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**Grant Thornton**

**Umph! schools business competition attracts record entries**



A record number of students from schools and colleges across Yorkshire have signed up to compete in this year's Umph! business and enterprise competition. The contest, which takes place at Huddersfield's John Smith's Stadium on 2 July, is now fully subscribed, although four-strong teams of 16-19-year-old Yorkshire students can still enter via the Umph! website at [www.umph.co.uk](http://www.umph.co.uk) to secure a place on the competition's reserve list.

A line up of entrepreneurs, including Andy Needham of traditional confectionery manufacturer Stockleys Sweets; Jacob Hill, founder of the Lazy Camper festival essentials brand; and Dean Hoyle, the Huddersfield Town chairman who founded and sold the Card Factory retail business for a reported £350m, are backing this year's competition. The entrepreneurs will work closely with the students, giving the youngsters the benefit of their business knowledge and experience in intimate workshop-style sessions.

Umph! is the brainchild of financial adviser Grant Thornton and forms part of the firm's Educate to Innovate programme, which aims to encourage entrepreneurialism in students and forge links between business and education in the region. Now in its third year, the competition is open to teams of budding young entrepreneurs, representing their school, sixth form or FE college.



media relations and profile

Twenty six teams of students will take part in the contest in Huddersfield. During the day-long event the teams will compete using the business simulation software SimVenture, with the winning team, and creator of the most successful virtual business, being awarded a trophy. Each member of the winning team will also receive their own iPad.

Andrew Hastings, one of last year's winners from Rossett School in Harrogate, said: "Meeting all the entrepreneurs, and being able to ask in-depth questions, was totally inspirational. I think we all feel the event gave us something to aim for, as well as a better understanding of how business really works."

Helena Taylor, who was named 'most enterprising individual' at Umph!, said: "It was fantastic to meet all the entrepreneurs in person and I learned a lot. Most importantly, perhaps, the event has given me the ambition to set up and run my own business, which I hope to do one day."

Sandra O'Neill, head of business development at Grant Thornton said: "There is a growing national emphasis on forging stronger links between education and business, which is the focus of Umph! The competition gives students a valuable opportunity to meet and question entrepreneurs about what a career in business is really like and it is this kind of interaction that often provides the spark of inspiration and is generally unavailable as part of academic studies."

Matthew Blakeley, client relationship manager at law firm Dickinson Dees, which is also supporting the event, said: "Times are tough for school leavers at present, with a 20 per cent youth unemployment rate and costly university fees. Encouraging and inspiring enterprise and innovation in young people is essential, not only for emerging new businesses but also to inspire and refresh our region's existing businesses."

Also supporting Umph! are Huddersfield Town Football Club, SimVenture, Fantastic Media and Huddersfield University.

**Ends**

**Photography:** Umph! 2012 winners from Rossett School, Harrogate l-r: Sophie Helsby, Andrew Hastings, Lauren Oliver-Walsh, Liam Saville

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