



Press release

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## **Dr Hannah Shimko Appointed as Director General of the Gift Card and Voucher Association (GCVA) to Lead Industry Advancements and Advocate for Tax Allowance Reform**

The Gift Card and Voucher Association (GCVA) has announced the appointment of Dr Hannah Shimko as its new Managing Director, effective April 10, 2024. Dr Shimko brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role, having served as Chief Executive Officer at the Online Dating and Discovery Association and Head of Policy and Communications at The Heritage Alliance.

Dr Hannah Shimko's selection for this pivotal role was based on her extensive skills and experience in managing the diverse activities of trade associations. Her track record of successfully leading teams, growing memberships, and championing initiatives aligns seamlessly with the GCVA's vision for the future.

Commenting on Dr Shimko's appointment, Siobhan Moore and Adam Hobbs (GCVA Executive Co-Chairs) stated, "Hannah's skills and experience were just what we were looking for. Someone who understands and has experience of managing the diverse activities of a trade association, with the ability to manage and grow the GCVA team, its membership and championing the many and varied GCVA initiatives that help drive our vibrant sector forward."

The appointment of Dr Shimko is expected to further enhance the development of the GCVA and the wider gift card industry. Despite the challenging economic climate, the gift card market continues to thrive, and the GCVA is confident that Dr Shimko will play a key role in capitalising on this upward trajectory.

In her new role, Dr Hannah Shimko will spearhead several key initiatives aimed at advancing the gift card industry and advocating for regulatory changes to support its growth. Chief among her priorities is advocating for an increase in the tax allowance for trivial benefits. Currently, employers can make tax-free gifts to employees of £50 each. Dr Shimko believes this allowance should be raised to match those in other countries, especially in light of the increasing costs of living.

Additionally, Dr Shimko aims to continue the gift card industry's success in tackling fraud and to educate a wider business audience on how gift cards can be utilised as tools to grow and



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improve their businesses. Whether promoting customer and staff loyalty or attracting new customers, Dr Shimko sees gift cards as invaluable assets in today's business landscape.

In her own words, Dr Hannah Shimko shared her enthusiasm for her new role, stating, "I am excited to lead the GCVA into its next chapter, supporting a growing team to continue to deliver the quality engagement and events members and wider stakeholders have come to rely upon. At the same time, we'll be looking at new endeavours, helping the sector further enhance its reputation, expand new commercial opportunities and campaign on areas of best practice and social impact."

Dr Shimko's extensive background in communications, events, and engagement, combined with her passion for mentoring professionals in the creative and cultural industries, positions her as an ideal candidate to drive the GCVA forward. Her commitment to delivering quality experiences and her vision for growth aligns perfectly with the goals of the Association.

"I am looking forward to getting to know a new industry, while also bringing my knowledge of tech and e-commerce policy, opportunities, and challenges to the GCVA," added Dr Shimko. "It's an exciting time to be joining the team at GCVA."

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

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### **About the GCVA**

The Gift Card & Voucher Association ([www.gcva.co.uk](http://www.gcva.co.uk)) was established as a trade body to represent the key players in what is today a £7 billion gift card and stored value solutions market. With more than 90 members representing key retailers, issuers, and suppliers the GCVA provides an information and reference point for the Gift Card & Voucher industry and is at the forefront of the issues affecting the industry.



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Its main objective is to provide a platform and infrastructure for the industry and to raise the profile and use of gift cards and vouchers within the UK, promoting the industry to consumers, businesses, government, and other interested parties.

The GCVA is the key industry organisation to share new ideas, innovate and promote best practice with the UK gift card and voucher industry. It runs a programme of events, meetings, research projects and updates throughout the year, including its flagship Conference.