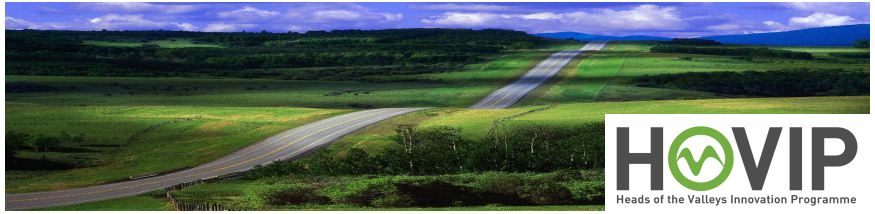


Heads Up

The business newsletter for HOVIP
Issue 6: December 2010



Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter for the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP). This edition features highlights from 2010, our latest ground-breaking initiatives and Nick Hewer (of BBC1's The Apprentice fame).

In the last two and half years that HOVIP has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) we have helped over 250 businesses and generated almost £1.5 million mainly in new business. This is a return on investment of almost 300%. In depth support for over 100 businesses, since April alone, is contributing to safeguarding 1674 jobs.

These outcomes are highly relevant in the current climate, represent value for public money and demonstrate a combined private and public sector approach which is what WAG is demanding for the future of business support.

Given that one aim of HOVIP is to raise the business profile of the region it is also heartening that HOVIP recently won the **UK Enterprise Support Initiative of the Year** in the Awards organised by the UK Sector Skills Council for Enterprise. There were a record 150 UK-wide entries with the Awards judged by entrepreneurs.

The team, however, is not complacent. We constantly evolve and improve our services in the light of the economic climate and customer feedback. Enjoy this issue, our website and latest videos! Best wishes for Xmas! *Phil Burkhard*

The spirit of innovation is alive and well in the Valleys!

Listen to the 2010 Innovation Award winners, thanks to Anytime Films: <http://www.hovip.org.uk/video-footage.php>.

The Bryn Meadows Golf and Country Hotel hosted 200 visitors for the fourth annual HoV Innovation Awards and Market Place. There were a record 57 Awards entrants (16 in 2007) and the Award winners were:

Most Innovative Social Enterprise (sponsor: Capital Law) **Telecentre and Business School Ltd.**

Most Innovative Sole Trader (sponsor: HSBC) **School for Life**



Most Innovative Business – fewer than 20 employees (sponsor: South Wales Chamber of Commerce): **RUMM Ltd.** (pictured above with sponsors)

Most Innovative Business - more than 20 employees (sponsor: BT): **Williams Medical Supplies Ltd.**

Record media coverage, including in the UK, further raised the profile of the winners and the region.

The event was compered by Jason Mohammad and was sponsored by the University of Wales Global Academy for the second year running.

FS4B sponsored the new '**Most Innovative Exhibitor Award**' which was won by **St. David's Foundation Hospice Care** with their 'smoothie bike'. As visitors pedalled they created their own smoothie via a link to a blender!



The event **creatively combined** an Awards ceremony and business exhibition with a speed networking event (courtesy of the Supplier Development Service).

Visitors were also treated to caricaturist **Picasso Griffiths** and an **innovative round of golf** – finding the answers to general knowledge questions, about Wales, placed throughout the exhibition, to encourage flow, and recording their answers on a tailored golf tee-card!



If you would like to find out how you can benefit from HOVIP, contact Phil Burkhard (HOVIP Manager) on 01685 725469 or email phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk or visit www.hovip.org.uk.

Nick Hewer fires up students!

The Big Pitch Challenge 2010

Nick Hewer of the BBC1's The Apprentice fame recently helped to judge the next generation of business talent



cultivated in the Valleys... This was part of a novel initiative to challenge students, from the **four Further Education colleges in the Valleys**, to

generate ideas, a marketing plan and press release for the **planned visitor centre for Rhymney Brewery** which is relocating to next to the Big Pit in March 2011.

The **Big Pitch Challenge** was part of Merthyr Tydfil's contribution to Global Enterprise Week in partnership with HOVIP and a project team including the four colleges, WAG and Equinox Communications

On talking about the evening Nick said: "I thought the concept of the evening was well constructed and the calibre of the students' presentations was excellent. I was delighted to be part of such an energetic event."

Over **120 students** competed to be in one of 8 teams (32 students) who presented to a capacity audience in Techniquest, after training and site visits. Valleys' businesses (Aberfanturning, Alison Richards Ceramics, Anytime Films and Rhymney Brewery) also benefitted.

Wales is rocking!

Rock UK opens Summit Centre in the Valleys



Thanks to HOVIP, Parrys Commercial Services and the Taff Bargoed Development Trustees, Rock UK, a leading outdoor activity centre specialist, has opened the **Rock UK Summit Centre** at the site of the former Wales International Climbing Centre, near Merthyr.

Mark Heasman, Group Chief Executive of Rock UK said: "This is such an exciting development for Rock UK. The acquisition of this internationally acclaimed climbing centre [the site of a former drift mine] and its proximity to some incredible adventurous locations gives us a fantastic opportunity to **bring the Rock UK adventure experience to Wales for the first time.**"

Jo Gambi, Everest climber and Rock UK's first Rock Star Ambassador, opened the new Centre in October.

Cluster for success!

The best form of business support

HOVIP believes that the best form of business support involves businesses collaborating with each other.

As a result HOVIP has facilitated the creation of multiple clusters. The first of these, **Secure Wales**, consists of six firms, including a social enterprise. They have made over £100,000 of internal referrals and saved money, at exhibitions, by taking one stand as the cluster.



The second most advanced cluster, **Build4Wales**, is about to go live with its website this month. The other clusters include: performance

engineering, recycling, accommodations & attractions, motorsports, one reducing tail pipe CO2 emissions and a variant involving the Model House, in Llantrisant.

An exciting development is also under discussion with Big Pit, Penderyn Whisky and Rhymney Brewery.

The January sales!

SalesCo Pilot: joined-up support for business

HOVIP has begun a **pilot involving 16 volunteers and 8 HOVIP customers**. This is with the support of JobMatch, Go Wales & Wales Contact Centre Forum.

The aim is to evaluate the benefits and viability of sourcing, training (in sales and call handling skills), mentoring and placing pairs of volunteers (people not in full-time employment), in host businesses, to deliver an agreed sales project. *Watch this space!*

What Next?

See www.hovip.org.uk

HOVIP continues to deliver bespoke & public creativity and innovation workshops. Our **Turning Heads Club** (111 innovation award entrants) 'Xmas Extravaganza' has been postponed until the New Year. This event will include businesses in the arts, crafts, food and drinks sectors to create a convivial atmosphere for networking. Bring on Xmas and 2011! *Best wishes – Team HOVIP.*



If you would like to find out how you can benefit from HOVIP, contact Phil Burkhard (HOVIP Manager) on 01685 725469 or email phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk or visit www.hovip.org.uk.