

# Case Study

## Entrepreneur Support in the BiG Challenge

Students at Fir Vale are never lacking in enthusiasm and ideas when it comes to the BiG Challenge, and this year 'Snap, Crackle n POD' (SCNP) were no exception. The team's teacher recognised that, although they were keen to take part in the competition, they did not have a clear idea about what their business could be. With support from the Entrepreneur Exchange, she enlisted the help of a local entrepreneur who steered the team in the right direction.



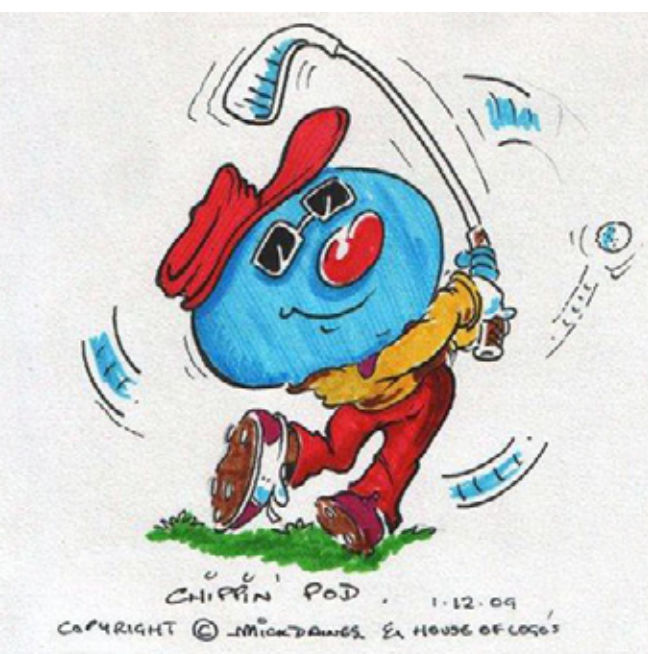
Mark arranged for the team to take part in the Entrepreneur Exchange networking event on Sheffield's Big Wheel.

Mark Elliott, Managing Director of House of Logos, was invited to attend a Business Studies lesson at Fir Vale in the early stages of the BiG Challenge 2010. The purpose of Mark's initial visit was to share his experiences of running a business with the students. He covered areas such as identifying your target market, finance, marketing and health and safety issues. Shortly after his visit, he was asked by the Leader of Learning in Business and Enterprise, Jo Walton, to mentor her BiG Challenge group. Jo explains:

"I invited Mark to join our group as he was enthusiastic and eager to be involved in more school-based activities. I was confident that he would be able to help to motivate and focus the team - who are a group of eight very excitable girls - and to pass on some valuable business knowledge."

In Mark's first session with the team, they brainstormed their ideas, which included the possibility of making an enamel lapel pin to sell as part of their business. Mark suggested that they launch a campaign which would raise awareness of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. By the end of the session, the team had created a cartoon front man called POD, a strap line and an overall project that would teach young people about eating well and keeping fit.

The team used House of Logos to design and produce the POD badges which were then sold as part of the campaign. Mark's links with local business networks helped the team to identify selling and sponsorship opportunities and to find low cost or free press coverage and marketing.





# Case Study

## Entrepreneur Support in the BiG Challenge



Mark arranged for the team to take part in the Entrepreneur Exchange networking event on Sheffield's Big Wheel, where they met local business people and were even featured in the Sheffield Telegraph. This was a highlight for Mark. He comments:

"Without any prompting, the team stood up and did a sales pitch at the networking event. Their confidence levels improved so much once they realised that what they were saying and doing was really being taken notice of. To say the least, I was very proud of my team."

The team continued their campaign for healthy living by creating a website which can be used as a resource for teachers and parents. Mark would like to continue working with the students so they can develop the ideas that they didn't have time to implement during the competition.

"The time factor was always going to be an issue because the potential of the project continued to grow and, no sooner had the students opened one door than another one opened for them. The plan to introduce POD's healthy lifestyle resources into schools and businesses is a fantastic opportunity and, who knows, we may get involved in a joint venture!"

Jo explains how Mark boosted the team's chances in the competition:

"Mark has provided us with support, helped us to find business contacts and has promoted POD to anyone who will listen. He has been an invaluable asset and if every group had a Mark a new dimension would be brought to the BiG Challenge, with groups surpassing their current potential."

To find out more about Mark's company, House of Logos, go to [www.houseoflogos.co.uk](http://www.houseoflogos.co.uk)

**If you would like an entrepreneur to support your BiG Challenge teams contact Liz Yoxall at Business and Education South Yorkshire on 01709 336738 or email [thebig@be-sy.co.uk](mailto:thebig@be-sy.co.uk)**



"We have nominated Mark as the best mentor!

He has helped, supported and encouraged us throughout the whole of the BiG Challenge and for that we are grateful towards him. If it wasn't for our mentor Mark, our business would not have even started and become the business that it is today. Mark has always been kind and helpful towards us and the business and has always given us support to keep our business keep up and running.

We are grateful to you Mark and thanks for everything!"

SCNP nominated Mark for the BiG Challenge Outstanding Entrepreneur Support Award, which he won!

