

Future Business Magnates

This is a collection of educational establishments working together made up of; Durham Federation, Durham High School for Girls, Park View Community School, Hermitage School, Roseberry Sports and Community College, Seaham School of Technology, Belmont School Community Arts College, Framwellgate School Durham, St Leonard's Catholic School, Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College and Easington Community College.

These are secondary schools – a mixture of state and private in a predominantly semi-rural area of the north east. A total of 120 Year 8 students (aged 12-13 years) took part.

The objective of partnership with employers was that students are introduced to the excitement and exhilaration of working in business. They broaden their understanding and knowledge of job roles and functions, develop their communication, presentation and research skills. This initiative also assists them with their study choices.

Employers gain direct experience of the world of education. The initiative provides a basis for developing corporate and social responsibility throughout the area. Some employers are 'Business Partners' to individual teams and others act as sources of information for the young people to access as part of their research. In addition, local business people act as judges, supporters and sponsors of Future Business Magnates.

Focus of engagement activity was Enterprise and employability skills.

Each school is allocated a business partner. This person will act as mentor for their team, take phone calls, answer emails, offer advice and guidance and contribute directly to the delivery and completion of challenges. They attend meetings with the team and happily share business skills and experience – often welcoming the team into their workplace and involving colleagues when appropriate.

Students work as a team to complete a series of business challenges to deadline. These are then judged by eminent business people in the North East and points are allocated according to strict criteria. A local newspaper publishes the league tables after each challenge. Teams have the opportunity to play one joker on a challenge that they feel they have done particularly well. This 'joker' will double the score on that particular challenge.

The initiative ends in July when each team must prepare a presentation to deliver in front of a panel of judges. On the evening of that day, all teams, their business partners and teachers will attend a Gala dinner where the winner is announced.

The initiative is just starting its fifth year. Initially it was run for Durham City schools only. In the second year, it was extended to include schools in the Chester-le-Street area and has continued to grow in size since. This year it is open to all County Durham schools and covers an area of some 1015 square miles.

Employers involved were J & G Archibalds who are building supplies, Bramwell's Jewellers, Durham Business Club which is a local business forum to support local businesses and provide training, Durham Markets Company who owns and operates markets in the city, Durham University, The

Marriott Hotel, Prince Bishops Shopping Centre, Utopian Leisure which operates licensed premises, nightclubs and restaurants in Durham and Belfast.

The benefit to employer was engagement with young people who are also prospective employees and also a chance to develop corporate and social responsibility.

Teacher and business partner feedback emphasises the transformation that takes place in these young people as they change from children to young business people. There is a massive growth in self-confidence, presentation skills, communication skills, social skills, independence and team working. At the end of the year, many students decide to follow a business studies course because they have been inspired by their business partners and the whole experience of planning their own business.

The initiative has gone from strength to strength each year. Now, in its fifth year, sixteen schools are taking part. More business partners wish to join as word of Future Business Magnates' success has spread across the region. Previously run by the Regeneration Department of Durham City Council, the initiative is seen as a valuable part of developments at the new Unitary Durham County Council.

Find out more: Future Business Magnates handbook available from John.Tindale@durham.gov.uk

There are many articles about Future Business Magnates, some of which are linked here:

<http://bdaily.info/news/education-and-training/03-07-2009/youngsters-praised-in-future-business-magnates-awards/>

<http://www.durhamcity.gov.uk/News/1305>

http://www.durhamtimes.co.uk/business/4486717.Federation_triumphs_in_schools_business_battle/