



Giving direction to
East Midlands enterprises
Guided by real life experiences

east midlands **business champions**

funded by  east midlands
development agency

Giving direction to East Midlands enterprises

The Business Champions programme is a unique pool of independent business volunteers, committed to shaping the region by sharing their knowledge and inspiring others.

The programme – created and funded by the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) – recruits high calibre, proactive business figures to support a whole range of projects and programmes where a commercial perspective is needed. Working with a variety of organisations, Business Champions form a unique link between the private and public sector. A strong network of senior business leaders, the Business Champions programme has become an integral part of the push to energise the region – influencing strategy, steering organisations forward, sharing ideas, connecting people and developing skills.

Who are Business Champions – is this the right programme for you?

The programme's flexible approach allows business people to get involved and to contribute to a diverse range of requests for help. There is a comprehensive recruitment process in place for the Business Champions culminating in an induction, which enables them to meet the team and other key stakeholders whilst familiarising themselves with the programme.

“Individuals far too often take for granted the experience and knowledge they have, which, if they can share it with others can make such a difference.”

Atholl Stott, FSB Partnership Ltd
– Business Champion

Once on board, Champions are targeted with opportunities to get involved, relevant to their profile and areas of interest. Each request for help is discussed in detail with the organisation before Champion involvement and the engagement is account managed throughout.

Commitment of time varies from Champion to Champion. While some may choose to support one off opportunities – an enterprise day or speaking engagement, others prefer to offer their support over a period of time, for example mentoring the director of a social enterprise, or joining a board of trustees.

Representation from all sectors of business and areas of the region is crucial to the effective running of the programme. Each application to become a Business Champion is carefully considered to ensure the network has the balanced mix of skills, experience and location needed to fulfil the variety of requests for help from across the region.

As a Business Champion you will become a member of a well recognised network of business people whose combined effort can really make a difference to the East Midlands.

Working with Champions – could your organisation benefit from Business Champions' help?

The Business Champions programme can offer your organisation commercial input, at no cost, from a business person with a perspective based on real life experience. Just submit your request for help and the matching process will begin.

A bespoke selection process enables us to offer a service that can match your need with a Champion that can help. The team are able to source the right Champion from a bank of volunteers, keen to share their knowledge and expertise.

An Account Manager will guide you through the application process and facilitate your relationship with the Champion. All we ask is that you fill in an evaluation form to help us measure the impact of the support you have received.

The programme has established relationships with regional initiatives as well as having the flexibility to adapt to more specific requests, such as working with developing enterprises.

As an organisation benefiting from a Business Champion's expertise you will be given the opportunity to join a network of professionals and resources that complement each other's endeavours.

What do Business Champions do?

- Give direction to enterprises by identifying a need and helping them to progress through sound business expertise
- Inspire students through workshops or master classes
- Offer strategic direction through forums and board positions
- Fly the flag for the East Midlands as regional ambassadors

Why become a Business Champion?

- An opportunity to give something back – to make a difference
- Develop your own skills through solving real life challenges
- Provide strategic input – a direct voice in shaping strategy
- To be taken outside of the box you normally work in, giving you new insights and the challenges that go with it
- Access to training – Champions can develop skills in areas such as coaching to enable the shaping of ideas
- Networking opportunities enabling you to heighten your profile in the region, and to share best practice

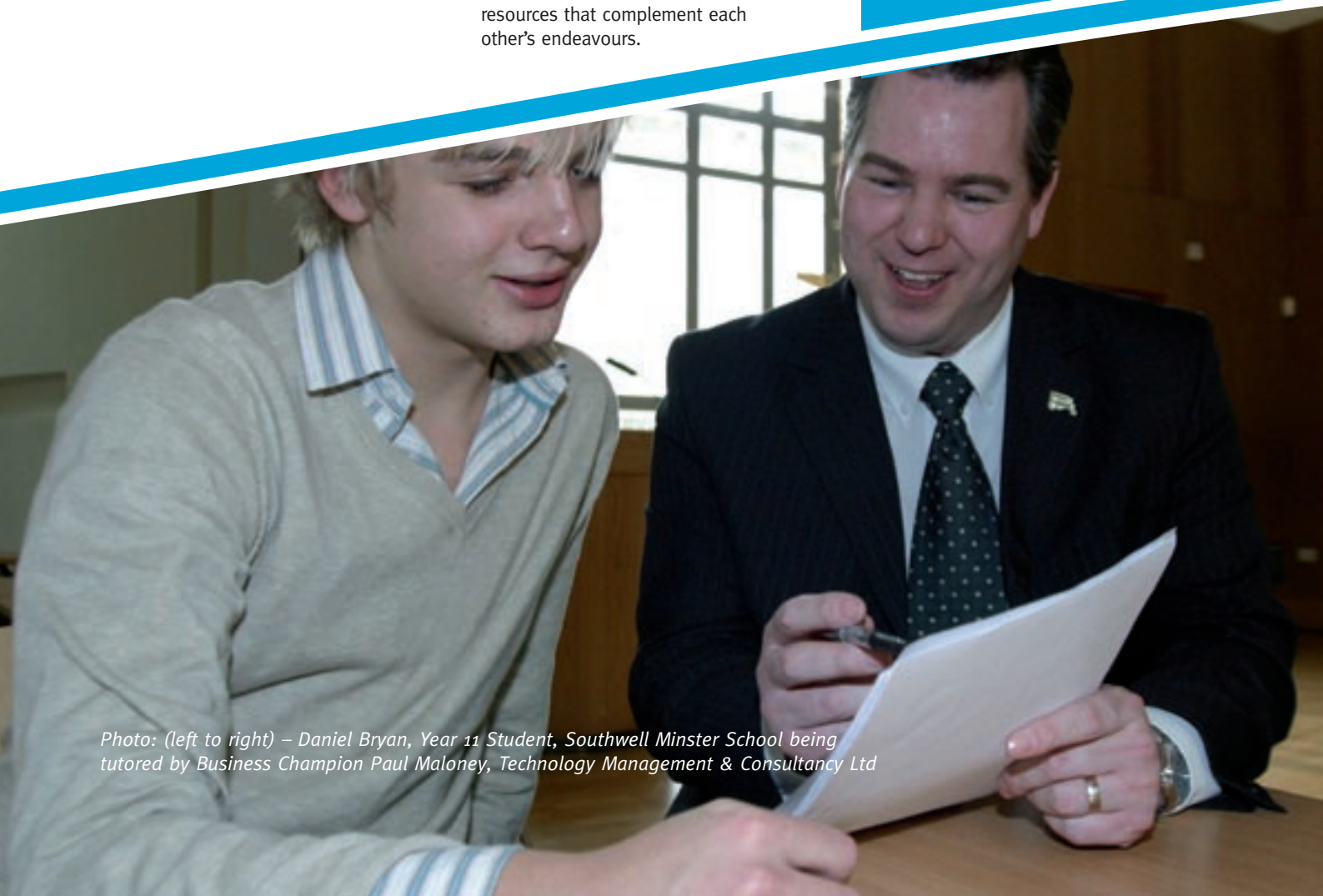


Photo: (left to right) – Daniel Bryan, Year 11 Student, Southwell Minster School being tutored by Business Champion Paul Maloney, Technology Management & Consultancy Ltd

Photo: (left to right) – Business Champions - Tiny Deol, Curryslim Ltd and Jonathan Bowman, Aspect7



What difference do we make?

The best way to explain the value of this successful programme and to measure its impact is to take a look at the evidence provided through some of the many case studies we've built up over the years. Each one tells a story of how effective Business Champions help can be and the difference that a Champion can make.

Too Hill Academy

Nottinghamshire's Too Hill Academy, Too Hill Comprehensive School, Bingham specialises in business and the arts, helping to develop the creativity, enterprise and talents of hundreds of people of all ages through their programme of dedicated business and art courses. They looked to Business Champions to assist in the development of the school's own skill set and enhance its offering to the local community. Paul Drakes, Director of marketing communications agency 23red and Champion Barrie Pierpoint, former Chief Executive of Leicester City Football Club and Managing Director of bp Management and Marketing Services, were selected to help. They seized the opportunity to create a more recognisable

business structure, identifying avenues for the Academy to progress at regular strategy and development meetings and also offering their time to inspire students to get involved in business through talks and events.

Adrenaline Alley

Adrenaline Alley, Corby, is a safe area for young people to meet and enjoy urban sports, such as skate boarding. Adrenaline Alley is a successful charity which is rapidly becoming an internationally recognised urban-sporting venue, with assistance from Business Champion Brian Ward. Brian helped Operations Manager Mandy Young develop her management techniques by showing her how to manage her time more effectively by setting achievable tasks and meeting up regularly to ensure she is on track. He has also provided support in developing a more recognisable personnel structure that has enhanced the team ethos. When things get busy, he alleviates some of the everyday pressures with his flexible approach, listening to opinions, so together they can weigh up the benefits and take things forward.

“The future is really bright for Too Hill, our Business Champions have inspired us with boundless energy and enthusiasm to give us an insight into how we can build on our qualities, develop ourselves and provide even more to the local community and businesses. They have shown us how to create a more business-oriented mindset, which will ensure our growth and development and reinforce our role as an active and committed provider of ongoing learning to our local community.”

Fiona Farmer,
Too Hill Academy

Photo: (left to right) – Business Champion Griffin Dixon, Corsair Environmental Consultants Ltd with Mike Phillips, Recycling Ollerton and Boughton



For Mandy, working with Brian has boosted her confidence and provided her with a clear plan to develop her vision further.

“Brian is a fantastic mentor. His support is unwavering, providing unlimited help and advice whenever I need it and a sounding board for ideas. We are laying a strong foundation to ensure the delivery of an internationally recognised venue, which is now more than achievable, making the future bright and exciting.”

Recycling Ollerton and Boughton

Business Champion Griffin Dixon, managing director of Corsair Environmental Consultants Ltd has been working with Recycling Ollerton and Boughton (ROB), Boughton. ROB is a registered charity that enables

adults with learning disabilities to gain vital work experience in the recycling industry whilst providing an effective recycling service for the local area. The organisation was looking for board members who could help the organisation become financially self sufficient and reduce their dependence on grant funding.

Griffin said, “Working with Recycling Ollerton and Boughton has been a phenomenal challenge and one that I feel is truly beneficial. It has provided me with the opportunity to give something back to my local community while helping a worthwhile organisation to overcome some of the challenges I faced when I first set up in business.”

“ Without the help from Griff the organisation would not have survived. He brought high quality financial advice which enabled our finances to become tighter, wrote a business plan and gave funding and expansion advice.”

Sandra Jackson, Recycling Ollerton and Boughton

Some existing clients

We work with a diverse mix of organisations ranging from small enterprises to those with a multi-million pound turnover. These are some you may have heard of:

- Arts & Business
- Education Business Partnerships
- Prince's Trust
- Social Enterprise East Midlands (SEEM)

Front cover image: Andrew Ogden, Broadcast Media Services Ltd – Business Champion

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