

business

In association with



INNOVATION drives success
A unique opportunity to
become more profitable



Deep in discussion at the Turning Heads Club event in Blaenavon

1,000,000 reasons to become more innovative

Over £1,000,000 has been generated as businesses across the region address the challenges of innovation, raise their game and become more competitive – and HOVIP is helping.

INNOVATION is about doing things differently in order to achieve a dramatic and beneficial result. It's not just about invention, technology and R&D, but has a much wider scope that can involve any aspect of a business from the people, processes, products, services, sales and marketing, to the way organisations are managed and community engagement.

HOVIP, the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme, is helping businesses in the region to address the challenges of innovation, to raise their game and become more competitive. Designed and delivered by business people with experience at the sharp end, HOVIP is aimed at businesses and social enterprises across all five Heads of the Valleys boroughs. And for the past 21 months, the second phase of the programme has delivered significant benefits. An independent evaluation endorsed the fact that:

- 251 businesses have benefited directly from at least one HOVIP service;
- 186 businesses have benefited as a result of joint initiatives delivered with a Heads of the Valleys local authority partner;
- 62 businesses have benefited from in-depth innovation support, introduced specifically in response to the recession, which is contributing to safeguarding 411 jobs; and £1,169,137 has now been generated in customer-endorsed financial benefits, of which £729,000 is in new business with the remainder covering funding raised, often with partners, and income for HoV venues.

And there's more.... HOVIP has:

- Introduced the first regional Innovation Awards;
- Attracted repeat sponsorship from household names including BT and HSBC and Cardiff-based businesses such as Capital Law and Equinox PR;
- Created the Turning Heads Club – a business club for HOVIP Innovation Awards entrants only, with 70 members to date;
- Created Secure Wales – visit www.securewales.co.uk - the first of many clusters;

- Delivered a range of innovative training directly and with partners such as Cardiff University and Enter the Highfields;
- Helped to raise the business profile of the region, both within Wales and further afield.

Rhondda Cynon Taf based Supply Only Bedrooms is one of the businesses that has received in-depth innovation support from HOVIP. Managing Director Mike Shea explains why he recommends the programme to others, "From the first meeting to the end of the project, the service has exceeded my expectations. The simplicity of the process and professionalism of all involved have been the main benefits. It would be foolhardy to ignore HOVIP's services as the benefits add real solutions to grow your company."

HOVIP Manager Phil Burkhard says, "We are delighted with the feedback and comments from the businesses we are working with. HOVIP is certainly playing a part in helping businesses and social enterprises in the region survive and thrive in challenging times. I am also pleased to be working more closely with Flexible Support for Business and other national initiatives to ensure that businesses receive complementary support."

He continues, "Thanks to our local authority partners and the Welsh Assembly, Government funding has been approved for a third phase of HOVIP. Our priorities during this next phase include creating more clusters, training an ad-hoc sales force, sharing innovation best practice across the region and nationally and doing the groundwork for a novel International Trade Fair at Easter 2011."

"We will shortly be launching the fourth annual Heads of the Valleys Innovation Awards and Marketplace, which will be held in Merthyr on 24th June, with compere Jason Mohammad. This is an excellent showcase of innovation across the region and I urge businesses to participate either by entering the awards themselves or by visiting the Marketplace event. Full details will be available at www.hovip.org.uk



If you would like to find out how you can benefit from HOVIP, contact Phil Burkhard on 01685 725469 or Email phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk or visit www.hovip.org.uk