

Welcome to the first issue of your newsletter

When we asked for suggestions about what you wanted to see in it you had plenty to say. So a big thank you to those of you who submitted ideas for this first edition.

Firstly I'd like to say well done to everyone involved in the LEAD programme as *all* Providers have now started their first cohorts and in fact some of you are already well on the way to recruiting your second & third cohorts. We now have 20 cohorts started in total, with nearly 400 delegates currently taking part in the programme which is an excellent start!

With the majority of cohorts having started with less than 25 delegates it does mean that our individual outputs are slightly behind target. On the other hand this is a real opportunity for the Provider network as we will be looking to fill this shortfall with additional cohorts and I know some of you have already expressed an interest in moving planned cohorts forward and taking on additional ones which is great news for everyone.

We know that the market we are operating in continues to be competitive and recruitment can sometimes be a long (and fraught) process but it is important that we work together to identify new market opportunities and continue to work with third party stakeholders to maximise our routes to market. Our biggest risk over this next phase of recruitment is duplication between Providers and ultimately the potential damage to the LEAD brand. It is vital that we work closely with each other to minimise this risk.

TIPS AND TOOLS

Whole Cohort Learning - Sue Peters LUMS

"Create situations for whole-cohort learning – when I gave them the choice, my group jumped at the rare opportunity it gave them to get to know more people. They know their action learning set and their exchange pair very well, but the wider group less so, and they're curious about each other."



Noguru cohort members at the overnight experiential 9/10 November 2009

And finally, it was great to see you all at our Provider Meeting earlier this month. We appreciate that these events often feel too short so we have taken this on board and the next meeting is pencilled in for the 29th/30th June and we are hoping to make it an overnight event.

We'd really appreciate your feedback on this first newsletter. We want it to be a useful communication tool for you so it is important we get your contributions and ideas.

Ian Rigby

Changing Faces – Provider News

- **Kim Ashby** has left the LEAD marketing team at LUMS to start her maternity leave, she is now mum to Freddy who weighed in at 8lb 3oz. **Judith Friesl** will be covering her role until the end of the year.
- We welcome **Nick Mackin** to the PINNA/LSN marketing team. **Jo Royle** from PINNA has also started her maternity leave and Nick will be supporting the LEAD programme on LSN's behalf.
- **Veronica Jones** has joined the LEAD delivery team at Salford supporting Project Management and Marketing. **Stuart Wells** is still involved in overseeing the LEAD programme from his new post as Director of Management Development Programmes.
- **Rachael Sterrett** has replaced **Emma Watton** as the Project Manager at University of Cumbria while Emma is on secondment to another role.

What the delegates say:

"After the first meeting with my LEAD coach I sat in my car for ten minutes trying to work out what had just happened. Problems – what problems? I couldn't quite work out how I suddenly felt so confident about myself and my business, just by having a chat. I know we are all still very new to LEAD, but I think it's possibly the best thing I have ever done."

"Action Learning Sets have been a fantastic source of comfort. Mine quickly made me realise that I'm not alone in the problems I face in my business."

"While the time commitment can feel substantial, particularly for someone running a busy Internet TV and social media consultancy, I am convinced that being part of the LEAD programme has given me the solid foundation I need to grow and prosper my business."

"My monthly turnover has increased year on year by 35% in Jan 2010. I thought that this was brilliant because it was the ultimate outcome we are working towards - the company was drifting before I started the LEAD programme."

Delegate Case Study: Adrian Mercer is a current LEAD delegate at University of Liverpool.

Joints & Points was set up in 1996 by Adrian Mercer, a qualified Chartered Physiotherapist, from a converted bedroom in his own home. The business delivers affordable and effective physiotherapy services to a range of users, and has grown steadily over the years – it now has five branches across Merseyside and employs six staff and twelve clinicians.

Despite having tried numerous clinical and business courses, Adrian knew he needed something different to challenge his learning and help him develop the business and his staff:

"LEAD gives you the time and information you need to take a look at your company in a fresh way. It has taught me how to evaluate my own skills, my staffs' skills and the good and bad points of the business. These tools give you the best opportunity to develop a realistic business plan – not one just for the bank, but one you can use every day to make your business work harder."

Adrian believes that the shared experience of learning alongside other business leaders on the course has given him more confidence about what he does right, and the skills and know-

how to improve areas of his business practice that are not so good:

"Talking to others who have started and run their own businesses and sharing information has been invaluable. It has taught me the benefits of working as a team, trusting my staff and delegating roles so that everyone can grow as the business grows."

Joints & Points now has clear growth plans for the next five years. The business will be moving to a new head office in September and its major challenges will continue to be managing the cash flow, being competitive, and developing into new markets.

"If you think you haven't got the time, can't afford it or that the business can't survive without you – then these are the reasons why LEAD would be so good for you. The LEAD programme teaches you how to sit back, reflect, manage time and ultimately make more money."

TIPS AND TOOLS

Reframing a difficult question - John Drysdale, NoGuru

We have been working on how best to answer when someone at a recruitment event asks "If I don't join this cohort, when is the next one due to start?"

A literal answer would put the option of delay into the mind of everyone – for many, an attractive way of putting off making a decision about LEAD.

One good answer begins with positive feedback: "I can see why some businesses might want to delay." Then the question can be turned back to the questioner: "Can I ask what will be different if you delay for six months?"

More time or money is the most common response. After explaining that often those who delay have even less time or money by the time the next cohort starts, we can then invite everyone present to work out the advantages of not delaying by asking simply: "What advantages would there be to starting now?"

2



Provider Profile: Learning and Skills Network/PINNA

The Learning and Skills Network works in partnership with specialist coaching provider PINNA to deliver the LEAD programme from the Myerscough College campus near Preston, Lancashire.

“We have 25 years’ experience of delivering a wide range of management education, while PINNA bring its coaching expertise to this LEAD programme, creating a good balance in what we’re able to offer our delegates,” says Nick Mackin from LSN’s marketing team. “We aim to coach the coaches – not simply transferring valuable skills to small business leaders, but also showing them how they can, in their turn, coach their own staff. The feedback so far has been very positive.”

LSN/PINNA’s first cohort began in September 2009 and further start dates are scheduled up to May 2011.

PINNA’s coaching experience is considerable, ranging from the design of bespoke leadership and management programmes to professional and one-on-one coach training. It also offers its alumni continual professional development and supervision, working with clients of all sizes from family-run SMEs to public limited companies with upwards of 2,000 employees such as My Travel, part of the Thomas Cook Group.

The Learning Skills Network works across a wide range of sectors in further and higher education, local authorities and schools, the public sector and for international clients,

tailoring education services to specific needs. It can offer products that develop people, enhance an agency or company’s services and improve organisation.

For more information, go to www.lsnlearning.org.uk
www.pinna.co.uk



How to turn bums on seats into completed application forms...

This has been keenly debated by members of the Marketing Network recently. Their conclusion is that no set formula will work for all Providers. There are some points we should recognise when looking at conversion:

Firstly, LEAD is *not* an instant buying decision. The decision-making process is often a lengthy one and this in turn means that Providers need to guide potential delegates through it. So how do we make the process efficient and cost-effective but not a hard sell?

Secondly, cost is often cited as a reason for not coming on LEAD, yet anecdotally it appears that the time commitment is often a more immediate barrier to conversion.

Finally, how big should you make your events? After a lot of debate, it is agreed that experience suggests size doesn’t matter. A high ratio of staff to attendees gets the best conversion rates.

Your shared experiences of preview events and meetings have been

distilled into the following checklist of those activities which drive the highest conversion rates:

Before an event contact attendees by phone – not e-mail – within 24 hours of receiving their details. Use this conversation to:

- tell them about LEAD, including the commitment required
- fill in the first part of the application form for their personal delegate pack

Then:

- e-mail the day before the event
- text on the morning of the event

At the event:

- Ask former and current LEAD delegates to network or present
- Use an Action Learning Set to create interaction and show the power of LEAD
- Directly address common barriers to conversion – time, money, etc.
- Offer interview slots immediately after the event



- Set deadlines for applications; announce dates of selection panels
- Give clear signposting to funding
- Suggest that inspired attendees fill in the form immediately

After the event:

- Send a thank you e-mail that includes interview dates
- Follow up with a phone call
- Offer one-to-one meetings, at their premises or at drop-in sessions
- E-mail application deadline reminders

Finally... The no-shows are also worth a follow-up call with the offer of another opportunity.

Case Study – Helen Docherty, current delegate at The Manufacturing Institute, Manchester

Prontaprint Manchester (franchise) was bought by Helen Docherty's parents 19 years ago and the company is now made up of four businesses operating out of two sites. When Helen decided six years ago to work in the family business full time, she was exposed to all aspects of it until she was ready to begin getting to grips with the role of General Manager.

Although she had a lot of practical, hands-on experience, Helen had no formal management training and felt that the LEAD programme would offer an opportunity to interact with other business owners. She also hoped that time spent out of the business would give her time for reflection and help her gather the kind of knowledge she needed to implement change.

“LEAD has made me more relaxed in the business,” she says.

“ Being part of the programme has helped me understand that business issues are the same in most companies. It is great to be among

others who have business experience and to see how they have overcome management issues when different agendas have to be considered.

“On the whole, the group discussions have been the most beneficial part of LEAD. Through these sessions I have made some good friends who I trust and whose opinion I value.

“Everybody wants to see each other succeed and we are generous in sharing support with each other. Taking different points on board from many different sources is shaping how I see myself in the family company and influencing the decisions I am making.

“I am now much more reflective about what I do and about how I introduce new ideas and changes into the business. I am sure this will have a long term impact both on me and the business. Even though I am in the early stages of my LEAD journey, I would highly recommend the programme to other small business leaders.”



For ideas, suggestions and content for the next issue of **LEAD View** please post on the Provider Forum or e-mail: Rachel.Scott@nwda.co.uk or Lisa.Whittle@nwda.co.uk

We are looking for volunteers for the next Provider Profile so please send your suggestions through to us.

And look out for our first Delegate diary which will appear in the next issue!

Next issue – May Copy deadline 5th May

Spreading the Word

The CPMT is focusing its efforts on driving increased demand for the LEAD programme by reaching as many small business leaders as possible.

- Providers will have seen the current advertorial campaign which continues until the end of March in local and regional papers such as the Lancashire Evening Post, Cumberland News and the Liverpool Echo business supplement, and in specialist print media such as EN Mag and Commerce GM.
- Finally, plans are underway for a series of smaller-scale events aimed solely at recruiting delegates, hopefully supported by email, press and radio publicity, and managed by the CPMT who will also handle registration and recruitment. More information will follow shortly.
- As you will all be aware we are entering purdah in the run up to the general election. It is vital during this period that *all* activity, no matter how small is passed to the CPMT for approval *before* it begins. The CPMT will be working with you all closely over the coming weeks to ensure we adhere to the purdah guidelines and will liaise with the purdah team to get sign off on any activity you wish to undertake during this period.

TIPS AND TOOLS

3

Help, please! -

John Drysdale, NoGuru

“I was dreading the Intro to Shadowing – and it did indeed seem difficult for delegates to grasp the concept. I felt I had covered it off, but it was obvious they were still fishing for a match to the business instead of a trusted partner who could provide feedback on their leadership. Any thoughts on how to make this clearer?”