

se

social enterprise west midlands

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

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Levelling the playing field

for social enterprise finance

Fair Finance Consortium is a group of West Midlands based community finance providers, all of whom are themselves within the social enterprise sector. We understand how hard it can be for social enterprises to raise finance from mainstream providers – even now it seems they sometimes just don't get the idea of social enterprise.



Fair Finance Consortium members can work with you, help you develop your business ideas and use their own funds to lend to your social enterprise. It can be very difficult to raise start-up or expansion finance from other sources, but Fair Finance Consortium members can lend up to £50,000 to social enterprises in the region that have plans to expand but lack the financial support. Interest charges are competitive and you will be dealing with a local business that understands your local situation. Fair Finance does not make loans itself, but puts you in touch with community finance providers that do.



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Contact Joanne Ross on
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WANT TO BE YOUR OWN BOSS?

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 **think**
enterprise www.thinkenterprise.org

Rising to the occasion



Sally Edwards | sallyaedwards@btopenworld.com

With The Queen's Speech including a reference to social enterprises and Vince Cable MP pledging to encourage more of them, the sector has cause for optimism about the future under the new Coalition Government.

In this issue of **SE**, Kevin Maton offers an interpretation of the policy statements that have been published so far. We're also featuring practical advice on a range of topics including how to use Neuro Linguistic Programming to work more effectively with others, how to make a good promotional film and why applying for a loan could be your best move. We hear from a number of social enterprises about their experiences and we have the results of our online survey.

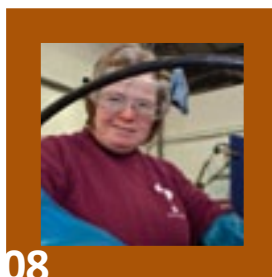
With significant public sector spending cuts on the way, the future will no doubt be challenging, but social enterprise is firmly on the agenda and in a good position to rise to the occasion. **se**



NEW ERA FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The new Coalition Government is presenting both challenges and opportunities.

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WEST MIDLANDS

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Social enterprises are businesses that trade for a social or environmental purpose. There are around 5,500 social enterprises in the West Midlands. Visit www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk for more information and central access to resources, intelligence, contacts and sources of social enterprise advice and support.

For details about **advertising in SE** and to download a media pack, go to www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

POLICY MATTERS

FINDINGS

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

BUSINESS MATTERS

SPECIAL FEATURES

DO IT RIGHT

New procurement framework could benefit social enterprise

The West Midlands Economic Inclusion Panel has drawn up a 'Procurement Framework for Jobs and Skills', which aims to increase access to jobs and training for local people by encouraging public and third sector agencies to make this a condition of their tendering opportunities.

This development presents a significant opportunity for social enterprises in the region as Kevin Maton, Network Director of Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM), explained: "With their focus on a variety of social and environmental goals, social enterprises are well placed to deliver social requirements as part of a contract, given the opportunity to do so," he said. "Tackling worklessness is at the heart of the work of many public and third sector agencies in the West Midlands, which is seen as vital in a region where the failure to make best use of the skills and potential of all of its people has had a negative impact on economic performance. Using the billions of £s spent by public and third sector agencies to help generate local job and training opportunities is one way of improving the situation."

The new procurement framework includes a raft of advice and a toolkit to support public sector leaders and procurement teams in embedding jobs and skills requirements into their organisations' procurement strategies and policies. The expectation is that every procurement exercise will consider making local job and skills requirements and contract clauses the 'default' position.

"So far it appears that knowledge of the framework and the ways it could benefit social enterprise and the wider third sector is limited," said Kevin. "In particular, the way that the framework can provide a focus for collaboration between local organisations to bid for larger contracts and a useful mechanism through which social enterprises can demonstrate their added value in proposals."

Anyone interested in finding out more can find a copy of the relevant documents on the SEWM website, or contact Kevin to discuss how their social enterprise can be more involved in taking the objectives of the framework forward. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Kevin Maton | k.maton@socialenterprisewm.org.uk | 024 7663 3911 x109 | www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk

West Midlands gets behind new SE Mark



Peter Holbrook (centre), at Enta in Birmingham, with representatives from West Midlands social enterprises, during his recent visit.

In his visit to the West Midlands in April, Peter Holbrook, Chief Executive of the Social Enterprise Coalition, praised social enterprises for their speedy adoption of the Social Enterprise Mark.

"The Social Enterprise Mark is our brand," he said. "It will raise awareness of what we do, in order to get more people to buy from, engage with, start up and work for social enterprises. The West Midlands has really thrown its support behind the Mark and already has twenty organisations approved to use it. I hope this is just the start and that it becomes a badge synonymous with trading for more than profit." **se**

MAKING CONTACT

SE Mark | www.socialenterprisemark.org.uk

Online presence strengthened

Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) is strengthening its online presence to help more people discover and buy from the sector. SEWM's existing website – www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk – has been refreshed and updated and a new website – www.buySe.co.uk – is being launched in autumn 2010.

SEWM's main website will continue to offer access to news, events, resources and sources of support for anyone interested in starting, developing or working with social enterprises in the region. New features include:

- A comprehensive database of over 300 support and finance providers
- A royalty-free picture library for SEWM members
- A new-look Members Directory



- A resource library, expanded to include videos and podcasts
- Blog, Twitter and social media integration
- Online event booking.

The new website – www.buySe.co.uk – will be a dedicated social enterprise directory. Ranjit Bansal, Marketing Manager at SEWM, who is leading the initiative, explained: "buySe addresses a long-standing problem for both social enterprises and potential customers – not being able to find one another! For the first time anyone wanting to buy from the sector will be able to easily source what they are looking for and hopefully make a habit of searching buySe before they look anywhere else." **se**



SEWM is offering a free 12 month listing on buySe

to the first 250 social enterprises to register. Visit www.buySe.co.uk for more details.

Increase your workforce for free

Action for Blind People is offering social enterprises across the West Midlands the services of blind and partially sighted people looking for employment. The aim is to help individuals develop skills and confidence while at the same time opening the eyes of employers to their abilities.

It is anticipated that the majority of placements will last between one and two weeks and could provide a perfect lead in or 'working interview' for permanent positions.

Social enterprises taking part in the initiative, which is known as SEED (Social Enterprise and Employment Development) will be offered a full package of support tailored to their needs, including advice on health and safety issues, access to specialist adapted equipment and Visual Awareness Training. The SEED team will work hard to match clients to organisations to ensure that both parties get the most out of the placements.

It is estimated that 66% of blind and partially sighted people of working age in the UK remain unemployed, yet research has shown that 81% of employers rate the performance of disabled employees as 'the same or higher' than non-disabled employees.

Mark Ellerby, Project Manager of the Birmingham-based social enterprise



Key benefits of the SEED project...

- Demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility.
- More customers! A diverse workforce reflects your potential customer base. Disabled people spend money too, so why not get a share of the market?
- More funding! Supporting disabled people can attract potential funding streams, funders or procurement opportunities.

Concept Conference Centre, says: "Many people believe that visually impaired people can't cook. All of Concept's chefs and kitchen staff are registered blind and by allowing people to see this we get them thinking about the capabilities of visually impaired people and how they could make very talented, loyal and motivated employees in their businesses."

The SEED Project is funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.

Interested?

If you can offer any of the following, please get in touch with the SEED team:

- Work Taster Sessions – giving beneficiaries the chance to 'sample' a job or vocational area they are interested in.
- Work Experience Placements – providing trainees with a more in-depth experience of work and work-based practice.
- Trainee Placements – six month paid placement (limited number available), providing participants with a fully supported experience of work and the chance to engage in a 'real' job. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

The SEED team | 0113 386 2821 | seed@actionforblindpeople.org.uk | www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/seed-project.html

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub: Another untapped resource?

If you are interested in setting up a co-operative or already run one, you may not be aware of the help and support offered by The Co-operative Enterprise Hub.

The Hub exists to expand the co-operative economy by creating strong, ethically-led businesses with a deep sense of social responsibility. The website offers information, help and support to new and existing co-operatives based and operating in the UK.

What is a co-operative?

A co-operative is a type of social enterprise owned and democratically

controlled by its members. The members may be customers, employees, residents, businesses, people who are part of the local community or a combination of these, depending on the legal model chosen. Almost any kind of enterprise can be run as a co-operative and it is the members who are the beneficiaries of the activities of the business.

What help and support is available?

You can apply for up to four days support which includes advice on business planning, finance, staffing, legal structures and governance. The

advice and training is tailored to your business needs. If you are eligible, an experienced co-operative business adviser will visit you and prepare a proposal. This might include business consultancy, management training and a finance package, comprising a small grant or loan – whatever the adviser and your co-operative think is the best way of ensuring the sustainability of your enterprise. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub | 0161 246 3020 | www.co-operative.coop/enterprisehub

New government heralds n



Photo: © Ian Cutbert / info@cutbertdesign.com

What impact is the new Coalition Government likely to have on social enterprise? Kevin Maton, Network Director of Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM), has looked at the policy statements and offers an interpretation for se.

Writing at the beginning of July 2010 who knows for sure what the political and economic landscape shaping social enterprise will look like over the coming months? What is certain is that rapid change is affecting every part of central, regional and local government and public services in general.

Since the formation of the new Coalition Government, the sector has featured prominently. There is a new Minister for the sector – Nick Hurd MP who is Minister for Civil Society – although many other departments of government will have links to the work of social enterprises.

The government launched the Big Society programme on 18 May, which backs an increased role for mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises in running public services. Plans to establish a Big Society Bank from dormant bank accounts were also announced and public sector workers are to be given the right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver. Particular interest was generated by the fact that, for the first time, 'social enterprise' was referred to at the opening of parliament in The Queen's Speech. She said, "The role of social enterprises, charities and co-operatives in our public services will be enhanced."

Transforming the economy

In a speech on 3 June, Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business,

stated that the country needs to develop a highly-skilled, enterprise-based, entrepreneurial economy. "To achieve that shift requires looking at enterprise in the widest sense. I have always believed that the value of mutualism, co-operatives and social enterprise lies precisely in the way they help people be self-motivated entrepreneurs with a clear stake in what they do for a living, while still remaining part of a supportive community of fellow workers. We will be encouraging more of them."

But this new higher profile within government sets us a challenge. We must continue to emphasise that fundamentally, social enterprises operate independently of government.

Those of us working in the sector know that social enterprises are not cure-alls, and they're not perfect – they have their ups and downs like any business. What we contribute are the principles of mutualism, co-production and participation, offering a business model that is accountable and gives people a voice – should governments or other bodies wish to use it.

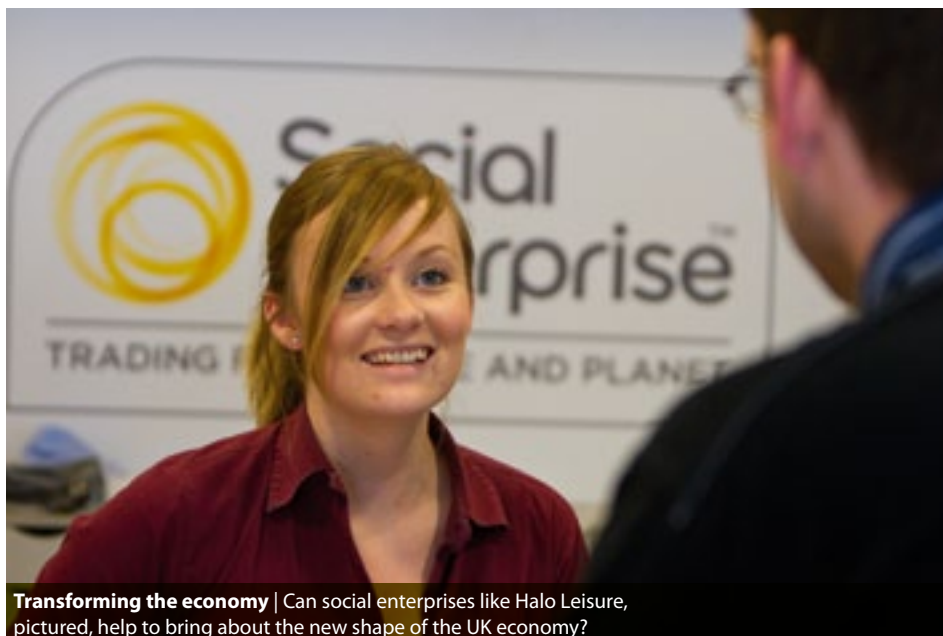
Clearly social enterprise is not just about public services. It is a business model that can work in any sector, but the move towards a transformation of public services is a major opportunity to be grasped. The

“I have always believed that the value of mutualism, co-operatives and social enterprise lies precisely in the way they help people be self-motivated entrepreneurs with a clear stake in what they do for a living, while still remaining part of a supportive community of fellow workers. We will be encouraging more of them.”

scale of that business opportunity will require social enterprises to work more collaboratively, seek out expertise and experience to assist with their business planning and identify appropriate routes to business investment to enable these developments to take place.

Transforming regional structures – a LEP in the dark?

To emphasise how quickly things are moving in government, hot on the heels of the announcement that our Regional Development Agency, AWM, is to close by March 2012, there is also a government proposal to replace some of their functions by establishing local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).



Transforming the economy | Can social enterprises like Halo Leisure, pictured, help to bring about the new shape of the UK economy?

Photo: © Ian Cutbert / info@cutbertdesign.com

new era for social enterprise



Photo: © Steve Punter / some right reserved / www.flickr.com/people/spunter

Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business

Groups of councils and 'business leaders' have been invited to form these LEPs that will 'provide strategic leadership and set out local economic priorities'. However, there is no indication that any of the existing money available for job support through the RDAs will be made available to the LEPs. The Government is setting out some criteria that they expect local authorities to follow, for example, they will be chaired by a 'business leader' with equal representation from business and local authority and operate across council boundaries. LEPs are proposed to tackle issues including planning and housing, local transport and infrastructure, employment, enterprise and supporting business start-ups. However, functions such as inward investment, access to finance and business support functions will remain under national control.

The day after this announcement Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg launched a £1 billion Regional Growth Fund to help areas and communities at risk of being particularly affected by public spending cuts. The fund, which will operate in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, will help areas most dependent on public sector employment as the Government encourages a transition to private sector-led economic growth. Both private bodies and public-private partnerships will be able to bid for funding by demonstrating that they will bring in private investment and

support sustainable increases in private sector jobs and growth in their area.

Full details about the creation of LEPs and the Regional Growth Fund, including who will be eligible to apply and the criteria and process for assessing bids, will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper on local and regional growth due in the late summer of 2010.

We then heard from Mark Prisk MP, the Business and Enterprise Minister, that Business Link will be shut down. According to the Minister "The regional Business Links have spent too much time signposting and not enough time actually

emergency budget proposals. But the full force of spending cuts will be felt after the Comprehensive Spending Review due to conclude in the Autumn. Undoubtedly this is going to have a direct impact on social enterprises, especially since in the West Midlands many social enterprises are dependent upon public sector contracts.

Whatever happens in the coming months, we must maintain the core values of social enterprise and not let the social enterprise 'brand' become damaged by being associated with the encouragement of the privatisation of



Photo: © Ian Cuthbert / info@cutthbertdesign.com

Filling the gap | What impact will spending cuts have on West Midlands social enterprises which are dependent on public service contracts? Pictured is Christopher Brady, a health trainer employed by Gateway Family Services CIC, with clients on a health improvement programme.

advising. Therefore the intention is that the current BL service will be replaced by a nationally-organised, two-pronged approach, led by a state-funded online service and the private sector supported by a call centre that will give people 'that little bit of extra advice from wherever you are.' However, just to emphasise the uncertainties operating right now, it is still not clear whether this announcement is Coalition Government policy and that Business Links will definitely go!

Social enterprise filling the gap

The context of these changes has been the Government's aim of cutting structural deficit through the recent

the public sector through the back door. Despite the outlook, there will be market opportunities for social enterprises; we need to be ready to take full advantage.

se and the SEWM website will carry more detailed information and analysis following the publication of the regional growth White paper. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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i To read the Government's Big Society programme in full visit: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

GOING FOR GROWTH

With grant funding and charitable giving being squeezed by the recession and public spending cuts on the horizon, there is a greater need than ever for social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations to scale up trading activities to secure their long term viability. **SE** spoke to **Graham Clark** of Where Next Association in Redditch about his organisation's strategies for business development.

Where Next was established over 25 years ago as a charity, to provide work experience and training to people with learning disabilities. We do this by running small, social enterprise businesses. We believe that it is important for our clients to experience the real pressures of a real working environment, so each of these businesses operates in a fully commercial way.

Contracts with statutory bodies to support our clients in their work have never, despite vigorous attempts, achieved the much vaunted 'full cost recovery'. So income generated by trading is essential for plugging the gap.

With this in mind, five years ago we embarked on an ambitious project to build a new centre. The aim was to house new businesses that could provide further opportunities for clients as well as generate additional, unrestricted, income. Unfortunately it proved impossible to raise all the money necessary for the building, so that part of the project has been shelved. However, with the agreement of donors, we have been able to use the funding raised in other ways to achieve our strategic aims - increase customer numbers and improve



the lives of our clients. We have taken two alternative approaches to expansion in the past year. The first was to replicate one of our successful businesses, the second was to acquire a private business and merge it with one of our social enterprises.

Opening another garden centre

Having run a flourishing nursery business in Redditch for 25 years, we opened a second garden centre in a prominent position in Sernal Ash, Studley, in April 2009. This has not only provided work experience opportunities for many more clients, it has also given us access to a new group of customers. Start-up funding came from a variety of sources, including specific grants and some of the building appeal monies. I'm delighted to say that Where Next Sernal has consistently surpassed its trading budgets.

Buying a local business

In September the opportunity arose to purchase an established garden machinery business. Whilst at first sight this may seem a major step, it was

in fact a logical extension of existing operations. Through our Shades of Green enterprise, we offer garden maintenance services to businesses and the public locally. This necessitates the use of many items of garden machinery, which need to be maintained. So we established an internal workshop to do this – providing opportunities for our clients to experience basic engineering at the same time. Having developed this expertise, we started to offer a machinery maintenance service to our customers. The business was building nicely when we heard that Frank Hedges & Sons garden machinery business in Bromsgrove was being put up for sale. The acquisition has given us the ideal opportunity to create more work experience placements for our clients in a financially viable environment. It was funded by money from the shelved building project and from specific grants.

Pros and cons

Acquisition and replication each have their benefits and concerns as business strategies for growth and we weighed these carefully before deciding to go ahead. In neither case were the decisions easy or taken lightly. Considerable sums of money were involved and many people's lives were affected, but doing nothing was not an option. We need to trade, and to change and develop what we offer all the time, in order to survive and be in a position to deliver our social objectives. We look forward to seeing our two new ventures thrive in the years ahead! **se**

MAKING CONTACT

Where Next Association | 01527 69955 | www.wherenextassociation.co.uk

GROWTH BY ACQUISITION

- Projection of income should be reasonably accurate
- The business is trading successfully from day one
- The 'parent' business can learn from good practice already in place
- Will the existing staff accept the philosophy and culture of the new parent company?
- Will the customers remain loyal?
- How difficult, and time-consuming, will it prove to merge systems and adopt people to form a coherent, manageable, business?

GROWTH BY REPLICATION

- The business is already tried and tested; lessons have been learnt
- New, or seconded, staff will be motivated and enthusiastic
- Your established name may carry sufficient weight to give the business a kick-start
- The circumstances will not be identical in every case; each new location will bring a different set of opportunities and problems
- If problems arise, there is a risk of damaging the reputation of the original business
- Projection of new income will rely on market research and estimates, and so may be less accurate.



are you missing a trick?



According to **Steve Walker**, Chief Executive of ART (Aston Reinvestment Trust), social enterprises

could be missing out on opportunities for growth and development because they are not taking advantage of the full range of financial options open to them. se asked him to explain.

There are many ways to finance a business – and a social enterprise is no different to a commercial enterprise in that respect. Apart from income generated through product sales or services delivery, grants might be available at the start-up stage or tied to specific activities. Loans are available for most business purposes, factoring or invoice discounting will help with cashflow and leasing avoids having to find large sums to buy equipment. For larger or high growth enterprises, there are a number of specialist venture capital schemes, patient finance and philanthropic funding. Community or member investment by way of share issues may also be an option.

ART, as a social enterprise itself, has raised funds in a number of ways to grow the business, which specialises in making loans to enterprises unable to source their needs from other providers. Having piloted the provision of loan finance to social enterprises back in 1999-2001, we have been surprised by how the take up has reduced in Birmingham and the West Midlands in recent years. This has happened in spite of the significant growth of the sector and the ways in which we believe loan finance can help to boost growth and support long term sustainability. The ART experience has been reflected by other funders across the region including some national providers, especially those providing growth products, when comparing activity in the West Midlands with other parts of the country.

Why is that? Are the Boards of social enterprises still focused on searching for

the reducing grant pots? Is confidence at a low level in planning for the future? Are the managers of social enterprises in the West Midlands more risk-averse than in other areas of the country?

Delivery of public sector contracts is becoming an increasingly common means of generating income for social enterprises. Yet many are finding that they need to increase capacity and upgrade their premises to qualify to take advantage of the opportunities available, and that having to wait for payment of significant sums poses a threat to their stability. They find themselves unable to tender for contracts due to a lack of funding. So why not consider a loan?

My belief remains that reliance upon grant finance for a significant proportion of overall revenue is a very precarious existence. By contrast, loan finance, and increases in the capital base from other sources, can offer stability, freedom to spend money on core costs and infrastructure development, a saving in administration, and can keep organisations afloat by overcoming short term cash flow problems.

Opportunities are growing for social enterprises with ambition that matches their inherent passion and I would urge managers and directors to seek support to become investment ready and explore the various financial alternatives through Business Link and local specialist support providers before the chances fade away. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

ART | 0121 359 2444 | art@reinvest.co.uk | www.reinvest.co.uk

Other useful sources of information | www.westmidlandsfinance.com | www.fair-finance.net | www.businesslinkwm.co.uk

Unlocking the Potential – a guide to finance for social enterprises | www.socialenterprise.org.uk

i **ART (Aston Reinvestment Trust)** is a social enterprise which lends up to £50,000 to businesses and social enterprises in Birmingham and Solihull. ART loans can be used alone or as part of a package of finance and can be unsecured or secured, with repayment periods of up to five years.

“Reliance solely on grant finance is a very precarious existence. Loan finance and increases in the capital base from other sources can offer stability.”



Flexible, supportive, willing to listen | Future Health & Social Care has used funding from ART to support the purchase of properties to house and provide care to vulnerable members of the local community. Future's Head of Property Development, Denis Hennigan, said: "We have always found ART to be flexible, supportive and willing to listen."

Photo: © Darren J. Scott

SOURCES OF FINANCE

Sources of finance for social enterprise include:

- The major clearing banks
- Banks specialising in the third sector – Charity Bank, Triodos, Unity Trust
- Local and national specialist organisations and funds for social enterprise and the third sector – such as Big Invest, Co-operative and Community Finance, Social Investment Business, TSELF and Venturesome
- West Midlands based Community Development Finance Institutions – see www.fair-finance.net
- Factoring or invoice discounting
- Leasing
- Asset or stock finance.

Are you making the most of European funding?



The combined West Midlands ERDF and ESF programmes 2007-2013 have around £510million to be spent on supporting jobs and helping to tackle social exclusion in the region. The West Midlands European Network (WMEN) exists to help third sector organisations bid for their share of it. **se asked Geraldine Tsakirakis, Chief Executive of WMEN, to explain what's involved.**

"European funding can be a minefield, so we're here to help organisations navigate their way through the guidance, understand the application procedures and requirements for match funding. Unfortunately many organisations aren't aware of the full range of free and very practical support available, which can strengthen their chances of securing and delivering a successful bid," said Geraldine.

WMEN has been supporting third sector organisations for over thirteen years, building their capacity to bid and compete for funding effectively. It works with organisations that will submit delivery proposals to engage and support individuals who are disadvantaged and disengaged from the labour market.

"We like to think of ourselves as the first port of call for organisations that are thinking about applying

for funds, ensuring they have all the information they need to develop projects that meet regional priorities.

"Our website is a good place to start. It provides the latest information on European Funding, forthcoming bidding rounds, awareness-raising events and training courses for voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises," said Geraldine.

WMEN has a number of ERDF/ESF experts that can be contacted for advice or act as a sounding board. A free initial diagnostic tool has also been launched recently to help organisations assess whether they have the right systems and procedures in place for managing and administering European funds. "This has proved really popular," said Geraldine. "The tool is designed to identify key areas for improvement that we can then work with organisations to address, through training or technical assistance."

A priority for WMEN is opening up dialogue with social enterprises in order to understand their needs and then match them with opportunities available from European funding. Geraldine said: "It is a challenge but also an opportunity to access a group of organisations that haven't previously made full use of the funding available. Programmes

FUNDS FROM EUROPE

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

helps stimulate economic development and regeneration in the least prosperous regions of the European Union. ERDF has helped a wide variety of projects – from large scale public projects to small local initiatives. All are designed to benefit the regional or local economy. The West Midlands ERDF programme is managed by Advantage West Midlands.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is funding from the European Union designed to improve the skills of the workforce and help people who are having difficulty finding work. The ESF programme is managed regionally through three 'co-financing' organisations: Skills Funding Agency/West Midlands Leaders Board; Jobcentre Plus and the National Offender Management Service. They set out their respective priorities and invite providers to bid for project funding to deliver activities that will help them to achieve their priorities.

A full list of priorities under ERDF and ESF is available on the WMEN website.

have been undersubscribed and WMEN is encouraging third sector organisations to join local consortia, where they exist, to submit bids that fully meet the funding criteria. There is an imminent bidding round for ESF funding, with ERDF to follow in the autumn – it's important that organisations start preparing now. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

West Midlands European Network |
0121 683 8891 | www.wmeuronet.co.uk

SE magazine: readers' perspective

Earlier this year, we invited readers to complete a short survey, to give us some feedback on how useful they find SE magazine and what might be done to improve it. This is what we discovered.

Readers' survey results

- **87.5%** of you felt that the magazine was well designed and laid out
- **90%** of you felt it improved your general understanding of social enterprise
- **97.5%** felt it provided you with useful information that has helped you in your job
- **87%** of you found the 'Business Matters' section most useful, followed by 'Policy Matters' (82.5%) and the 'In the News' section (80%)
- **97.5%** of you felt the writing style was good/excellent
- **70%** of you felt that the magazine raised your awareness of the activities and developments in the West Midlands, with **65%** of you stating that the magazine made you feel better connected to the sector.

We were delighted to find that overall the feedback was so positive. There were some suggestions for improvement, which included:

- Increase the 'News' section
- Include news and examples from the wider sector
- Provide more information on funding, contract and commissioning opportunities
- Add a calendar of events and training opportunities
- Include more stories of emerging social enterprises, particularly the more quirky ones and those involving young people, or the creative industries
- Add a readers page
- Break up the runs of larger articles
- Include a regular feature on selecting the most appropriate legal form for your social enterprise
- Issue a reminder about advertising opportunities and deadlines.

We would like to thank all those of you who took part in the survey. Your opinions are important to us and will influence the look and content of future issues of **se**.



Respondents were automatically entered into a prize draw to win £100 for their nominated social enterprise ... and the winner is ... Vicki Phipps at Ideal for All. Congratulations Vicki! **se**

Hidden social enterprises

In a first attempt to measure the scale of social enterprise in the general business population, a new report by Delta Economics and IFF Research has found that there are a substantial number of 'hidden social enterprises' contributing to the region's economy.

The Make a Difference (MAD) study included a survey of 500 entrepreneurs in the West Midlands with businesses of between two and five years old and turnovers of more than £200,000. 48% of them said they had set up their businesses in order to make a difference. Of these 19%, although set up as private companies, conformed to accepted definitions of social enterprise by not only having social objectives (wanting to make a difference either

socially, environmentally or in terms of creating jobs) but also reinvesting their profits back into their businesses in order to achieve those objectives.

Other key findings included:

- Women are slightly, but significantly, more likely to have set up all types of hidden social enterprise.
- Minority ethnic individuals are nearly a third more likely to be hidden social entrepreneurs than straight commercial entrepreneurs.
- The percentage of hidden social enterprises in the West Midlands is slightly lower than in other regions.
- Hidden social entrepreneurs in the region run companies that create on average eight jobs, compared to the

average for the whole entrepreneurial population of four jobs.

- Hidden social entrepreneurs set up companies with slightly lower growth rates than their mainstream counterparts in the region.
- Hidden social entrepreneurs are more likely than other entrepreneurs to say that they perform well in terms of a raft of intangible aspects of business such as welfare of their employees, salaried and non-salaried jobs created, positive social impact and positive environmental impact.

MAKING CONTACT

Hidden Social Enterprises report | www.deltaeconomics.com



As the internet becomes increasingly interactive it's becoming common for video clips showcasing an organisation's activities to be included on its website, or published via YouTube. In fact, it's never been easier to communicate through the medium of film. Here DVD and video production company **Ignite Creative** offers **SE** readers some tips on how to make an effective film.

1 Be clear about your audience

This will determine key points – the style of filming, the approach to editing, the style of graphics and whether to use voice over or a presenter.

2 Define your core message

You don't want too many messages. Your core message might simply be that your organisation is a viable and socially aware place to work.

3 Set out your aim

This is what you want to achieve. It could be to recruit more volunteers or share best practice.

4 Consider the structure and content

Will it be straightforward, graphics-intensive or humorous? What sort of music will work? Will you want different versions for different audiences?



5 Think about the budget

The usual rule is the lower the budget, the lower the quality of production, but this need not be the case if you have tackled tip 4 thoroughly. Investing time considering structure and content before you start will ensure you get your ideas across in the most efficient way.

6 Make the most of pre-production planning and storyboarding

Before filming starts you should have a clear picture of what the finished product will look like. Whether this is done visually or in writing, it will help you imagine the piece and spot any gaps. Identify the right questions to bring out your core message. This stage is vital to ensure the commissioner and the production company understand each other's roles.

7 Be prepared for the shoot

Time is money and production companies are paid on a day rate. If

the shoot needs several days, aim for back-to-back filming so you only have to set up once. Also ensure someone with the authority to give the green light or red flag to the shots attends.



8 Get the best out of editing

There are several stages from rough edit to final cut. Line up a focus group. When you've been so close to a project, the reaction of outsiders to the rough edit can help get the finishing touches right – but if you want big changes, it will cost!

9 Spread the word

Before the final cut is ready, start the PR and let everyone know your film is coming.

10 Send it out and about

Use DVD, your website, YouTube – the more places the merrier and ask for feedback, it could inspire your next production! **se**



MAKING CONTACT

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i **Ignite Creative**, based at the TechnoCentre at Coventry University's Technology Park, is a social enterprise, which has been trading successfully since 2003. The company produces DVD and videos for clients ranging from large corporate companies to charities. It also offers training for disadvantaged groups and schools, as well as free consultancy for charities and voluntary sector organisations.

MAKING THE MOST OF

YOUR

ASSET



People are probably the greatest asset of any social enterprise, yet there is likely to be little time and money available to invest in their development. **John Chubb**, a training specialist and expert in motivating and developing people, explains to **se** how it is possible to provide valuable opportunities for learning with modest resources.

All organisations have a staff development imperative, but there are features of social enterprises, which provide distinctive challenges and opportunities for training, compared with the private and public sectors.

Third Sector organisations may have a high proportion of volunteer, part-time and temporary staff, often working flexi-hours. The training budget may be small and with the daily work to be done, staff development may be low on the list of priorities. Organisations may have a flat structure, working in fluid contexts and with uncertain budgets. The upsides are that staff may have multi-tasking capabilities, commitment and untapped work experiences to be shared.

You may not have the funds, time or critical mass to send colleagues on formal courses, but that isn't necessarily a problem. A virtue may be carved from necessity, or as Henry Kissinger once said:

"When the options are reduced, it clears the mind wonderfully."

Good results can be achieved with imaginative use of in-house coaching, buddying and mentoring. Social enterprises can develop staff by using the best resource around – themselves.

"Training is useful, but no substitute for experience."

Rosa Klebb, visiting an assassination school in the film 'From Russia With Love'

Crudely, Rosa Klebb was placing formal training at one end of a spectrum of acquired expertise with experience at the other. Coaching, mentoring etc fit somewhere in between. The terminology may be confusing and some brief definitions may help.

The starting point for any organisation has to be a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). Quite simply an audit of where you are at the moment: who is doing what and whether there is a skills gap. This can be done via a line-manager appraisal

model or alternatively, with one person interviewing across the organisation.

I recently used the second approach with a housing regeneration body of 25 diverse staff in the West Midlands. It can be time-consuming but the pay-off is immense, enabling a consistency in approach. An exemplar: two colleagues were spotted doing excellent work, but they could do even better if they swapped roles and coached each other in these. A win-win for the individuals and the organisation.

Once the TNA agenda has been identified, and assuming that a coaching-mentoring strategy is adopted, some principles enabling effective delivery can be noted.

Whatever development model is adopted, each comes with its health warning. Leadership can be a lonely business, and with mentoring, care must be taken to avoid the creation of a dependency culture. With buddying, the pitfall is the development of cliquism and for coaching, unimaginative didactic explanation.

However enthusiastic and experienced the coach, the recipient deserves effective and interesting strategies in the transmission of expertise. The coach should appreciate active questioning and listening, knowing how people take in information and the structure and sequence of topics to be covered.

Relevant anecdotes, common-sense and humour add to the mix. The process should be relevant and logical, anticipating 'what if' situations.

A final quote to start your development thinking:

"Tell people what to do not how: you'll be surprised by their ingenuity."

George Patton

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COACHING-MENTORING

These would form the basis of a good practice handbook:

- That support sessions between colleagues are not gossip sessions over a cup of coffee. There has to be a tight agenda of what is to be covered with some clear outcomes.
- Those involved are given a protected time slot, away from the normal running of the organisation.
- Trust, integrity and honesty to be key principles in the process.
- Those responsible for setting up the support mechanisms have to be mindful of the compatibility of those working together.
- The organisation needs a capable staff development manager. This person will audit the TNA, mapping progress and identifying areas for future attention. Good staff development is not having a once-yearly event but should be an on-going process.
- Take some risks. Some amazing coaching-mentoring successes stem from pairings where seemingly incongruent personalities shared their knowledge.
- Think of creating a Communication Board so that all those in the organisation can see the wider picture of who is doing what, why and when.
- Problems shared – problems halved. Develop links with other organisations so that you are not rehashing the same agendas within your organisation. You don't want 'group-think' to emerge.
- Identify your staff who seem to have a natural talent in being able to support others.

GLOSSARY

TEACHING	<i>Formal transmission of attitudes, skills and knowledge in a structured and assessed manner. The teacher-learner relationship may be unequal and the process may merge into tutoring.</i>
COACHING	<i>A training approach with task-based objectives in a short time frame. The relationship between coach and recipient may be 'this is what you need'.</i>
MENTORING	<i>The mentee brings to bear their expertise by discussing issues with someone else who has also 'been there'. The mentor is the critical friend and the process can be on-going. The contexts may be more strategic and value-driven.</i>
BUDDYING	<i>Two or more colleagues work together providing mutual support. It could be two new members being inducted into a social enterprise.</i>
SHADOWING	<i>An opportunity to sit in with or experience the role of another. A device supporting succession planning.</i>
COUNSELLING	<i>The process of supporting a colleague, who may have difficulties stemming from the past, with their professional and personal life.</i>
BLENDED LEARNING	<i>The use of a variety of training strategies, which can include e-learning.</i>

i John Chubb is a presentation specialist based in Wolverhampton. His company, You Never Can Tell, is currently delivering a portfolio of training to Urban Living, one of the government's Pathfinder housing and community regeneration schemes in the West Midlands. Urban Living works closely with social enterprises and other third sector organisations.



MAKING CONTACT

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Citizen Coaching has been running an anger management programme for 16-19 year olds for nearly three years, funded by Connexions (prior to its merger with the Local Authority) in partnership with The What? Centre. But what impact has it had? **se** spoke to **Martin Hogg**, Managing Director of Citizen Coaching, to find out how he has started to evaluate its impact using SROI.



I started Citizen Coaching in 2005 to help adults and young people address a range of personal and business development issues through coaching and counselling – and have always wanted to be able to measure the impact that we have had, not only on the individuals supported but also those around them.

I came across Social Return on Investment (SROI) last year, and with some help from More than Outputs, started to discover just how much of a difference our work is making. Some initial training gave me the confidence to test it out, and although we've still some way to go, it's been a real eye opener.

Determining the focus

Rather than try to measure the impact of the whole organisation, we were advised to ease ourselves into SROI and focus on one aspect of our work. Our anger management programme seemed the obvious choice, given that it forms a core part of our work. The programme involves holding a weekly drop-in group session in a church hall. Around 20 young people attend over the course of a year and they attend an average of 15 sessions.

Doing the research

After identifying all the different stakeholders involved in the programme and reviewing what information we already had, we started by interviewing five of the participants about what

had changed for them as a result of attending the sessions. The interview asked about positive, negative and unintended change. Responses included: "I'm calmer", "I get things off my chest", "I'm not going to prison for GBH", "less fighting" and "my fuse used to be a couple of millimetres (long), now it's a metre".

These reported changes were grouped into three categories or 'chains of events' for the purposes of the analysis: 'improved relationships'; 'enhanced ability to work and develop themselves'; and 'reducing offending behaviour' (affecting only those who had previously offended).

These descriptions of change were used as the starting point for identifying 'indicators of change', relevant to this stakeholder group, which can now be looked for and evidenced on an ongoing basis. In this way we can monitor what is actually important to our service users.

We also looked at the service from the funders/commissioners point of view. Now more than ever we need to show what their money is buying and the added value we generate for them. Unfortunately, it hasn't been possible to interview Connexions, but The What? Centre has found that the anger management programme has made it easier for them to consult with young people, and has increased the level of partnership working with organisations that refer clients to them. The analysis is still ongoing and there are plans to speak to other stakeholders, including the families of the young people.

Developing the analysis and valuing change

The changes identified so far have been included on an 'impact map' that shows for each stakeholder group the relevant and significant changes for them, how we will know it has

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

SROI is a framework for accounting for more of the value that is created by an activity than might traditionally be the case.

It offers a process and set of guidelines for organisations to make decisions about how they measure the social, environmental and economic value they are creating. Developed from cost-benefit analysis and a wide range of evaluation practice, SROI involves stakeholder groups in understanding change (outcomes) and in valuing the change that's important to stakeholders, whether it results in a money changing hands or not.


For further information about SROI, see www.thesroinetwork.org especially 'A guide to SROI', Nicholls et al, Cabinet office 2009.

occurred (the indicator) and how much change has occurred. These changes have been valued using financial proxies (approximations of value).

For example, some of the young people were able to stay in education longer and the value to them of this change was estimated by considering a small change to their earning potential of £55 per week.

In terms of savings to the state, around a quarter of the young people (ie five per year) had a prior criminal record; they reported that they had previously been charged with 'GBH', but were not reoffending. Potential savings to the youth justice system may be substantial; however these are extremely difficult to calculate as has been commented on by studies with much greater resources than this one. We estimated the value at £2,000 per avoided offence.

The value of the change relevant to Connexions – that the young people do not end up NEET – is relatively low. This reflects the scale of our current programme, which has a modest investment in it and



Demonstrating the **social value** of anger management

which deals with 20 young people. Connexions Black Country serves 13,251 young people and knows of 710 young people who are NEET.

The financial value created by the anger management programme for the stakeholders interviewed so far is in the order of £7 to £13 for each £1 invested, with the majority of the value created by the current scheme being for the young people themselves, rather than savings to the state.

A deduction from the total value claimed was made for what would have happened in any case and the contribution of others. A sensitivity analysis was also undertaken to consider the effect of assumptions made, so that in the full report it is clear the extent to which the account can be relied on.

Conclusions

Even at this early stage, the SROI analysis has enabled us to reach some useful conclusions:

- The anger management programme is creating considerable value for the

young people who participate in it. The changes it effects are also relevant to the commissioners, but may not currently be seen as significant because of the small scale of the activity. The possibility of scaling up the service could be explored.

- There are positive outcomes for public sector bodies that don't currently commission the service – ie the youth offending and justice services. The possibility of a joint commissioning approach could be investigated.
- The programme may be having a longer term effect on the young people's lives. It would be useful to track the duration of the outcomes identified.

Using the findings

Now that we're able to evidence some of our impact, I think it actually gives us a competitive edge. We have been able to develop monitoring systems to measure what is important to the service users as well as the funders. And by understanding and being able to quantify the value of this programme to

commissioners, we are able to improve our sales strategy. We can now take the next step and apply the SROI process to other areas of our business. **se**

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i **Citizen Coaching** based in Birmingham, helps individuals and organisations with anger and conflict management as well as providing counselling, coaching and training services. Citizen Coaching accessed SROI training and ongoing support from the Adding Value – Winning Contracts project delivered by More than Outputs, funded by Capacitybuilders. This project aims to help social enterprises increase their share of public sector contracts.



Social franchising is emerging as a particularly effective way of developing businesses with a social aim. **SE** spoke to **Robert Looker**, a leading UK franchising expert from Exemplas, with experience of both mainstream and social franchising, to find out about the challenges and opportunities associated with growing a social business through franchising, or becoming a social franchisee.

Can you give us a brief overview of how franchising works?

Franchising is a business 'partnership' in which one party (the franchisor) permits another 'partner' (the franchisee) to replicate a proven business system, operating under a common brand, in return for initial and ongoing fees. Think McDonalds or Costa Coffee chains as a basic example: an individual or organisation will run the independent branch, paying the franchisor to replicate their store design, use their recipes, and operate under their brand name. Social franchising simply means that the base organisation, or franchisor, is a social enterprise. Well known examples include: Ben and Jerry's PartnerShops; Relate; and Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurants.

Why would or should social enterprises look at franchising as a growth strategy?

'Scaling up' is a buzz term at the moment and, as organisations are coming under increasing pressure to identify opportunities for growth, franchising presents one strategy for responding to this pressure. It is a long-term strategy which can introduce 'scale' into a business through a process of business replication.



Allowing organisations to take their brand and model to new audiences, franchising can lead to increased 'brand recognition'; and with this, credibility, customer awareness and a greater presence in the market place. With the right franchisees, an innovative, motivated and positive network can be developed, delivering quality service and excellent customer satisfaction through 'local' providers.

Enjoying the opportunity to support franchisees to develop and grow has been identified as a benefit by many franchisors, and is particularly fitting for those running businesses with a social agenda.

What are the key factors to consider before developing and offering social franchises?

Franchising is only one growth strategy, so think carefully about whether it's the best option for you.

Ask yourself:

- Do you really want to grow your business or are you happy with it as it is?
- Is there a steady and growing demand for your products/

services and strong continuing funding for the long term – ie a market for potential franchisees?

- Can your business model be replicated in other localities or is it dependent on unique or specific circumstances, for example, only relevant to your local area?
- Can you describe – and then replicate - the infrastructure, human resources, processes and procedures (to include recruitment, training and support) to build and develop the network?
- What are the costs that you are likely to incur in order to prepare your business for franchising?

The franchising process needs to be planned, tested ('piloted') and proven to be replicable, sustainable and 'profitable' for both parties before being launched.

As with all businesses, people are key. The franchisee will be the face of your business; so, think carefully about the profile of your franchisee – their characteristics, ethos and experience.

Once you've decided what you're looking for in a franchisee, consider the recruitment process, the initial training,

and any ongoing support: how will you ensure that there is an alignment of social purposes and aims, for example? You need to take time to develop these relationships – franchising is a different way of doing business and it is important to establish a shared understanding from the outset.

Always seek expert advice if you have any questions or need any further support. There's some great advice out there and opportunities to talk through your specific business, as well as any particular questions you might have.

What are the challenges that social enterprises might encounter if they were offering a franchise?

In my experience, the key challenges are the upfront development and operating costs; making the model work; and, keeping it simple and contained. A lack of understanding around franchising can also present a barrier, and one which is particularly evident in relation to levels of interest in becoming a franchisee.

An awareness of these potential difficulties can help organisations to determine whether franchising is an appropriate business model, as well as supporting organisations to address these challenges before they become a problem.

Why would anyone want to become a franchisee of a social enterprise?

It offers a supported way of starting and running a social enterprise, which offers a strong chance of success. It may provide an opportunity to extend or add to an existing business.

What should a potential franchisee be looking for?

If you've decided that you're interested in buying a franchise, you are fundamentally looking for a 'business in a box'; a DIY kit you can follow that is proven to work and comes with instructions!

The key aspects that you are looking for are:

- Proven business systems capable of replication

“If you've decided that you're interested in buying a franchise, you are fundamentally looking for a 'business in a box'; a DIY kit you can follow that is proven to work and comes with instructions!

- Steady or growing demand for products or services
- Simple business formats that are easy to learn
- Identifiable brands and trademarks with distinctive image or concept
- A franchisor with the right attitude – prepared to delegate and allow you to run the business – and to work in 'partnership'
- A business that has been shown to be profitable and is financially viable and secure for both parties.

Are there any particular secrets of success?

First and foremost, as with any business, you need to understand very clearly what you are trying to achieve: what your objectives are and whether the franchise enables you to achieve them.

Then, it's about finance, the initial franchise fee (if there is one), the ongoing fees and the bottom line. Can you afford it and will the venture provide enough money for you and the franchisor?

Being a franchisee requires a specific attitude or mind shift. The franchisor will set out a framework for the way the business is run and operated that you will need to adhere to. There will be a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for both franchisor and franchisee which should provide an opportunity for both parties to be successful. Franchising is about working in partnership. Effective franchisors will allow franchisees to innovate and share best practice or ideas with the wider network.

Motivation, long term commitment and an eye on the bottom line are all key!

What are the risks? Can it go wrong?

Like any business model, there's an element of risk in franchising. Taking a

THE RIGHT RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL FRANCHISE...



STEADY OR GROWING DEMAND



SIMPLE BUSINESS FORMAT



IDENTIFIABLE BRANDS & TRADEMARKS



FRANCHISOR WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE



PROVEN PROFITABILITY & SECURITY

franchise, however well established the model or brand, does not guarantee success. Insufficient support from the franchisor can be problematic. Equally, franchisees may find that they don't feel comfortable in the business, or find it harder to operate than anticipated. In some instances, there may even be a breach of contract and this could lead to the termination of the franchise.

Planning, preparation and sufficient development are all linked to survival rates and the profitability of the franchise. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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i *Exemplas is a Hertfordshire-based business support organisation with a long history in supporting both franchises and social enterprises, helping them to change, grow and prosper by delivering advice, support, information and training solutions.*

Collaboration and partnership working are at the top of the social enterprise agenda, so is there a knack to working together effortlessly? **Liz Watkins-Young**, Director of Rubus, believes NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) may hold the answer. Liz is a Certified NLP Master Practitioner, so **se** asked her to explain how it works.

If you met my mother-in-law, you'd understand my anxiety at the prospect of setting up and explaining her new HD-ready, integrated Freeview, multi-channel TV. She's 75, partially deaf, used to five TV channels and still thinks that video is a pretty clever invention (and she's lovely!).

My anxiety about the TV stems not from my mother-in-law but from the way her son, my husband, explains things to her. It generally ends up with her reaching for the hankies and him storming off in a huff muttering, "I give up!". And it doesn't have to be like that. She's a bright lady. So what goes wrong? How often does something similar happen in our working lives? And where does NLP come into it?

How clever is TV's *The Mentalist*?

If you've watched *The Mentalist* on TV you've seen some NLP in action. The premise is of an expert crime solver who, mysteriously, seems to understand the criminals so well that he catches them every time. And how clever is that? Well he's simply using a range of skills and techniques to understand the perpetrator, pre-empt him (or her) and get the outcome he wants. The writers acknowledge NLP on the show from time to time.

I came to NLP not to fight crime but because I'd identified some things I wanted to be better at professionally; listening more deeply and building really productive working relationships.

NLP

NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING



Photo: © Rob Finney Photography / www.robfinneyphotography.co.uk

NLP is sometimes described as the art and science of personal excellence. It's derived from understanding attitudes that lead to success, modelling people who are excellent in their field and integrating the resulting techniques into your life. Imagine modelling Richard Branson or Jamie Oliver – modelling what they do, how they do it, why they do it and what they hold as their personal mission. Thankfully the original modelling on which NLP is based produced tools, techniques and models of thinking as resources for everyday use.

Resources for personal excellence

NLP enables you to grow and develop in a way that fits with your personality and unique qualities. It provides resources to improve your professional life: improved communication and leadership skills, the ability to sell more effectively, to build better relationships, support effective goal setting and create a really positive culture. And it can lead to deep lasting positive change and growth.

Creating positive change and better outcomes is at the heart of social enterprise,

so for me NLP and social enterprise go hand-in-hand in their positive intent. Some of the underlying assumptions of NLP ('presuppositions') support this:

- Respect for the other person's model of the world
- Accept the person, change the behaviour
- People are doing the best they can with the resources they have available
- Possible in the world and possible for me is only a matter of how
- There is no failure, only feedback.

Accepting that these presuppositions and others apply to every person and every situation we encounter creates positive intent in your thinking, and so in the way you behave and the language you use. That's NLP. I know many social enterprises where these assumptions are already a given. That could mean they're already a step closer to excellence.

NLP in business

So in a world where collaboration and strong stakeholder relationships are the bywords for successful development, on a practical level what can NLP do for a social enterprise? NLP is perhaps best known for enabling people to improve their communication; to communicate with clearer meaning and intent. With it you can build rapport (the key to successful business relationships), observe other people and avoid judgement, make conscious use of language. In the workplace or the meeting room this creates stronger working relationships, supports more effective teams or partnerships, generates greater creativity and productivity, and enables people to coach others.

Because NLP encompasses a range of tools, techniques and models of thinking, you can take them into any business setting and achieve the positive outcomes you're looking for. Every day activities like problem solving, creative thinking, team development and management, performance improvement and appraisal can be underpinned by different elements of NLP. Its techniques and skills can help you improve sales and marketing of your



Photos © Rob Finney Photography / www.robfinneyphotography.co.uk

products or services by helping you understand a potential customer's world-view, then match their goals with yours. If you're working in a partnership or collaborative arrangement, the same techniques can help you bid or tender and deliver effectively together.

NLP and leadership

NLP is used around the world by some of the most successful business-people to create a positive culture and provide inspiring leadership. Great leaders, in any walk of life, display common traits: charisma, vision, certainty of purpose, a focus on the outcome, the ability to articulate their vision and inspire people through what they say and do. With my NLP hat on, I'd say that these are people with a strong personal mission, acuity to their environment, easy rapport with others, values that align and are demonstrated through their behaviour in every part of their life, all wrapped in great communication skills. It's possible to develop or hone all these abilities using NLP as your toolbox.

Getting started

You can get into NLP in lots of ways. The NLP community is open and welcoming to newcomers. It's part of the ethos of the community to positively enable people to learn, grow and share their experience with others.

My personal preference is to explore new ideas face to face. Training is one option, and many NLP trainers offer taster sessions or business-focused workshops that will give your enterprise a practical outcome and allow you to experience NLP techniques first hand. Some even qualify for Train to Gain funding support, under Business Link's Leadership and Management Advisory Service.

NLP stands for Neuro Linguistic Programming

Neuro | the study of the mind and how we think.

Linguistic | the study of language and non-verbal communication and how we use it.

Programming | the programmes and patterns we run in our lives.

By studying how we all think, communicate and run the patterns in our lives we can understand ourselves and others better. We can change the thinking, patterns or behaviours that are un-useful for us.

There is also a wide range of books, audio and video resources that provide an introduction to NLP. Just type 'NLP resources' into Google. ANLP (the UK Association for NLP, www.anlp.org) is a great place to start - and it's an award-winning social enterprise! **se**

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i **Liz Watkins-Young** is an INLPTA (International NLP Trainers Association) Certified NLP Master Practitioner, development consultant and business coach with Rubus. She works with social enterprises and their leaders to facilitate positive change and growth. She can't solve crimes like TV's *The Mentalist*... yet!

The author would like to thank Monkey Puzzle Training & Consultancy for content within this article, inspiration, and some amazing learning experiences: www.monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk



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ALL ABOUT STUFF

Heather Matuozzo set up CloudsEnd CIC last year to help hoarders. She explains to se why they need help and what drove her to set up the business.

We probably all have too much stuff. Most of us have cluttered cupboards and drawers. A recent survey by Hammonds Furniture revealed that 25% of us have been forced to stop using at least one room because it is too full of stuff!

But for about 2% of people the problem is much worse. They are busy filling their homes with everything from rusty bicycles to rotten food. They block doorways and hallways. They fill sinks and baths with junk. They bury sofas and beds beneath piles of old clothes or newspapers. They are often characterised as lazy or dirty people, but in truth their behaviour is evidence of a psychiatric condition called compulsive hoarding or hoarding disorder.

Hoarding can cause many personal and social problems – people have even died as a result of their clutter, but psychologists are only just beginning to understand what causes it and how to help sufferers.

Genetically, I'd have to say I have hoarding tendencies. Both of my aunts were hoarders and I found it joyous as a child. They taught me about going to jumble sales and rooting through the items on sale for 'treasures'. Yet I always wanted to tidy up when I visited. So when I first came across the concept of 'decluttering' it was a

light bulb moment – I knew that was the kind of work I wanted to do.

I worked as a freelance de-clutterer for a couple of years – great work, nice clients, mainly quite well off, a couple of celebrities, then one day I had a call from a charity who asked if I could help a lady who had just had her children taken from her as her home was deemed unfit for children to live in. The charity was desperate, they had tried clearing her stuff out but it had failed. What a responsibility! But I knew that I could help. We worked together over a period of six months and still now her home is clear – I know as I occasionally pop back.

Whilst working with her I researched 'Hoarding Disorder' in the UK – and discovered that there was currently no means of support for sufferers. I couldn't believe it. It seems that hoarders are usually left to their own devices, although environmental health can intervene if there is evidence of vermin. When this happens they try a few threats, then if nothing gets better they usually put the tenant into a hotel, destroy everything in the home, refurbish it then return the tenant to the home and ... guess what ... they do it again, but usually a bit quicker. This can cost as much as £60,000 and does not address the problem.

It seemed to me that there had to be a more compassionate and cost-effective solution – and that is how CloudsEnd CIC came about. My aim is to raise awareness and understanding of the condition and provide appropriate support. I want to

encourage individuals, their families and friends, or professionals who come into contact with hoarders, to seek the right kind of help. I am pulling together task forces of partners – including personal organisers or 'declutterers', psychiatrists or mental health specialists, deep (forensic) cleaning companies and recycling companies – who can offer a service to the authorities that will save individuals from trauma and harm, families from distress and break up and the public sector money. I am also developing a training course for people who come across hoarding in their work, which will promote understanding of the condition, show how to approach it and how to work effectively with a client. The money earned from clients who can afford to pay for help will be invested in helping those who can't.

I have been very fortunate to find so many supportive people willing to help me along the way – both in terms of developing the business and in devising and delivering services to help the hoarders. As far as possible I am trying to work with other social enterprises and am still looking for partners who can be called on as part of a task force.

I named this venture CloudsEnd to reflect my optimistic outlook. I know that there is hope for sufferers of this common condition. **se**

MAKING CONTACT

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