

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment		
Curriculum Provision	✓	Real context for Business Studies module
Employer Partnerships	✓	Win/win partnership with local business
Reflective Young People		
Informed Career Choices	✓	Positive role model for self-employment

Queensbury businessman talks to Year 10 students about being a sole trader

Queensbury School is an 11-18 school situated halfway between Bradford and Halifax. As part of the GCSE business course, 49 year 10 students needed to compare and contrast a large and a small company. The teacher had covered the large company but struggled to find a small firm: *'We had organised for a former pupil to come in and talk about her business but she cannot do this now. I've asked a parent who is a sole trader to come and speak but she seems quite nervous and I think she's going to pull out.'*

Firth Cycles is a bike shop located – literally – a couple of hundred yards up the road from the school. Many of the students catch the bus home from outside the shop, so they knew it well.

The students were asked to research Firth Cycles and prepare questions, based on the GCSE specification, which they put to owner/manager Barry Firth over a one hour lesson.

Owner Barry Firth was very willing to be involved in a Q&A session. He saw it as an ideal way for students to learn about running a business. He said: *'I think students learning about life and business, and the two together, can only be a positive thing.'*

Mr Firth talked to the students for just under an hour, describing his career before he started his own business and then what it was like to run a small business. The students were surprised to hear that he no longer sold bicycles, as the competition from Internet sales meant this part of the business was not longer profitable.

Impact on the students:

- The students were engaged from the start. They knew that the guest would know what he was talking about and be able to explain some of the benefits and pitfalls of being a sole trader.
- Some of the student recognised Mr Firth since they had visited his shop. They were really pleased that he had taken the time to talk to them.
- The session led some of the students to consider starting a business as a future career choice.
- Student evaluations showed that students enjoyed the session and had been given practical and useful advice:

'I learnt communication is key to owning a business.'

'You can do well without a degree – it's all about effort.'

'Be prepared to change your business.'

Impact on the school:

- The project helped the Business Studies teachers to complete a section in the scheme of work (comparing a large business with a small business). They felt that the information gained would be very useful when the students completed their coursework.
- The teachers felt that students had a greater interest in and better understanding of the practicalities of running a small business.

Impact on the business:

- The students' ideas and questions showed that they were genuinely interested in talking to Mr Firth, and the PR coverage was helpful.
- Mr Firth was clear that it would help his business if more young adults in the community recognised him and came into his shop, which was set up in 2007.



Firth Cycles is located a couple of hundred yards up the road from the school gates.



Barry Firth spent an hour speaking about his business and involved in a Q&A with the students.

Student evaluations reveal personal development, as well as increased business knowledge:

