

Look at new possibilities

"Whenever I watch BBC's Dragon's Den, like most people I either have a good laugh at some of the crazy inventions presented to the panel or I watch with interest when the more feasible ideas unfold and the dragons, having identified a potential business opportunity, move in for the kill.

In most cases though you have to admire the fact that people have had a go at doing something different. They have taken a step out of their comfort zone to explore new possibilities and that can be a useful approach to take when trying to move things forward.

Whatever the business, staying profitable in difficult times is a top priority and in tandem with that is the need to remain innovative and ensure the best customer service.

Sometimes talking to people who can give objective suggestions is a good starting point to finding out new ways to drive success and move forward.

BusinessHub@UCB could be that starting point. We have expertise in key service industry areas. If you and your business or others you know think we could add value, please do get in touch."



Paul Simpson - Deputy Principal - UCB

Reducing the risk of injury

Sports Therapy staff at UCB recently devised a specialist training and advice programme for therapists working at Hyatt Regency Birmingham. The training included updating on sports massage techniques and professional advice on how to perfect the techniques in order to protect the therapists' joints from potential problems such as repetitive strain injury.

Five of Hyatt Regency Birmingham Amala Spa's therapists took the day long course and on completion, participants gained a UCB certificate to add to their professional portfolios.



Jacqui Brooks, UCB Industry Placement Tutor presents a training certificate to Laura Jayne, Senior Therapist, Amala Spa.

Natalie Power, Human Resources Manager, Hyatt Regency Birmingham said: "Maintaining up to date techniques for our therapists is important to our Company. It was great to have the opportunity to work with UCB on this project. They have been able to assist us with new working practices,

that are current and up to date. We look forward to working with the BusinessHub again in the near future".

Company expands its product range with help from expert chefs

Working with tomatoes has been in Paul Drew's family over 50 years since his parents founded Haven Nurseries, a specialist tomato nursery in Worcestershire in 1953. Since then they have grown to be recognised as leaders in the marketplace.

One of their early business challenges was to find a use for the surplus of on the vine tomatoes which occurred as a result of harvesting their high quality tomatoes for supermarket customers. And so, after research and testing Drew's Tomato juice was born.

Customers liked the juice so much they started to ask if any other products were going to be made.

At this point Paul turned to BusinessHub for help with ideas to expand their product portfolio. The brief was to create some sample products that would potentially sell well and could be produced on site with Drew's existing facilities and equipment.

Chef lecturers, Bernd Schumacher and Mike Edwards developed a range of recipes using the tomato juice including gazpacho and provencal vegetable



flavours for use as a drink, a cooking accompaniment or as a sauce base.

In addition the chefs helped prepare detailed product specifications, ingredients lists and preparation instructions plus flow diagrams to prepare a hazard analysis.

After consumer testing the new Drew's products were launched in March 2009 at the College. Paul Drew said "We needed the chefs culinary skills and ideas to take our product range to the next stage and I am delighted with the

end result. BusinessHub presented us with a portfolio of research and produce development findings, including tasting and sampling reports, all of which have proved invaluable."

Drew's used INDEX Innovation vouchers to fund their work with BusinessHub. For more information call BusinessHub on 0121 243 0141.

For more information on Drew's of Worcester visit www.drewsofworcester.co.uk

Food product and recipe development

Professional chefs update their Far East skills



Tailored training

Success with Eastern Food was the theme of the latest series of professional development workshops staged by BusinessHub for The University Catering Organisation (TUCO) and University Hospitality Seminars (UHS).

Headed up by chef lecturers Kali Davidson, Mike Edwards and Bernd Schumacher the three workshops covered the Indian sub-continent, cuisine of China and the cuisine of Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea and Burma.

Attending the workshops were chefs employed in universities across the country. Dr John Horobin UHS secretary was delighted with the success of the workshops. He said: "The evaluation scores are amongst the highest we have seen in University Hospitality Seminars and reflect both the quality of your facilities and the lecturers."

Bill Brogan, Learning and Development Group Chairman and Catering and Conference Manager at St John's College Cambridge, also received good feedback. "The chef that I sent from St John's College was very impressed with the course and the attendees from other institutions that I spoke to were extremely complimentary. The support from University College Birmingham was first class."

Culinary workshops lined up for 2010/2011 include Sweets and Deserts, Wines, Restaurant - Banqueting Skills and Techniques, Vegetarian Cookery, Mediterranean Cuisine, Special Diets and Scandinavian Cuisine.

It's Delightful, it's Delicious, it's *Devine*...



Rosemary Ndukuba, owner and manager of Devine Foods, started her company in 2007 from her home, making African influenced chilli sauces.

As a special treat for customers she gave them, free, homemade after-dinner sized pieces of chilli chocolate. Such was the demand for the chilli chocolate, Rosemary moved to a commercial unit in Rugby in April 2009 and gave up her full time career earlier this year to concentrate on the business.

Rosemary knew she wanted to develop chilli chocolate based sauce and spread products but felt she needed some specialist support in how to ensure the product had the right consistency and flavour.

So, she approached BusinessHub and was advised to apply for an Innovation Voucher via the West Midlands Innovation Voucher scheme, to help fund and make real her ideas. A voucher is worth £3000 and can be used by an eligible small business to work with a Higher Education Institution of their choice in a project bringing immediate benefits to their business.

Product development specialists at UCB have developed four sauces, spread and drizzle products for Devine foods which are currently being assessed for shelf life, with a proposed launch by the end of this year.

"Without the help of the development team at UCB I would still be wondering where to go with my new product ideas. Now I have several new delicious sauces and spreads to trial in the market place and have learnt a lot about the new product development process," said Rosemary.

Rosemary's tips for budding entrepreneurs include the value of a mentor, and a passion for what you are doing combined with a business strategy. "The first year in a new business is very hard and it's so tempting to go back into a safe job but your business dream will help you survive those hard times. With help from UCB and the innovation voucher scheme, I feel confident that my business is heading in the right direction."

To find out more about the Innovation voucher scheme and using the product development facilities at UCB please contact Don Hacker, Director, BusinessHub tel: 0121 243 0141. d.hacker@ucb.ac.uk



Food product and
recipe development

Is all well in Shakespeare's Country?

Paul Bamber, a specialist lecturer in tourism and destination management at UCB is currently working on a research consultancy project examining the relationship between public and private stakeholders and the destination management partnership (DMP) that represents them in the region.

DMP's are organisations set up as public/private partnerships designed to promote and develop tourism in a specific area or region. Businesses and public sector organisations contribute financially and professionally to ensure the success of DMP's.

The DMP in this case is Shakespeare Country (South Warwickshire Tourism) and in order to compare the views on the nature of the partnership, Paul is carrying out focus groups with some of the key businesses in Warwickshire including Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Warwick Castle.

Paul is working in liaison with Phil Hackett, Chief Executive of Shakespeare Country who said: "How Stratford Upon Avon is promoted and perceived by visitors, whether regional national or international is vital to the continuing success of the area. Paul's study will be a valuable exercise to help determine that the Shakespeare's Country DMP is providing its member businesses with the support it needs and thus promoting the area successfully to tourists".

Market research

Chef for a day and dine in style at night – now that sounds like a good present...!

UCB has teamed up with award winning Opus restaurant, to offer a master chef cookery day and dinner experience. During the day, participants will take part in practical cooking sessions in the professional training kitchens at the College, under the guidance of chef lecturer, Adam Pickett who has worked for the Living Room Group and the Academy of Culinary Arts.

Then when the cooking is over, in the evening, everyone will enjoy a fabulous four course dinner with wines at Opus, prepared by David Colcombe and his talented brigade.

The cookery day and dine experience costs £150 per person and for an extra £50 a guest can join you for dinner. The next date planned is 30 January 2010. To book a place call 0121 243 0141.

Industry partnership

What's happening in the UCB School of Childhood and Education?



Examples of ongoing projects:

- 1 We are looking forward to working with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and delivering the Early Years Practitioner Status programme, a course adapted for their practitioners in Early Years settings.
- 2 From January 2010 professionals who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage will be able to take part in industry updating by completing a CACHE endorsed course. The course has been designed and developed in collaboration/partnership with the Children's Workforce Development Council.
- 3 Work is underway with the Birmingham Education Local Authority to accredit training already in operation for those professionals and practitioners who have the responsibility for coordinating special educational needs provision within a school, namely the Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).
- 4 The School is also currently working in partnership with a number of Higher Education institutions and with the Lifelong Learning Network in the development of a common statement of requirement for managers in the area of Early Years. The aim is to develop an Adult Certificate in Early Years Management at level 4 that is recognised, accepted and endorsed by all in the West Midlands region.

Introducing new therapy diplomas for industry specialists

UCB has introduced two new ITEC (International Therapy Examination Council) Diplomas in Reflexology and Aromatherapy.

The qualifications have been developed specifically for those who hold a level three beauty therapy qualification or similar and would like to develop additional skills.

The courses are designed to run part-time on a week-day evening in the UCB salons at Richmond House Spa and incorporate study into the principles and practice of complementary therapy and business practice. On completion of the Diplomas, candidates will be able to operate their own clinic or home visiting practice.

The next courses start in January 2010. For further information contact BusinessHub on 0121 243 0141.



Professional development courses

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