

Students inspired by experiences of successful entrepreneurs

Client

Business, Administration and Finance Diploma course for Sandon, Blurton and Mitchell High Schools

Activity

Features of an Entrepreneur talk by three businesspeople

Participants

Mair Williams of Dreamair, Ben Dyer of The Altogether Company and Jane Pallister of Boommm Marketing

Programme

Business Broker Project



Jane Pallister (top), Mair Williams (above left) and Ben Dyer (above right) talk to Year 10 students

Students from three Stoke-on-Trent high schools were given tips for the future when businesspeople took time out to talk to them about what makes an entrepreneur.

Mair Williams, Ben Dyer and Jane Pallister – who all run successful businesses – met students taking the Business, Administration and Finance Diploma after teachers contacted the Business Brokers for help.

The result was a concentrated session that gave the Year 10 students an insight into the realities, challenges and rewards of running your own business – and left them eager to start their own mini-enterprises as part of their Diploma studies.

More than 40 students from Sandon, Blurton and Mitchell Business & Enterprise Colleges meet up for the weekly BAF Diploma days held at the City Learning Centre, Longton. They were accompanied by teachers Janet Jackson from Sandon, Chris James from Mitchell and Ben Grainger from Blurton.

“For this session we wanted the students to hear from entrepreneurs themselves what it’s like running a business and what the features of an entrepreneur are. We want students to be passionate about what they’re doing and the morning has been a great success,” said Janet.

The young people would next be given the challenge of working in teams to run their own businesses, funded with £100 start-up capital and aiming to produce and sell goods in the run-up to Christmas, she said.

“It always helps to key into the realities rather than learning from text books – this has been an excellent experience for the students,” said teacher Ben Grange.

Mair Williams, who runs the Longton-based personalised gifts business Dreamair, told the young people that any of them had the

chance to become entrepreneurs. “Anyone can start a business – it’s not a case of haves and have-nots. But you’ve got to have self-belief in what you want to do.”

Hard work and the ability to identify the right market for your product were key factors in success, she said.

Mair added afterwards: “I’ve built up a successful business and I now want to give something back to the community, so I was pleased to be able to talk to the young people.”

Former Sandon High pupil Ben Dyer, still only in his early 20s, told of his experiences in running a fast-growing company. “From an early age I always wanted to go into business,” said Ben.

Ben’s The Altogether Company delivers enterprise challenge days in schools across the country and his latest venture is a Longton pub providing work for friends and family members. “No matter what you want to do you will have setbacks along the way, but if you can keep on getting back up you will do well,” he said.

Jane Pallister of Boommm Marketing gave

students a clear checklist for entrepreneurial success – make the most of your talent, have confidence, work hard, spot an opportunity, make contacts. “Entrepreneurs go out and make things happen, they’re very assertive, they don’t give up,” she said.

The students, just starting out on their two-year Diploma course, left the session with pages of notes and plenty of ideas. “It’s been really inspirational,” said Sandon High pupil Thomas Healy, “now I can’t wait to start on our own businesses.”

Positive outcomes

Community engagement

Three businesspeople were involved in their local community by talking to Year 10 students.

The young people gained an insight into the realities of running a business and the qualities required of a successful entrepreneur.