Insurance: are you covered?

Last Updated Thursday, 17 September 2009

While it may seem an expensive but necessary evil, protecting your property and business is extremely important. But there's a bewildering range of policies out there. Mark Whiteman from Reid Hamilton starts you thinking about the questions you need to ask.

What's the best insurance for your hotel, restaurant or pub? There are plenty of providers of specific hotel insurance, and most of these policies will provide all-risk cover for buildings and contents, business interruption, loss of money, employer's liability, public and products liability, loss of licence and legal expenses. While there may be small differences in the detail of cover, most policies are very similar - so should you just buy the cheapest available cover?

What will a good broker ask?

A good independent broker will go into lots of detail to ensure they pick the right policy for you, including questions about:

- Your business property
- The number of diners and residents you can accommodate
- The stock and contents you hold there
- Your turnover, gross profit and book debts
- Where you keep cash
- Live entertainment
- If you use a deep fat fryer
- How your premises are secured and alarmed
- Your recent history of insurance claims.

Insurance provides no value at all until you come to claim, and that’s the point at which you need to see real value for money. An incident at your guest house or hotel, such as a burst pipe, storm damage or small fire, may well result in a total or partial interruption to your business and that is when you need help to ensure that you can claim for all that you are entitled to.

If you buy online, or from a direct insurer, you’ll have to present your own claim and will need to fully understand your policy to do so. However, if you have used the services of a good independent insurance broker, the process will be much more straightforward as you will have someone working for you, dealing with your claim from start to finish and ensuring that your expectations are fully met.

Reid Hamilton, independent insurance brokers based in Lancaster, have over 25 years experience of arranging specialist cover for hotels and guest houses and were the first broker in the area to promote a specialist hotel scheme for the Lake District National Park, launched in 1988. To obtain competitive and comprehensive cover, you can contact Reid Hamilton on 01524 39939 or visit their website.