

Innovation day for North Leamington School

halfords



STRAWBERRY FIELDS
THE FUTURE BELONGS TO PEOPLE WHO INNOVATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK



in collaboration
with the
University of
Warwick



John Rainford has helped to develop strategies for small family businesses as well as many large companies. He lectures in the Far East at the University of Hong Kong and closer to home at the famous Ryan (Air) Academy for Entrepreneurship in Dublin (above.)

left to right
includes:
Richard McCann,
Joy Mitchell,
(headmistress);
John Rainford,
Business and
Innovation
facilitator; Halfords
boss, Phil O'Connor
and some of the
business students.

The students work with a business (Halfords) to solve business problems. This helps them to become astute about business processes, it also helps them to be more entrepreneurial and this attracts employers because the students become more capable individuals. They begin, before the day, with market research, looking at Halfords' website for example to see what Halfords do. The process involves the students understanding how a business model works. They are shown

how to use creativity to come up with solutions to the questions that Halfords' Managing Director, Phil O'Connor, would like to resolve. Confidence building and working effectively in a team are key aspects of the innovation day. The business problems are real business issues.

The students (in effect) become the directors, and they present back with their solutions. A leading University (Warwick) awards a certificate of merit to all of the participants.

For video about the Innovation day workshops see www.strawberryfields.com or contact John Rainford on +44 (0)1948 840102 JR@strawberryfields.com

John is a visiting Fellow at the University of Birmingham Business School where he teaches Practical Entrepreneurship (MBA) and Creativity for Competitive Advantage. He also teaches innovation strategies and marketing for the Chartered Institute of Marketing as part of their accreditation process.

www.strawberryfields.com



TEAMS DISCUSS THE PROBLEM



IDEAS WITH MIND MAPS



FUN LEARNING PRESENTATIONS

The problem:- Time is running out... The UK is missing out on its most important asset, its latent talent! Entrepreneurial thinking is not part of the national curriculum and yet it has been identified as a crucial element, not just for the future prosperity of the UK economy and its citizens, but for the whole world. Encouraging young talent to thrive in our community is the responsibility of everyone. Entrepreneurial thinking isn't just about putting people into business - as some people might think, it's about empowerment, self-respect, self-reliance, and developing our young people to reach their true potential in life. These are qualities and aspirations for our children that we would dearly like to encourage and, whilst many good ideas are being supported by government and concerned parties, many lack the will or the means to mobilise entrepreneurial thinking. Many people have identified some aspects of the problem, for example - perhaps its about education? How can teachers teach business thinking if they have never been in business? It's like a trainee pilot receiving instructions from someone who has never flown a plane (just a little scary!) The learning institutions are abound with academics who teach entrepreneurship, but haven't a clue how to set up their own business. There is also the issue of who is going to pay? Public funding is limited and, in the long term, its just not sustainable. We are seriously letting our young people down and our legacy could be communities devoid of energy, ideas and their implementation - and a bankrupt country.

The solution !!! - An integration of business money and business acumen into the educational system mobilising entrepreneurial talent and resulting in more capable (can do) employees for employers and business ideas that see the light of day and are implemented into the real world - a process, which benefits the young, teachers, employers - and the wider community. A practical example of how this process works in reality is demonstrated by the 'Innovation day' at North Leamington

School in Warwickshire conducted by John Rainford - a practical entrepreneur and innovation facilitator and CEO at Strawberry Fields. Halfords' boss, Phil O'Connor, approved the funding for the whole day and was astonished at the results. He flew in managers from Ireland for the event to work with the 'business studies' students. The process was carefully orchestrated by John Rainford to get the maximum creativity from all of the delegates, and it resulted in practical ideas that have been implemented by Halfords as part of their national marketing campaign. Phil O'connor remarked that they had spent tens of thousands of pounds on consultants who came up with very similar ideas.

The process involves an understanding of Business models which John advocates can easily be understood by anyone - his 12 year old son used this simple process to get his own business off the ground and John uses the same business models for his mature MBA students at the University of Birmingham Business School. Creativity, team building and practical aspects of innovation are part of the learning and many of the students remarked that they would love to attend more of these creative courses if they were given the opportunity. Halfords' managers were under pressure to think outside of the box. One manager admitted that he had a limited understanding of innovation and thought it might be about extending the size of the stores. The brainstorming techniques are unusual in that they encompass mind maps, an innovation matrix and other visualisation techniques which John has used for scientist's in Houston, USA to help them think outside the box.

Students benefited from the experience, it raised their morale, self esteem, and self respect and they enjoyed working in teams. They were involved in a process that helps them to believe that they are well capable of solving problems in a practical and meaningful way. Their exposure to a potential employer was stimulating.

The School and teachers involved celebrated the event as a special day. They gained a lot of publicity from the Innovation Day and received some commercial enquiries about the resources they might offer to local businesses. The teachers involved also benefitted from the learning.

Halfords benefitted by receiving fresh ideas about their business development plans. The materials were all taken away for further examination and investigation by the executive strategy team at Halfords. They had, by this means, helped to resolve problems that were integral to their marketing campaign - in Ireland as well as the UK. Businesses that contribute to their community in this way demonstrate that they are caring employers, and this will attract smart applicants, as well as gaining high value publicity.

The University of Warwick benefitted by providing input into the market research aspect which allowed them to get publicity and a good learning outcome that would reflect on their own expertise - and, of course, it was innovative.

The local community benefitted knowing that their children had participated in a valuable event that raised the profile of their school and allowed them to be proud of their children's achievements.

UK PLC benefitted, albeit in a small way, but these sorts of activities could revolutionise education in a way that not only encourages entrepreneurial thinking but helps to foster real enterprise activity - transforming the prospects for wealth creation. in this country. With enough trainers trained in the process, the model could be rolled out nationally with companies choosing the schools and vice versa at no cost to the school - having a direct impact on enterprise, and entrepreneurial activity in the community.

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