

One in five employers claim young people's CVs all look the same, and two fifths say they want young people to give greater prominence to their personal achievements and real-life experiences (soft skills) in job applications. Having a practical experience of business from an early age will help them stand out in an increasingly competitive jobs market.

MyBnk delivered our Enterprise-in-a-Box workshop to a group of young people at Evelyn Grace Academy, as part of a JP Morgan mentoring project. With ethical products and business training, we gave them their first experience of running a social enterprise.

Vicky 14, Sabrina & Kadzia, 15



"Today, you are going to set up your own business, have a chance to make money and do something good in the process!"



An exciting but daunting prospect for some young people, but friends Vicky, Sabrina and Kadzia have an experienced MyBnk Education Officer to guide and challenge them in their entrepreneurial journey.

After viewing a series of short video case studies showcasing entrepreneurs

introducing their businesses, they were asked what skills had made these traders successful and to rank them in order of importance. A small list suddenly became very long as they asked questions like; "what's the point of being confident if you can't manage your costs?!" They then examined their own talents and areas they would like to develop – the knack of selling, and how to price topped most lists.

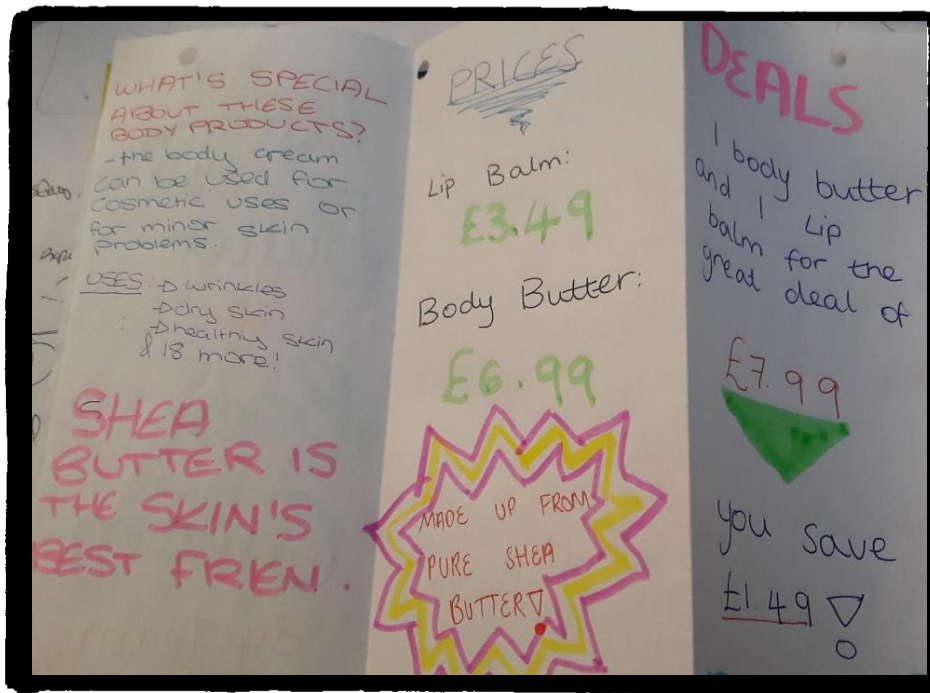
Once acquainted with their products of Fair Trade chocolate, beauty products and urban 'Seedbombs', the group practiced some pitching roleplay: "sell me this pen" style. Swapping the roles of disinterested customer and eager seller, each time honing their craft.

They learnt to focus on the unique selling points of each product, "it is organic", and turn the customer into an agent for positive change by telling the story of the merchandise, "10% of profits goes to a development fund for farmers."

Product:	RRP:	Our Price:
butterfly garden	£3.00	£4.50
tree bit	£3.50	£4.50
mini box of 'grow your own!'	£1.15	£2.00
full box of 'grow your own!' (contains 4 mini boxes)	£4.50	£9.50

Additional notes on the whiteboard include: "Come rain come shine, JJYS seeds!", a logo with a sun and lightning, a smiley face, and a cloud with "10% profit" written inside.

They matched their skills sets to roles and delegated tasks in design, marketing, accounting, sales, and selected a project manager. Once they created their team name and logo, the group focused on advertising, making colourful posters carrying special offers to display around key points at school, even bus stops! After a costing exercise examining unit prices and profiling their target market, the selling begun. Next week, they would present back to their peers.



The girl's team sold out within three days, making £108 off a single £20 box – that is over 500% profit! Sell to who you know, was the catchphrase. Teachers, parents and friends, fellow pupils, other young people on the journey home, they were all turned into regular customers. This boosted their confidence and helped their persuasion skills. Once they realised how to sell the group altered their pricing structure, rewarding returning customers with 'limited time only' bulk deals.

Instead of divvying up the money and calling it a day, the team has decided to reinvest their profits into the business, and have continued to buy boxes from MyBnk.

Almost everybody will need to sell something at some point, whether it's selling himself or herself in an interview or performance review, or presenting a solution or idea to colleagues or a manager. Furthermore, the skills associated with sales, such as persuasion, listening and interpreting information, asking the right questions, presenting and negotiating, are useful throughout your career, no matter what role you are in.

"I've gained leadership skills and learnt how to cooperate with people I don't usually work with. I have also learnt and developed the mind-set to be able persuade my customers to buy our products without forcing them to!" Kadzia.

"MyBnk has boosted my confidence tremendously. The sessions have not only taught me business skills, but have actually given me the opportunity to understand myself!" Vicky.

The ability to assess risk and learn from failure improves soft skills such as leadership, communication, and problem solving, and improves employability across the board. Programmes such as Enterprise-in-a-Box shows that everyone needs enterprise skills, even if you are not starting your own business.

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