

SMALL BUSINESS AMBASSADORS

An initiative developed by two Kent businessmen Roger House and Debasish Sen, to reinforce the work in schools, colleges and universities on developing enterprise and entrepreneurialism with the input of small business owners.

Having represented the interest of small businesses initially in Kent and then more broadly across the southeast, (Federation of Small Businesses) Roger House sits on a number of key public/private sector bodies covering the regional issues of the economy and the need to improve skills. From this vantage point it soon became clear that something more needed to be done, and that it should be driven by business and more importantly – the small business sector, being the largest contributor to the economy and the closest to true enterprise and entrepreneurialism one could get.

Debasish has a particular focus on building micro-business consortia and developing training programmes for businesses and both he and Roger have invested considerable time and energy in perfecting the programme for students and the content, as well as developing a core group of Ambassadors ready to take the project to its next stage.

The process has brought together valuable input from business, teachers and students at all levels together with other organisations. This in turn has led to the creation of a mentoring group for the project. With great encouragement from KCC, from the Director of Education downwards and the Director of Skills in SEEDA, a number of pilots were run in Kent and the development of the programme has taken shape now gaining an impetus that is set to spread across the southeast and with the encouragement of SEEDA – nationally.

Schools are encouraged to take a partnership approach so that business intervention keys into the curriculum in the most effective and sustainable way. Businesses Ambassadors are given a support structure within which to work and are taken through a process to make them 'comfortable' in the classroom ensuring their input is effectively focused and delivered. There will also be spin-off benefits for business as the group develops, with networking, marketing and social responsibility payback incorporated within the agenda.

For more information please contact Roger House or Debasish Sen on 0845 388 7801 or email infor@smallbusinessambassadors.co.uk. Website is www.smallbusinessambassadors.co.uk.