



## Slow-dried fruit business gets fast track approach!

Moses Kibuuka Muwanga, Founder, Jali Organic and Jim Lawson, Entrepreneur Exchange

When Moses Kibuuka Muwanga, a Sheffield-based filmmaker inherited 500 acres of prime arable land in his homeland of Uganda, he decided to turn it into a business called 'Jali Organic', which would benefit both the farmers that worked the land and provide a nutritious product that he could sell for a profit to independent health food shops.

But getting his Fair Trade, organic dried pineapple, mango and jack fruit to market was proving difficult for Moses, so he contacted the Entrepreneur Exchange for support and advice. Here, Enterprise Relationship Manager Jim Lawson matched him with Emma Killilea, the founder of the successful Sheffield-based gluten-free food company Delicious Alchemy.

**Moses says: "Jim arranged a meeting at which he introduced me to Emma and after that she was able to offer me some fantastic business support, in particular suggestions about routes to market and how to make an effective sales pitch."**

Moses says Emma has also helped him persevere with the project when "everything that could go wrong did go wrong", adding "she was happy to be available by phone or email to give me ongoing advice. When you're setting up a business it's a very lonely process and it's great to be able to talk to someone who understands what you're going through and can help you avoid some of the pitfalls. If you can learn from other people's mistakes, as well as what they did right, then it

can set you off on the right track and save you lots of time and money."

Moses, who has young children himself, was keen to improve the diet of children in the UK, while paying Fair Trade prices to the farmers, which would improve the community's access to schools and healthcare.

"With a lot of help from the villagers, I built a drying factory on the island which meant we were able to establish a slow drying method that retains all the flavour."

Jali Organic dried fruits are available from health food shops in Sheffield and London. In the meantime, consumers can order by post by contacting him on 0114 258 7648 or visit the website [www.jaliorganic.com](http://www.jaliorganic.com).

## What is the Entrepreneur Exchange?

The Entrepreneur Exchange was established to encourage the culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship in the Sheffield region. Over 250 accomplished entrepreneurs who have 'been there, done that and are happy to share it' make up the Entrepreneur Exchange, with the

support of a team of Enterprise Relationship Managers. The entrepreneurs share their expertise and know-how with both young people and adults from across Sheffield to inspire, motivate and mentor the next generation of businessmen and women.

The Entrepreneur Exchange also creates links to bring entrepreneurs together to network formally and informally, to help share personal experiences and assist each other, as part of encouraging growth and further prosperity in the area.

In this  
Issue

Foreword from  
David Grey

What an impact – latest  
start up success stories

Top business tips from  
our entrepreneurs

Julia Gash explains  
why she's a member

How to get  
involved

# David Grey MBE foreword



I was delighted to be involved at the outset of the Entrepreneur Exchange and to have seen it grow and prosper over the past three years. Like all great ideas, it was based upon a simple premise, which was to bring established entrepreneurs and new start-ups together as part of stimulating the enterprise culture in Sheffield.

Back in 2007, we had just started to feel the early impacts of the financial meltdown. The recession that followed meant that many businesses shrank or even disappeared. In any thriving city it is important to ensure that businesses are starting up and growing at a faster rate than businesses are failing.

New businesses face many challenges, not least because the new business man or woman has a huge learning curve to deal with all the issues that inevitably confront them.

It was decided that what this city needed was to build a network of entrepreneurs who were prepared to put something back, by supporting fledgling entrepreneurs to successfully establish and grow their businesses either by mentoring or by taking Non Executive positions.

Those of us who have weathered the ups and downs of driving forward a business over many years are in a great position to offer practical advice, or perhaps just a different perspective to people on the early stage of that journey. But to be truly meaningful to a new or existing business needing support it was decided that a process of matching skills and industries must be set up – and this is what the Entrepreneur Exchange is there to do.

The Exchange's staff investigate the needs of the business seeking support as well as getting to know what kind of help existing entrepreneurs can offer. They then seek a business mentor from their extensive database and arrange for the two parties to meet up as many times as are necessary. It is at this point that the "magic dust gets sprinkled" boosting the success of dozens of new businesses ventures and creating industry and wealth in our city.

Over the past three years the network of entrepreneurs has grown from just a handful of people to over 250. This body of people is constantly evolving, with the support of the Entrepreneur Exchange team who are always seeking new entrepreneurs from all walks of life to share their experiences and expertise. Every one of these has played their part in helping to make Sheffield a more enterprising city.

Another aspect of the Exchange's work is to inspire young people in Sheffield schools to consider setting up their own ventures in the future. Almost every week, the Entrepreneur Exchange arranges for local business people to give their time to go into schools and talk about the huge opportunities that exist if they chose to start up their own business one day.

I believe we will look back in decades to come and see the immense value of the work now being undertaken by The Entrepreneur Exchange in growing new businesses, creating jobs and raising the aspirations of young people. Along with my fellow entrepreneurs in the Sheffield area, I hope to see it go on from strength to strength.

David Grey MBE, Group Managing Director of OSL Group Holdings Ltd.

# Why I support the Entrepreneur Exchange

**Julia Gash of Bag It Don't Bin It explains why she's a member of the Entrepreneur Exchange.**

Julia is full of praise for the Entrepreneur Exchange's networking events which she says offer benefits to business owners on many different levels.

She says: "By attending these entrepreneur-only gatherings, you gain support from people who are in a similar situation. It's a chance to offload problems and share experiences and knowledge - you can't pay for that kind of support! And because they are held in a relaxed social atmosphere, people are much more open than they would be in a business setting."

Julia recalls how someone she was chatting to at an Entrepreneur Exchange event gave her a contact which led to vital investment in her business.

She explains: "In the early days of my company, I was finding it incredibly difficult to get the investment I needed - in fact it was crippling the business. I was talking about this to a fellow entrepreneur at an Exchange networking event and he gave me a number for a 'business angel' organisation which resulted in a new investor coming on board."

Julia has also found the presentations given at events relevant to everyday business challenges and has also gained new clients as a result of attending.

**She says: "It's a really subtle and fun way of networking. People say things to me like: 'Oh Julia, I'm glad I've seen you because I want to put in an order for 100 bags for an event I've got next month.'"**

Despite her busy schedule, Julia finds around three hours a month to mentor the owners of start-up businesses as part of the Exchange's volunteer programme.

She explains: "I see it as part of giving back to the community, but it's also an important contribution to the health and welfare of the local economy. I think what goes around comes around - I have been given business support myself and so I believe it is important to pass on the help that I can give. After all, as business owners we will all benefit from being part of a vibrant, growing local economy and some of the start-up companies I have advised could become clients for my business."

She recently advised a new start-up who was planning to import products from India and was able to give detailed advice about customs procedures, as well as useful contacts.

Julia comments: "I know what a huge difference this sort of support can make. Running a business is a difficult and often isolating experience. The encouragement existing entrepreneurs can give to newer business people could make the difference between someone saying 'I've had enough, this is just too hard' or carrying on and building something that will last."



Julia is a serial entrepreneur, who in 2007, established Bag It Don't Bin It, an eco-friendly producer of custom-designed reusable cloth bags. The bags are produced in India to high ethical standards, and designs are then created and printed at the company's Sheffield base. The rapidly growing company currently employs 12 people in Sheffield and is likely to create further new jobs in the near future.

# Start-up stories – how the Exchange is boosting new businesses



Tony Bower makes his dreams come through thanks to Entrepreneur Exchange

## Exchange helps lay concrete foundations for garden ornament company

fashions – such as the current craze for meerkat models.

He decided to set up the business in his home town of Sheffield, but he knew he needed some expert business advice on sourcing trade outlets for his products.

He soon discovered that the help he needed was close at hand when he asked the Entrepreneur Exchange to find him a business mentor who could help with a marketing strategy.

Jim Lawson says: “I decided to put Tony in contact with Vinny Rihal at Kaimera Creative, a company which specialises in

commercial graphic design. Vinny was able to help him think about different target markets for his product and ways of accessing them.”

Tony adds: “Without the help of the Exchange I don’t think my business would have got off to such a great start. Now I’m really excited about what I can achieve – I’ve already employed one member of staff and I will be advertising for more very soon.”

New business owner Tony Bower is hoping to trade happily ever after, following assistance from the Entrepreneur Exchange, which turned his dream of starting a business from fairy tale to reality.

Tony spotted a gap in the UK market for a wide choice of solid cast garden ornaments, and was sure that by manufacturing on site he could respond quickly to changing

## Spice mill inventor turns to the Exchange

Product designer Nathan Bestwick of Rotherham is riding high after winning the 2010 Sheffield Hallam University’s Enterprise Challenge 2010 with his ‘Millme’ spice mill, which is designed for people who have limited strength or dexterity in their hands. But it is the support of the Entrepreneur Exchange at Business and Education South Yorkshire (b&e) which has helped him along the difficult journey of protecting and promoting his unique design.

Nathan, 24, is aiming to design a range of kitchen products which can be used by people with disabilities, but which don’t lose any of their design value. His Millme spice mill works by being rolled in the hands without any need to grip or twist – making it ideal for people who suffer from arthritis.

Nathan grew up in South Yorkshire and, after leaving school, chose to stay in the area to study industrial design at Sheffield Hallam University. He was introduced to Jim Lawson of the Entrepreneur Exchange during a meeting at the university’s enterprise centre. After chatting about his business ideas, Jim invited him along to a

free workshop hosted by the Entrepreneur Exchange, at which local entrepreneur Richard Campos explained how to bring a new product to market.

Nathan says: “The workshop was really relevant to me because it was all about the legal aspects of licensing, which is the agreement under which you sell the rights to your design to a manufacturing company in return for royalties. Getting this issue right was absolutely central to the kind of business I was setting up.”

Richard is a member of the Entrepreneur Exchange’s network of business people who volunteer to advise the owners of new start-ups, and following Nathan’s request for more assistance he was assigned as Nathan’s business mentor.

Nathan adds: “I met with Richard for further advice which led to me investing in employing a firm of solicitors to draw up



Photo courtesy of Sheffield Hallam University.

Nathan Bestwick at SHU awards

a detailed agreement on behalf of my business. I know that this has been a really vital contribution to secure the future of my company.”

He then continued working on his kitchenware designs – inspired both by his own love of cooking and his memories of how his late grandmother struggled with severe arthritis.

The ingenuity of Nathan’s Millme spice mill has captured the interest of a leading international kitchenware producer and negotiations are underway about launching it onto the world market. You can find Nathan’s design company at [www.if-works.com](http://www.if-works.com).

# Green media company hits the street!

An innovative new 'green' company launched in Sheffield is thriving thanks to the help of the Entrepreneur Exchange.

Green Street Media UK is an environmentally-friendly advertising company, which specialises in spraying marketing messages onto town and city streets with a high pressure water jet trained on a stencil. Instead of applying paint or ink, the company actually cleans the outline of the words making the marketing message clearly visible against the darkened surface of the pavement.

The company was launched in June 2010 by former Sheffield Hallam student Conrad Thornton, who began by promoting it via social media sites. Staff at the university's enterprise centre then referred Conrad to the Entrepreneur Exchange for professional advice on the next steps to growing the business.

Conrad explained that his major challenge at the time was to find reliable marketing advice and so Jim offered to link him with Darryl Dawson, Managing Director of a South Yorkshire-based PR and marketing company called Connexions PR & Marketing Ltd. Darryl was very impressed by Green Street Media's

service but recommended some changes to the way the company was promoted to prospective clients.

Conrad says his meetings with Darryl have been "inspirational" and led him to analyse his potential market more carefully and re-brand his company accordingly.

He adds: "The Entrepreneur Exchange has given me the direction and inspiration to transform Green Street Media into a national brand. The support and encouragement that I have received has really helped me in expanding my business and improving our brand identity."

Conrad went on to win a prize at the 2010 Sheffield Hallam University Enterprise & Innovation Awards, where he was shortlisted as a finalist and listed Darryl as his mentor. He also picked up a 'spot award' of £1,000 to develop his business. In another high profile triumph, Conrad secured Shell's Livewire Grand Ideas Award for 2010 – all within his first six months of trading.

Green Street Media has gone on to sign up prestigious clients such as The Natural History Museum and applied messages on



Conrad Thornton with one of his advertising stencils.

some of the most famous streets in London. Conrad has also won contracts closer to home, including promoting a weekly event at Sheffield University Student Union and encouraging visits to the Natural History Society's wildlife photography exhibition with shoppers encouraged to follow animal 'footprints' on the streets.

Conrad and his team are busy building on their early successes, and longer term plans for the business including the launch of franchise operations, which will enable Green Street Media to expand throughout Europe.

# Life takes off for Jayne!

When Jayne Briggs from Sheffield set up her life coaching practice 'Life Solutions' based in Grenoside, she recognised that the key to her success was good networking. She attended Sheffield Chamber of Commerce events to build her set of contacts, where she also came across the Entrepreneur Exchange.

**"The Entrepreneur Exchange sounded right up my street," says Jayne. "I liked the idea that it was for entrepreneurs only, which meant that I was sure to meet like-minded business people, who might be able to share their experiences and offer support."**

Jayne, whose background was in health and fitness, soon became a 'serial networker' and started attending the regular Entrepreneur Exchange events, which she found hugely beneficial. Jayne adds: "The contacts I built up through the Entrepreneur Exchange have been invaluable and it is very motivating to be setting up a business in a city where enterprise is being actively encouraged and promoted.

She was also delighted when the Exchange created an opportunity for her to work in schools, where she has offered her services as a motivational speaker and student mentor.

Jayne explains: "I really value my involvement with the Entrepreneur Exchange; it has helped me to strengthen my portfolio of experience, in particular by giving me the chance to work with young people. I am confident that the insights and experience I have gained will lead to new clients in the future."

She adds: "I have a great relationship with the Entrepreneur Exchange team, that has undoubtedly contributed to the ongoing growth and

success of my business. Putting something back into the community was something I always wanted to do and they have also made it easy for me to work with schools."

Jayne is also grateful for the way the Entrepreneur Exchange signposted her to a funding source, which enabled her to invest in publicity material which has helped her to build up her client base.

She says: "When an opportunity arose for me to work with a number of collaborative family law practices across South Yorkshire, I received some really helpful advice on funding from the Entrepreneur Exchange. This meant I could advertise my counselling service on the lawyers' websites, as well as having my own literature designed and printed. It was enormously helpful to me at the time and has resulted in a lot of additional business coming my way."

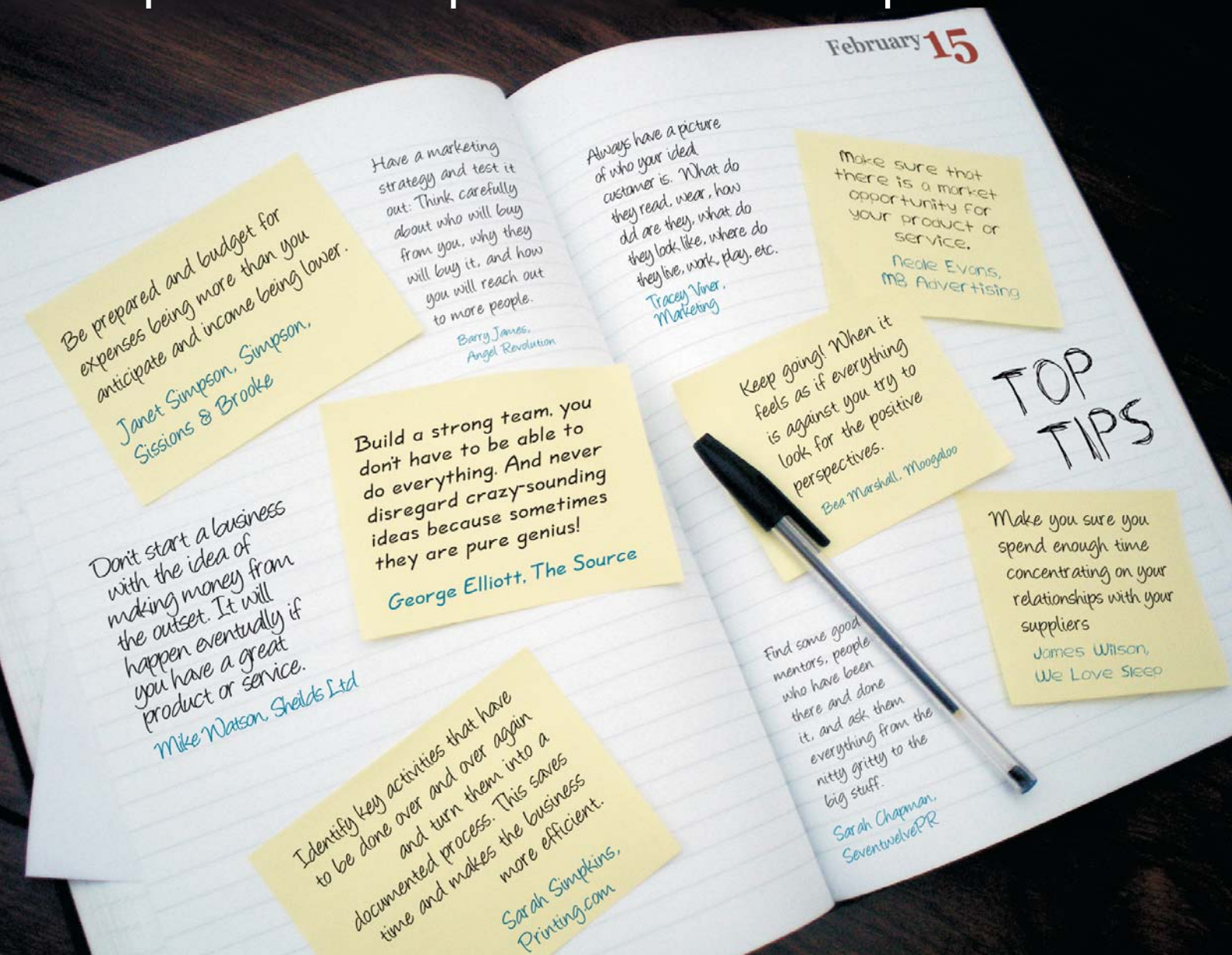
In recent years, life coaching has become better known and a high number of practices have sprung up in Sheffield. But despite increased competition, Jayne says the firm foundations she had already laid with the support of the Entrepreneur Exchange meant that her practice has continued to go from strength to strength.

She concludes: "I have also been able to pass on the benefit of my experiences to other budding entrepreneurs at that daunting time of setting up a new business. I get great satisfaction from doing this, because I know that kind of advice is what got me to where I am today."



Jayne Briggs, owner Life Solutions

# Top business tips from our entrepreneurs



## What an impact – at home and overseas!

Often there are hidden benefits to being a member of the Entrepreneur Exchange that are not immediately obvious but can have far reaching effects on a local and global scale. Take for example when Jim met Moses (see page 1 story), not only did the meeting and the consequent match make a real impact on Jali Organic as a business, but there were other benefits too. Jim put Moses in contact with Richard Tims, Chairman of Sheffield FC – the world's first football club. Within just a few weeks, the club had arranged for a batch of football boots to be despatched to Uganda for their youth team, appropriately known as 'the skins' as they have always had to play bare foot, due to not being able to afford football boots. The team now has boots to play in, all thanks to a Sheffield entrepreneur and his connections, and have been renamed 'The Sheffield Skins'!

And, on the theme of making international links, Jim and the Entrepreneur Exchange team demonstrated in Global Entrepreneurship Week (which happens in November every year) just how global the Entrepreneur Exchange has become. During this week, they gave local entrepreneurs the opportunity to demonstrate to schools what a positive impact their businesses in Sheffield have on communities across all five continents of the world.



So, the real benefit of the Entrepreneur Exchange is the contacts that new start ups and existing entrepreneurs gain and the networks they can tap into that can help to increase business success or to impact on communities in a very positive way, both at home and abroad.

### The Sheffield entrepreneurs are helping to;

- Bring clean water supplies and education
- Bring communities together
- Improve children's school play time
- Provide shelter for homeless and abandoned children

# Making a difference with every match!

**Jim Lawson is Relationship Manager at the Entrepreneur Exchange – a role which sees him matching entrepreneurs with those who are seeking advice, for mutual benefit.**

“The first day I joined the Entrepreneur Exchange,” says Jim, “I spoke to someone who was just about to start a cupcake business, an entrepreneur who runs a bar in Sheffield and needed support to grow and develop his business and an engineer who had been made redundant who needed help to make his way as an aerospace consultant. Every day since has given me the opportunity to meet a fascinating variety of people and it is a real privilege to be able to connect them with entrepreneurs from the Exchange.”

The South Yorkshire area has traditionally been one where people were employed by large companies and probably as a result of that the number of people starting up their own businesses has been quite low compared to other regions.

Jim explains: “Our role is to help people who are considering starting a new venture to understand what entrepreneurship and owning a business is all about. We do that by introducing people who have a business idea or are start up and early stage businesses to one of our network of entrepreneurs – it’s a bit like a business dating agency!”

“Suffice it to say my job is hugely enjoyable.. Working alongside my colleagues Liz, Cecilia, Anna and Kerrie, we can see at first hand the amazing creativity and diversity of business ventures in the Sheffield area. As a result of this, we have seen start-ups being given the confidence to develop and many have become really sustainable companies, employing local people.

“People come to us as referrals from our partners within the Sheffield Enterprise Programme. I contact the client direct to discuss what sort of advice they feel they need to develop their business.

“They often have a great product or service, but they don’t know how to get it to market and during the conversation I often pick up on all sorts of help they might need.

“After identifying their requirements, I go through our database and look for someone who would be a good match, in terms of experience, skills, knowledge, understanding and personality. I arrange a meeting between them and then something magical just seems to happen as

the entrepreneur inspires the newer business person to reach for higher goals.

“Often what the start-up client needs most is the reassurance that they are doing the right things, which helps them to believe in what they can achieve. They are frequently relieved just to know they are not the only one who has faced particular difficulties. The entrepreneur might say ‘I was where you are five or ten years ago and I’ve built a successful business so you can achieve it too.’

“In many cases, the client goes away with a more positive outlook as well as with some great practical tips and advice to help their business. Sometimes the new business owner and the entrepreneur get on so well that they plan a series of follow-up meetings or keep in touch by phone and email.

“Although most meetings are face to face ‘in person’ - some of our entrepreneurs are based outside the local area. We simply facilitate these meetings via skype which means distance is not a barrier and people can still be face to face.”

However, it is not just new business owners who need a little friendly advice - existing operations can often hit a trading plateau and the Entrepreneur Exchange is also available to them.

Jim says: “If there is an owner who, for whatever reason, needs to have a fresh look at his or her business then we can help. Sometimes the person running a business is a bit too close to it to see what the underlying problems are. They might need some professional advice from a marketing or finance expert or perhaps from someone who can tell them how to move the business forward. Or it might be that they are planning to take on staff for the first time and they just need to talk to someone who has done that and can share their experiences.”

Jim is always delighted when another successful business person joins the network, agreeing to be called upon if their help is needed.

He says: “Of course entrepreneurs have many demands on their time, but if someone is considering joining our network and says to me that they can only give one hour every six months, then I would still want to get them on board. After all, that single hour could be immeasurably helpful to someone who is just starting on their entrepreneurial journey.”



## Eat, drink and network

The lifeblood of the Entrepreneur Exchange is its network of entrepreneurs and to thank them for their continued support, the Exchange arranges a quarterly social/networking event.

These events, which are normally held at some of Sheffield’s most popular bars and restaurants, normally attract at least 60 entrepreneurs in a very informal setting, and many new business relationships have been forged as a result.

Networking is universally acknowledged as one of the most effective

ways of boosting a business and the Exchange arranges regular, informal events which are only open to entrepreneurs from this region.

We also organise more structured events, where successful entrepreneurs share their advice on subjects such as trading through the recession, or ensuring a business is reaping the full benefit of the internet. Workshops and webinars are also available free of charge to our network, and we are always happy to respond to suggestions for subjects you would like us to cover.

For details of the next networking event for the Entrepreneur Exchange, contact 01709 336738 and speak to Jim or Liz.



**If you are an existing Entrepreneur**, you can join the Exchange’s network by simply coming along to an event or by registering your interest with one of the Entrepreneur Exchange team. This will give you access to entrepreneur-only networking events, and you will be invited to mentor newer business start-ups or give some of your time to bring enterprise alive to school pupils in Sheffield.

**If you are a Business Start-Up**, or an established business looking for a mentor and you are based in the Sheffield area, then contact the Entrepreneur Exchange to see how this free service could help move your business forward.

## How to get involved

Contact Jim Lawson or Liz Yoxall on 01709 336738  
Or email [jim.lawson@be-sy.co.uk](mailto:jim.lawson@be-sy.co.uk) (Business)  
[liz.yoxall@be-sy.co.uk](mailto:liz.yoxall@be-sy.co.uk) (Schools & Colleges)

The Entrepreneur Exchange,  
Business & Education South Yorkshire, Templeborough  
Offices, Sheffield Road, Rotherham S60 1DX.



business & education south yorkshire



Project Part-Financed by the European Union European Regional Development Fund