

Case Study: Business Battle MyBnk

Barnet Youth Services, Summer 2017.

A lack of soft skills will cost the UK economy £8.4bn per year by 2020. The human cost can be measured in the one in ten 16-24 year olds currently not in employment, education or training (NEET). That is 790,000 young people! 48% of NEETs have no experience of paid employment and as a result, often show poor workplace attitudes and a lack of motivation.*

MyBnk takes a hands-on and practical approach to these employment barriers, using enterprise to give young people a real-world experience of business. In one week, we took young people at risk of becoming NEET on an entrepreneurial journey from drawing board to market place using interest free loans to design and sell their own products. This is Business Battle.

Mark, 15 – ‘Bathing It Up’

MyBnk
**BUSINESS
BATTLE**



Whilst Mark expresses an interest in business and busily makes notes, he struggles to make eye contact with people and interpret social cues.

Our MyBnk experts led workshops covering sales, marketing and product development. Talking to the public, budgeting and working as a team were things he had never done before.

After market research and ideation sessions his team received an interest free loan of £40 from MyBnk and created a range of bathing products - bath bombs, tea lights and fresh lavender.

Mark was very anxious about going to market and selling. His team practiced pitching through roleplay, swapping the roles of disinterested customer and eager seller and each time honing their craft. His confidence grew.

On the day, whilst his team battled to sell, Mark felt better selling alone and took the initiative for a late sales push, gathering up an armful of the products and roaming far and wide across the market's high street introducing himself with a friendly 'Hello, I'm Mark from East Finchley Youth Centre.' In the end his team won Business Battle in no small part due to his determination and ability to overcome his fears in what was an overwhelming environment for him.

Mark's team sold £34 worth of goods, but made a loss of £6. A host of skills were developed such as presentation, customer service, team working, resilience, decision making and time management. Mark worked hard all week, impressing his team mates with his resilience and work ethic.



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Ali, 14 – ‘Mocktails’.

For Ali, Business Battle was an opportunity to show his peers and elders he could apply himself to a team orientated and focused task.

He sometimes struggled to manage his energy and if not occupied would act up. He did however have some brilliant ideas for a market stall and his team responded positively. He also had input on the pricing of their products and came up with marketing strategies to bring in the punters: “A free cookie with every cocktail!” and slogans on posters such as “If it's fresh, it's Friday”.



He took the initiative, applying his new customer relations skills to source raw materials at the lowest price and managing to get his team free fruit by talking to the local greengrocer. Ali invented his own products and became an expert mixologist and was keen to continue his exploits.

The fact that he completed the activity and made a big contribution is hugely positive for him and at his best, he was a real asset to his team. His key learning was 'never give up' as a late surge of enthusiastic selling meant they sold out of goods. They just fell short of repaying their loan.

The ability to assess risk and learn from failure improves soft skills such as leadership, communication and problem solving and improves overall employability prospects. Programmes such as Business Battle show that everyone needs enterprise skills, even if you are not starting your own business.

What did the Youth Worker think?

“Fantastic- Best project I've seen all summer. A brilliant and rare opportunity for YP. I would love to deliver/co-deliver this course”.

Rated:

- Very Valuable.
- Very Effective.
- More effective compared to volunteers and host staff.

**Laura Davitt, Youth Worker,
London Borough of Barnet.**



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* Need stats from ONS, Development Economics Ltd, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.