



# Focus on smart marketing to give business a healthy start

## Client

**Platinum Healthcare Solutions Ltd**

Stoke on Trent

## Activity

Healthcare, first aid and food safety training, consultancy and event services

## Mentors

Bob Moore and Mark Lewis

## Programme

Let's Do Mentoring managed by the Business Broker Project



The growing pains of a start-up business are only too familiar to Lee Carrington-Smith who, having launched Platinum Healthcare Solutions, turned to Let's Do Mentoring for help.

Thanks to input from two mentors – first Bob Moore and now Mark Lewis – Lee is focusing on his aim of delivering vital health and safety training to firms of all types.

A fully trained nurse with a decade of experience, Lee has in-depth knowledge of the requirements of healthcare, first aid and food safety training. Offering courses for sectors ranging from manufacturing to retail, leisure to care homes, Platinum Healthcare Solutions is backed by an impressive list of accreditations that a much larger organisation would be proud of – ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 – not to mention approval by bodies including the Health & Safety Executive and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

But as Lee has discovered, the challenges facing an entrepreneur setting up their own business go well beyond expertise in a particular field.

Hampered by both a lack of resources and a need to continue his work as an agency nurse until the company was fully established, Lee's business plans were frustrated by the uphill task of signing up clients for his training courses.

Although he had established an impressively detailed website, he was restricted by a shortage of funds for marketing, found it difficult to reach decision-makers and discovered that tendering procedures were often weighted against small start-up firms.

Mentor Bob Moore cast new light on the business when he began assisting Lee in July 2008. One of the first issues Bob identified was that Lee was in danger of offering too many courses, with more than 50 listed on his website.

"We explored which courses were most successful from a business point of view and therefore the ones Lee needed to focus on. We also worked on improving his ability to tender," says Bob.

Current mentor Mark Lewis is equally convinced that concentrating on the products – a specific number of courses – that generate most income will be the key to success.

"Lee has great ideas and great products, and he shouldn't be put off by his lack of funds," says Mark. "You have to be very clever with your marketing. I know from my own businesses that highly targeted marketing can be economical and very effective."

As well as supporting Lee in targeting potential clients, the mentors have also made input into consideration of where courses are delivered, with the firm facing a choice between on-site training or hiring suitable premises.

Lee, who has recently achieved the

milestone of working on Platinum contracts for a complete month without the need to fall back on his agency nursing, is very positive about the future and feels inspired by the support of successful entrepreneurs like Bob and Mark.

"As a small business to get support from successful people such as Bob and Mark is very valuable. I don't think I would have been in this position without help from my mentors," he says.

"I believe Let's Do Mentoring is a fantastic scheme, but its success also depends on what you prepared to put into yourself. If you don't bother to take up the ideas you're given, then it's your own fault."

## Positive outcomes

### Employment

Support to make successful transition into full-time self employment

### Marketing

Re-focusing activities on most promising products and potential clients using most cost-effective methods

If you would like to access mentoring or become a mentor contact the Business Broker Project