



## **News in Brief**

### **Worker absence a headache**

Small firms are suffering from worker absence from the workplace.

According to a survey by the Forum of Private Business 71.4% of respondents have suffered through workers' absence and nearly two thirds said staff absences had cost them £5,000 or more.

Most smaller employers use sickness management to reduce absence. The most common tools in managing absenteeism are restricting paid absences, return to work interviews and incentives for good attendance.

Availability of occupational health resources and healthy working environments are the key objectives of the Government's ongoing effort to promote the health and well-being of people in work.

### **Local firms drive consumer loyalty**

'Local' and 'ethical' are two of the strongest brands driving customer loyalty according to a new report.

Almost half of shoppers will go out of their way to support new and local businesses in their community, while one in three consumers will give their money to businesses with a social and ethical approach.

The findings come from a consumer loyalty report published by O2 and the Global Future Forum, which asked over 1,000 shoppers to evaluate their feelings toward brands.

Head of small business marketing at O2, Peter Rampling said consumers are looking for the human touch. By virtue of their size and access to the community, small businesses can build strong individual relationships and deliver a great human experience that keeps customers coming back.