



# **ROTHERHAM MEANS BUSINESS 2011**

*Ignite The Entrepreneur In You*

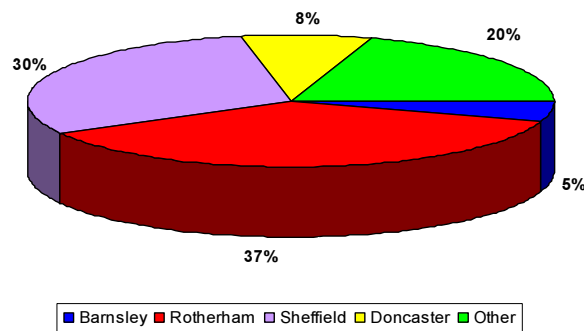
## **Briefing Paper**

### **Event Overview**

Rotherham Means Business 2011 was Rotherham's first Enterprise and Business show held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 8.30 – 4.00pm at Magna Science Centre, Rotherham. The event was sponsored by UK Steel Enterprise Ltd, The Source, AESSEAL and the Work and Skills board. The project was also part-financed by European Regional Development Funding.

The event was held in conjunction with Rotherham Council's third annual Meet the Buyer event in partnership with Business Link. Rotherham Enterprise Show Committee (RESComm) was the organising committee, consisting of key stakeholders working together to deliver the show.

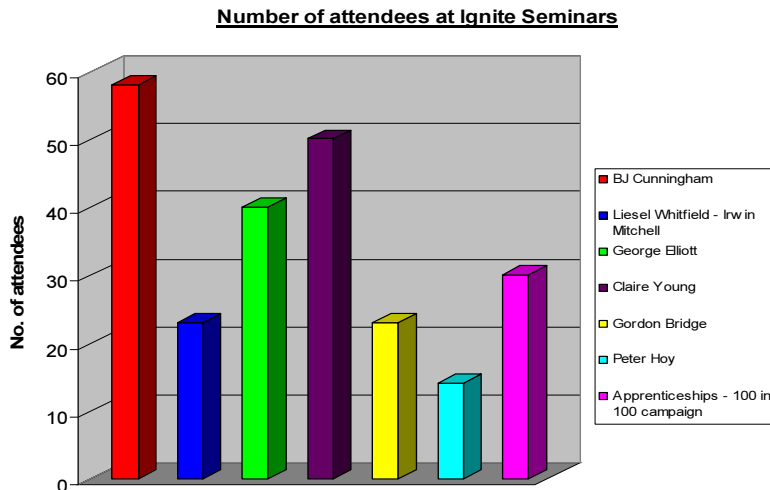
The event was incredibly successful, with 517 delegates pre-registering with Business Link through the Rotherham Means Business website and a total of 486 who attended, 112 of those choosing to register on the day. Delegates attended from across Rotherham, South Yorkshire and some came from even further afield, demonstrating the appeal and need for such an event.



### **Seminar Programme**

Two purpose built seminar rooms were constructed in Magna's main hall, one for Meet the Buyer and one for the Ignite section. Each room could hold up to 120 delegates and ran a packed seminar programme throughout the day. Seminars offered thought provoking presentations from a great range of experienced and some local speakers who shared their knowledge and expertise on a variety of different business related subjects.

All the ignite seminars had a good attendance, with some proving particularly popular. The keynote speaker BJ Cunningham seemed a particular favourite and achieved the highest delegate attendance, however the overall programme received a great response.



Below are some of the quotes received from delegates who shared their thoughts on the seminar programme:

*“The Customer service seminar was excellent and inspiring! BJ Cunningham was humorous, interesting and a great start”.*

*“Gordon Bridge is an inspirational local man - nice chap”*

### **Exhibitors**

In total there were 36 exhibitors at the event. The main hall at Magna was split into three different zones; Enterprise and start up, Business to Business and Meet the Buyer. Ignite had 24 exhibitors, to name but a few:

- NHS – Mind your own Business
- Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- Rotherham Youth Enterprise
- Voluntary Action Rotherham
- Park Inn Rotherham
- The Junction
- Bull Information Systems
- Business Link

Meet the Buyer had 12 public sector exhibitors which gave local businesses an opportunity to discuss how to trade with the sector, find contract opportunities and how to bid on upcoming contracts. Meet the Buyer exhibitors were:

Rotherham Council Procurement & Commissioning  
Yorkshire Gold Business Club  
Sheffield Hallam University  
Dearne Valley College  
YORbuild  
Wilmott Dixon  
Construction Network  
Rotherham General Hospital Trust  
South Yorkshire Police  
South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue  
Sheffield Council/Buy4Sheffield  
NPS Barnsley (Barnsley Council)

An Ignite exhibitor feedback poll took place halfway through the event to capture their thoughts on the event. The responses were extremely positive, 95% of those asked thought the event was a success, 86% had already achieved their aims for exhibiting at the event before midday and 82% felt the event had been great value for money.

Exhibitors were also asked if they would have done anything differently. A number of constructive criticisms were received, however this was a small amount in comparison to the number of overall exhibitors.

The top answers received were: Catering, stand location, increased footfall and more stands.

Exhibitor Mark Slater of Bull Information Systems said *“The event was extremely well attended and gave us a great opportunity to showcase what we do. As an IT Solutions provider in the region we are keen to work further with Public and private sector businesses in Rotherham and this event raised our profile greatly”*.

## **Final Budget Overview**

<b>Income</b>	
Sponsors	£12,000.00
Event Partners Business Link	£3,000.00
Exhibitors – 17 paid stands	£8,400.00
ERDF Funding	£2,457.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£25,857.00</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>	
AV, Shell Scheme	£10,481.00
Other	£47.00
Event Photography	£297.00
Marketing	£420.00
Speakers	£5,396.00
Supporting Materials	£3,786.00
Telesales	£750.00
Venue & Catering Costs	£4,680.00
Website	£0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£25,857.00</b>

As can be seen from the above information, the event was delivered at no expense to Council Tax payers.

## **Delegate Feedback**

Disappointingly only 12 delegate feedback forms were completed and returned despite forms being in every delegate pack. This outcome was predicted by RESComm, as this has been the case at previous events, and so an exit poll was also undertaken. Exit polls were completed by 96 delegates on leaving the event. This covered the following four questions:

1. **Which sector are you from?** - 95% of the delegates worked in the private sector which was the key target for the event.
2. **Where is your business based?** – Like the full delegate list, the exit poll indicated the biggest part of attendees came from Rotherham followed by Sheffield, Doncaster, Other and Barnsley.

### 3. What was most useful for you today?

- 36% - Networking
- 25% - Stands
- 25% - Meet the Buyer
- 8% - Other
- 6% - Speakers

### 4. What difference will attending the event make to your business? Some of the responses are found below:

*"It's given me an opportunity to contact businesses I'm not working with at the moment & potentially increase my customers"*

*"Its given me the opportunity of going back to organisations that you have put me in touch with & work together with them, and also stop me feeling so isolated"*

Of the delegate feedback forms received, the following results were achieved:

- 100% thought the event was relevant to them
- 100% thought the event had met their expectations
- 83% said that the event had given them the confidence to progress their ideas further

The feedback received also provided some suggested improvements if the event was to be run again, such as:

*"Make the event 10 - 2 pm; it will make it easier to network"*

*"Repeating the seminars would have been good"*

### **Lessons Learnt**

Obviously we also received constructive comments on how we could have improved the event. Feedback from delegates, exhibitors, sponsors staff and the 'After show' Rotherham Enterprise Show Committee meeting has produced a list of lessons learnt that can be drawn upon to consider for a future event.

The lessons learnt are;

- Improvements made to the sponsorship package for example; sponsorship of individual items such as seminars/delegate packs, more prominent logos on presentations, more value for money for sponsors.
- A bigger networking/café area available for delegates as this proved very popular throughout the day.
- Development of a tiering system for stands which includes different sizes and prices available for different types of business and locations. Possible free stands for new start up businesses.
- Consider alternative venues, Magna was very popular with delegates and exhibitors but possibly too large and expensive for future events.
- Utilise the expertise of a telesales marketing team at the beginning of the project to sell sponsorship packages, and exhibitor spaces and raise the

overall profile of the event to large and small size business across the borough and surrounding sub-region.

- Look at the possibility of repeating the speaker programme from the morning in the afternoon, or possibly having a shorter seminar programme as the seminars in late afternoon had the lowest attendance figures.
- Consider different event opening / closing times i.e.: start earlier / finish earlier with a lunch break in the middle to encourage more networking opportunities and to reduce a low footfall in the late afternoon.
- Better known and more local business speakers.
- Enlarged printed versions of the speaker programme available outside the seminar room.
- Dignitaries list available prior to event.
- Advertise the event to delegates from the wider sub-region earlier in the planning stage.
- Clear lines of responsibility and authorisation in terms of the budget and organising the event.

Since the event press releases have been created and sent out to media partners along with several articles in the Rotherham Advertiser highlighting the successful outcome of the day. Additionally there will be a full page article in the May / June edition of the South Yorkshire Business magazine.

The Rotherham Means Business website is currently being updated with event photos, post event press releases and quotes from delegates and exhibitors and will continue being updated on the progress of any further event. The website link will then be sent to all the events delegates, sponsors, partners and exhibitors to create further interest in the future.

Please see below some of the fantastic quotes we received about Rotherham Means Business 2011:

*“The event was just what I needed to give me a boost and get my business mojo back, thanks”.*

*“I have created more business opportunities, enhanced opportunities and met loads of people – excellent!”*

*“The event was a fantastic idea for new businesses like mine; I wouldn’t hesitate to go again next year”.*



**Project Part-Financed  
by the European Union**

**European Regional  
Development Fund**