Sswap Wins IDEAFEST 2019

Sswap, an innovative platform for students looking to swap or cancel their tenancy agreement in university halls accommodation, scooped the prestigious top prize of £1,000 plus professional mentoring at the Final of the 2019 IDEAFEST Student Business Idea Competition.

The Final, held on 24 April 2019, was closely contested by six teams of students presenting their business idea to a panel of judges and an excited crowd of over 40 audience members. After much deliberation the judges were unanimous in awarding the victory to Sswap, submitted by MSc Entrepreneurship students Ezequiel Anibal, Amer Nahouli and Debby Chau, and the team were presented their award by Dennis Lee, one of the judging panel and a Partner at IDEAFEST sponsors BDB Pitmans.

The Sswap team receiving their award from Dennis Lee

Following the announcement of the winners, Debby commented: “IDEAFEST was an outstanding platform to nurture our entrepreneurial mindset and skills. Winning the competition opens us doors to the right people at the right time, who can help us leverage and commercialise our business idea.”

The second place award went to Lizz Wilden, Yan Yang and Fabian Cardozo for their idea WakeSense, a device aiming to reduce fatigue related motor and machine operation accidents by monitoring brainwaves to check how awake the wearer is. Third place went to Max Hawksworth, Rhett Galvin and Harry Kirby for their idea of Kungfu Vintage, an online clothing retailer selling unique and vintage pre-used branded sportswear, casual attire and designer pieces from sellers all over the globe for low prices.

In the other categories, the winner of the Most Innovative Business Idea was WakeSense and the winners of the Henley MBA Student China Entrepreneurship Bursary were WakeSense and Thousand Years Tea.

IDEAFEST received 31 applications this year, making it the most popular the competition has ever been. The other finalists were:

Blanc and Bears, a clothing company targeted towards 18 to 25 year olds that are looking for affordable but stylish brands.

EMTBZA, a Blockchain technology distributed ledger application for managing and monitoring appropriate use of the extended loans and aid money.

Waterreserve, a company that manufactures internally mounted water storage tanks that connect to the user’s mains, ensuring that customers have water when water supply is lost to the area.

For more information, read the full news release at: https://www.henley.ac.uk/news/2019/sswap-scoops-top-prize-to-win-ideafest-business-idea-competition-2019

IDEAFEST is sponsored and supported by BDB Pitmans and Renal Services.
HCfE Opens New Entrepreneurship Hub for Students

In October 2018 HCfE announced the opening of its Entrepreneurship Hub, a shared space open to students looking to develop their business ideas whilst either studying on their entrepreneurship modules or participating in entrepreneurial competitions.

By using the Hub, located in room 273 of the Edith Morley building, students have access to shared IT facilities, office space and lockers, as well as the opportunity to make connections with other students that are aspiring entrepreneurs. Students used the Hub to work on their IDEAFEST entries and following student feedback the Hub was renovated in January 2019, including a full wall mural designed by Angela Luchembe, a student on the MA Creative Enterprise (Art) course.

Entrepreneurship Hub mural, designed by Angela Luchembe

Harry Good-Stephenson, a BA Entrepreneurship student and regular user of the Hub, said: “The Entrepreneurship Hub has helped me to build and grow my business exponentially whilst still studying at the University of Reading. It has provided me with the opportunity to work alongside likeminded entrepreneurial students, who strive to make a difference in the business world.”

To find out about applying for the Hub, visit room 270 of the Edith Morley building, Whiteknights campus, to collect an application form.

Entrepreneurship Vibes 2018 Event Attracts Over 100 Students

HCfE hosted the inaugural Entrepreneurship Vibes event on 23 October, attracting an audience of over 100 students interested in finding out more about the entrepreneurial initiatives offered.

Prof Andrew Godley, the Academic Director of HCfE, opened the event by emphasising the importance of “putting entrepreneurship into practice,” even for students studying a course outside of Henley Business School. He was followed by Jurek Sikorski, the Executive Director of HCfE, who gave the assembled students an overview about the IDEAFEST Student Business Idea Competition 2019, and Harry Good-Stephenson, who spoke about his role as the President of the Entrepreneurship Society.

Jurek Sikorski presenting to the packed audience of students

Students then participated in Dr Lebene Soga’s launch of the E-Buddy Programme, a networking session for students to forge connections to other aspiring entrepreneurs by sharing ideas and pledging to attend events together. The event concluded with a talk by Tim Brownstone, a University of Reading alumnus and CEO of wearable technology company KYMIRA. Tim shared his experiences of how he started KYMIRA, coming from a background of biological science rather than business.

Festival of Digital Disruption Makes Waves with Local Students

Jurek Sikorski, representing HCfE and Henley Business Angels, was invited to the Festival of Digital Disruption to speak on the Creative Ways to Fund panel on 22 November 2018, which focused on the stories behind how business founders of exciting tech companies managed to find funding.

Jurek was joined on the panel by several speakers, including Tim Brownstone, the CEO of KYMIRA, and Rhian Burrell, the CEO of Osokey. The Festival, which was sponsored by Henley Business School, was held between 21-23 November 2018 and attracted 600 young people, engaging them with the pathways and opportunities that new technologies can provide businesses. Other notable events led by the Festival included the launch of the Thames Valley 50 Game Changers, the Tech for Good Conference and a Fashtech challenge where local schools pitched their ideas for the wearable technology fashions of the future.

Tim Brownstone and Rhian Burrell at the Creative Ways to Fund panel
Louize Clarke, the co-creator of the Festival and Director of Connect TVT, said: “We had start-up founders, investors and the next generation of developers and entrepreneurs all sharing their ideas and stories. By making Reading and the surrounding area a true digital destination we will attract more people to come and work here and inspire the next generation into careers with the region’s tech companies.”

The 2019 Festival of Digital Disruption will be held between 20-22 November. To find out more about the Festival of Digital Disruption, go to their website: https://www.fodd.co.uk/

Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp 2019 Open to Aspiring Entrepreneurs

The upcoming Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp 2019, a week-long workshop open to students and local entrepreneurs to help them develop a business from scratch, will be held on 24-28 June 2019 in room G15 of the Henley Business School building, Whiteknights campus.

Applications to sign up for the Boot Camp are online here: https://www.henley.ac.uk/summerstartupbootcamp


The Boot Camp is sponsored by Santander Universities and Nominet:

Students Praise the Experience of Visiting Wroclaw and Moscow

Between 8-12 April 2019 Henley Business School Masters’ students visited the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) University to join with MGIMO student teams pitching at their annual business idea competition.

The trip was organised by Prof Olga Khotyasheva, the Director of the MGIMO Business Incubator, and in addition to the Masters’ students was attended by Jurek Sikorski, the Executive Director of HCIE, Dr Maks Belitski, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship, Prof Yelena Kalyuzhnova, Vice Dean (International), and Natalya Radko, a Leadership, Organisations and Behaviour PhD student.

The aforementioned Henley Business School visitors sat on the judging panel alongside Katarina Tamarina, last year’s competition winner and the founder of fashion leisure and sport brand Kennedys. The winner of this year’s competition was Grigorii Sorokin, a first year MGIMO student. Grigorii’s idea was TalentsGo, a matchmaker platform that connects employers offering internships and projects with university students. As reward for winning, Grigorii is invited to the UK to attend the upcoming Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp.

Grigorii Sorokin and the Henley Business School delegates

Commenting on the visit, Yelena said: “It was another successful project with our strategic partner MGIMO. We all had a fantastic international week. It was especially great to see co-operation between Henley and MGIMO students.”

Following the visit to Moscow, Prof Khotyasheva and the Henley Business School delegates went onto Almaty to launch the first international IDEAFEST Competition at the Kazakh-British Technical University (KBTU).

The launch, which took place on 16 April 2019, was part of the participation at the KBCC Creative Industries Symposium, sponsored by the British Council under the Creative Spark project. Hosted by Prof Gulzada Shakulikova, Vice-Rector of KBTU, and Dr Dinara Keshubayeva, Head of Research Department at Karmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory, the IDEAFEST judging panel included Uakhat Bastimiyev, the founder and CEO of local start-up Verigram, and both Jurek and Natalya from the Henley Business School delegates.

The first round of IDEAFEST KBTU had five student teams shortlisted and the winner selected by the judges was Aron Karatayev, an engineering student at KBTU. Aron’s idea was called Sanorak, a smart wearable solar panel device for charging mobile phones, and the judges were impressed by his prototype and ingenuity. Aron was awarded the prize of a place at the Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp in the UK.

IDEAFEST KBTU Winner Aron Karatayev receiving his award
After receiving his award Aron said: “I’m really pleased to have won this round and very excited to visit the UK and learn how to turn my project into a business.”

The second round of IDEAFEST KBTU will take place in May, at which point a second winner will be selected to join Aron at the Boot Camp. Further IDEAFEST competitions will be launched internationally later in the year, with Ukraine scheduled next.

Additionally, a group of 40 postgraduate students on the Entrepreneurship Project and International Human Resources Management modules went on a study visit to the city of Wroclaw in Poland, co-ordinated by Keith Heron and Dr Liz Houldsworth.

The trip covered from 1-5 April 2019 and featured Henley Business School students attending several talks on aspects of business, meeting entrepreneurs to deepen their understandings of business operations and collaborating with students from the Wroclaw University of Economics.

Amer Nahouli, an MSc Entrepreneurship (Leadership) student who attended the study visit, commented: “This trip gave us hands-on, real-life consultancy experience by giving us the chance to engage and consult entrepreneurs who already have established their business. Our main objective in these consultations was to help entrepreneurs find a sustainable way to monetise, commercialise, and develop a new marketing strategy to take their operations into the next level."

University of Reading Team Wins ‘Environment’ Category of Young Entrepreneurs Scheme 2018

On 11 December 2018 a team of four University of Reading Early Career Researchers (ECRs), supported and mentored by Henley Centre for Entrepreneurship, the Knowledge Transfer Centre and VitalSix, grouped together to win the 2018 Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES) ‘Environment’ category.

The team was made up of Simona Grasso and Natalie Masento, who are both Postdoctoral Research Assistants with the Institute for Food, Nutrition and Health, Andrew Goodall, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow from the School of Agriculture, and Esmie Wescott, a PhD student from the School of Chemistry. The team conceptualised a company known as ‘MooFree’, who use genetically modified yeast to produce dairy products, and were invited to the YES 2018 Final, held at the Royal Society, after impressing the judges at the ‘Plant, Microbial and Environmental’ themed workshop, hosted by Syngenta on 17-19 October 2018.

Reflecting on winning the competition, Andrew said: “Taking part in YES 2018 was a fantastic experience and showed us what goes on behind the scenes when commercialising scientific ideas. The transferable skills and knowledge we have gained will be useful in our future careers and are something that we wouldn’t have been exposed to without this competition.”

University Executive Board Approve Establishment of Henley Co-Fund

On 25 February 2019 the Investment Committee of the University board agreed to a significant investment in the Henley Co-Fund, established to invest alongside Henley Business Angels.

A steering committee including FSE Group acting as Co-Fund Manager has been set up to progress actions planned and previously approved by the UoR Executive Board.

Marketing of the Henley Co-Fund to potential investors will commence in the summer. The Henley Co-Fund is timetabled to become active and ready to invest from early 2020.

HCfE Delivers New ‘Winning at Customer Development’ Masterclass

HCfE’s Executive Director Jurek Sikorski delivered the ‘Winning at Customer Development’ Masterclass on 17 October 2018 to an audience of 20 delegates from 17 early stage companies. This masterclass was the first of eight that make up the Eagle Lab Flight Accelerator Programme, launched at the Innovation Catalyst a partnership between Barclays Eagle Labs, Henley Business School, Thames Valley Science Park and VitalSix.

Jurek had the delegates engage in an exercise to create a ‘sales value proposition’ and spoke about how learning selling skills is essential for any customer facing staff, with a sales strategy which
defines how selling activities are to be organised equally as important. Jurek’s talk was followed by Jim Malone, the VP of Worldwide Sales at Reading-based monitoring software company Opsview, who shared his insight into how Opsview is achieving greater than 90% renewal rates by focusing on the longer term value of the customer, as well as the opportunity and profitability of upselling and cross-selling in the future. Jim elaborated by exploring the strategies Opsview has implemented to build customer loyalty, including operating a customer success team and creating a customer value programme and user community.

Delegates were pleased with the workshop. Sagi Barkay, CEO of Dognostica, said: “I was most impressed by Jurek’s explanation on how we should truly listen to the customers and understand what they need and only then try to emphasise how our product answers to those needs. It was also great to hear that the customer is looking to buy an experience and not just a product.”

**HCfE Celebrate Move to New Offices**

On 23 November 2018 HCfE staff gathered to celebrate their recent office relocation and discuss both recent successes and upcoming initiatives over mince pies and refreshments.

Following the room moves the majority of HCfE staff are now based on a single corridor in the Edith Morley building, allowing for closer collaboration.

Prof Andrew Godley, the Academic Director of HCfE, spoke highly about how well staff have adapted to the move and outlined some of the major success stories, including the opening of the Entrepreneurship Hub and HCfE’s recognition from the European Quality Improvement System (ECQIS) accreditation body.

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**HCfE Staff and Students Speak on Reading Scholars Programme**

On 2 April 2019 three Henley Business School students, Harry Good-Stephenson, Alex Christou and Charlie Reeve, spoke on the topic of “What is Entrepreneurship?” to an audience of Year Twelve students from local schools and colleges as part of the Reading Scholars programme.

The Reading Scholars event was kicked off by Jurek Sikorski, the Executive Director of HCfE, who talked about the entrepreneurship initiatives the University of Reading offers to students. Alex then spoke about his web development agency and the challenges and opportunities faced when running a business before graduating, whilst Charlie told the students about the country clothing brand which he has started this year. Harry rounded off the talk by providing a different perspective, describing how he has taken over a part of his family business.

Harry said: “It was a pleasure to speak to such an enthusiastic bunch, who showed a real interest in entrepreneurship.”

To find out more about the Reading Scholars Programme, visit their website: https://www.reading.ac.uk/teachers-and-advisors/events-and-activities/ta-readingscholars.aspx

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**Ukrainian and Georgian Academics Meet HCfE for British Council’s Creative Spark Project**

A group of visitors from the Kyiv National Economic University and the Business and Technology University of Tbilisi were invited to Henley Business School in February 2019 to work alongside HCfE on the British Council’s Creative Spark Project.

The purpose of the visit was to study the experience of Henley Business School in developing academic entrepreneurship and the role of the University of Reading in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The visitors were given a tour of the Thames Valley Science Park, worked on a case study on navigating changes in business activities and met with Prof Andrew Godley, Academic Director of HCfE, Jurek Sikorski, Executive Director of HCfE, and Dr Maks Belitski, Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Maks said: “The delegates had a unique opportunity to get to know all the HCfE activities, such as the Start-Up Boot Camps, IDEA FEST and more. By studying HCfE’s success as a hub of creativity, resourcefulness and innovation in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, they can implement the ideas themselves to further the concept of an entrepreneurial university.”

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HCFE Hosts Visitors from Nigerian Film Industry

On 25 February 2019 HCFE was pleased to host a group of Nigerian film industry experts from the creative hub Afrinolly, as part of the British Council’s Nigeria Creative Enterprise Support Programme.

The visit was co-ordinated as a follow up to an earlier trip to Lagos by HCFE’s Academic Director, Prof Andrew Godley, where he offered entrepreneurial insights to actors and producers in ‘Nollywood’, Nigeria’s thriving film industry. For the subsequent UK visit Prof Godley delivered a talk exploring avenues of collaborations with UK counterparts in the creative industry, Dr Lebene Soga, Lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Leadership, led a mentoring session and Jurek Sikorski, the Executive Director of HCFE, spoke to the visitors about angel investment.

Prof Godley said: ‘The Nigerian film and media sector has an enormous pool of talent, but needs some support in identifying how to improve access to financing and market intelligence. I am delighted that we are working together with them to be able to deliver a dramatic improvement to their entrepreneurial ecosystem from now onwards.’

Researchers Gather to Share Insights into Entrepreneurship Ecosystems

On 5 April 2019 HCFE held the seventh Reading-UNCTAD International Business Conference in April 2019, organised in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and funded by the British Council.

Dr Maks Belitski ran a session to increase understanding in how entrepreneurial culture, actors, organisation, financial resource providers and entrepreneurs build strong entrepreneurship ecosystems world-wide. The session was punctuated with guest speakers, including: Dr Ben Spigel, a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship at Edinburgh Business School; Nada Khachlouf, Associate Professor in Entrepreneurship and Strategy at ICD Business School in France; Dr Pınar Büyükbalei, Associate Professor of Management from Yıldız Technical University in Turkey; Prof Andrew Godley, the Academic Director of HCFE; and Dr Irina Heim, a recent PhD graduate from Henley Business School.

Maks said: “The session was structured around open-ended debates with an explicit focus on conceptual and theoretical developments in international entrepreneurship ecosystems. Findings allow for re-considering the applicability of current entrepreneurship ecosystem frameworks for entrepreneurship in developed and developing economies.”

Dr John Cavill Appointed as a Visiting Fellow

The Henley Business School’s Resources Committee has awarded Dr John Cavill, a Henley Business School alumnus of the DBA programme, the title of Visiting Fellow, joining both Andrew Gaule and Tim Brownstone.

John has been involved with Henley Business School since the mid-1980s, when he was a regular guest speaker on the Business Acumen Programme at Henley Management College. John completed his DBA in 2012 and wrote his thesis, titled ‘An investigation into the competences, characteristics and process factors associated with the performance of entrepreneurial top management teams in UK high-growth SMEs’.

John set up and ran the Henley Business Accelerator Programme as Programme Director, before handing over the course administration to VitalSix, and he continues to lecture on Growth Entrepreneurship and coach students. John is a judge on IDEAFEST, has chaired a session at the first Brittelstand Symposium and attended and supported numerous Henley Business Angels events.

Business Idea Clinic Sees Huge Growth in Demand from Students

The HCFE-led Business Idea Clinic, which supports University of Reading and Henley Business School students looking to get expert advice on a business idea, has recorded its highest ever booking figures, reaching a total of 21 appointments over the 2018/19 autumn semester.

The booking numbers are up 75% compared to the 2017/18 autumn semester, with the Clinic’s spike in popularity coming on the heels of the launch of the 2019 IDEAFEST Student Business Idea Competition, the opening of the Entrepreneurship Hub and the Entrepreneurship Vibes 2018 event. Sessions are held every Wednesday with Jurek Sikorski, Executive Director of HCFE and students can book an appointment by emailing Alex Baker on a.j.baker@henley.ac.uk

Dr Irina Heim presenting to the delegates
Find out more about the Business Idea Clinic at [https://www.henley.ac.uk/research/research-centres/henley-centre-for-entrepreneurship/henley-centre-for-entrepreneurship-business-idea-clinic](https://www.henley.ac.uk/research/research-centres/henley-centre-for-entrepreneurship/henley-centre-for-entrepreneurship-business-idea-clinic)

**HCfE Lead ‘Dragons’ Den’ with Dr Ashley Dabson**

On 19 March 2019 a group of Henley Business School Real Estate and Planning undergraduate students took part in a Dragons’ Den event, organised by both HCfE and Dr Ashley Dabson from the Real Estate and Planning department at Henley Business School.

The students worked in groups to pitch their ideas for a property-related business. Ideas included an events company targeted at the elderly, a combined bar and restaurant in a floating shipping container and a net type screen that to be used for advertising on scaffolding.

Expressing his appreciation to the Dragons, Ashley said: “Thank you for making this the most enjoyable university event of the year for me. I have never had such a positive student feedback from this or any other event that I have been involved in.”

**HCfE Hosts First ScaleUp Berkshire Programme Peer to Peer Event**

On 5 February 2019, HCfE hosted the first in a series of peer-to-peer networking events for scale-up businesses in Berkshire, led by ScaleUp Berkshire and attended by CEOs and founders of dynamic scale-up businesses from across Berkshire, including Fantoo, Universal Networks and ComXo.

Scale Up Berkshire is a specialist support programme for leaders of ambitious scale-up businesses with an annual turnover of over £1 million and 20% annual growth. The programme brings scale-up experts together to create a better-connected and visible scale-up ecosystem in the county and help generate further growth.

Peter Fleming, the Scale Up Partner at ScaleUp Berkshire, explained: “The objective of these networking events is to provide an exclusive forum for founders of scale-up businesses to share ideas, learn what works and build mutually beneficial relationships with other leaders. This first event was a great way to kick-off the programme.”

**HCfE Supports University of Reading Technology Society’s Hackathon Event**

RU Hacking, the University of Reading’s student-led technology society, led a 24 hour Hackathon event on 16-17 February 2019 in the Henley Business School building to approximately 100 students.

The Hackathon, now in its second year and an official member event of the Major League Hacking group, was hosted and supported by HCfE. The theme of the Hackathon was focused on social benefit and using ‘IT for good’, with students responding to the challenges set by sponsors by using creative problem solving to implement IT solutions.

Andrejus Kostarevas, the society’s president, said: “Students were encouraged to use the weekend to pick up new skills, both technical and soft, and take their projects from concept to reality. The event encouraged attendees to work on their ideas and build solutions that can potentially grow into businesses.”

To see more about the Hackathon, watch the YouTube video of the event here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I0qKpm4VQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I0qKpm4VQ&feature=youtu.be)
Entrepreneurship Society Leads Several Events for Students

Reading Entrepreneurs, the University of Reading’s Entrepreneurship Society, have led a series of successful events over the last six months to engage students.

On 11 October 2018 the Society led a ‘Meet the Committee’ event, where new members that had signed up from the Entrepreneurship Society’s Freshers’ Fayre stall could get to know the other members in a ‘speed networking’ arrangement.

This was followed up with two talks: the first took place on 27 November 2018 and featured Piers Rudgard-Redsell, Partner and Creative Designer at Honey Partnership. Piers spoke about his experiences in China and how they helped shape his entrepreneurial mindset. The second talk, on 5 December 2018, featured local investor and serial entrepreneur Richard Irvine, who told the story of his entrepreneurial journey.

Additionally, Reading Entrepreneurs held a workshop titled ‘How to Win IDEAFEST’ on 5 February 2019 which featured Jonas Tusar from the 2018 winners, Norma. Jonas gave his perspective on how he created a successful business plan to impress the IDEAFEST judges and offered some handy hints for students considering entering IDEAFEST themselves.

To read more about Reading Entrepreneurs and their upcoming events, visit their website: http://www.ruentre.com/

Henley Business Angels Revamp Website and Grow Membership

Working in tandem with web design company MakeHoney, Henley Business Angels have completed a rebranding of their website.

Taking on board feedback from members and applying companies, the HBA website is now easier to navigate and features summaries of each of the companies that HBA members have invested in, along with testimonials from both members and entrepreneurs about their experiences working with HBA.

Jurek Sikorski, the Director of HBA, said: “The refreshed website has a new clean look, is easier to navigate and carries more resources and news for the member and entrepreneur.”

Additionally, Reading Entrepreneurs gathered for talk with Piers Rudgard-Redsell

Finally, Henley Business Angels gathered for talk with Piers Rudgard-Redsell

To find out more about R U Hacking, go to their website here: https://www.ruhacking.me/

Are you a business leader, successful entrepreneur or self-certified investor? If so, we would be interested to talk with you about joining Henley Business Angels

Members enjoy significant benefits, including access to investment in carefully selected early stage companies with high growth potential, engagement with the University in collaboration and networking with other HBA members working together in areas of mutual interest.

This is what one HBA member and senior executive at an IT company had to say about why he joined and how he has benefitted:

“Joining Henley Business Angels has given me a unique opportunity to meet some of the brightest entrepreneurs in the Thames Valley and hear the exciting and innovative ideas for which they are seeking funding. I have had the privilege of discussing these in detail and have been able to provide my own perspective and support to help them get to the next level of growth and funding. Over the past year of involvement, I have personally invested in three separate and very different start-up enterprises, each with a novel proposition and disruptive approach to their markets. I look forward to continuing my involvement with the group and helping further young enterprises realise their full potential.”

For a private conversation about HBA and becoming a member, contact Jurek Sikorski, founder and Director of HBA, at jurek.sikorski@henley.ac.uk
If you are interested in becoming a member of HBA, read more at http://henleybusinessangels.com/investors/

HBA Members Invest in Several New Companies

Henley Business Angels is thrilled to announce that a total of four new companies have received investment from HBA members within the last six months.

Crypta Labs, an innovative Internet of Things security company, has raised £1.5m of funding, with one Henley Business Angels member participating in the funding round.

Justin Roberts, the Chief Commercial Officer of Crypta Labs, said: “We are extremely grateful for the support from HBA at this stage of our development. The potential market for our QRNG technology could be trillions of connected devices given the need for portable, cost efficient, fast and robust hardware security that does not currently exist in the market today.”

Lein Applied Diagnostics, a company that specialises in innovative and precise optical technology, received investment from two members of the Henley Business Angels after closing their latest funding round.

Dan Daly, the company’s CEO, said: “This is the second time we’ve worked with HBA to support our fundraising, both times very successfully. As we push the commercialisation of our meters, the ongoing support of our investor network is invaluable.”

Open Blend, a company that has created software to facilitate coaching-led one to ones in the workplace, have raised a total of £250k of funding, with two Henley Business Angels members contributing to the funding round.

Anna Rasmussen, the founder of Open Blend, commented: “We are using the funds to drive the growth of the business, including the growth of the team, product development and marketing activity.”

Superfood Bakery, a company that makes gluten-free dairy-free baking mixes and snacks, have closed their £240k round that includes investment from one member of Henley Business Angels.

Tania Vynokurova, the company’s founder and CEO, commented: “Thank you to HBA for making the introductions. The funds are being used to support new and existing retail listings and launch a new product range.”

HBA Announces Sponsorship Agreement with Clarks Legal

Henley Business Angels (HBA) is delighted to welcome leading Thames Valley commercial law firm, Clarkslegal LLP, as a new sponsor.

As part of the sponsorship Clarkslegal will be supporting HBA’s various initiatives, including the quarterly company presentation events and the Investment Readiness Workshops, along with helping HBA support entrepreneurs looking to raise funds.

Ashan Arif, Partner at Clarkslegal, said: “We are delighted with the link up with Henley Business Angels, which has grown fantastically well over its relatively short life. As a firm, we are committed to providing expert support to entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs, and working with HBA is further demonstration of this commitment.”

Rotolight Secures Major Financial Investment

Rod Gammons, an alumnus of Henley Business School’s MBA programme and Managing Director of Rotolight, has announced that the company have secured £5 million of equity investment from the Development Capital team at Octopus Investments.

Rotolight are a world leader in LED lighting for the photography and filmmaking industries, with its professional studio lighting products used by the BBC, ITV, EA Sports and Disney. The company have an IP portfolio of over 50 patents and have made sales in over 40 countries around the world.

Rod Gammons (left), with fellow Rotolight board members

Rod said: “Without my Henley Executive MBA, this would never have happened. It is an extremely exciting moment for us and a great British manufacturing success story, with the investment...”
**KYMIRA Receives Recognition from Kairos Society and Appoints Chairman**

Smart textile company KYMIRA, founded by University of Reading alumnus and Visiting Fellow Tim Brownstone, have been named by the Kairos Society as one of the world’s most innovative seed stage companies founded by a young entrepreneur.

The Kairos Society counts more than a thousand members around the world and has raised over $3 billion for enterprises. Their highly selective program identifies the best global entrepreneurs who are going to shape the world.

Tim Brownstone, CEO and founder of KYMIRA, commented: "The list of firms nominated is an impressive who’s who of leading entrepreneurial businesses from across the world. The kind of advice, investment and profile this scheme can offer participating companies will be invaluable."

Additionally, on 4 April 2019 KYMIRA announced that Jurek Sikorski, the Director of Henley Business Angels, was appointed as their new Chairman. Jurek’s appointment will help Tim build the business with his experience in the industry of medical devices, as KYMIRA aim to expand their electrocardiogram and foetal monitoring projects.

**Sung Kim, CEO of QOOQn, Shares Impact of HCfE’s Endorsement**

Sung Kim, the CEO of online catering and meal sharing business QOOQn and an alumnus of Henley Business School’s MSc Entrepreneurship course, has spoken of how HCfE’s support has helped her turn her business idea into a reality.

The idea for QOOQn developed when Sung took the New Venture Startup module for her course and after graduating she wanted to stay in the UK to develop her business. She now has offices in the Start-Up Business Incubator at the Thames Valley Science Park.

Sung said: “HCfE endorsed me when I applied for a Graduate Entrepreneur visa and supported me with everything from office space to professional consultancy and mentoring. QOOQn’s aim is to be the AirBnB for food; it works by pre-ordering a homemade meal, with a time and a pickup point of the customer’s choice. The company aims to expand its customers from university students to professional staff working in offices. We also plan to expand our service from online orders to a home-made meal catering business for universities, office events and private functions.”

HCfE have booked QOOQn to cater for several events, including the 2019 IDEAFEST Final, the Henley Business Angels Company Presentations and the 2018 Summer Start-Up Boot Camp.

To find out more about QOOQn and order food from them, go to www.qooqn.com to place an online meal order.

**Henley Business School Alumnus Lottie Watts Reveals Benefits of Mentoring**

Lottie Watts, an alumnus of Henley Business School’s BSc Real Estate course, has been receiving mentoring from HCfE’s Executive Director, Jurek Sikorski. Now several months on, she shares her experiences of being a young entrepreneur and the support that HCfE have provided along her journey…

"Studying BSc Real Estate at the University of Reading and achieving a First Class degree has provided me with a solid foundation of technical knowledge and confidence in my ability to enter the real estate industry. After graduating I started working for my family business, Construction and Real Estate Limited, encompassing property management, maintenance, development and refurbishment for both commercial and residential buildings. We are a growing business looking for both new clients to invest in development opportunities and we are also looking to increase our management portfolio with new clients.

“Being a part of the Henley Business School is being part of a community for life and being mentored by Jurek in the transition from graduating to assisting in running a business has been invaluable, as he has helped me create a plan to grow the business.

“Jurek has given me specific advice on how to achieve my goals, such as creating an online presence, methods to meet new clients and how to manage staff. It has been a steep learning curve since I graduated but I absolutely love being involved in with the sharp end of running a business and I am very excited for my future and the future of Construction and Real Estate.”

**HCfE Faculty Announcements**

HCfE is pleased to announce that Dr Lebene Soga was selected as the winner of the RUSU Excellence Teaching Award for Henley Business School. Lebene was praised for his interactive lectures and the way in which he “teaches using real-life examples”.

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Henley Business School students sampling QOOQn’s range of food.
Congratulations also to Parisa Baig on being awarded her PhD on institutional entrepreneurship in Dubai (supervised by Andrew Godley and Maks Belitski) in January 2019. Parisa has since joined LOB faculty as a Postdoctoral research fellow in entrepreneurship.

Additionally, all members of HCfE wish Dr Marrisa Joseph and Dr Adeyinka Adewale well for their first steps into parenthood. Marrisa gave birth to Theo Joseph-Knights and Adeyinka is the proud father of ImisiOluwa Iva Adewale.

News Call

The Editor welcomes articles and news items of interest from faculty, students and staff on any topic related to entrepreneurship for publication in HCfE News. News items should be emailed to Alex Baker, the Newsletter Editor, at a.j.baker@henley.ac.uk

Advertisements

Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp

Ever thought about starting your own business from scratch, but lacked the confidence or know-how? If so, the Henley Summer Start-Up Boot Camp can help!

The Boot Camp is a week-long, hands-on course led by the PopUp Business School, designed to give students and local budding entrepreneurs the tools they need to set up a business from the ground up. It runs from 24-28 June 2019 in room G15 of the Henley Business School building, Whiteknights campus.