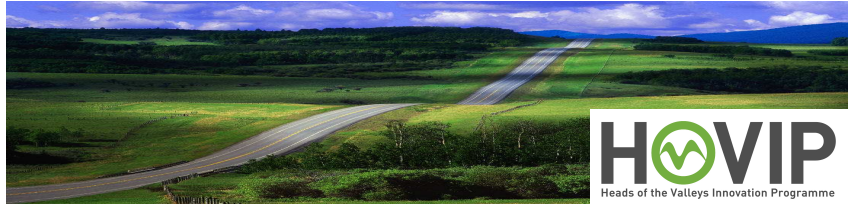


Heads Up

The business newsletter for HOVIP
Issue 2: April 2008



Welcome!

Welcome to the second issue of the newsletter for the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP). The first issue described the business benefits delivered as a result of HOVIP1. This issue puts the spotlight on HOVIP2, the related initial opportunities for businesses, progress and details about this year's Innovation Awards & Market Place.

At the time of writing 3M, where I started my career, have just announced the loss of 185 jobs at their Gorseinon plant. This is another vivid illustration of the importance of on-going innovation to survive, let alone grow, in the global economy when even businesses held up as exemplars of innovation are finding it difficult to remain competitive.

On a more positive note, we have just heard that HOVIP1 (which was hosted by Merthyr Tydfil College) has been short-listed for the 'Effective Partnership Working' category of a National Award. This is great news for all concerned – the businesses we have supported, sponsors, the five Heads of the Valleys Councils, the team and the region.

Recognising and celebrating success of our businesses and raising the profile of the region underpins HOVIP. Make a date in your diary to join us as a visitor, exhibitor or Award entrant on [June 26 at the Parkway Hotel, Cwmbran](#) to be inspired, make new contacts, win new business or simply to hear about our innovative and world beating businesses.

Register as a visitor before 31 May and you could win an iPod kindly donated by BT!

Phil Burkhard

Spotlight on HOVIP2

Practical, proven, imaginative and ground-breaking opportunities for businesses – see www.hovip.org.uk

HOVIP2 is a regional business development initiative providing a range of support to raise the levels of innovation in the Heads of the Valleys area and the five related local authorities.

This phase of the programme is hosted by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government HoV Regeneration initiative.

All the opportunities are open to any businesses, including social enterprises, in the local authorities of RCT, Merthyr, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen.

Is YOUR business facing these challenges?

- How do we increase profits?
- How do we improve cashflow?
- How do we raise our profile?
- How do we find new customers?
- How do we get repeat business?
- How do we encourage staff to be innovative?

HOVIP can help you. Read on to find out how!

HOVIP links up with Design Wales

Design Wales deliver 30 Branding workshops in Wales every year. HOVIP has teamed up with Design Wales to bring three of these workshops to the region. These two hour sessions will run alongside a half day HOVIP Creativity & Innovation Taster Workshop.



Places are limited to 5-10 delegates with delegates able to attend either or both workshops:

Dates for YOUR diary – Register Now!

3 June, St. Margarets Park, Aberbargoed.

7 Oct, Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar.

26 Feb 2009, Orbit Business Centre, Merthyr Tydfil.

HOVIP Business Challenge Workshops

A series of mixed sector 1 day workshops will be delivered from September, across HoV, focusing on applying creativity and innovation tools to real business challenges faced by the delegates.

Delegates who have previously attended this workshop have gained new ideas, new contacts, generated new business and transferred the skills and tools to staff.

In addition, we will continue to deliver the split 2 day version of this training, as a client specific workshop, with 5 weeks between day 1 and day 2, to enable delegates to put the learning into practice before day 2.

We are currently working with two of last year's HoV Innovation Award winners, delivering client specific innovation workshops and related HOVIP services.

For example, Royvon Dog Training School, have used the techniques to identify and begin to implement ideas to provide an increased level of service to their high revenue customers as well as introducing new services that are generating an additional £1500 per month.

We are also working with Penn Pharmaceuticals Services to help them innovatively enhance the role of their Company Forum as well as transferring new skills.

HOVIP Implementation Support

Businesses often complain about bureaucratic procedures to apply for grants and often just need a small sum of capital, in tandem with experienced hands-on support, to implement improved ways of working.

HOVIP has responded to these needs by providing up to 18 businesses, in year 1, with up to £1600. This covers up to 5 days professional implementation support (up to £1000) with the balance to support the project. Firms must contribute up to £200.

The first business to take advantage of this is Creative Innovations who will, again, produce the trophies for this year's Awards. They attended an Innovation Workshop on HOVIP1.

As a result, they immediately gained two orders worth £1000 and we assisted them to create a Marketing Plan. HOVIP2 is now providing them with practical and financial support to implement the key actions on the Plan, including their WRU Grand Slam contract.

HOVIP and the HE / FE Training Portfolio

We are currently talking to all the regional Further Education Colleges and Universities to identify training courses that HOVIP will partially subsidise.

Up to 40 places, per institution, per year will be offered at a £50 discount to HOVIP businesses. We have agreed the following business provision to-date:

- Cardiff University (Media Relations and Sales for Non-Sales People)
- Merthyr Tydfil College / University of Glamorgan (Delivering Excellent Customer Service)
- The College Ystrad Mynach (SAGE)

All these courses are delivered by people with private sector or business experience. You book direct with the institution. Dates will be published on www.hovip.org.uk.

HOVIP and the INSIDE WELSH INDUSTRY SCHEME

Inside Welsh Industry

a programme for people in business



Vincent Kane, Chairman of the Wales Quality Centre, has noted that EVERYONE is talking about innovation but comparatively few are DOING it.

HOVIP has teamed up with the Wales Quality Centre to extend the existing national Inside Welsh Industry Scheme (www.insidewelshindustry.org.uk) of best practice visits to a pilot involving the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Award winners.

One of the winners, Royvon Dog Training School, has already been approved as a host and the other winners are going through the simple approval process.

HoV Innovation Awards & Market Place

Theme: 'Aiming High'

Merthyr was once the iron capital of the world and a related hotbed of innovation. It is fitting, therefore, that the launch of this year's Awards takes place at Cyfarthfa Castle, home of one of the owners of the ironworks.

Innovation is about doing things differently to achieve a dramatic and beneficial outcome. There are four categories for the HoV Innovation Awards: social enterprise, sole trader, less than 20 employees and more than 20 employees. There are cash prizes, too.

The application process is **SIMPLE** and **SHORT** with only 7 questions and a submission of up to 4 pages. We will also forward our Award winners applications to the inaugural Wales Innovation Award.

The HoV Innovation Awards ceremony, on **June 26**, is combined with a business exhibition. The latter will include procurement and business development officers from the five HoV Councils.

The theme of the event is 'Aiming High' which is apt given that our guest speaker has climbed Everest and will deliver an inspirational story about the practical art of leadership, with input from Nelson Mandela!



We are also grateful to the above sponsors who have continued to support HOVIP for the second year running.

Dates for YOUR diary – Register Now!

31 May: visitors pre-register & potentially win an iPod!

6 June: deadline for Award submissions

26 June: The Awards & Market Place, Parkway Hotel, Cwmbran (5-8:30pm)

What next?

We look forward to working with our new partners and Community Enterprise Wales and NESTA who have joined the HOVIP Steering Group of HoV Councils.



Other HOVIP services (e.g. Turning Heads Club for Award winners and entrants and a Regional Affinity Scheme) will be progressed in the Autumn. Finally, I would also like to

welcome Mike Warren (GreyMatter UK) who is the latest business person to join the HOVIP team.

▶▶▶ For more information visit www.hovip.org.uk or contact phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk 01685 725469.