

No. 010.17

26 April 2017

## NEWS RELEASE

### Sales whizz kids storm 'big Bucks' challenge

Three local schools in Bucks have gone head-to-head in the county's first ever Sales Apprentice Challenge, organised by [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership's Skills Hub](#) to help students gain essential sales experience in a fun and practical way.

In this initial pilot, three schools were teamed up with entrepreneurial local businesses to compete against each other for the CV-enhancing challenge – Buckingham School, Aylesbury College and Amersham & Wycombe College (The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy).

Serious Brands, Webmart and ANT Telecom joined forces to deliver the exciting opportunity for year 12s, developing the core sales skills everyone needs professionally and in life, and to gain valuable real experience.

Marina Jackson, Under 19 Skills Manager, Buckinghamshire Skills Hub, said: "The challenge gives students the opportunity to discover traits common to all sales professionals, exploring and developing confidence, knowledge, presentation, communication, research, resilience and persistence."

Teams of year 12s competed in schools in the first round. The winning team from each school then spent a day with their employer mentor in the workplace training for the final, which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> April at Coca Cola Enterprises, Milton Keynes.

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The final was judged by Nick Coleman, local entrepreneur and founder of the Snaffling Pig and Medical Supermarket and Amrita Das of the Careers and Enterprise Company. Competition was tight, but Amersham & Wycombe College mentored by ANT Telecom were the overall winners.

Klaus Allion, Managing Director at ANT Telecom, said: "When working with the students it became clear very quickly how much talent and motivation they have. It was amazing to see how quickly they all took on board what we discussed and worked on and how well they presented their sales pitches. Congratulations to all teams, but specifically to my team from Amersham & Wycombe college for their winning performance. I can only urge other employers and entrepreneurs to come forward and get involved."

Carla Dean, Sales Support from Webmart, said: "It was great to be able to pass on our knowledge and see our group grow in both skills and confidence throughout the process. I thought all three teams did a fantastic job in the final and it was really encouraging to see how much work and research the students had put into their presentations."

Following the success of this year's pilot, plans are in place to expand the challenge across the county next year.

Alex Pratt OBE, Founder of Serious Brands, said: "Every business knows how essential sales skills are to growth. This challenge places rare skills into the hands of young people making them more able to sell themselves into companies looking for greater success in competitive markets".

Shaun McCarthy, tutor at Amersham & Wycombe College, added: "It was an excellent opportunity for our students to broaden their experience of the 'real world'."

**more...**

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If you're a business or school in Bucks and would like to get involved in next year's 'Big Bucks' Apprentice Sales Challenge, contact Marina Jackson at Bucks Skills Hub via email [Marina.Jackson@btvlep.co.uk](mailto:Marina.Jackson@btvlep.co.uk) or call 07766 654335.

**Ends**

**Photo caption:** *Winners and finalists from Amersham & Wycombe College (The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy), Buckingham School and Aylesbury College.*

#### **Note to editors**

The aim of BTVLEP's [Skills Hub](#) – one of the first LEPs to develop such a hub – is to make a difference to young people's employability while addressing the needs of employers. In Bucks, the level of employer engagement activity in schools can vary from school to school, and the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub is working to ensure all schools have access to effective and impactful employer interactions.

In order to help young people gain the valuable, constructive, rewarding work experience required, the Bucks Skills Hub has launched WANNABE ([www.wannabebucks.org](http://www.wannabebucks.org)) where employers can post opportunities for young people to apply for. The site provides extensive information, guidance, a careerometer tool to explore earning potential and career prospects, as well as work experience, apprenticeship and part/full time job vacancies. Young people can look for work experience opportunities which are in line with their ambitions, rather than perhaps spending time at their parents' place of work or finding placements via their parents' network. There is a broad range of opportunities for young people to apply for.

The [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](#) (BTVLEP) is a business-led 'partnership of equals' between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County. Formed in January 2012, the partnership balances a uniquely strong collective business voice with a cohesive elected local leadership. Coming together to engineer the conditions needed to drive forward business prosperity in the county and beyond, BTVLEP recognises that an important part of this is to support education and skills providers and employers to ensure our young people have the right skills to meet the needs of the economy, including the growth sectors such as life-sciences, space, creative industries and advanced engineering.

[Buckinghamshire Business First](#) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities. BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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