Se

social enterprise west midlands

SOCIAL PURPOSE | BUSINESS SENSE

CUTTING EDGE

WHAT MAKES A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR TICK? 20

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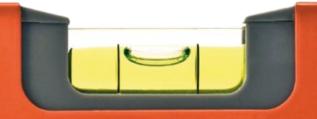
Do you want FREE help and advice for your social enterprise?

If your business is community-based and concerns food, you could be taking advantage of a comprehensive package of free support from the **Making Local Food Work** programme. We can offer you:

- **Up to five days' business advice** from expert advisers on any issue, from business planning and human resources to finance and asset management;
- Practical hands-on support from a individual business mentor, who will help you over a three month period to foster the growth of your business;
- Fully-funded visits to successful businesses similar to your own to inspire you with new ideas, learn new ways of doing things and re-kindle enthusiasm for your enterprise.

Find out more about the Specialist Enterprise Support programme delivered by the Plunkett Foundation as part of the Making Local Food Work project by contacting Richard Snow on 01993 814388 or email richard.snow@plunkett.co.uk





Fair Finance Consortium

Local lenders fo local busines

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.











The time's right for the right support



While the future remains uncertain in terms of the impact of public sector spending cuts, the Big Society and how the Government will support the growth and evolution of a strong Civil Society, it is heartening to see evidence of the determination and creativity being applied by many in the sector to help social enterprises survive the current challenges and emerge stronger, better supported and more widely recognised than ever.

We hope that **Se** magazine will continue to play its part by offering comment on policy and research, showcasing success stories and offering practical advice to help social enterprises trade more effectively. If you have any news or lessons learnt that you would like to share with readers, or a topic you would like to know more about that we can report on, do get in touch. We're here to support you. Se



SUPPORTING SOCIETY



GROWING THE BIG

Institute for Public Policy Research's findings on enterprise support.



MAKES A SOCIAL **ENTRE PRENEUR** TICK?

Heidi Harris of Harris & Harris Accountancy CIC.

IN THE **REACTION TO THE SPENDING REVIEW:** Kevin Maton with an

initial assessment of



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GET LISTED ON SE100:

RBS SE100 index of top social enterprises gathers information on social enterprise performance.



BUSINESS

SHOP FOR CHANGE:

iSE has launched a campaign to get social enterprises to trade with each other.



DO IT RIGHT

RE-POSITIONING:

Graham Beaumont from Health Exchange says we need to re-position



SPECIAL

PRIVATE SECTOR LANGUAGE: Michael **Eynon from Wates** sheds light on working

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QUESTIONS ANSWERED

INTELLECTUAL PROPERT: Lenni

George with sound advice on protecting your best ideas.



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socialenterprise WEST MIDLANDS

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.

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IN THE **NEWS**

POLICY MATTERS

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

BUSINESS MATTERS

SPECIAL **FEATURES**

DO IT **RIGHT**

SWEDA – 21 this year! | Charting a decade of



s SWEDA celebrates its 21st year, CEO Davinder Kaur is optimistic. "I believe the future is bright for social enterprises" she says. "With the right kind of government support, both nationally and locally, there's every reason for the sector to continue to thrive and grow."

Incorporated in October 1989, SWEDA was initially set up to support women in Sandwell starting their own businesses. Since then it has diversified to support anyone over the age of 16 years and grown from three to 15 staff. Last year it had a turnover of over half a million pounds. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

 $\textbf{SWEDA} \mid \text{www.sweda.org.uk}$

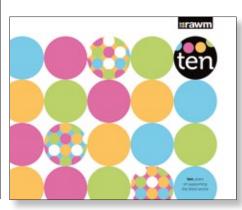
Charting a decade of change in the sector

AWM, the support agency for voluntary and community organisations in the West Midlands, has published a set of short 'think pieces' charting developments in the voluntary and community sector over the last decade and includes a reflective piece on social enterprise support.

Written to commemorate RAWM's 10th birthday, 'RAWM: ten years of supporting the third sector' captures an image of an ever-changing sector and is a rallying cry for moving forward together with a common purpose. To order your copy email RAWM. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

RAWM | rawm@rawm.co.uk | www.rawm.org.uk | 0121 359 9100



Local Enterprise Partnerships announced

The Government has announced that 24 Local Enterprise
Partnerships (LEPs) will be set up in England to work with it in allocating funds, supporting local projects, dealing with planning issues and business regulation. Ministers say they will shift power to local communities and businesses, tackle barriers to investment and streamline planning.

Ministers received bids for approval to create seven LEPs in the West Midlands. Only four were successful and will progress to the next stage of establishing boards and governance arrangements. They are:

- Birmingham & Solihull with East Staffordshire, Lichfield & Tamworth
- Coventry & Warwickshire
- Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

 The Marches, which covers Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

The Black Country and Worcestershire bids were rejected, as was an overarching bid by Business Voice West Midlands. LEPs are being introduced alongside the Regional Development Agencies, which are winding up, but will not be defined in legislation. They will be expected to fund their own day-today running costs, which could be met by leveraging in private sector investment or submitting bids to the Regional Growth Fund – although LEP bids will not receive preferential treatment. It is likely that a process will be set out to invite unsuccessful bids to be revised for consideration. Se

£1.4bn Regional Growth Fund opens

new fund to support areas dependant on the public sector for jobs has been launched by the Government. The objectives of the Regional Growth Fund are to:

- Stimulate enterprise, by providing support for projects and programmes with significant potential for economic growth, and create additional sustainable private sector employment
- Support, in particular, those areas and communities that are currently dependent on the public sector in making the transition to sustainable private sectorled growth and prosperity.

Bids are invited from the private sector, social enterprises and public-private partnerships, and must be for a minimum of £1 million. Bids can take three forms: standalone projects; project packages; or programme proposals.

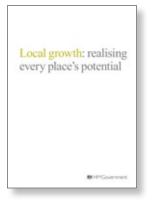
Where they are established, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other developing or established economic development partnerships are expected to play a role co-ordinating and assisting with bids for their areas.

The Fund will operate from April 2011 to April 2014. The first round of bidding is now open for receipt of project proposals and will close on 21 January 2011.

More information on the fund is available in the Government's White Paper: 'Local Growth: realising every place's potential'. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

'Local Growth: realising every place's potential' | http://bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/L/PU1068%20-%20Local%20growth





Guiding carbon descent

hrewsbury-based Marches Energy Agency, a leading climate change social enterprise, has developed a groundbreaking online carbon management tool that helps organisations to work out their carbon footprint and find ways of reducing it.

WeSave is a web based tool – www.WeSave.org.uk – that takes organisations through the process of undertaking their own energy audit and action plan, with accompanying help screens and workbook.

"Scientific opinion is almost universally agreed that we must cut man-made emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to prevent irreversible damage to the ecosystem of the earth," says Richard Davies, Director of MEA. "The cuts required are big and will need every person and organisation to make their contribution," he adds.



WeSave interacts with an organisation, showing it how its energy consumption decreases over time and assisting with any future changes. In

addition, the tool incorporates various behavioural change elements which can be disseminated to staff and visitors.

The resource is intended to enable a person who is not an energy expert to work through a step-by-step process to build up an action plan to be used by their organisation.

"WeSave aims to be a bit different; to be inspiring, to be empowering. But more importantly it seeks to help all that use it to get from aspiration to planning practical action," says Richard.

WeSave has been developed with support from Be Birmingham and BVSC (the Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council) and is available to use free of charge. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

WeSave | www.WeSave.org.uk **Richard Davies, Marches Energy Agency** | www.mea.org.uk

Social enterprise ambassadors

enterprise message have received a major boost with the announcement of 25 new social enterprise ambassadors in the West Midlands.

Key members of staff from Jobcentre Plus, chambers of commerce and schools across the region are working with Social Enterprise West Midlands to increase their understanding and act as advocates for the sector within their own organisations.

Melanie Mills, Business Services
Assessor at SEWM, says: "It is hoped
that the diversity of ambassadors will
help to raise awareness of social
enterprise amongst young people, those
working in industry and commerce
and those looking at routes into
employment. The ambassadors will
also help their organisations to identify
and improve ways of working with
the sector through their increased
knowledge and first-hand experience."

The ambassadors are being supported to fulfil their roles through a mix of training, work shadow opportunities and social enterprise study visits. They will also be responsible



for tracking established or new social enterprises that are being run in their areas of interest, sharing all they have learned to maximise the impact of the programme.

Ambassadors have already received training on governance and legal structures from Anthony Collins Solicitors, an introduction to the Social Enterprise Mark, attended SEWM network meetings and are working with a number of local social enterprises.

"We're using an innovative, partnership-based approach to embed social enterprise within large scale organisations and would like to hear from others that may benefit," says Melanie. A bespoke social enterprise ambassador programme can be offered to interested organisations for a fee. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

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Fordhall Farm celebrates win in national photography competition

lagship social enterprise Fordhall Community Land Initiative has won the West Midlands regional heat of a national photography competition for social enterprise. The 'Social Vision: business at its best' competition set out to find images that show the unique and transformative work of social enterprise.

Now in its third year, the photography competition is for the first time being jointly run by Triodos Bank and the Social Enterprise Coalition in association with Social Enterprise Magazine and the regional social enterprise networks of England.

Fordhall is the UK's first communityowned farm, based in Market Drayton (Shropshire), and works to reconnect the local and wider community to food and farming. The competition was organised to mark Social Enterprise Day – 18 November, a national celebration of social enterprise.

The winning photo shows visitors enjoying a tractor ride at one of the farm's open days, which are held throughout the year. The farm, which was saved from the clutches of developers by more than 8,000 shareholders around the world, has recently received the green light to renovate old farm buildings into an Eco Visitor and Education



Centre, complete with a local food tea room and classroom space.

"We began the venture back in 2006 by selling shares in Fordhall Farm to raise capital to buy the land," said Charlotte, now aged 27. "The farm gates were opened and the community got involved. Since then we have had hundreds of school visits, provided the unemployed with work experience and even created jobs, provided access to green space for the community and most recently been teaching children and families how to grow their own vegetables. We're delighted to have won."

The runners up were Birminghambased Tru Streetdance CIC and My Time

CIC. The national winner will be decided by an online vote to be hosted on the Social Enterprise Live website where you can also follow the competition and see the winning photos in other regions. All West Midlands entries can be viewed in the Flickr gallery of Social Enterprise West Midlands' website. Se

MAKING CONTACT

Social Enterprise Live | www.socialenterpriselive.com **Fordhall Community Land Initiative** |

www.fordhallfarm.com

Tru Streetdance CIC | www.trustreetdance.com

My Time CIC | www.mytime.org.uk Socal Enterprise West Midlands |

www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/category/news

Accredited advisers set to increase

The number of specialist social enterprise accredited advisers is set to double in the West Midlands within the next 12 months following the successful take up of a bursary programme launched by Social Enterprise West Midlands.

The initiative is one of several measures being taken to improve the accessibility and quality of business support for the sector. Around 30 advisers are expected to gain the nationally-recognised SFEDI social enterprise accreditation and will have access to a programme of continuous professional development in order to maintain it.

Laurence Green, Skills Development Broker, says: "Although there is great uncertainty around the future funding of business support for the sector, the drive to raise standards and consistency must continue. Accreditation gives confidence to the adviser and the client, but it can be costly. The bursary programme has enabled us to address geographic gaps as well as support advisers that would otherwise struggle to finance their accreditation."

Specialist advisers in the West Midlands have the chance to network and gain CPD (Continuous Professional Development) through 4se, a forum for social enterprise business support professionals, co-ordinated by Social Enterprise West Midlands as part of its role as the Social Enterprise Centre of Excellence for the region.

"We have also invested in the development of an internship framework for young people interested in business adviser roles," says Laurence. "Mapped to National Occupational Standards, it's a comprehensive learning and development programme covering legal structures, governance, and business planning." The internship framework has been produced by Walsall Endeavours and iSE and is available from Social Enterprise West Midlands to organisations that wish to pilot it. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

Laurence Green, Social Enterprise West Midlands | l.green@socialenterprisewm.org.uk

Initiative) is the Government-recognised UK standards-setting body for business support and business enterprise. SFEDI researches leading practice, sets standards, principles and guidelines. The Social Enterprise Support Standard demands the same core competencies of advisers as the generalist Business Support Standard, but also requires detailed knowledge and experience of issues unique to social enterprise | www.sfedi.co.uk



Reaction to the Spending Review

Kevin Maton Social Enterprise West Midlands

What will the impact of the Government's Spending Review be on social enterprise? Kevin Maton, Network Director of Social Enterprise West Midlands, offers his thoughts to Se.

The first thing to say is that there's still a lot we don't know. There have been some headline figures and a few key announcements for the news headlines. But it will take weeks, if not months, to really get a handle on what the Spending Review means in practice.

We know that one of the Government Departments hardest hit is Communities and Local Government (CLG), with its capital spending cut by 71% – mostly affecting the already cash-strapped social housing sector. We also know that the budgets of local authorities will be cut by about 7% a year for the next four years – that's a quarter less to spend by 2015. These are the headline figures, but it will now be up to individual councils to see where those cuts will be made, so we will have to wait a while longer to see and feel the full impact. With local authorities likely to prioritise maintaining support to schools and social care, we can anticipate that other areas, such as libraries, culture and leisure, are likely to shoulder a disproportionate share of the cuts.

This situation could be a double-edged sword for social enterprises. Direct support from local authorities for activities operated by social enterprises will fall, but Councils will be looking for more cost-effective ways of providing, for example, quality care services and libraries. The reduction in programmes and budgets may also result in more asset transfer opportunities, allowing social enterprises to take advantage of redundant buildings. Just don't look for any cash from the local Council to help with the process!

A downside might be if social enterprises, despite having a solid track record in delivering innovative and pioneering services across the public sector, lose out on future contracts because of the hurried decisions that some local councils will take under

pressure to make cuts. Too many Councils still don't know about the social enterprise sector and what it is already delivering in many areas, which means they could miss opportunities to commission better services through social enterprise or to allow public sector staff to create social enterprises.

There is also likely to be significant competition for this out-sourced work. Whilst the Government preaches 'localism' and a bottom-up approach, in the spending review document (page 34, paragraph 1.87) it makes clear that it is willing to enforce contracting-out by setting private provider quotas for council services such as care of

small fund in the face of massive public spending cuts and increased demand for services in a country where some of the poorest will be hit hardest and where Civil Society Organisations – charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups – are already having to consider how they will absorb the additional costs of VAT payments estimated at over £170 million.

It has also been announced that the Regional Growth Fund, set up to support development of private sector business in areas that have been reliant on public sector jobs, will receive an additional £400m and extend into a third year.

So how does this relate to the wider issue of the Government working to



the elderly and Early Years. Private sector companies are already geared up to take advantage of this.

Some more positive news was the announcement of a £100m Transition Fund to provide for "those organisations delivering frontline services that stand to be affected in the short term by reductions in spending and are able to demonstrate that the financial impact will affect their ability to deliver services". Details are still sketchy and it will be important to confirm that this is separate from the Consolidation Fund that is being put forward in the 'Supporting a Stronger Civil Society' consultation exercise announced by Government at the end of October. It is also a very

develop the 'Big Society'? As stated, many of the organisations expected to help deliver this will be taking a big financial hit as Councils cut back on their budgets to support community organisations. The vision of social enterprises and community organisations becoming an integral part of the Big Society will only be fully realised in the delivery of public services if the innovation and passion of these organisations is allowed to flourish and there is an enlightened procurement and commissioning process within public sector organisations. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

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Supporting civil society



hat is 'civil society' and how can it be supported? Kevin Maton, Network Director of Social Enterprise West Midlands, has been following the development of government policy and offers an update and personal comment for Se.

Whilst there have already been a plethora of workshops aiming to explain what the 'Big Society' is, the Government has launched a consultation on a much more important issue. That is the availability of support to social enterprises and other civil society organisations that will enable them to better deliver products and services to communities. Entitled 'Supporting a Stronger Civil Society' its aim fits positively alongside the views of social enterprises in the West Midlands put forward in SEWM's prospectus – 'The Time is Now'. The prospectus concluded that a strengthened social enterprise sector will come from growing individual organisations with the assistance of the right forms of support and access to relevant expertise.

The consultation document points out that less than a fifth of so-called Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) - charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups - access support from infrastructure organisations, but those that do are far more likely to be successful in grant applications and the award of contracts. This suggests the need to increase the capacity and reach of such advice and support organisations if CSOs are to take on a greater role in service provision to communities. The Government document states that "it will be vital for CSOs to improve their business skills, become more entrepreneurial and strengthen their governance".

Under the heading 'Easier Access to Advice' the consultation looks first to

develop and rationalise online sources of advice and support. SEWM's own website - www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk is a good source of information. But when it comes to starting a new social enterprise, social enterprises themselves have argued consistently that they want to work with real people. In particular with experienced entrepreneurs and trained advisers in a mentoring or peer to peer situation. This approach is very much supported by the Government. However, it also suggests placing significant emphasis on volunteers from the private sector to assist CSOs. Whilst skilled volunteers with appropriate experience can be part of this provision, we would be concerned if volunteers were seen to be the primary basis of support for developing social enterprises.

The Government is proposing to provide bursaries to enable organisations to access specialist services to "become less reliant on the state, bid for public service contracts, modernise or become more entrepreneurial". The Government argues that bursaries put the organisation in control. SEWM, as part of its support and infrastructure role, is able to assist this process through providing information about the specialist providers of these types of services through the Help and Advice section of its website. Over 300 organisations that provide support and finance are listed in a new searchable database. We are also developing an approved consultants register -ConsultantSe - that will enable social enterprises to identify individuals, or a multi-skilled team, to work alongside them to deliver a particular piece of work, or to provide expert assistance through a period of change or development.

The Government is encouraging infrastructure organisations to ensure they are as efficient as possible, by sharing back office functions or undertaking joint procurement, for example. As an incentive to encourage this process, there are proposals to provide time-limited consolidation grants to help improve the sustainability of infrastructure bodies. It wants to see the minimum amount of such infrastructure delivering the greatest amount of support to the front line.

Finally, the Government believes that organisations that use infrastructure support services are more likely to have a good relationship with public sector bodies – although it recognises that this is not currently the case everywhere.

Have your say

The Government wishes to consult individuals and organisations about proposals for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of support and advice for frontline CSOs.

The consultation is asking for ideas about how best to support areas where there is not the social capital in place to help build local relationships and a stronger civil society.

The Government also wants feedback about the best way to provide a coherent offer of technical advice and support through infrastructure bodies to frontline social enterprises.

It is important that the Government has recognised that making the transformation into the Big Society will require organisations being able to call on appropriate support and expertise. This consultation is our chance to suggest how that support might be shaped. Se



Supporting a Stronger Civil Society – An Office for Civil Society consultation document is available to download at www. cabinetoffice.gov.uk. The deadline for responses is 6 January 2011.



The Time is Now – a vision and prospectus for social enterprise in the West Midlands is available to download at www. socialenterprisewm.org. uk. To request a copy call Social Enterprise West Midlands on 024 7663 3911.



Your say on the impact of public spending cuts

SPENDING

The Social Enterprise Coalition is undertaking an online survey to find out how initial, or pending, cuts in public spending are affecting social enterprises.

The findings will be used to present a compelling case to Government for strengthening the support and resources available for social enterprises and illustrate the impact on the sector. The research will also help the Coalition and partner organisations to

establish what should be done to help members and identify priority areas.

Social enterprises and other sector organisations are encouraged to complete the survey, more than once if necessary. The survey will remain open to build the evidence base. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

The survey is available to complete at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/KX8V9VJ

Ceri Jones, Social Enterprise Coalition | ceri.jones@socialenterprise.org.uk

Get listed on SE100

The RBS SE100 Index is gathering facts and figures about social enterprises, charting both growth and social impact to put the stats behind great stories of businesses delivering positive economic change across the UK.

The Index enables organisations to see how their growth and social impact compares to others in their marketplace and in the social enterprise arena as a whole – and offers prizes for the top performers.

Now in its second year, the Index was created by Social Enterprise magazine in partnership with Royal Bank of Scotland Community Banking to gather robust information from the sector on an annual basis. Any organisation that classes itself as a social enterprise is welcome to enter by completing an online or telephone survey. The survey requires transparency on legal structure and sources of income, both of which will be used to assess whether an organisation is a bona fide social enterprise.

Top performers are highlighted on the Social Enterprise Live website each month, but also in an end of year Data Report – the first of which was published in June 2010 and includes key statistics on sector growth, size, impact, and geographical variations.



Of the 350 organisations listed in year one, only 15 were from the West Midlands. Social Enterprise West Midlands wants this figure to increase by tenfold this year and is encouraging its members and **Se** readers to get listed. The 2010/11 index closes in March 2011. To sign up to the index or download the 2009/2010 RBS SE100 Data Report, visit the Social Enterprise Live website. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

Social Enterprise Live | www.socialenterpriselive.com

SEWM MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Earlier this year SEWM undertook its first survey of members, to find out what they thought of its services and their effectiveness.

Membership currently stands at 400 organisations, 25% of which responded. Over 42% of these were social enterprises, the majority with a turnover of less than £50,000. Their answers revealed some interesting findings:

- 39% trade mostly with the public sector, less than 5% trade mostly with the private sector and around 17% sell their services mainly to the general public
- Over 80% said that since the recession, demand for their services had increased or stayed the same
- 26% reported that sales had increased and 41% said that business growth had also increased
- 33% considered that the availability of finance had decreased
- 59% said that their take up of business support had not increased
- The most popular area of business support accessed was marketing (42%), followed closely by support for collaborative working (40%), and business planning (37%).

The findings have helped to shape a new membership offer from SEWM that will connect with a broad range of organisations and individuals. It will officially launch before the end of the year, providing a range of negotiated offers, a discounted listing on the **BuySe.co.uk** directory, potential contract opportunities and access to member-only networking and development events. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

Ranjit Bansal, Social Enterprise West Midlands | r.bansal@socialenterprisewm.org.uk | www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk



The Institute for Public Policy Research's (IPPR) recent report, 'Growing the Big Society: Encouraging Success in Social and Community Enterprise in Deprived Communities', presents the findings of a study into the support needs of social enterprises and the potential role of national and local government in ensuring the sector has the opportunity to meet expectations. Se has taken a look at the key findings.

GROWING

Critical success factors for social enterprise

The report contains a review of the literature and research that has been carried out into social enterprise and draws out critical success factors to assist in the identification of the priority areas for investment in specialist support. These include:

- Intensive support at the prestart and early start up phases
- Finance and funding failure to assist with these is a major inhibitor to success
- Ensuring a mix of relevant skills on the Board
- Having a clear and strategic vision
- Succession planning should the 'founders' move on
- A trading ethos, especially for those emerging from the grant-driven voluntary and community sector.

Interviews were also carried out with stakeholders in the North West of England, primarily local authorities, to ask them what they thought were the critical factors for successful social enterprise development.

 The most important consideration was the financial sustainability of the social enterprise and ensuring they had diverse sources of income. This meant a strong focus on the business planning capability of the organisation and their ability to tap into and manage various income streams.

- Being business minded was seen as central to success and this was interpreted as being hard-headed about what the enterprise does, including ceasing activities that are being delivered at a loss unless there is a way to cross-subsidise them.
- Good core organisational functions were highlighted, with a particular focus on financial management, marketing, procurement, networking and negotiation skills.
- Finally, owning or being able to manage a capital asset in a way that generates profit was highlighted as important.

Increasing social enterprise

The same group of stakeholders also offered suggestions as to how to increase the number of social enterprises. These included:

- Targeted pre-start-up support for individuals and groups of entrepreneurs
- Proactive promotion of the social enterprise model, especially for improving life in deprived communities
- Providing a programme of capacity-building and associated community development in areas without a track-record of social enterprise development
- Targeting groups of individuals with the skills to help lead the establishment of social enterprise – social enterprise ambassadors.

Becoming enterprise-ready

Big Society

The stakeholder group thought that the key area where social enterprises need support is in achieving sustainability. The challenge is how to achieve this. Their suggestion was that more specialist social enterprise advisors, training and mentoring opportunities need to be developed.

Offering the right support

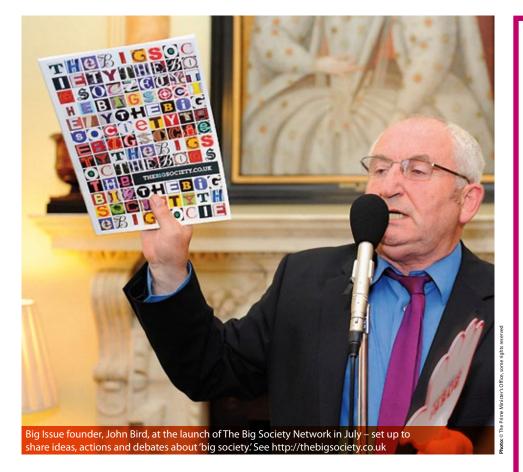
The study also surveyed over 100 social enterprises and this work highlighted some key issues that need to be addressed if opportunities are to be realised:

- Finance there is a need for support to become investment-ready; access to capital finance; access to shortterm grant funding for organisations emerging from the grant-driven voluntary and community sector, to aid the transition towards becoming a fully trading social enterprise
- Public sector commissioning and procurement – a perennial issue for the sector, but there is a major concern at present that cuts in public services will generate a move towards bigger contracts and a concentration on the cost of outputs rather than outcomes and impacts

• Good quality business support

 there is a need for appropriate advice and expertise to be available in a timely and affordable fashion as an enterprise develops; also for expert and technical support





tailored to specific market sectors, eg young people or health.

Developing local economies

The IPPR argues that supporting the transition of organisations from grant-dependency to enterprising activity should be a priority for those with a remit to develop local economies and support communities under the new organisational structures designed to encourage economic development and community regeneration.

Working together

Finally, the research makes a plea that, in the interests of the wider social enterprise sector, the wide range of support agencies work together to better co-ordinate effort and ensure that a coherent support offer is available to existing and aspiring social enterprises 'based on a life-cycle framework'.

Rising to the challenge

The findings of the report indicate that, in spite of the cutbacks in funding of public sector organisations – especially local authorities, there are real opportunities for the social enterprise sector if it can build on the critical success factors identified:

- People strong leadership offering a clearly articulated vision, combined with access to relevant skills such as business planning, marketing and people management
- Networks and Profile both as a means of sharing and gathering commercial intelligence and through providing valuable peer-to-peer and other support and mentoring opportunities
- Market Intelligence not only understanding the community being served, but also how to access and develop new markets.

Finally...

The IPPR report is based on experiences in the North West of England, but certainly echoes much of the local intelligence gathered in the West Midlands over the last three years. As a result, many organisations in our region are already taking steps to address the issues raised. Se

A 'BIG SOCIETY' IS...

...getting people at local level to take more responsibility and do more to help themselves and their neighbours and is seen as an alternative to action taken by state institutions and public services.

The government wants to make society stronger by getting more people working together to run their own affairs locally.

It aims to put more power and responsibility into the hands of groups, networks and communities and to generate more community organisers, neighbourhood groups, volunteers, mutual organisations, co-operatives, charities, social enterprises and small businesses.

The idea is that these will take more action at a local level, with more freedom to do things the way they want to. Bringing local knowledge, based on everyday experience, to bear on planning and decision-making will, it is argued, lead to better outcomes for neighbourhoods and individuals.

Despite the growth in Big Society-branded meetings and workshops, there is still not much detail available on precisely what the Big Society entails from the Government's point of view! It is more of a framework or a 'vision' of how things could be in the future, which does offer opportunities for influencing what happens – providing we act quickly. What we are not being given is a complete policy with everything worked out and planned!

'Growing the Big Society: Encouraging Success in Social and Community Enterprise in Deprived Communities' (IPPR, 2010) is available to download at: www.ippr.org.uk/ipprnorth/publicationsandreports 'Ten Big Questions about the Big Society' (Anna Coote, NEF) is a useful guide from The New Economics Foundation which explains the broad vision of the Big Society, its merits and flaws, and ways to make the best of it. It is available at www.neweconomics.org



Time to review and make changes

The social enterprise sector across the UK is under increasing pressure following the dramatic reductions in public spending. The fact that this is happening just as the social enterprise movement is recognised as a major player in the delivery of public services means that organisations need to be prepared not only to beat the cuts, but to cope with a greater demand on their services than ever before.

The impact of the downturn and recent spending cuts is being evidenced across civil society; organisations are struggling to maintain their revenues and are finding their costs increasing. Despite continuing uncertainty, Social Enterprise London (SEL) is advocating that organisations consider this as a chance to re-position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities that the recovery and economic changes will bring. Strong organisational strategy, structure and governance, product positioning and financial management will all be vital to sustainability and competitive advantage in the years ahead, they say.

Supported by Capacitybuilders Income Generation Scheme, SEL has been running training sessions to help social enterprise infrastructure organisations review their direction, consider future sustainability, maximise their potential and continue to deliver valuable support for civil society organisations. Here, they share with se readers the key guiding principles they have identified for managing and leading during this time of transition and change. These principles apply equally to social enterprises themselves.

- Understand the true picture: take time to get to the bottom of what is driving your organisation. What are the challenges and opportunities presented to you and how are these impacting on how you currently do business? What should be the focus and direction of the organisation?
- Understand the needs of your stakeholders: have a clear picture of how the changes may be affecting and impacting on your stakeholders and build this into the organisation's strategic review and planning to ensure it is responding to the most pressing needs and priorities.
- Focus on what really matters: review and evaluate those products, services, customers and processes which don't create value for your organisation or align with the strategic direction.
- Be ready to act: despite tough and uncertain times, be ready to take difficult organisational decisions, but those that continue to increase the value created, reduce the risks to the business, and allow the organisation to respond quickly to new opportunities.

- Plan for different scenarios: being ready to act requires successful organisations to consider their ability to be flexible and agile.
 Exploring strategic options and understanding different scenarios for the organisation will strengthen its ability to respond to new opportunities and risks.
- Nurture the organisation's financial health: ensure the finances and working capital are in good order and monitor performance against financial and non-financial commitments. Adopt strong financial management procedures.
- Managing the cost base: this may include considering where efficiencies can be made, additional value created, unnecessary complexity removed or whether the business model itself needs to change.
- Take advantage of new opportunities: reviewing and evaluating your ogranisation's strengths and working on areas that need improvement will put you in a better position to respond to new opportunities. Continue to innovate and invest in areas of growth and protect your organisational brand. Se

MAKING CONTACT

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SHOP FOR CHANGE

n July 2010, iSE launched a campaign to encourage inter-trading within the third sector in Birmingham as a way of helping to combat extensive public sector spending cuts. Here iSE's Chief Executive, Sarah Crawley, talks exclusively to Se about how the campaign has taken off and how she would like to see still more social enterprises getting involved.

Shop for Change arose from an iSE initiative, supported by Be Birmingham, called MarketMakers, which aims to understand, develop and link social enterprises to emerging markets. "As one of the strands of activity, we commissioned a survey into the purchasing habits of social enterprises and other third sector trading organisations in Birmingham," explains Sarah, "which revealed some quite shocking statistics."

Almost half of those interviewed said they spent less than 10% of their supplier-spend in the sector and 35% said they didn't buy any goods at all from the sector. In addition, 83% said they derived 20% – 100% of their income from the public sector, which clearly made them vulnerable in the light of anticipated massive public sector spending cuts.

"It seemed to me that here was a market right under our noses that wasn't being fully exploited," says Sarah. "So we conceived the idea of 'Shop for Change' – a campaign designed to make it easier for social enterprises and trading voluntary and community organisations in Birmingham to buy business goods and services from each other."

Among the reasons given for the lack of inter-trading were unavailability of appropriate goods and services, uncompetitive pricing and unacceptable quality. Through the 'Shop for Change' campaign, iSE is aiming not only to encourage new and existing third sector organisations to fill any gaps identified in the market, but also to work with organisations to improve processes and skills to make the sector more competitive.

A suppliers database and dedicated 'Shop for Change' website have been created and iSE is calling for third



sector organisations to sign a pledge to put social enterprise at the top of their shopping list when looking for business services and supplies.

Around 100 people attended the launch of Shop for Change at ENTA in Birmingham at the beginning of July and their organisations signed the pledge. "We were delighted by the energy and enthusiasm in the room," says Sarah. "People embraced the concept and immediately started making contacts and discussing opportunities to work together."

By the beginning of October, over 3,600 individuals had visited the Shop for Change website to consult the suppliers database, register as a supplier, or find out more about the campaign; and over 75 more organisations had signed the pledge to put social enterprise at the top of their shopping list.

"It has been immensely gratifying to see how the campaign has captured

the imagination of social enterprises locally and how many organisations have been keen to get involved and make a difference," enthuses Sarah. "I always thought it was a good idea, but now I'm convinced it was a great idea!"

Those who have pledged to Shop for Change are being encouraged to display the pledge certificate and promote the campaign, encouraging others to join in. "I see this campaign as being about revolution," says Sarah. "It's about working together to change the world. We're now looking at how we can extend the reach of the campaign beyond Birmingham."

To find out more about Shop for Change or download a copy of the survey 'Shop for Change: An Analysis of Trends in Social Enterprise Markets' visit the Shop for Change website. **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

iSE Shop for Change | www.shopforchange.info



Although it appears that the Coalition government's Spending Review has, as promised, spared the NHS from significant cuts, plans laid out in June's emergency budget for a radical shake up remain unchanged. Efficiency savings, improvements at the frontline, smarter procurement practices and major restructuring are all part of the changing landscape. **Se** spoke to Graham Beaumont of Health Exchange CIC about how his social enterprise is re-positioning itself now to secure its future.

Health Exchange was set up by Graham in 2008 to broaden the reach of health and wellbeing support services for Birmingham residents, providing health promotion information, behavioural change and educational services. "The current change in the landscape represents quite significant challenges," he says. "If you're not optimistic about the future it's time to get out now and do something else.

"There is a sense of renaissance for social enterprise in the government's thinking, but I'm not sure they particularly understand what that means in practice. There is also a lack of understanding over how difficult it is to achieve some of the things they are beginning to champion. If the sector isn't well positioned, we'll lose business to the private sector" says Graham. "That's why we can't stand still. We've got to listen to our customers, manage risk and be really clear about our objectives and how we will achieve them."

Founded on the principles of choice and personalisation, Health Exchange is all about supporting people on a journey of health improvement tailored to their needs. It does this by working in partnership with clusters of local (often third sector) organisations, GP and dental practices, pharmacies, children's centres and community venues, who either signpost or deliver specialist services directly. This 'in-reach' activity, coupled with a health information web-portal and an on-demand SMS service accessed more than 500,000 times annually, has seen the organisation grow to over 60 staff with a turnover approaching £2.7million in two years. The organisation has invested in its marketing and communications so that the Health Exchange brand is increasingly recognised as a trusted provider of information and community healthcare services.

Visibility is one part of a much broader strategy of ensuring Health Exchange is firmly positioned to withstand changes in healthcare commissioning, for which responsibility will eventually be transferred from primary care trusts to GPs. "The fact that our existing partners will become our purchasers creates a degree of challenge, on top of which they, as a group, face managing huge change. However, that transition may not be so difficult if the services offered provide clear benefits and support the outcomes GPs are looking for."



In order to make that transition, the organisation has put evidencing impact at the top of its priority list. "We have to evidence that we are productive and cost effective in achieving wellbeing outcomes that GPs can measure and understand." says Graham. Health Exchange is deepening its relationships with GP practices across the city so that the impact of Health Exchange interventions are clearly recognised and ultimately recorded on the systems that GPs trust for their information. In each surgery a link person co-ordinates the Health Exchange relationship. "All of this is being done a couple of years ahead of GPs having control of commissioning, but it's an investment in our future and will hopefully demonstrate the real value Health Exchange is adding."

This dual strategy of developing service delivery within GP surgeries and continuing to delight existing customers and clients is not without its internal pressures. "It creates a strain in



the organisation, but a necessary strain at a time of great and unpredictable change. It's important to continually earn the trust of possible supporters and champions who are in a position to buy our services in the future."

Changes, started under the Labour government, around the separation of the provider and commissioner relationship enabled social enterprises like Health Exchange to be created and thrive. Within a year of emerging as an independent social enterprise from Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust, Health Exchange experienced growth of 41% forcing a fundamental re-think about the company structure.

A programme of restructuring internal management and teams was undertaken and measures introduced to ensure teams were not operating in silos. A management dashboard assists the management team to keep an eye on the organisation as a whole. "We look at cash flow profitability,

contract management and human resources on a weekly basis. These are the things that tell us if the organisation is working."This activity has put the company in good stead to expand to the East and West of the region.

Amongst other strategies to continue to improve and strengthen the company is the development of a knowledge management culture, supported by a range of formal and informal systems to capture and share knowledge between people at any point in the organisation. "If we could mobilise the knowledge of all the people we have in the organisation and all the people we network with, how powerful would that be?" asks Graham. "It's not easy, but knowledge is an asset and we're launching an internal 'yellow pages' to record as much as we can."

Looking ahead, Graham is optimistic about the future, recognising that the role of the chief executive is particularly

important at this time: "If you're a leader of an organisation it's your job to make people feel good about the future and give people the confidence to make the commitment you're asking them to make. Times of change create enormous opportunities. It's not anybody else's business to make your business successful, so you have to go for it." **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

Health Exchange CIC | www.healthexchange.org.uk

Health Exchange CIC is a Birmingham-based social enterprise, delivering free and confidential health information and lifestyle choice (behaviour change) services. It engages people in a dialogue that enables them to make positive lifestyle choices, working with and supporting communities to achieve good health and wellbeing.



TALKING THE PRIVATE SECTOR LANGUAGE



In the current economic climate, with greater competition for a reduced number of public sector

contracts, social enterprises are looking at ways to enhance their trading income and become self-sustainable. Trading with the private sector is an avenue often untapped, as many social enterprises find it hard to create the necessary links to find and bid for private sector contracts. Michael Eynon, Group Social Enterprise Co-ordinator at Wates, spoke to Se about what this private company with a current turnover of £1 billion, looks for in potential social enterprise partners.

"Private sector companies are primarily interested in quality, time and price," says Michael. "Although these are key drivers for Wates as a business, what sets us apart from other private sector companies is that we are passionate about the communities we work in, which has been driven by the Wates family and their values."

Social enterprises have a great opportunity to demonstrate competence to differentiate from other businesses by demonstrating their social impact. They should use their evidence of impact as an added-value tool when approaching the private sector. At Wates, we are obviously aware of the social enterprise sector and the benefit of using social enterprises. However, not all private sector organisations are open to this kind of business, they may not be as inclined towards social impact, so it is also about approaching the right private sector organisation whose values match yours."

About Wates

Established 113 years ago, The Wates Group is the largest family owned and run construction business in the UK, currently employing 2,200 people. Although an increasing number of private businesses have a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, what separates Wates from its competitors is the fact that it is a socially-driven company. "At the heart of Wates is the phrase 'above all, it's about people", explains Michael, "and our social enterprise strategy is a clear demonstration of that. Working with social enterprises is one of the CSR objectives for the Group and we are exploring every opportunity for social enterprises to deliver their skills, goods and services to our business.

"At the start of 2010, building on our existing experience of working with social enterprises, we devised a clear new strategy to trade with and support social enterprises on a more systematic basis. Our goal over time is to build a model of good practice for working with social enterprises that we can share with others, both within and beyond the construction sector. So far this year we have worked with over 20 social enterprises and many for repeat business.

"Our vision is to have a social enterprise on every project - and we have approximately 150 live projects at any given time. This vision will be implemented as a priority going forward. As part of getting the message across internally, all Business Unit Directors and their management teams were briefed on the vision and they each put forward a Social Enterprise Co-ordinator for their Business Unit. We now have 20 Co-ordinators across the four businesses - Construction, Living Space, Retail and Interiors. Their role, alongside their busy day jobs, is to encourage, raise awareness and ensure each Business Unit uses social enterprises as part of its supply chain."

Goods

Doors

Windows

Components

Electrical kits

TYPES OF WORK FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES WORKING WITH WATES

Skills

Installation

Construction trades
Groundworks
Landscaping
Painting & decorating
Carpentry
Joinery
Maintenance

Services

Furniture
Courier
Printing
Recycling
Design
Cleaning
Catering
Food delivery
Copying

Transport & distribution

Events



TOP TIPS for social enterprises to engage with the private sector

- Step up your publicity to help the private sector find you
- Clearly demonstrate your social added-value
- Make sure you are price-competitive
- Communicate consistently and smoothly with potential private sector partners
- If you are working with the construction industry, ensure you comply with Health & Safety regulations and in particular get CSCS accreditation for your staff
- Don't over-promise. Start with low value, low risk projects, deliver well and build your reputation over time

The importance of good communication

"Some of the feedback I have had from our regional Social Enterprise Co-ordinators suggests that potential opportunities for social enterprises to work with us are being hampered by a lack of communication. When Wates surveyors and commercial teams put together work packages they usually have a list of preferred, or usedbefore, sub-contractors and suppliers. However, with the new objective they are coming away from their normal route and offering social enterprises a chance to tender for work – but this

can only be done if communication is consistent and smooth. If a social enterprise wants the package, they must be available for several talks prior to receiving the tender."

Working with Wates

"As we are a construction services company a key issue for us is Health & Safety. All members of the UK Contractors Group (UKCG) must have complete compliance with Health & Safety. If a sub-contractor is going on to a Wates site, its staff must have Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) accreditation. One of the problems we have found with social enterprises wanting to go on site is that CSCS accreditation has

not been a priority for them. I would encourage all social enterprises related to construction, and whose activities will be performed on a construction site, to look into Health & Safety aspects and in particular get CSCS cards for their staff."

There are many ways in which social enterprises can work with Wates. Michael's advice is, "Don't take on too much at the outset and risk doing a poor job. Start off with low value, low risk packages and gradually build your reputation." **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

Michael Eynon, Group Social Enterprise Coordinator, Wates | michael.eynon@wates.co.uk | www.wates.co.uk With the growth of the internet, it's never been easier to find, publish or pass on information and ideas, but in an increasingly competitive global market, how do you protect your Intellectual Property Rights? **Se** asked Lenni George of The Development Alchemists for a few helpful pointers.







What exactly is Intellectual Property?

Broadly speaking Intellectual Property (IP) can be divided into two categories: industrial property and copyright. Industrial property covers inventions, trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source. Copyright covers literary and artistic works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures and architectural designs.

Practically, there are four aspects to IP:

- Patents protect inventions and what makes things work
- Trade marks protect distinctive symbols that distinguish goods and services in the marketplace, eg logos and brand names
- Designs you can protect what something looks like
- Copyright applies when the work is fixed, ie written or recorded in some way.
 It applies to the way the information is produced, not to the ideas.

What is a patent?

A patent gives you the right to stop others from copying, manufacturing, selling, and importing your invention without your permission. The existence of your patent may be enough on its own to stop others from trying to exploit your invention. If it does not, it gives you the right to take legal action to stop them exploiting your invention and to claim damages.

With a patent you can also:

- Sell the invention and all the IP rights
- License the invention to someone else but retain all the IP rights
- Discuss the invention with others in order to set up a business based around the invention.

What is a trademark?

A trade mark is a sign which can distinguish your goods and services from those of your competitors. It can be words, logos, or a combination of both.

A trade mark must be distinctive for the goods and services you provide. In other words it can be recognised as a sign that differentiates your goods or service as different from someone else's.

Why register a trademark?

Just because a company name has been registered with Companies House, doesn't mean it is protected. Someone else could use it. A company name and brand is a valuable asset, so consideration should be given to protecting it by registering it as a trade mark.

Registering your trade mark gives you the exclusive right to use your mark for the goods and/or services that it covers in the UK.

If you have a registered trade mark you can put the ® symbol next to it to indicate it is registered. Using this symbol for a trade mark that is not registered is an offence.

Having a registered trade mark allows you to take legal action against anyone who uses it without your permission and allows Trading Standards Officers or Police to bring criminal charges against counterfeiters if they use it.

It costs £200 to apply for trade mark registration (see Form TM3 from IPO).

How can a design be protected?

To protect your design from being copied without your permission you can register it.

Industrial design relates to how something looks. It differs from patent as it is not necessarily based on innovation or novelty. It may not be about how something works, but could include ergonomics, pattern, colour and usability. Industrial design may relate to both two and three dimensional designs.

What is copyright?

Copyright is an automatic right, which applies when the work is fixed ie written or recorded in some way. You do not need to apply for it or register the work.

In the UK it lasts 70 years after the death of the author. If you use the copyright symbol, your work may also be protected in other countries.

Copyright applies to any medium, so you cannot publish photographs on the internet, for example, or make a sound recording of a book, or a painting of a photograph without permission.

How do you determine who owns a copyright?

- Creator and first owner the creator of an original copyright work is usually the first owner.
- Works created for an employer

 are usually owned by the
 employer not the employee.
- Commissioned works the rule regarding commissioned works changed in 1989. Even if you pay a design company for a logo, or a website, it doesn't belong to you unless they assign the copyright to you. Website copy belongs to whoever writes it, which may be a consultant. Articles written by PR consultants belong to the author. The copyright for photographs remains with the photographer.
- Joint authors a single work may be created and owned by more than one person.

If you produce training materials or workbooks, you should put your name © and the year on it, to flag up that the copyright belongs to you.









INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY



How can copyright be enforced?

Copyright is essentially a private right, which allows you to determine how your works are used, so the decision about how to enforce that right is up to you. There is a moral aspect to copyright, which in some instances is more important than any commercial gain. If you do wish to enforce your right, it is usually better in the first instance to try and negotiate to resolve the issue. Mediation is another option. The courts are the final option. The courts can stop someone making further infringing use of the material by:

- Granting an injunction
- Awarding the copyright owner damages
- Making the infringing party give up the goods to the copyright owner.

Deliberate infringement of copyright on a commercial scale may be a criminal offence.

In fact, people are often delighted to give permission to reproduce their work, provided they are credited. I know I am often very happy to share the work that I produce. If other people use it, it just inspires me to create something better! And of course

if they are kind enough to credit me, that provides not only some free marketing but also establishes my reputation.

It is an urban myth that changing something by 30% or more makes it sufficiently different to get around copyright. There is no set percentage. It is debateable. Copyright is said to be infringed if someone uses the 'whole or a substantial' part of a copyright-protected work without the permission of the owner. It is the word substantial that is the difficult one.

If you decide to pursue someone for infringement of copyright, be clear at the outset what you want to achieve. You may spend a lot of time and money only to receive an apology and have the infringer make further changes to the material then carry on using it.

What about ideas for a business, or new product that doesn't yet exist?

Before sharing any new business ideas with anyone, it is a good idea to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Where can I find further information?

The Intellectual Property Office provides guidance on when and how to use Intellectual property rights. They also have all the application forms and guidance notes online. You can purchase the booklet 'The law of copyright and rights in performances' from the British Copyright Council. Se

MAKING CONTACT

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www.dev-alchemist.com | For free downloads of materials and to exchange ideas see www.thedevelopmentalchemistsltd.ning.com

British Copyright Council | Copyright House, 29-33 Berners Street, London W1P 4AA | 01986 788122 | copyright@bcc2.demon.co.uk

Intellectual Property Office | www.ipo.gov.uk

The Development Alchemists is an organisation development consultancy, which delivers a wide range of development activities from training to action learning to coaching and organisation and business consulting services.



What makes a serial social entrepreneur? After talking to the co-founder of the UK's first accountancy firm to become a Community Interest Company, Se suspects it might all be in the genes...

Heidi Harris comes from a family of 'doers' who have always been more than willing to give freely of their time for the benefit of the community.

When the Norfolk village in which she was born needed a playing field, her grandfather set about getting one built. "He worked for the Army, as a civilian, so he persuaded them to help with the job," Heidi explains. "The idea was to fill in a dirty old pond and raise the level of the ground to create a football and cricket pitch. The Army did its bit and brought along a lot of material and manpower to make that possible," she says.

Meanwhile 'can-do grandpa' was busy hustling up funds to raise a proper pavilion on the site. Mission accomplished once again. After his death, eight years ago, the mantle was assumed by his son, Heidi's father. Not surprising, then, that the family ethos of 'see a need and do something about it' is strong in Heidi, too.

It gave rise to Harris & Harris, the accountancy-firm-with-a-difference that she established in Birmingham recently with her husband Ceciel. The 'difference', of course, is that Harris & Harris not only specialises in helping Community Interest Companies (CICs) to negotiate

WHAT MAKES A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

their way around the UK's accountancy maze, but is also a CIC in its own right.

It's the only accountancy firm of its kind in the UK, in fact, although this is a business model which is growing increasingly popular. "Six months ago, something like 40 or 50 enterprises a month were switching to CIC status, because of the benefits it brings," says Heidi. "Now it's around 100."

One of the reasons, Heidi believes, is George Osborne's much heralded public sector spending cuts. "A lot of people are losing their jobs – particularly in the NHS - thanks to the measures announced by the Chancellor," she says, "and many people are setting up as CICs to deliver the services they used to provide as employees back to Primary Care Trusts."

Harris & Harris does offer consultancy advice to CIC start-ups, but Heidi says it's not a key area of their work. "We don't do much of it because there are a lot of people out there offering very good, free assistance on how to set up as a CIC," she explains. "We get involved occasionally, however, if someone needs advice on whether to become Limited by Guarantee or Shares, or has technical questions. At present we are offering free 45 minute consultations, and the

people who attend those sessions often stay with us as clients," she adds.

Heidi & Ceciel established Harris & Harris CIC after working in the charitable field for a number of years. "Ceciel spent three years volunteering and learning about running a charity, so we both have a passion for social enterprise," says Heidi.

Much of her volunteer work entailed providing accountancy services as well as organising activities and giving advice and guidance to clients of Bloomsbury Cyber Junction (BCJ). BCJ was founded by Ceciel and provides computer-based activities and learning for teenagers and adults in parts of Nechells. Harris & Harris now supports BCJ financially, channelling its surpluses back into the centre.

The most recent venture has been setting up Bloomsbury Cutting Edge, a social enterprise hairdressers, offering training opportunities for young females. Although this is their second venture, Heidi points out: "I don't really consider myself to be a serial social entrepreneur. It all just happened.

"After working as a volunteer with charities for so long I decided I really liked it more than I liked straight forward accounting. Setting up Harris & Harris means I can do



something useful with my qualifications as a chartered accountant."

With two social enterprises under her belt, and two more on the drawing board, Heidi looks like qualifying for the 'serial' prefix, whether she likes it or not.

Soon to come is a nationwide venture, the details of which are being kept under wraps, and a regional enterprise in which Harris & Harris will be working with the CIC Association.

All this work means she can no longer manage with a staff of just two, and she has advertised for two more part time accountants – "preferably qualified, but part-qualified would do at a pinch," she says.

"Unfortunately we don't have time to train someone from scratch at the moment. We need people who are able to help with the workload as soon as they walk through the door, but I hope that in the future we can train someone up to do the job."

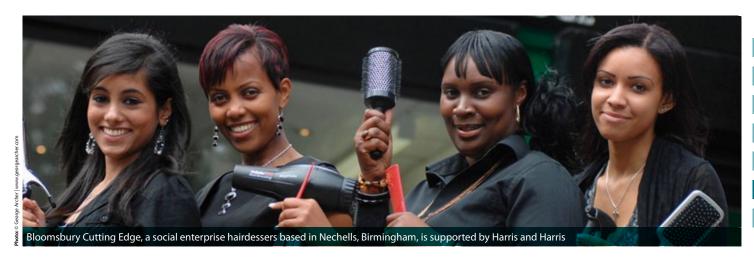
The recruitment is taking on a sense of urgency, because her firm is committed to a project with a fast-approaching deadline. "A church-run centre in Nechells is closing because no-one who attends it takes part in the religious activities," says Heidi. "We are looking at ways in which the groups that use the centre can either buy the building, or find some way to continue using it. We're in the very early stages but we must move

quickly because the deadline is March 31 next year. That's when the budget cuts will affect the availability of funds."

Despite having achieved so much in her 35 years, Heidi stresses that very little planning has gone into the career path she has travelled. "This is just the way it's all happened," she says. "I haven't looked for these things, but opportunities have presented themselves and I felt it would have been wrong for me not to have helped by using the skills I have." **Se**

MAKING CONTACT

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Securing sponsorship

Promotional sponsorship is a powerful tool that is often underutilised, but can help stretch your marketing budget that little bit further. Although it may be new territory for many social enterprises, there are some easy steps you can follow to make it work for you.

Almost anything can be sponsored – events, websites, competitions, projects, research, publications, merchandise, and of course organisations and people. Particularly well used in sports, arts and education, sponsorship usually involves receiving finance and or other resources in exchange for advertising space or publicity. The sponsor is usually interested in building awareness of their brand, increasing networking opportunities and new business opportunities, whereas the recipient may be seeking support to either make an activity viable or improve its deliverability.

Planning

Start by being clear about your objectives. Is sponsorship suitable for what you're trying to achieve? What activities are likely to attract sponsorship? Are you simply looking for finance or more of a strategic relationship? The relationship can be short term (eg for a one off event) or a longer term association with a contract in place.

Once you're clear on what you want, think about what you can offer to attract the right type of sponsor. This would form the basis of a 'sponsorship proposal', which sounds like a lot of work but it's a really useful document to help you present and sell your sponsorship opportunity, outlining the benefits to the sponsor and what you can do for them. If you're running an event, be sure to include details of how many people will be attending, target audience, media exposure expected, etc.

Where appropriate you may be able to include different sponsorship packages so that a range of sponsors can get involved. And think more broadly than a financial contribution. Sponsors may be able to give you 'in kind' access to expertise and other benefits.

Start the process of identifying potential sponsors that match not only the opportunity, but also sit comfortably with your organisation's purpose and values. There are businesses that have significant sponsorship programmes like banks, print media, and large corporates, but it may be more beneficial to approach a local company that has never considered sponsorship, but may be a really good partner for you.

Selling

Identifying the right person to sell the opportunity is just as important as approaching the right sponsor. Who within your team, board, or wider network is best positioned to secure what you're looking for? Can an introduction be brokered, or will you need to make a speculative enquiry? Approaches can range from being quite relaxed to formal presentations. Anticipate questions and tailor the proposal to each organisation you approach. Always talk about how the sponsor will benefit and what they will get, not how the sponsorship can help you. If you're not successful ask for feedback and refine your proposal.

A successful outcome is where you've negotiated a good deal for both parties. The value and form of sponsorship will determine whether or not you'll need a contract, but it's always good practice to put something in writing to be clear on expectations for both parties.

Importantly, once you've been through this process you can have an ongoing sponsorship strategy, dedicating a part of your website to sponsorship, listing all the opportunities and inviting expressions of interest.

Servicing

It sounds obvious, but delivering what was agreed (or even a little extra) is essential to ensure you receive your sponsorship and also puts you in good stead for future negotiations. Thank your sponsors in an appropriate way. Send them press cuttings or an evaluation of the activity that evidences delivery of the benefits you promised – this all helps to cement the relationship. Sponsors may even help you broker other sponsorship deals. **Se**

THE BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP

For you

- Provides additional financial resources and expertise
- Offers access to sponsor's networks, leading to other opportunities
- Enhances creditability by association
- Develops commercial acumen and negotiation skills

For the sponsor

- Builds brand awareness and enhances profile
- Generates media coverage
- Positions sponsor as a leading player
- Offers access to new clients and sales opportunities – wide, cost-effective reach
- Can deliver on Corporate Social Responsibility objectives
- A way to access specific target audiences













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