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WELCOME

from Professor Jane Turner

It has been almost six months since I took up my role here at Teesside University as pro vice-chancellor for enterprise and business engagement. I have spent much of that time out and about talking to businesses to discover what they want and need. It has been extremely valuable and enlightening to better understand the role the University needs to play in the future growth, efficiency and effectiveness of businesses in this region and beyond.

Through listening and talking to business leaders, I have been able to build a picture of the organisational challenges, particularly around how to do more with less, how to be more innovative, how to build resilience and how to access the high quality talent that will set your businesses apart.

I have also used my first 200 days to better understand the knowledge and expertise that resides within Teesside University; which is particularly impressive. My role moving forward is to ensure we build upon the strong foundations of engagement the University has with the business community and make it even easier for you to access the talent and capability that resides within our staff and students, to facilitate the development of your businesses.

It is vital that businesses from all sectors see us as their key partner; agile, responsive and relevant, and the recognised place to go for new knowledge that will drive innovation. Teesside University offers the learning experiences that will build the continuing professional development of your people. Leadership and management capability is a particular challenge for the UK and this region,

but which we know that if it is done well, it significantly raises productivity. I am therefore delighted Teesside University will play an even bigger role in the future of Tees Valley, so that together we can grow our economic base and make a significant contribution to the region's prosperity.

And to ensure we can work together to address the challenges, here at Teesside University we have a new vision and strategy that will cement our reputation as 'the' prominent business engaged university, an engine of innovation that develops world-ready graduates, grows your employee talent and acts as a catalyst for business support, growth and business start-up to ultimately deliver regional prosperity.

You can find out more about the vision for both business engagement and research and development on pages 5-7.

Along with that, this edition showcases some of the partnership work that is already proving 'best in class' and demonstrates the impact of business and university collaboration.

Professor Jane Turner

Pro vice-chancellor (enterprise and business engagement)



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VISION

2020

**A VISION FOR
BUSINESS**

A new vision to lead Teesside University into 2020 looks at how business and research can work in tandem to deliver the solutions to real-world problems

As a key driver for research and innovation, the University will use its expertise and knowledge to create real impact by solving the major challenges faced by business and industry.

Overleaf, pro vice-chancellors Professor Simon Hodgson and Professor Jane Turner outline their vision for research and business and how their plan to build on Teesside University's success to put its work on the global map.



VISION

ADDRESSING THE 'GRAND CHALLENGES' OF OUR TIME

As Teesside University looks ahead to what the future holds in 2020, pro vice-chancellor (enterprise and business engagement) Professor Jane Turner unveils her vision to drive forward the University as an engine of innovation and a catalyst for business growth, strategic partnerships and regional and national prosperity.



Professor Jane Turner

From winning the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Excellence in Higher Education to being described as 'the place to do business' by the then business minister Vince Cable, Teesside University has justifiably had an enviable reputation for business engagement.

Over the next five years, it is our ambition to build upon this reputation and, by using the knowledge and academic excellence generated by the University, to further contribute to the economic, social and cultural success of students, partners and our community. We want to transform lives and economies by education enriched by research, innovation and engagement with business.

Naturally, with a plan as ambitious as this, there are inherent challenges. The difficulties facing the economies of the Tees Valley and wider North East are well publicised. However, we are confident

that, along with our partners in industry, at Teesside University we have the skills and expertise to overcome these hurdles as well as the ability to capitalise upon the unique opportunities present in the region.

Local investment in the Tees Valley has been strong, with £1.36bn of private sector investment in the last five years. As a region we are also recognised for our enterprising nature and have attracted major investment for innovative technologies such as subsea, industrial biotechnology, biologics and energy from waste and key developing markets in the area include digital and professional services.

We want to work with even more global businesses to bring skills and opportunities to the Tees Valley and attract more inward investment in to the area.

The professional development of regional, national and international employees will play a key role in how we enable businesses to grow and prosper. Already, with our Leadership Accelerator and Leadership Forge programmes we have seen tangible results in this field. Using The Forge at Darlington as the Executive and Professional Development Centre we plan to expand our offer to business, ensuring organisations have access to relevant learning experiences for the key asset, people.

At the University, we will also enhance our distinctive research strengths in areas such as food technology, crime and forensics, digital technology and health and social care, to enable companies to apply this knowledge within their business.

Equally important is ensuring that our graduates are equipped with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to enter the workplace, in other words that they are work-ready. We will take a much more focused approach to student employability guaranteeing that every student will have access to a work-related learning experience, while ensuring that employers are better informed and engaged to reach the graduate talent they need.

Teesside University has an excellent track record for supporting entrepreneurship and we want to improve on this. Over the next five years, we will place particular emphasis upon student and graduate start-up, to ensure that the creation of a viable business is seen as a legitimate career option.

These are exciting times for Teesside University, and enterprise and business engagement will continue to play a key part in what makes our University special. We very much look forward to continuing our work with our regional, national and global partners to deliver innovation, regeneration and economic growth.

Professor Simon Hodgson, pro vice-chancellor for research and innovation, has a bold and clear vision that research at Teesside University should address the grand challenges of our time on a global scale. Harnessing the expertise of academic staff, teaching, research and business should be brought together to solve real-world problems and enhance the student learning experience – making Teesside the ‘go to’ place for research that makes a difference.



Professor Simon Hodgson

As a University for innovation, we are raising our research aspirations – creating a strong, sustainable and vibrant range of research, innovation and impact activities. This is fundamental to our vision to be a University with an international reputation for academic excellence.

One of the great things about Teesside University – and what the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) told us – is that we have world-leading research in every single academic school. There are pockets of brilliance across the University. I am working now towards building on these and identifying a number of thematic areas where I believe the University can be globally competitive.

What is the purpose of research if it does not impact upon and solve problems that matter? My vision is that research carried

out here should have a real impact on the grand challenges faced in our time – the emerging pressures on society, health, the economy for instance – and how we as a university can help to address those challenges.

Take global security, for example. We have great strengths around the University in a diverse range of subjects such as criminology, digital, cybercrime, anthropology, extremism. We can draw all that together around the global security theme, and with all these people working together, be really significant players. It will help to raise the profile and potential for internal, external and international cross disciplinary collaboration.

My vision is highly ambitious as we look to increase the volume and quality of our research, doubling our research power and the scale of our research and innovation activity by 2020. We are going to be investing considerable resources to make Teesside University the go-to place for research – somewhere that gets the job done, and makes a difference.

I want to raise the profile of Teesside University through our research – increasing the visibility and impact of our research outputs, our annual research income, recruiting more PhD students and

developing additional international research partnerships are just some of the ways in which we can achieve this.

Research is absolutely central to what makes us a university. Every student should expect to be exposed to people who are actively engaged in research and moving their disciplines forward – it is what university is all about. Research underpins and strengthens the student learning experience and allows us to be recognised internationally for our academic excellence.

I don't see teaching, research and business as separate entities; they are all interdependent and we need to draw our strengths together in all these areas to generate real innovation and impact.

I was delighted with the results of REF 2014 and the way it highlighted our world leading research – but I want more of it. I want to create the space, time and environment where academics are encouraged and enthused to engage in high-quality research. It is a win-win for everybody – adding external value and credibility, developing the academic curriculum and providing a boost for employers who know that they are working with and employing people who are outstanding representatives of their respective fields.

Outstanding customer focus nets a major award for Teesside University

By David Roberts

Teesside University's commitment to a dynamic, customer-focused service for business has been recognised with a prestigious award.

The University's business hub, The Forge, has been awarded the nationally recognised Putting the Customer First accreditation – one of only a handful of universities in the country to achieve this standard.

Dozens of University staff were interviewed as part of a rigorous assessment process which looked at how the University meets client needs through relationship building, market awareness and people development.

Teesside has continuously met the Customer First standard since 2010, with reassessment every two years. Each time it is reaccredited, the University must demonstrate how it has continued to improve its services.

Last year, the University unveiled The Forge, its new identity for Teesside's business products and services.

The front door for hundreds of businesses, ranging from start-ups and SMEs to blue-chip multinationals, The Forge provides a single point of contact which means companies can readily get to the expertise and support they need.

Teesside University also manages Fusion Hive, the brand-new business and innovation centre on Stockton's Northshore, for growing tech businesses.

Assessors from Customer First met with staff at Fusion Hive to find out at first-hand about the customer service experience of its business clients.

In total, 26 people were interviewed over the two-and-a-half day Customer First assessment period.

The visit followed a rigorous self-assessment process which looked at business enterprise and engagement activities across the University, measuring performance against 30 different criteria focusing on direct customer service, strategy and marketing and the people delivering the services.

Professor Jane Turner, pro-vice-chancellor (enterprise and business engagement), says, 'This is a fantastic achievement and is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff.

'It gives us a powerful platform on which to build our exciting plans for the future of enterprise and business engagement.

'This award demonstrates our commitment to working with our partners in industry to deliver the skills and services they need.'

Karen Race, deputy director of The Forge, adds, 'The Customer First standard provides a well-rounded framework within which we can test our business enterprise and engagement activities to demonstrate that we can and do meet the needs of our customers.

'This way we can continue to support their growth through innovation, knowledge transfer, training and development.'

Michael Wildey, Customer First Practitioner, says, 'Teesside University's commitment to business engagement goes from strength to strength, matched by the commitment and delivery of excellent customer service. They thoroughly deserve to maintain their Customer First accreditation.'



Lisa Mckeown, customer services manager with Michael Wildey, Customer First practitioner and Karen Race, deputy director of The Forge

Research projects win major accolade



Professor Nash Dawood, Omar Tapponi and Peter Barker

Joint research projects between Teesside University and two North East businesses have been judged the best in their field.

The University has undertaken two separate Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) with Ryder Architecture and Colour Urban Design Ltd which have been looking at different ways of implementing building information modelling (BIM) in their work.

The quality of the research in both KTPs has been judged as 'outstanding' by Innovate UK, formerly known as the Technology Strategy Board.

KTPs typically last for two years and are a collaboration between a university and a company. They are part-funded by Innovate UK to help businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills.

The partnership with Ryder Architecture saw KTP associates Graham Kelly and Omar Tapponi investigate ways in which building information modelling (BIM) can be implemented into facilities management.

BIM is a concept that uses a combination of processes and technologies to develop a digital representation of physical and functional characteristics of a building.

It is the second KTP that Ryder has undertaken with Teesside University, and the research into BIM has helped establish the firm as a leading practitioner of BIM methodologies, affecting clients from across the world. The first KTP was also led by Professor Dawood and also scored 'Outstanding' according to Innovate UK.

Ryder's previous collaboration with Teesside University has already led the company to form a new business, BIM Academy, an R&D, education and consultancy organisation to support other firms who want to implement BIM methodology in their work.

Peter Barker, director at Ryder Architecture and managing director of BIM Academy, says, 'Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are a fantastic mechanism for businesses to tap into academic knowledge to research new areas of innovation which will ultimately lead to business growth and commercial success, as well as giving the academic partner access to practical industry experience.'

'We're delighted that our relationship with Teesside University has yet again succeeded in winning this major accolade.'

The KTP at Colour Urban Design looked at how Newcastle and London-based urban designers, landscape architects and masterplanners could embed BIM in their work.

KTP associate Henry Fenby-Taylor began working at Colour in November 2013 to look at implementing BIM project management standards and enhancing software productivity and efficiency.

The knowledge generated by the research has resulted in Henry being commissioned by the Landscape Institute to author a book, BIM for Landscape. The book will be published in May 2016 and is the definitive guide for landscape practitioners, project leaders and decision-makers working with landscape on a BIM project.

Stephen Blacklock from Colour says, 'Working with Teesside University has enabled us to expand our BIM capabilities and improved efficiencies in our workflows which in turn keeps us at the leading edge of our industry delivering BIM projects for masterplanning and landscape architecture.'

Teesside University has an excellent track record for its work with KTPs. Of the KTPs completed over the last five years, 90% have been awarded the top two grades, with 50% graded 'Outstanding'. This compares with national averages of 55% achieving the top two grades and 12% graded Outstanding.

The KTPs were supervised by Professor Nashwan Dawood and Dr Mohamad Kassem from the School of Science & Engineering.

Professor Dawood says, 'We are delighted to have received these ratings from Innovate UK and it is fantastic to see these partnerships deliver real impact.'



A visual produced by Colour taken from a model made on BIM software, Revit, and then processed through gaming software

New health apprenticeships launched

A new initiative which allows employees to earn while they learn has been launched at Teesside University.

The Higher Apprenticeship in Health (Assistant Practitioner) is part-funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and has been developed to meet the needs of the health profession.

On completion of the apprenticeship, the student receives a Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care Practice from Teesside University.

The course has been designed for employees who work in healthcare alongside a registered practitioner and there is no age restriction for this higher apprenticeship.

Most of the study is work-based, with the equivalent of 20% of the working week dedicated to learning at University.

At Teesside, nearly 100 students are already enrolled on the Higher Apprenticeship in Health from both NHS employers and independent sectors.

Linda Nelson, assistant dean in the University's School of Health & Social Care, says, 'Once students have completed the higher apprenticeship they can progress on to a pre-registration professional programme and their previous learning is recognised. Examples include nursing, radiography and operating department practice.

'By completing the apprenticeship, they're opening up many more opportunities for a professional career.

'The feedback from students has been extremely positive. The course is really helping them make the link between theory and practice.'

The University is also in the process of developing higher and degree apprenticeship qualifications in a range of other subjects including leadership and management and fire scene investigation.

Dr Ruth Helyer, the University's Head of Skills, adds, 'The higher apprenticeship is excellent for both employers and employees.

'Because the qualifications that form part of the apprenticeships have been

developed in consultation with senior managers and employers, businesses can be assured that they will meet their specific needs. They will also benefit from funding from the Skills Funding Agency.

'Students will begin their studies in the knowledge that they have a job from day one. They also won't have to worry about fees as these are met by their employer and the SFA.'





Launchpad makes businesses ready for lift off

By David Roberts

The next generation of entrepreneurs is receiving an extra boost thanks to the innovative Teesside Launchpad project.

The ground floor of Teesside University's business incubator, the Victoria Building, has been transformed to allow the free flow of ideas and the creation of new business and collaborative working opportunities.

Young entrepreneurs are already taking advantage of the facilities, equipment and networking opportunities to put their business ideas to the test and recruit new members to their teams.

Teesside University's head of graduate enterprise Steve Dougan, was aware that, for the majority of graduate start-ups, a lack of space to work meant there was a physical restriction to how they were able to develop their business.

'A lot of people underestimate the importance of space,' says Steve. 'But it's super-important to the development of any business.'

'Historically, a lot of our start-ups have been sole founders, setting up in a spare room. But very rarely do sole founders have all the competencies and attributes needed to get their business off the ground.'

'Teesside Launchpad has been created to allow students, graduates, staff and members of the business community, to come together in an entrepreneurial ecosystem where ideas and experience can be shared.'

'We want to bring together people who might not ordinarily work with one another and get them collaborating and testing their business ideas. We want to create a currency of favours', says Steve.

Cortilda Makhumla, founder of Cortilda Fashion Ltd based in the Victoria Building



Teesside Launchpad offers:

- > The co-work space has been fitted with 12 PCs and two iMacs where entrepreneurs can hot desk. Already, members of the North East Chamber of Commerce and the Entrepreneurs' Forum, as well as capital investors, have expressed interest in using the room to mix with graduate businesses. In addition a small photo studio, equipped with the latest equipment, has been created for product shots, podcasts and profile shots.
- > The ideation room is an informal area where businesses can formulate proposals in a creative and fun environment. Alongside a giant plasma wireless television and meeting table, the room also contains an Xbox and ping pong table. The room hosts regular networking functions and business hacking events.
- > The learning space provides a more traditional meeting room for entrepreneurs to learn, present and pitch, as well as hosting workshops, masterclasses and training programmes.
- > The maker space provides facilities and equipment for start-ups. It houses ultra-modern equipment, such as 3D printers, alongside more traditional apparatus like sewing machines. Already, the room has helped to forge a unique business opportunity for a 3D design export and fashion entrepreneur: printing bespoke buttons for a new clothing range.

Innovative start-up preserving precious memories in 3D

An innovative new business is using advanced 3D technology to help people preserve precious memories in the form of highly detailed models.

Moments in 3D has developed a special scanning booth to create 3D scans of family members, loved ones, or even a favourite pet. The scans are then transformed into miniature models using the latest 3D printer technology.

The company, based at Teesside University, secured an exclusive concession at the flagship Fenwick department store in Newcastle upon Tyne over Christmas to offer the service as an ideal gift for festive shoppers.

The company's founder Behzad Parniani has a background in aerospace and technology and used his technical expertise to devise and construct the scanning booth and develop the business model in Teesside University's business incubator at Victoria Road.

The 3D scanning booth uses more than 100 digital cameras connected to computers, and triggered simultaneously to capture every angle of the model's body as easily as taking a normal photo.

The image is then rendered using powerful 3D software before being printed, layer upon layer, by the latest colour 3D printer.

The figurine is printed in full colour in a sandstone effect high-performance composite which captures every detail of the model from facial expressions to the creases in their clothing.

The new service is proving very popular and Behzad is now exploring ways to expand services and business by offering the service at different outlets nationwide.

He says, 'By using the latest 3D technology and the best 3D artists, we're able to construct figurines that are extremely lifelike and incredibly detailed. The technology offers endless possibilities and we're experiencing high demand already.'

Behzad was given assistance by Teesside Launchpad to help him get his business off the ground. This included help and support from the University's graduate enterprise team and access to facilities and equipment at Teesside University.

He adds, 'The University has been a fantastic source of help and advice which has enabled me to take the business to the next level.'





Graduates launch world's first truly social network

A young entrepreneur has overcome dyslexia to set up the world's first truly social network.

Hayden Bailey, along with fellow Teesside University graduates Adam Green and Michael Kirby, has launched Orca Mobile, an app designed to encourage users to put down their phones and tablets and meet up face-to-face.

Based in Teesside University's Victoria Building, Orca has already secured seed funding worth £32.6k from venture capital fund manager Rivers Capital Partners for the innovative app, which contradicts conventional thinking about how online users should interact.

Orca allows users to find and create social gatherings and activities, ranging from gigs and sporting events to pub crawls, or just meeting up for a drink.

Users can meet like-minded people who share their interests and once they

have confirmed that they are attending an activity they can chat within the app to finalise arrangements.

The team were inspired to create the app in order to find new ways to get together and socialise.

Hayden says, 'There are recent studies which link the increasing use of social media to a rise in depression, as people are not communicating with each other directly.

'Instead, social media encourages you to remain logged into the networks. In many ways, they're anti-social networks. We're different, we want people to be truly social. We want people to get out of the house and off the computer or their phone and find new experiences and meet new people.'

Orca already has a community of users within the Tees Valley, particularly amongst the student body at Teesside University, and the team plans to reach 20,000

registered users over the next 12 months.

The app can be monetised either by targeted advertising or by taking commission on tickets sold to events. The success of Orca represents a personal triumph for Hayden, who has dyslexia.

He adds, 'I'm dyslexic, always have been and always will be. Dyslexics often choose to be the joker of the class to shy away from the academic stage, which is nothing more than a defence mechanism, it's this defence that means many fail to reach their potential.

'In my time at the University, the staff had a monumental impact on my academic self-belief and I owe them a huge amount for this. I also owe thanks to my fellow students on the business management course who set relentlessly high standards for me to compete against.'

INSIDER INTERVIEW

BY LAND, RAIL AND SEA

Moving freight is a high-tech procedure these days, as a visit to AV Dawson's operations in Middlesbrough proves.



By Alison Ferst

Whether it is moving steel in highly precise amounts for Nissan car parts, developing a quay to allow for bigger cargo ships or restoring an old railway goods yard to protect future business – AV Dawson has a finger on the pulse of the future.

It is precisely what has helped to ensure its survival for almost 80 years as a local family business in the Teesside area – a business that was started in 1938 by 18-year-old Arthur Vernon Dawson and wife Eleanor with £50 and a horse called Dina selling coal from Emmerson Street in Linthorpe.

Today the company is run by his grandson Gary Dawson, who aged 30 took over as managing director 15 years ago with his father, Maurice, who then became chairman.

With 240 full-time staff and a host of contractors, and supporting a further 100 jobs, the company now has a turnover of £23m and has invested over £15m in the last eight years alone.

The company's new building with an extensive warehouse opened in Middlesbrough just a year ago to take steel from Tata Steel in Wales and transport to Nissan in Sunderland.

Clearly the volatility of the steel market will have an impact. Gary explains, 'About 50% of turnover depends on steel and it is a struggle with world steel prices but there is still a demand for the automotive industries which are strong here in the North East. We are continuing to invest in working with Tata to help create savings and efficiencies in supply chains, focusing on productivity. We have a team that works with Tata to manage the steel as it comes out of production for transportation to Middlesbrough.

'We are evolving as a business. Steel and fertiliser are our traditional markets



Gary and Maurice Dawson

We are evolving as a business. Steel and fertiliser are our traditional markets but we have invested in facilities to break into different markets

but we have invested in facilities to break into different markets such as oil, gas, renewable energy and subsea, working with companies who need transport and storage of marine asset equipment.'

The company has also invested in purchasing new property to expand including the Middlesbrough Goods Railyard on which they now have a 99-year lease, 'It desperately needs refurbishing and modifying and we felt there would be too much risk to the business not to do this,' Gary says.

For the future the waste to energy market is interesting for AV Dawson. 'While we add value to mature markets, we are pro-active in moving into new markets such as refuse

derived fuel, transporting baled refuse for incineration in power generators in Scandinavia,' Gary adds.

Alongside these plans, the company has invested in HR support to ensure its future operations run successfully. 'I think the reason we are successful is that all our decisions are made here on Teesside. We think long term, we take considered risks with investment to grow the business and we remain a family business,' Gary smiles.

His father Maurice received an honorary Doctorate in Business Administration from Teesside University in 2015, in recognition of the long service to business of the family and the development of the company as part of Teesside's history.

BUSINESS FOCUS

Forging business links



The value of digital to business performance

Laura Woods, director of The Forge, explains how Teesside University is working with businesses to help maximise potential through the use of digital technology.

Over recent weeks, we have been delighted to learn that our Knowledge Transfer Partnerships with Ryder Architects and landscape architects Colour Urban Design Ltd have been ranked as 'Outstanding'. (See page 9)

This recognition from Innovate UK, is of course very welcome, but what makes this especially satisfying, is the way academics from Teesside University have worked with Ryder and Colour to improve business performance by implementing the latest digital technology in their businesses.

Both companies have now integrated building information modelling systems and practices into their work, meaning they now have the ability to improve the predictability of building projects, saving both time and money and enhancing accuracy and efficiency.

At The Forge, one of our key aims is to grow the use of digital technology to improve key sectors of our economy.

DigitalCity, our flagship digital business growth initiative, which has the support of Tees Valley Unlimited and the five Tees Valley local authorities, has a fantastic track record of helping entrepreneurs to set up and expand digital and creative businesses. Our next step is to work with existing businesses – not necessarily those within the tech sector – to improve their digital skills and help them to grow using state of the art equipment, software and knowledge.

The excellent documentary *Addicted to Sheep*, which featured in the previous edition of R&B and was produced by two of our DigitalCity Fellows Magali Pettier and Jan Cawood, is picking up rave reviews wherever it plays and was recently screened on BBC4.

The prospect of self-shooting a feature-length documentary in the wilds of Teesdale and then editing it to a broadcast quality standard would have been unthinkable only a decade ago. However, this has been made possible thanks to the rapid advance of digital technology.

But the impact of digital technology was really brought home to me in one scene in the documentary where a portable ultrasound scanner was used to determine how many of the ewes were pregnant and with how many lambs.

In a way of life laced with tradition which, in many respects, hasn't changed for centuries, the use of this hi-tech scanner seemed strangely anachronistic. But it meant the farmer could accurately forecast the size of his flock and plan his budget accordingly. In a vocation like farming, where the slightest financial miscalculation can mean the difference between success and failure this scanner proved an essential tool. This small example illustrates just how important it is for businesses to be digitally enabled. It's now critical for competitiveness.

Through DigitalCity we'll be working with businesses to make the most of digital potential. We want to help train staff in digital skills making them more competitive and able to adapt to the changing needs of the marketplace.

Across all sectors, and all sizes of organisations, digital technology is transforming the way business is done. DigitalCity has a key role to play in leading this transformation, and we look forward to working with you.

For more information visit
www.tees.ac.uk/theforge

Ticket to success for booking company

By David Roberts

A company founded by a Teesside University graduate is now handling more than a quarter of a billion pounds of bookings each year.

Booking Live, founded by Vinnie Morgan, has clients across five countries and has worked with prestigious names such as television chef Rick Stein, Transport for London and the Baku 2015 European Games.

The company, which is based in Bristol, designs bespoke online booking systems and was developed at Teesside University with the help of its DigitalCity and graduate enterprise initiatives.

It has grown to employ ten people, as well as six extra staff overseas. The company has its sights set on further overseas expansion and is looking to attract £250,000 investment to enable to

increase its offer to businesses.

Vinnie, who is originally from South Wales, first developed the company after finishing his MSc Visual and Web Applications at Teesside University in 2008.

Throughout his course he was given advice and assistance by the graduate enterprise programme and picked up a number of awards including Entrepreneur of the Year and Best New Business, as well as plaudits at ExpoTees, the University's annual showcase of digital talent for final year students in the School of Computing.

Upon graduating Vinnie founded his business, originally conceived as a digital agency, and worked with DigitalCity based at the University, taking part in the Fellowship programme alongside an 18-week bootcamp and expert mentoring.

After being asked by one of his clients to design a booking system for a nationwide

zorbing company, Vinnie hit upon the idea for Booking Live.

The company now has more than 150 global clients including 6% of all the local authorities in the UK. Many of his clients have tripled their footfall over the last three years.

The company is looking to expand overseas into the United States, Australia and Europe. It is also hoping to develop a range of mobile apps and electronic point of sale software.

Vinnie says, 'We've got some ambitious plans and the company looks set to have a great future.'

'We've come a long way in the last few years and done some work with some very interesting names.'

'I wouldn't have a company if it hadn't been for DigitalCity and the University's graduate enterprise programme.'

'It gave me the support and knowledge to develop and design the business.'

Laura Woods, director of The Forge, Teesside University's business hub, says, 'Booking Live is a fantastic example of a business using innovative methods and new technology to satisfy a demand in the market.'

The company is a great ambassador for the quality and entrepreneurial talent of Teesside graduates and for the success of enterprise programmes.

'We're delighted to have been able to give Vinnie the help he needed to grow his company.'

To learn more about Booking Live visit www.bookinglive.com.



LEADING THE WAY

PRESERVING A DIGITAL FAMILY FOR THE FUTURE

By Gary Martin

Forward-thinking artist Simon McKeown is creating opportunities to bring deceased family members back to 'virtual life' through digital technology and social media activity.





In the future, with *Preserved Memories*, you will never have to experience the loss of a loved one



His *Preserved Memories* project suggests that in the future you will be able to reconstitute your reality so that you never have to permanently say goodbye to a loved one again.

Instead, by combining state-of-the-art gaming technology, voice synthesis and big data streams – such as social media, government databases and health records – you will be able to create a synthetic digital life which you recognise and which will recognise you.

It is the brainchild of Simon McKeown, a reader in animation and post-production at Teesside University, who says that in 50 years' time, this kind of technology will be seen in a similar way to how the Xbox or Playstation is seen today.

Simon has displayed *Preserved Memories* at the Dox Centre for Contemporary Art in Prague as part of the Brave New World Exhibition.

It uses a process called photogrammetry where you can accurately reconstruct a virtual 3D shape of a human being from existing photographs and video. In addition, the advancement in computer voice synthesis, will also take into account local and regional accents and deliver a more personalised, human experience. When you link these virtual humans to big data streams the system will create a digital lifeform which is up to date and informed about your activities. If you have been shopping or to the doctors, the virtual character will already know.

'In the future, with *Preserved Memories*, you will never have to experience the loss of a loved one,' explains Simon.

'You will be able to add to your family tree and select new family members, including famous faces and legends, all of whom will already know about you.'

'Using emotion-sensitive human-computer interaction our artificially

intelligent participants continue to acquire ongoing knowledge long after their death - they evolve digitally and do not die.

'This life form will be up to date and informed of your daily activities through GPS, wifi, health and fitness tracking, consumer records and much more. They will know if you have passed your exam, driving test, flown on holiday, bought new shoes, ditched your boyfriend. They will know what you tell it on social media and also by the constant tracking that occurs every day.

'Our prime data feeds mean digital participants instantly know what you have done and can sense your physical mood and excitement.'

Simon's *Preserved Memories* has made national and international headlines, featuring in The Telegraph and Mail Online, as well as television and radio appearances in the Czech Republic.

MY BUSINESS

Hammerhead pushes global virtual reality boundaries

By David Roberts

From helping to visualise the human genome, to the unusual immersive experience of travelling through a fridge, a North-East tech firm is helping to push the boundaries of virtual reality.

Hammerhead VR was founded in 2014, by Teesside University graduate Christian Frausig with the help of a Fellowship from DigitalCity and the University's graduate enterprise programme. Now based in Newcastle, with an office in London, the company has enjoyed continual growth through working with clients across the globe.

The rapidly growing company employs 17 people, to create pioneering cinematic, virtual reality and immersive content experiences.

One of the latest projects, launched at the Festival of Marketing 2015, was conceived and produced for global advertising agency,

AMV BBDO, for their client Thunderhead, the cloud-based customer engagement platform.

Building on the creative concept by AMV BBDO, the VR experience available to view on littlstar.com, puts the viewer at the helm of Thunderhead's ship in a futuristic Norse world. The viewer flies through clouds on a metaphorical journey learning about the benefits of the technology.

AMV BBDO chief creative officer and chairman Paul Brazier says, 'Hammerhead VR impressed me with their creative flair, speed, and quality of production. I couldn't have wished for a better partner.'

Christian Frausig says, 'It's been an incredible journey. We're really proud of the work we're producing, the team we've built, and the talent we're attracting.'

'One of our clients picked up an award at the Festival of Marketing for the Boursin Sensorium, which we created, which was great recognition for the team.'

'Everything we've planned to do since launching has come to fruition. We're hopeful that we will be one of the many DigitalCity Fellowship success stories.'

Christian took part in Teesside University's DigitalCity Fellowship scheme which supports entrepreneurs to develop their digital business product or idea. As well as support with living expenses, fellows are also able to access industry-specific mentoring and coaching along with facilities and equipment at the University.

Cheryl Evans, DigitalCity Programme Manager, says, 'Hammerhead VR are undertaking some extremely exciting projects and positioning themselves at the forefront of their industry.'

'We are delighted to see Christian and his team doing so well and wish them every success.'

Christian Frausig



Local talent supports film company growth

A Tees Valley film production company, set up by a Teesside University graduate, has turned to local talent as it expands its team.

Ithica Films has appointed Connor Chambers and Jack Holmes as filmmakers to help service a growing client base and an ever increasing workload. The Middlesbrough-based company was founded by Teesside alumnus Matt McGough with the help of a fellowship from DigitalCity, which is based at the University.

Ithica takes a modern approach to business filmmaking, and employed its latest members after they both impressed while on internships.

Connor, from Bedford, graduated from Teesside University last year, having gained a BA (Hons) Performance for Live and Recorded Media.

He says, 'Working at a company like Ithica Films is a fantastic opportunity and a dream come true.

'It is very rare for graduates to leave university and within two months to have started working in their chosen industry. I learn something new every day and although a lot of pressure comes with the role, it only makes me

strive to achieve more and impress myself and the people around me.

'I strongly believe that to be a success, you need to surround yourself with people who are just as passionate and able to test you every day. I have turned from an acting student to a professional film maker in ten months due to the help of Matt and the team.'

Jack, from Middlesbrough, who has been taken on as an apprentice filmmaker, adds, 'I haven't had much experience within this industry, but I've always known it's what I've wanted to do, so it feels great working with Ithica Films.

'It's a fantastic team and I get along with everyone, plus I get treated with a large amount of trust and respect, just like a normal employee would, so I really don't feel like an apprentice filmmaker.'

The DigitalCity Fellowship scheme supports entrepreneurs to develop their digital business product or idea. As well as support with living expenses, fellows are also able to access industry-specific mentoring and coaching along with facilities and equipment at the University.

Ithica Films enjoyed a successful 12 months last year, which included a move into a new office in June, choosing the chic Boho One area of the town as its base.

This was the first step in the company's expansion plans, as director, Matt McGough, knew having more space provided him with the potential to grow his team.

With this in mind, Matt was keen to offer any future opportunities within Ithica Films to local students and build on the company's close links with Teesside University – something he regards as extremely important for the future of both his business and the North East.

Matt says, 'It's important to be able to offer these kinds of opportunities to young people on Teesside, whether they come from here or have spent time here at the University.

'As the company's director, it's brilliant seeing the team expand as it's what we set out to do and we also want to use the graduates and apprentices around us.

'It's very satisfying to be able to do this and as we are hoping to create an industry around the region, it's important we also create the opportunities for the people around us to get involved.'

Since its conception, Ithica Films has worked on projects covering a range of sectors including the NHS, dental, education, Kickstarter films, engineering, construction, manufacturing and training.

RESEARCH ROUND-UP

By Gary Martin

From digitising letters written by women during World War One and documenting injuries sustained by workers in the steel industry, to highlighting the struggles of male domestic abuse victims, research at Teesside University covers a diverse range of issues that impact upon the lives of real people.

Unearthed letters reveal heartbreaking challenges faced by women during World War One.



A historian at Teesside University is leading a project to digitise letters that were sent from women whose loved ones died in the First World War.

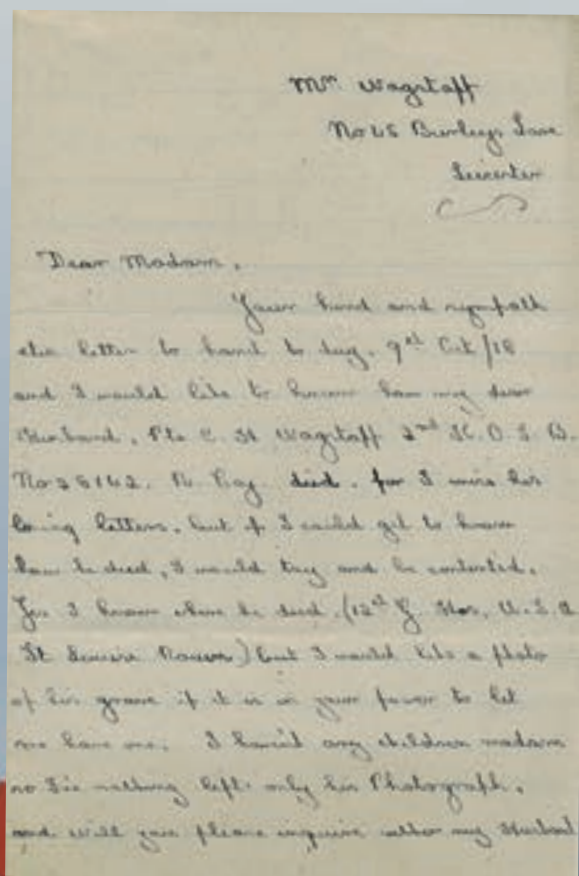
Dr Roisin Higgins, senior lecturer in the School of Arts & Media, supported by a grant of £9,700 from the Heritage Lottery

Fund, is working to make the letters available online and uncover the stories of the women who wrote them.

The 120 documents were discovered at Ormesby Hall in Middlesbrough and had been sent to Mary Pennyman, whose family then owned the property. Mary Pennyman, whose own husband was fighting in the war, wrote back to the women, offering words of comfort and advice.

The letters provide a personal insight into the loss they experienced and the struggles they were faced with.

Dr Higgins says, 'Researching the lives of the women who wrote them is a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon the cost of war and to build a picture of the challenges faced at the time and the strength it took to survive.' The three-year project will create an online platform so that people can see the letters first-hand. A programme of talks and exhibitions will also be delivered throughout the project.



More support needed for male victims of domestic abuse

Research by a Teesside University academic has found that male victims of domestic violence are reluctant to report the abuse they suffer for fear of being accused of violence themselves.

Dr Jessica McCarrick, a senior lecturer in counselling psychology and chartered psychologist, says that men are often arrested under false accusations and their disclosures of victimisation are initially dismissed.

She carried out interviews with male victims who say that, as well as the trauma of domestic abuse, their negative experiences are perpetuated within the criminal justice system by being treated like the guilty party or feeling dismissed by the police.

'Men find it incredibly difficult to talk about their experiences of domestic violence because of the shame and emasculation they feel is associated with it,' explains Dr McCarrick.

'To find the courage to speak out, only to be accused of violence themselves, is incredibly disheartening and ultimately prevents countless men from reporting intimate partner violence.'

Intimate partner violence should be viewed as a human issue rather than a gender issue, argues Dr McCarrick, and there should



be more services and support to enable men to seek the help and sanctuary they desperately need.

She says, 'Campaigners and researchers made waves in the 1970s, which had a positive impact and improved service provision for women – it is time to do the same for men.'

'Promoting awareness of the plight of male victims may encourage men to report abuse and feel assured that they will be taken seriously.'

Made by Steel project documents industry injuries

A digital exhibition documenting the injuries of steel workers over the decades is the latest project by Simon McKeown.

Simon, a reader in post-production and animation, is working on Made by Steel, which will capture digital footage of disabled steel workers' injuries and tell the stories of how those injuries occurred and what effect they had on the individual.

Video footage of steel workers and their specific injuries will be recorded and displayed on large screens, and Simon is hoping to get people involved who have worked in the steel industry locally, nationally and internationally.

Simon's own father Robert McKeown was the first contributor. He was seriously injured in the Billet Mill at Lackenby, Redcar on 16 April 1963, sustaining devastating injuries which left him with permanent disabilities.



'My father was a steel worker and suffered an injury which severely impacted his life,' explains Simon.

'I've been planning this work for a long time and don't want this to become a requiem for the industry in the UK, rather I'm interested in creating a work which has a resonance about the historic and continuing risks and dangers workers experience to produce the products we use.'

TeeGene's Kiwi connection

A Teesside University spin-out company was selected to take part in a British research and development delegation to New Zealand.

TeeGene Biotech, which has developed a method of creating soap from bacteria, was part of the international visit sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

It aimed to create agriculture plant and food research connections with New Zealand's Crown Research Institutes, leading universities and specialist biotech firms.

Dr Pattanathu Rahman, founding director of TeeGene Biotech, says, 'This was a prestigious international networking event and will lead to a number of new collaborative opportunities as both countries have common interests to develop their agriculture and biotech sectors.'

Sam's career is developing into a bright one at Trade Interchange

Degree choice proves a winner for Trade Interchange

Teesside University graduate Sam Murray is set for success after recently securing a new role as a junior asp.net developer at Trade Interchange, a local software development company.

Sam graduated with a BSc (Hons) Computer Science, 'I've always wanted to work with computers, and I knew that this particular degree would provide me with lots of different career choices and opportunities.

'I always had a vision of studying at Teesside University, as it has a reputation for being a good place to study any IT-related course due to the first-class facilities and experienced tutors – all of which helped me to complete my course.'

During his studies, Sam secured a placement at a local hospital as a data analyst. Within this role, he applied his academic and technical knowledge to a real position, which also counted towards five per cent of his final grade.

He adds, 'The sandwich course definitely gave me a better insight into the

career path I have chosen. It also allowed me to gain extra experience which helped me secure my current job.'

After graduation, Sam started as a software developer at another local firm, but began looking for graduate roles to develop his skillset further.

A position at Trade Interchange offered guidance and support to help maximise his learning potential.

Sam says, 'At interview I knew instantly that I wanted to work at Trade Interchange. I liked the team ethos and the fact that it is a growing business.

'I love being part of a team who all work really closely with each other, all playing a part in the development of the software, and knowing that I'm making a real difference within my role.'

Based in Stockton-on-Tees, Trade Interchange helps organisations reduce

the costs, risks and complexities associated with managing a large supplier base. Its solutions support a range of supplier management activities, from initial tenders and supplier information management through to supplier contract and performance management.

Sam's role includes working on projects surrounding Trade Interchange's supplier management platform, including a recent key project which involves making some of the software mobile and tablet friendly. In addition, Sam often works with the implementation team and helps to resolve any technical issues.

Mike Edmunds, managing director at Trade Interchange, says, 'We're really pleased that Sam has settled into his new role with such ease, and he is already proving to be an invaluable member of the development team.

'As a growing business within Teesside, we're keen to recruit some of the best graduates with the right skills, and the education and knowledge that Sam has gained while studying at Teesside University is definitely being put to use in his job today.'





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I love being part of a team who all work really closely with each other, all playing a part in the development of the software, and knowing that I'm making a real difference within my role.

ENTERPRISE CLINIC

with Steve Dougan

Steve Dougan is Teesside University's head of graduate enterprise. He coaches and supports graduate entrepreneurs and leads a team of people helping students, graduates and staff to start up in business.

Got a question for Steve?

Email s.dougan@tees.ac.uk and remember to include your contact details.

Q. I hear a lot about the importance of intrapreneurship – but what is it?

A. Intrapreneurship is about people behaving and thinking like an entrepreneur within an established organisation. Introducing new technology, increasing efficiency and productivity, and creating new products or services are all characteristic of intrapreneurs.

How can businesses encourage intrapreneurship?

Intrapreneurship can be difficult to integrate into an established organisation for many reasons such as issues of size, hierarchy, risk aversion and inertia. Start by encouraging creativity. And to focus creativity and create real value, invest in collecting customer insights which provide a focus for ideas generation and solution crafting.

A real-world example:

Insight	'we would love to play video games with our grandchildren but we just don't understand all the buttons and menus'
Problem	game input systems are too complex and are excluding large customer segments from engaging
Idea	an intuitive motion-based game controller
Solution	Nintendo Wii

If you need help implementing social media in your business there are a range of training and consultancy solutions available in the Tees Valley.

Contact The Forge to find out more:

01642 384068
theforge@tees.ac.uk

Q. How do you collect insights?

A. Ensure that your business communicates with customers across as many channels as possible to uncover unmet needs. Your sales people, customer service teams and quality managers should be a rich source of customer insights: make sure you listen to them and reward them for providing insights.

Once you have insights it's time to get your teams working on ideas. Here are some tools you can use to get the ideas flowing.

Gordian Knot - break the rules!

In Greek legend, the oracles foretold whoever untied the Gordian Knot would rule all of Asia. Many people tried to no avail. Alexander the Great had invaded Asia Minor and arrived in the town of Gordium – he was just 23. It was inconceivable the young, impetuous king would not tackle the legendary Gordian Knot. Crowds of Macedonians watched as Alexander struggled with the knot before chopping it in half with his sword and demonstrating a different solution. Breaking the rules is a great way to get creativity flowing.

Try SCAMPERing

Scamper works on the principle that everything new is just an addition or modification to something that already exists. Take the product or service your customer insights relate to and ask your teams 'How could we...?'

Substitute	ingredients, materials, process, place, approach, parts, formats
Combine	materials, purposes, uses, ideas, resources
Adapt	copy, emulate, incorporate, alternative context
Modify	magnify, extend, reduce, alter
Put to another use	other fields, other uses
Eliminate	delete, omit, divide, split
Reverse	change negatives into positives, opposites, backwards, unexpected

Teesside welcomes new director-general of CBI

The new director-general of the CBI (Confederation of British Industry), Carolyn Fairbairn, visited Teesside University as part of a tour of the North East, a region she described as an 'inspirational place to visit.'

Carolyn met with vice-chancellor and chief executive Professor Paul Croney at the University's new teaching and learning building The Curve.

Carolyn is proud of the strong foundation built for UK businesses to thrive but insists that Britain needs to change and adapt to meet new challenges for the global economy.

She says, 'I believe the UK has a golden opportunity over the next decade to create a new era of growth and prosperity, and that to do this, we will need to focus on five main priorities.

'Access to the talent and skills needed for growth; world class infrastructure – including road, rail, broadband, aviation, housing, energy; globally competitive tax, regulation and support for enterprise; easy and open access to global markets and a relationship of trust between business and society.

'Individually each is key, taking time to work on each will help drive prosperity throughout the country.'



Fire investigators graduate from unique courses

Firefighters celebrated academic success, after they graduated from special courses put together by Teesside University and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

Proud family members watched nine CDDFRS students and one from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service presented with certificates on Friday 6 November by Professor Simon Hodgson, Teesside University's pro-vice chancellor (research and innovation).

The ten students had completed a foundation degree or university certificate in professional development (UCPD) in fire investigation.

The courses involved are the only ones of their type in the country and cover modules in forensic awareness, fire scene photography, forensic reconstruction, fingerprint recovery and fire scene investigation techniques. The UCPD in Fire Investigation requires a one year study period and assessments in investigation, the science of fire and forensic evidence recovery.

Chief Fire Officer Stuart Errington says, 'I would like to congratulate all of the serving personnel who have successfully combined their

demanding roles with practical and academic study to achieve these qualifications.'

Professor Hodgson adds, 'It is wonderful to see another cohort graduate as a result of the outstanding partnership between Teesside University and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.'



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Research will help develop international BIM initiatives

An internationally leading research collaboration, involving a Teesside University academic, will help policy makers around the world achieve higher productivity within their construction industries.



Dr Mohamad Kassem

Business information modelling (BIM) is the digital representation of a facility, covering not only its 3D image, but also time and cost. It is increasingly used as a single shared knowledge resource by building designers, contractors and operators, supporting the whole project lifecycle from planning and design through to operation. It has a major impact on productivity, efficiency and cost reduction.

By David Roberts

Dr Mohamad Kassem from Teesside University's Technology Futures Institute, and Dr Bilal Succar from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Built Environment Research at the University of Newcastle, Australia, have developed a number of models to help policy makers with initiating or benchmarking their national building information modelling (BIM) initiatives.

After three years of research, Dr Kassem and Dr Succar have developed the models, which are the first of their kind, and have been published in a number of peer-reviewed articles.

The first five models are presented in *Macro-BIM adoption: Conceptual Structures*, a peer-reviewed journal paper, and are explained in short videos on YouTube. The research is particularly timely as new national BIM initiatives are currently being launched in many different countries.

Among the research findings is a model that identifies eight key components that must be measured and compared in order to establish the BIM maturity of each country. The eight components are:

- > objectives, stages and milestones
- > champions and drivers
- > regulatory framework
- > noteworthy publications
- > learning and education
- > measurements and benchmarks
- > standardised parts and deliverables
- > technology infrastructure.

A second model helps policy makers to identify the set of activities needed to encourage BIM adoption. The third model identifies the roles of different stakeholders, and how each must play a role in BIM diffusion. Another establishes the metrics to assess the extent of BIM diffusion within organisations and across markets.

Dr Kassem and Dr Succar have already used these models to assist a number of international policy makers in developing their national BIM initiatives.

Also, using these models and other specialised metrics, Dr Kassem and Dr Succar have recently launched the first worldwide assessment to benchmark and compare the BIM maturity of whole countries.

The assessment campaign includes 20 countries so far, with input received from more than 100 selected international experts. The results of this campaign will be available by mid-2016 and preliminary results were presented at the European BIM Summit in Barcelona in February.

Dr Kassem says, 'These models are very timely as without such metrics, there is no accurate way to assess and compare the BIM maturity of whole markets.'

Dr Succar adds, 'These models are available for all to use and can assist policy makers in developing their national BIM adoption policies using clear, research-based methods.'

In establishing the models, Dr Kassem and Dr Succar hope their research will contribute to BIM adoption across markets and assisting policy makers to achieve higher productivity in their respective countries.

If you'd like to participate in this ongoing research, please contact Dr Kassem on m.kassem@tees.ac.uk.

Building business from town's forgotten trades

Two new social enterprises which build on the past for future success have been spun out of Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art's popular Localism exhibition.

By Claire Thomas

Adam Clarke





Localism used public contributions and feedback to tell the story of the history of art in Teesside and pledged to support community initiatives in the area as part of mima's vision for the future.

Now two long-term social enterprise projects from the show have been commissioned to continue and mima is working with Adam Clarke of New Boosbeck Industries which makes furniture and Emily Hesse and James Beighton of New Linthorpe who are reviving the famous potteries of Middlesbrough.

The collection is part of a wider Creative Community Programme and other similar schemes to support visual arts in the Tees Valley. The move is part of director Alistair Hudson's new vision, to change the concept of art as a spectator activity to a usership model, and to build a Useful Museum with mima as an institution dedicated to the promotion of art as a tool for education and social change.

New Boosbeck Industries is a project that draws on a moment of deprivation and production in 1930s Teesside and works with the public to design and produce Bauhaus style furniture with a modern twist. The developer, Adam Clarke, takes inspiration from Boosbeck Industries furniture which emerged during the Great Depression era as part of the work camps set up to tackle high unemployment

in former mining villages across East Cleveland.

Adam hopes to revive this tradition through his work with the aim of generating a new and sustainable social enterprise in Teesside. Following the same essential ideals as his predecessors, the new project will harness contemporary, digital production methods to create modern furniture while encouraging understanding of the connections between art and work and emphasising its relevance to today's economic climate.

Emily Hesse is also looking to aspects of our area's heritage to find solutions for current social concerns. Her project stems from Linthorpe Art Pottery, a company established by John Harrison and Christopher Dresser in 1879 which used ceramic production as a way of tackling Middlesbrough's unemployment at the time. The project asks what a pottery on Teesside would look like today, how it could be self-sustaining as well as providing skills, training and an opportunity to make, think and act for a local community. In her own words, the undertaking 'is guided by a belief in not just the ability but also the responsibility of art to make a difference to lives.'

mima director Alistair Hudson says, 'We are very pleased to be working with both Emily and Adam on a long-term basis and are happy to be supporting

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We are very pleased to be working with both Emily and Adam on a long-term basis and are happy to be supporting such worthwhile projects.

such worthwhile projects. The visual arts sector is vital to the town's prosperity and sustainable projects like these are the stepping stones to a brighter economic future. Our vision is to bring together people and groups with shared strategies and goals, to tackle social issues in new ways and provide alternative strategies for regeneration.'

Ownership of mima was transferred to Teesside University in 2015 with the aim of bringing together two public institutions to support each other and build on mima's success.

mima
middlesbrough
institute of modern art



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THEFORGE
Together with business





FUSION HIVE CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITAL MARKETING BUSINESS

By David Roberts

A move to the Tees Valley's newest innovation centre is helping a digital marketing company expand its business.

Forrest Digital is planning to employ more staff after moving to Fusion Hive at Stockton's Northshore.

Fusion Hive, which opened its doors last year and is managed and operated by Teesside University, is rapidly establishing itself as a prime hub for businesses with ambitions to grow.

The innovation centre is already home to 20 different companies creating a collaborative working environment.

It brings together digital and technology companies and gives them the opportunity to network, collaborate and capitalise on opportunities for growth.

Fusion Hive also gives access to the University's significant business networks, expertise and training provision, as well as help in sourcing potential funding.

Forrest Digital is one of the latest companies to move into Fusion Hive.

Founded in 2003 as Wynyard Consultants, the newly rebranded business helps other companies to grow, using digital marketing techniques that allow them to reach new customers in the UK and across the world.

The company specialises in customised online marketing strategy and training, with particular expertise in search marketing. Founder Iain Forrest is a Certified Google Partner as well as being MBA qualified

and a member of the Institute of Direct Marketing, the UK's leading professional body for digital marketers.

He says, 'Until now, I've been predominantly working with sub-contractors, but the new office has space for three people and I plan to fill it within the next year to supplement our established outsourced team.

'Fusion Hive is in a great location, I've got a brilliant view over the River Tees from my office. There's also a great community of businesses here in the building. I've already managed to get some leads from other tenants.

'The facilities are excellent. It's very handy to be able to book meeting rooms with no extra cost, and the support from

Teesside University has been invaluable.'

Laura Woods, director of The Forge, Teesside University's business hub, says, 'We're very pleased to welcome Forrest Digital to Fusion Hive and delighted that the move is helping to create new opportunities for the business.

'It is fantastic to see so many different companies taking advantage of the unique benefits that Fusion Hive offers.'

For more information about Forrest Digital visit www.forrestdigital.com

To learn more about Fusion Hive and how it can help your business visit www.fusionhive.co.uk.



Major project to light the fuse of economic growth

By Michelle Ruane

Teesside University is part of a major new project to explore how the creative, digital and IT (CDIT) sector in the North East can be developed in order to play a leading role in the region's economy.

The £3m Creative Fuse North East project involves all five of the North East's universities – Teesside, Newcastle, Northumbria, Durham and Sunderland – and is funded jointly by the universities and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The universities are working with the 12 local authorities in the North East, businesses, artists, cultural organisations and partners to research how the CDIT sector can ensure it has the right skills for a sustainable future.

They are also examining how the skills within the region's CDIT sector can benefit the wider regional economy.

The 30-month project will map the creative, digital and commercial landscape of the North East in terms of the mix of skills, knowledge and support available. This will be followed

by work to identify opportunities for more effective use of resources and best practice in workforce development as well as highlighting ways in which the region's universities can support the sector more effectively.

Creative Fuse North East, led by Newcastle University, will draw on expertise from more than 40 academic and business support staff from across the five institutions, from creative arts, cultural heritage and digital humanities to business schools and cloud computing.

Sharon Paterson, assistant dean (business engagement and partnerships) in the University's School of Arts & Media, says, 'Creative Fuse North East is a fantastic collaborative project which will allow us to use our expertise to find new and

innovative ways to support the region's creative and digital sector.

'Teesside University has an established reputation as a leading institution for supporting the creative and digital industries and we have helped hundreds of businesses across the region use new technology to grow and fulfil their potential. We are delighted to be involved with Creative Fuse North East and it is yet another boost to this rapidly-evolving sector.'

Professor Andrew Thompson, chief executive officer of the Arts and Humanities Research Council adds, 'Creative Fuse North East combines the research strengths of the region's five universities with a range of local authorities, cultural, creative and digital sector partners in ways that will facilitate new interactions between researchers and businesses, education and entrepreneurship.

'A multi-disciplinary range of subjects are involved from the initial scoping work, business analysis and networking through to potential platforms for deeper engagement between creativity and economic growth.'

For more information email
info@creativefusene.org.uk



Stonewall recognition puts Teesside at the top

Teesside University has been ranked as the top English university for LGBT employees.



Stonewall, the lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality charity, has published a list of the top 100 places for LGBT employees to

work across Britain in 2016, judged on the way each treats members of staff from the LGBT community.

Overall Teesside University is at number 44 in the top 100 employers across Britain, making a massive jump from its position at 111 in last year's list. It is one of just six North-East employers on the list.

Other North-East employers listed in the top 100 include Newcastle City Council, Northumberland County Council, North East Ambulance Service, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Your Homes Newcastle.

Michael Lavery, Teesside University executive director and the University's equality and diversity champion: LGBT, says, 'It is a remarkable achievement to rise up in the national index in a year by such a degree.'

It is a significant accolade which puts us as the top university in England for LGBT inclusivity and is part of our wider equality and diversity commitment across the University and our communities.

'It is reflective of the dedication, energy and hard work put in by the staff and student community to champion equality and to celebrate diversity. We have



Dr Joan Heggie, Margaret McFee and Michael Lavery

developed a supportive and representative network, working in partnership with local authorities, LGBT groups, the Students' Union and our trade unions.'

Margaret McFee, Teesside University equality and diversity adviser, adds, 'It is great to know that the work we have all been involved in to promote equality has been recognised. This accolade marks out Teesside University as an employer – and as a first-choice university for students – that is committed to equality.'

Teesside University has also been awarded a Silver North East Better Health at Work Award.

There are four levels to the award – bronze, silver, gold and continuing excellence – which recognise the efforts of local employers in addressing health issues.

As a recipient of the silver award, Teesside is among organisations rewarded for taking a more holistic view of the workplace.

It builds on work staff have been involved in across the University to promote and encourage healthy eating, alcohol awareness, stress awareness and the benefits of exercise.



Together with business



The Forge is the place to come for innovative businesses with big ideas and ambitions.