

New year ... New Business?

THE New Year is often a time when people start to think about a new start – perhaps a new business?

Budding local entrepreneurs should find that more help is at hand thanks to the introduction of a new Business Buddy scheme through Darlington Borough Council's Enterprise Coaching project.

Recently, a number of local entrepreneurs, representing a range of industries and business sectors, met to find out about the Enterprise Coaching project, and about becoming 'Business Buddies'.

Business Buddies will see new-start businesses in Darlington being paired up with established local entrepreneurs who can provide support and advice - whether it be over the telephone, via e-mail or over a quick coffee.

The Buddies will operate alongside the work of the Enterprise Coach, providing an additional resource to new start businesses in Darlington. It is hoped that there will be a

bank of Buddies created which can be drawn upon, dependent on the nature of the business and the skills and experiences of the Buddy.

Enterprise coaching seeks to identify, encourage and support people with entrepreneurial talent to help them achieve their goals. The Enterprise Coach works with individuals to consider their skills and aspirations, with the aim of raising awareness of enterprise as a viable means of employment.

Nik Grewer, Business Engagement Manager, Darlington Borough Council said:

"Business Buddies is an excellent idea. Anyone starting a new business, especially in today's economic climate, needs as much help and practical advice as possible. What better way to get this than from people who have already succeeded in business. As a council we are keen to help local people to find employment or start up their own business and will offer any help and assistance we can."

Enterprise Coach, Shakeel Asghar, Darlington Borough Council added:

"Despite there being a lot of support out there for businesses, it can be quite lonely and unnerving when you're first starting out. Many business owners have told us that they only wish there had been the opportunity to be able to talk to others who had been in similar circumstances, and to be able to learn from their experiences – both good and bad. Often people can really benefit from being able to use another business person as a sounding board. Sometimes they have questions or issues that they don't want to raise with their business adviser, bank manager or accountant.

The project is funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) resources, matched with British American Tobacco (BAT) Legacy monies, and is part of a collaborative project in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, scheduled to run until March 2013.

Kate Schott (*Enlightened Living*):

Kate runs a business that provides new approaches to self-healing and personal development by offering sessions of Metamorphic Technique, Mind Detox Method and inspirational workshops. She is the only practitioner in the UK offering such a wide range of these innovative services.

Kate remarked: "I think the Business Buddies project is an excellent idea, I would have found the project extremely useful when I was starting out. It's a scary and sometimes lonely time when you're starting up a business and I feel that I will be able to provide that little bit of reassurance to individuals when required".



Kerry Lewis (*My Little Beauty*):

Kerry runs My Little Beauty which is a crowd-pulling 1960's American Airstream classic trailer fitted out as a self-contained beauty salon. My Little Beauty offers pamper packages for both adults and children.

Kerry commented: "I am really looking forward to meeting my first mentor; I think the Business Buddies concept is excellent and will add value to the Enterprise Coaching service that is already in place for local residents. I feel confident that I have lots of experiences and lessons learned from my own journey, that I can now draw from in order to help a new starter in the business world".



Patrick Masheder (*Real Results Marketing*):

Patrick's business is Real Results Marketing which is an expanding, full-service marketing agency and business consultancy. Real Results Marketing supports small to medium sized business, organisations and start-ups with advice and actions that deliver sustainable, tangible results.

Patrick said: "The kind of support that is available through the Business Buddies programme is invaluable to businesses just starting out. It's great to be able to offer to help other local entrepreneurs through a process that can be quite daunting. It's great to be able to give something back".



Simon Williamson (*Boardroom Consulting*):

Simon runs Boardroom Consulting, a company that works with Managing Directors and Owners of companies to increase revenue. Boardroom Consulting can work with an organisation from just a couple of hours a month to a couple of days a week or anything in-between.

Simon stated: "As local entrepreneurs I believe we all have a certain degree of social and economic responsibility to contribute that little bit extra where possible. I feel that in doing this we will only strengthen the local economy and help to nurture a more enterprising generation which will benefit us all both regionally and nationally. I think it's great to see the project taking shape".

