

In terms of marketing, various media have been used but advertising on Facebook was indeed the most popular option and most say that this marketing tool proved very effective and ‘essential’ for the success achieved on the day. Moreover, a good deal of businesses decided to advertise on diverse radio channels.

Apart from the 23rd November – Black Friday - 76% of respondents also extended offer to Saturday and 33% to Sunday. 58% of respondents have extended their normal shopping hours by opening early, closing later and staying open throughout the day.

37% have extended their Black Friday promotions to online with 65% confirming increase in sales through their website on Black Friday.

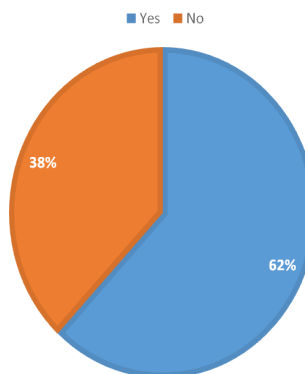
There is still a concern with how Black Friday affects other shopping days and the Christmas period as many report slow shopping days in the days leading and following Black Friday. Most respondents however also say that Black Friday results increased overall sales with consumers encouraged by the offers enjoy their shopping day and spend more freely.

As a run-up to this survey, GRTU was proactive in informing the media about the day that businesses were having. As such, many reported early cuing, which lasted throughout the day.

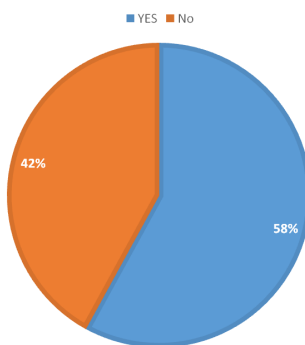
“Black Friday is a welcome phenomenon and Maltese businesses are doing their part in being present on the market when consumers want them to be present and offering the advantages expected on Black Friday” concluded Abigail Mamo.

This trend in Malta is likely to continue; as Black Friday becomes more popular among consumers.

DID YOU INCORPORATE ANY OFFERS THIS YEAR SPECIFICALLY FOR BLACK FRIDAY?



HAVE YOU EXTENDED YOUR NORMAL OPENING HOURS DURING BLACK FRIDAY?



Satabank

A tragic case from which authorities have to learn

Two months have passed since the bank was effectively closed. These months have been very turbulent for the businesses hit by this measure.

Overnight these businesses learnt that their business, and in many cases, even personal accounts had been frozen. Most of them had no alternative accounts because their attempts to open accounts with other banks were simply turned down because there is no appetite locally to accept businesses that are considered riskier because of their sector, due to having foreign stakeholders, or their structure not being straight forward enough.

Throughout this month GRTU has been supporting these businesses through its lobbying efforts. The authorities had immediately put up a wall to keep everyone concerned out. There was absolute

secrecy on what had happened and what businesses should expect. These businesses' money was immediately, literally, held hostage and no public information is being provided.

GRTU has made various attempts to address this head to head with the government's highest officials and offer a helping hand to mitigate the devastating impact, however too little progress has been registered to date. GRTU has serious doubts on why the authorities are being so secretive; are they hiding behind a wall because of the seriousness of the situation or because they had not thought about the repercussions businesses have had to face, until GRTU raised the alarm.

When GRTU went to the media things started to slowly move, albeit very slowly. Businesses were so desperate that they themselves started to go to the media to voice their concerns and tell them about their situation. Some even ended up eating take-away at the entrance of the regulator, the competent person, etc... in protest to the way they were being treated.

Satabank happened during the same week Malta was hosting its largest blockchain conference, promoting Malta as the Blockchain Island. Sigma has just taken place as well because this is the economic momentum we work very hard towards. There is however another side of the coin. The investors we celebrate and call upon to invest in Malta are the same ones we have bitten with the closure of Satabank. The harm this has caused and is still causing to our economy is significant and this should have been handled better. Depositors hurt are now hitting back at our country and warning other investors and explaining how they have been treated.

GRTU appreciates the efforts put in by Malta Enterprise in setting up the Hardship fund in response to our concerns but this also has its limitations and most of the damage done is irreparable.

As a business representative we feel very disappointed with how Satabank depositors were handled. The authorities played the high as mighty and businesses were regarded and dispensable and individuals not worthy of basic social respect. The end is, so far, not yet in sight.



Malta Enterprise launches 'Get Ready' scheme to help SMEs that trade or do business with the UK.



MALTAENTERPRISE

Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Businesses Chris Cardona addressed a business breakfast titled 'Brexit: threats, challenges and opportunities', hosted by Malta Enterprise, the Chamber of Commerce and GRTU and launched the Get Ready scheme.

The Get Ready scheme has purposely been designed to provide advisory support to Maltese businesses to get ready for the various possible future trade relationships that may arise between the EU and Britain after 29th March 2019. Aid shall be granted in the form of a cash grant covering 50% of the costs for advisory services. Minister Cardona said that the ministry is doing its utmost to help Maltese businesses make the transition with the least possible impact and that the launching of the Get Ready scheme is a significant foundation block.



Business dependent on the British market need to carry out a close examination of their business model to mitigate risks, as a result of the uncertainties and challenges being created by Brexit.



Aid shall be granted as a cash grant covering 50% of the costs, capped at €4,000, to part finance costs of the consultancy services offered.

List will be available on Malta Enterprise Website



Measure is open to SMEs carrying out an economic activity in Malta, employing at least 5 persons and a maximum of 50 persons, employed at a full-time basis.

Applicant will be required to justify significant dependency on the British market in terms of import and/or exports.

A business shall be considered to have a significant dependency if, for the last two years, at least 20% of its turnover was dependent on transactions related to the British market.



Scheme is ongoing until 31st January 2019



maltaenterprise.com/support/get-ready

Issuing of New Cash Notes

The European Central Bank aims to always be one step ahead of counterfeiters; that is why the European Central Bank has developed a second series of euro banknotes with enhanced security features which keep the banknotes secure.

The new series has been introduced gradually across the euro area over the past few years. Following the introduction of the new €50, counterfeiting of the first series note has expectedly decreased. More than one year after the introduction of the new note the number of €50 counterfeits of the Europa series is still less than half the level that had been observed in the two years prior to the launch of the second series banknote. With the issuance of the new €100 and €200 banknotes on 28th May 2019, the second series will be complete.

The new €100 and €200 banknotes make use of new and innovative security features. At the top of the silvery stripe a satellite hologram shows small € symbols that move around the number and become clearer under direct light. The new €100 and €200 banknotes also feature an enhanced emerald number. While the emerald number itself is present on all the other notes of the Europa series, this enhanced version also shows € symbols inside the numerals.

The new €100 and €200 banknotes are now the same height as the €50 banknote. However, their length remains unchanged – the longer the note, the higher the value. Since the €50, €100 and €200 banknotes are now the same height; they can be more easily handled and processed by machines. They will also fit better in people's wallets and last longer, as they will be subject to less wear and tear.

In addition to the security features that can be seen with the naked eye, euro banknotes also contain machine-readable security features. Therefore, it is important that retailers' banknote handling machines are updated in order to be able to read the new features. Suppliers of banknote handling machines are already testing machines and therefore owners should contact their suppliers without delay.

The Central Bank of Malta not only offers support to suppliers in upgrading their machines, but also offers training activities such as on-site training and e-learning courses for cash handling employees.

For more information retailers can contact us either by calling us on +2550 6010/+ 2550 6002 or send us an email on coosupport@centralbankmalta.org



Awarding Businesses, Overcoming Barriers.

GRTU had the pleasure of being part of a conference, organised by the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, better known as CRPD.

During this conference, GRTU chaired a workshop that focused on practicality, reasonability and accessibility. The aim of this workshop focused on the main issue faced by employers when applying for permits. Although the right of persons with disabilities should always be safeguarded, the workshop sought to highlight areas of impracticality and areas which can be improved. This session concluded that there needs to be a change in approach in how we push for the right of accessibility and that new mechanisms need to be introduced.

CRPD, during this conference announced that they would be creating the Malta Disability Business Forum, which GRTU shall form part of, to ensure that all stakeholders work together. It is important that both sides understand each other and come to conclusions which will benefit everyone in a practical and reasonable manner. The aim of this is to provide accessibility for all.



Inauguration of MITA's New Emerging Technologies Lab



Parliamentary Secretary for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation Silvio Schembri inaugurated MITA's New Emerging Technologies Lab, a safe haven for scientific and technological research lab which was made possible through an investment of €250,000.

This lab will have two types of activities:

1. Ongoing lectures with the aim of increasing awareness and knowledge of emerging technologies such as blockchain programming and data mining.
2. To encourage creative thinking for MITA employees and government officials

The activities at the MITA Emerging Technologies Lab are targeted towards technological fields related to DLTs and blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Internet of Things, and 3D Printing/Scanners. It offers state of the art technology that can be used to innovate, and enhance various sectors including educational technology, Artificial Intelligence and robotics.

Valletta Pedestrianised Zones

Legal Notice Published

The Legal notice regulating pedestrianised zones in Valletta has been published. This is following intense consultation with GRTU.

The below is a summary of the main conditions implemented;

Morning Time Zones:

Access to all pedestrianised zones areas from Monday to Saturday between 01:00 – 09:30.

Afternoon Time-Zones:

Following our insistence the legal notice published allows, access during the afternoon on Mondays and Thursdays between 14:30 and 16:30 (Access on Saturdays [afternoon] will no longer be permissible).

Access to Valletta pedestrianised zones during the afternoon will be only accessible through:

1. Entrance from St. Paul's Street through Melita Street, all the way down through Merchant Street, through old theatre street, leading to Republic Street and exiting through St. Lucia Street.
2. Entrance through St. Paul's Street, through Melita Street, proceeding through Merchant Street and turning Republic Street (from St. John Street) and down from St. Lucia Street (adjacent to Courts of Justice) and exiting St. Lucia Street.
3. Entrance through St. Paul's Street, through Melita Street, proceeding to Strait Street and exiting from St. John Street.
4. Entrance through St. Paul's Street, through Melita Street, proceeding through Merchant Street and down through St. John Street.
5. Entrance through St. Paul's Street, Through Melita Street, through Strait Street and exiting form St. Lucia Street.

The legal notice clearly indicates the above-mentioned routes. Kindly note that the above routes only apply for the afternoon time-slots (Mondays and Thursdays between 14:30 & 16:30). The legal notice can be viewed [here](#).

Moreover, TM have committed themselves that as part of the transition, Transport Malta official present will be guiding and educating delivery personnel without enforcing the legislation. Having said that kindly inform all employees immediately with these changes in order to ease this transitional process.

TM have also committed themselves to dedicate a space, for delivery vehicles in Ordinance Street (normally occupied by street hawkers until 1PM) for deliveries during the afternoon.

Maximum Vehicle size (as per legal notice): During the afternoon time-frames, only vehicles of up to 7.5 tonnes will be permitted within pedestrianised zones.

GRTU will be organising a information session together with Transport Malta on the above details and also to discuss the additional Loading Un-Loading Bays required. We shall be communicating the date in the near future.

Please do not hesitate to flag any issues by sending an email to admin@grtu.eu or by phone on 21232881.

“Corporate social responsibility has the ability to create constructive links between the private sector and society”

President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca delivered the opening speech at a conference organised by Fundazzjoni Tumas Fenech together with the President’s Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, entitled ‘CSR: Business, Journalism and Society’, at San Anton Palace. The President said that during sessions of consultation held by the Foundation with diverse NGOs, many of these organisation expressed concerns that their activities were not being given sufficient media coverage, and that they could not afford to employ public relations specialists as part of their team, further stating her belief that “we must do more to motivate media representatives to respond to these concerns.” President Coleiro Preca said that the media has “the important role to be a catalyst for education, information, and an objective and inclusive voice, especially on delicate and sensitive matters,” adding that the media, “as the fourth estate of democracy must maintain an ethical perspective which respects the dignity of all the members of society, at all times.” The President said that, in this way, the media will be strengthening its own professional standards.



SME Innovation—Survey

A Masters student at The Edward DeBono Institute of Thinking at the University of Malta, Mr David Grech, has designed a survey focusing on SME innovation entitled: ‘An Exploration of Innovation Strategies used by SMEs.’



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
The Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking

This study will essentially define the extent and manner by which whether Maltese entrepreneurs tend to innovate their business. Furthermore, this study will aim to deliver practical implications for Maltese businesses to improve their innovation strategy going forward.

Should you wish to participate, please click [here](#).

FSS/VAT Return Online Submission

Free Info Session
GRTU Offices
Tuesday 22nd January
15:00

Register [here](#).

Fondazzjoni Ideat— Survey



Fondazzjoni Ideat has embarked on a project to receive feedback on the economy from CEOs operating in different sectors. The reason being that it is these economic operators who manage enterprises and create wealth, thus their feedback is crucial. They really know what the economy requires to continue to grow. This feedback is being collected through a Business Analysis Questionnaire. This survey should not take more than 3 minutes.

A report will be written based on these replies. The replies will remain strictly unanimous.

Should you wish to participate, click [here](#).

Please send your replies by 31st December 2018

GRTU Calendar of Events

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	REGISTRATION
<i>FSS /VAT return online submission</i>	22nd January	15:00	GRTU Offices	https://goo.gl/65nZP5
<i>Business Enhance ERDF Grant Schemes</i>	12th December	15:00	Business First	http://www.business1st.grtu.eu/
<i>eBizznify</i>	24th January	15:00	Business First	http://www.business1st.grtu.eu/

The Occupational Handbook

The Occupational Handbook is a source of information related to 246 occupations found in the Maltese labour market. These 246 occupations cover more than 90% of the labour force.

The information detailed in the occupational sheets of this handbook was obtained by means of desk-based research, online questionnaires and consultation meetings with various sectorial stakeholders (the State, Educational Institutions, Private Enterprise and other Social Partners) and makes it unique to Malta and the needs of the Maltese economy.

If you would like to know more, please click [here](#).



Occupational Handbook

2018

Contact GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs on **21232881 / 3** or e-mail **admin@grtu.eu**



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013
 Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
 Project may be part-financed by the European Union
 European Social Fund (ESF),
 Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



Investing in your future