

CentraStage Secures Investment and Appoints New Chairman

CentraStage successfully completed its funding round with the help of TVIN members at the end of last year and is going from strength to strength.

Christian Nagele, CentraStage's Managing Director, presented at the TVIN Investment Meeting held at Green Park in September and secured investment from 5 TVIN members amongst others already committed.

Christian told us that he thought that securing investment in the current economic climate was going to be very difficult. "We are really pleased to have successfully raised the capital we needed despite these concerns. It is a testament to the strength of the CentraStage proposition."

Christian and the rest of the team at



CentraStage must now go out and prove the support of their new investors to be fully justified and they're making good headway. The company has made a great start to 2010 with a number of new customers already signed up, including 7 new Local Authorities. Importantly, the future pipeline looks equally strong.

An innovative remote monitoring and management solution lies at the core of the CentraStage offer and the company has established a strong customer base both in the education sector and the growing Managed Service Provider (MSP) market.

A project undertaken by the Buckinghamshire ICT Schools Team provided the material for a case study. This highlighted that using the CentraStage service resulted in a saving of 80 working days on this project alone. Similarly, using a new ROI tool provided by CentraStage, Education Bradford has calculated an annual

cost saving of over £55k, a 20% efficiency gain and that 2500 hours of school ICT 'downtime' had been avoided. A Serco team that supports ICT in Bradford schools has been running CentraStage for over 12 months and has calculated that without it, the local authority would need 2.5 more staff members to complete all tasks in the same time. With the current squeeze on finances, CentraStage is helping its customers deliver better services with their existing resources.

Christian was happy to acknowledge that "TVIN was a great experience for us and an excellent route to finding quality investors - who provided excellent contacts and expertise. We are pleased and excited to announce that one of our investors, Tim Simpson, has been agreed to become our new Company Chairman."



Sportpost Launched

After 15 months of development, 1300 man hours, 21 investment pitches, one broken back and many temper tantrums, Sports International Limited have launched Sportpost, Europe's first sports social media site.

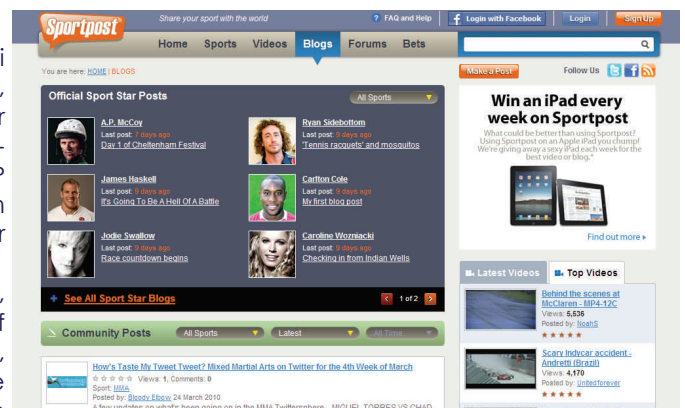
The company presented at TVIN in March 2009 and the Network was instrumental in helping them to raise the funding they were seeking.

Sportpost combines a huge sports video library with premium brand channels, a sports star blog network, up to the minute news, fans forums and the latest social media tools. It has already signed up names such as Redbull, Nike Football and the UFC, as well as star blogs from the likes of

Carole Wozniacki (tennis world no.3), England Rugby star James Haskell, champion NH jockey A P McCoy and West Ham and England striker Carlton Cole.

Peter Janes, Managing Director of Sports International, said "The fans are the most important people in sport and with Sportpost the fans are in charge. They can create, promote and share their favourite sport and its thrills and spills with the World."

Being completely independent,



Sportpost works with all athletes, brand owners and media partners giving its users huge access and choice.

www.sportpost.com

Contents

Cover Stories	Pg 1
CentraStage Sports International	
Network News	Pg 2
Managers' Update Dates for your Diary	
Expert Advice	Pg 3
NDA's Trade Marks Innovation Centres	
Current Investment Opportunities	Pg 4
Amicus Recruit LawPlayer Sideways News Tereca British Eco Red Redemption Sound Forms plc Wave Craft Rocket Route Tea Shop Asylum Zumba	
Company Updates	Pg 5
Adapt Formwork The Business Voice Augmentra Crowdbass GourmetOrigins Menhir QQ Growth Engineering	
News in Brief	Pg 6

Network Managers' Update

As you can see, we've given the design of the TVIN Newsletter an overhaul this month, although we've kept all the regular items in roughly the same place.

In a very real way, that is how the Network operates, continually adjusting the way it does things to suit the needs of its Members and clients, those brave or foolhardy people looking to raise funding for their business.

You could argue that it's a necessity but investment networks are a strange combination of commercial operation, service provider and members club. They play an important role in helping to develop new businesses and supporting local economies, especially important when the economic climate is stormy.

So much for the promotional advert but the real value of an investment network is at a more personal level. Whatever you may think of their proposals, the vast majority of entrepreneurs presenting through TVIN, or any other network for that matter, are committed to their business idea, wholly and without reservation. Some may have wildly inflated opinions about the prospects for their business, have yet to do enough groundwork to fully understand what they are trying to do, or are simply blind to reality. Others are too early or too late into the market, or have a great idea for a product that has no real market appeal. But the thing that most, if not all,

have in common is that unshakeable belief in what they are trying to achieve. If you've met anyone through TVIN who does not demonstrate that dedication, then point the finger squarely in my direction as they should not have made it through the filter.

On the other side of our equation, there are our investor members. I'm often asked to describe our membership, to somehow categorise everyone and come up with a composite picture that is representative of TVIN. Yes, there are statistics, but you know what they say about them? The backgrounds, career experiences, lifestyles, aims and goals are so varied and different that it is impossible to provide a group CV. The common ground is that they have all expressed a desire to invest in early stage businesses, for all the risks this involves.

There you have a reason why investment networks are important at a more personal level because that's the level at which investments are made.

Helping to create an atmosphere and a set of surroundings in which this can be achieved is what TVIN is about and we'll keep changing things with this in mind. As a member recently said to me "it has to be fun and you don't have fun with people you don't like."

Leo Dunne
Network Manager, TVIN.

Dates For Your Diary

OION Annual Dinner

21 April 2010
Oriol College, Oxford



TVIN Investment Meeting

29 April 2010
venue tbc



TVIN Investment Meeting

27 May 2010,
Green Park, Reading



TVIN Investment Meeting

24 June 2010
venue tbc

TVIN Summer Party

Join us aboard the
Caversham Princess as she meanders
her way along the Thames on

Thursday, 10th June 2010
at 7.00pm

For further information and to book your
tickets please email
h.sanislova@oxin.co.uk

TVIN is delighted to be sponsored by a select group of prominent professional service firms active in the Thames Valley Region. Here they provide Newsletter readers with the benefit of their expertise and discuss issues relevant to both managing and investing in early stage businesses.

KEYSTONE LAW

NDA's - Worth the paper they are written on?

I am often asked by companies looking for funding whether they should ask their potential funders to sign an NDA. "They are not worth the paper they are written on"; "we would never sue our investor"; "they are just a distraction". My advice to these companies is don't dismiss them out of hand. Having an NDA is always better than not having one. Legally it provides an express contractual way to ensure you receive compensation for your loss if confidentiality is breached and practically it shows you are serious about the value of your IP and know-how and you want to agree up front with the investor how you are going to ensure it stays confidential.

Also, never forget that most of the recipients of your confidential information will not invest. Accordingly, it is important for the one funder who does invest to know that the confidential information revealed to other potential investors will stay confidential and will not erode the value of his investment. Put another way: while you won't sue your investor, what about those who did not invest?

You can find a free template NDA on our website* and, as a sponsor of TVIN, we are happy to discuss any legal issues you face without an initial charge.



William Robins,
Partner, Keystone Law
www.keystonelaw.co.uk
*<http://bit.ly/freenda>



Strengthening Brands by registering Trade Marks.

Brand identity is one reason customers choose one product or service over another. A brand embodies the values, qualities, characteristics and personality that a brand owner aspires to communicate to their customers.

What some Brand owners overlook is how vulnerable brands can be unless they are protected effectively. Take for example the brands belonging to a Premiership Football Club. The club will sell replica clothing, other goods, posters and even screensavers containing their brand. Much of the income for the club might come from the sale of branded goods, and hence counterfeit goods on which no royalty has been paid can make

a serious dent in their finances, in addition to damaging their reputation if the quality is not up to standard.

Obtaining a registered Trade Mark for your brand can enable you to "police" use of your brand and so ensure that unauthorised parties do not make money on the back of your brand or mislead your customers as to the origin of goods or services.

Before embarking on the launch of a new product or service think seriously about the existing brands in the market and take steps to differentiate your branding in such a way as to ensure you do not accidentally infringe existing Trade Marks and that your new brand is protectable. Professional advice from IP attorneys in relation to your brand can save some very expensive mistakes, and ensure you get the very most from your brand.

Jane Clark,
Partner, Mathys & Squire
www.mathys-squire.com



Oxford Innovation is the UK's leading operator of innovation centres, managing a network of centres across the country that provide flexible office and lab space to over 400 innovative and high growth companies. Companies in the centres benefit from a stimulating and supportive environment in which they can focus on growing their company, leaving us to deal with answering the phone in the company's name, sorting post, welcoming visitors and more general facilities management.

The centres are great places to meet other like-minded individuals through regular networking events and through the Centre Manager who can facilitate introductions with other customers. There is a real sense of

community at each centre, where companies often support each other, and with additional signposting support from the centre manager, companies based in an innovation centre are that much more likely to succeed.

Office space within our centres is flexible, requiring just one month's notice, so there is minimal risk and no long term commitment; but for companies not yet ready to move in to an office, virtual office services are also available. These services allow companies to benefit from a professional image for the company, without incurring the cost of a physical office.

Elaine McKechnie
E-Marketing Manager
Oxford Innovation
www.oxin.co.uk/office-space

Sponsorship Opportunities

If you are interested in exploring how you or your company can become involved with TVIN, please contact the Network Manager, Leo Dunne.

The following provides brief details of businesses seeking investment who have presented their propositions at TVIN Investment Meetings in recent months. Highlighted amounts detail an updated investment requirement. Further details on all opportunities are available from the TVIN team.

Amicus Recruit		
£650k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

Amicus Recruit is a recruitment company providing qualified social workers and managers to local authorities in the London Boroughs and is now expanding into other areas of the UK. The company was founded in 2000, had turnover of £6m in 2009 and is on target for £6.8m in this financial year. £650k is sought to acquire shares in a MBO.

British Eco		
£250k	Jan 2010	TVIN <small>GREEN TECHNOLOGY</small>

BritishEco's aim to become the UK's-first choice for buying and installing renewable energy products for new and existing buildings, both for private residences and commercial organisations. Through franchising, BritishEco can scale to delivery locally and three new franchises have recently been awarded. Investment is now sought to fund this rapid expansion.

iGeolise		
£350k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

iGeolise is a comprehensive, continually up-to-date source of local information, available through any web enabled device. It offers several unique benefits including a better way to find local information and a better way to charge for local ads. Proof of technology demo has been built. Investment is sought to build and launch the initial city pilot site.

Lawplayer		
£50k	Jan 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

A specialist end-to-end digital production company for the legal profession. It offers a unique online and on-demand legal knowledge portal that delivers compulsory continuing professional development (CPD) training to lawyers and provides legal knowledge for the wider audience. It provides improved training experience, reduced cost and flexibility.

Red Redemption		
£50k	Jan 2010	TVIN <small>MEDIA</small>

RR is developing a digital game, "Climate Challenge 2010". The game follows the significant success of their 2007 title "BBC Climate Challenge" which reached around 900,000 players. The game is focused on environmental, real-world, non-violent themes, is scientifically accurate & fun to play. Funding is sought to complete the product to distribution.

Rocket Route		
£140k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

RocketRoute addresses the vital needs of private pilots and small airlines who continually need to prepare and submit flight plans but who do not have the luxury of a flight operations team to support them. A prototype of the service is available for demonstration. Funding is sought to launch the business in Europe. Beta launch is intended for May 2010.

Sideways News		
£650k	Jan 2010	TVIN <small>MEDIA</small>

A website delivering "fresh perspectives" on the news to the large & growing group of Cultural Creatives. The website, beta launched in June 2009, is now attracting over 20,000 unique visitors a month and provides the reader with the opportunity to get involved with the issues. Investment is sought for marketing, content, more website development and staffing.

Sound Forms Plc		
£750k	Jan 2010	TVIN <small>MEDIA</small>

Sound Forms design, develop and market a range of portable and semi permanent acoustic sound stages to the global music live event market. These "Mobile Acoustic Performance Shells" (MAPS) will provide a quantum jump in the delivery and enjoyment of live musical events. MAPS is unique, has global patents registered and can move straight into production.

Tea Shop Asylum		
£900k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>MEDIA</small>

An exciting British romantic comedy film with a great script, a cast that includes John Hannah and Joanna Lumley, and BAFTA-Winning director David Skynner. Investors are sought to provide 53% of a £1.7m production budget. The balance will be generated from UK tax credits and product placement revenues. The company will be EIS-certified.

Tereca		
£600k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

Tereca is aiming to build a global business delivering specialised digital services. It offers a seamless flow of information online, on any mobile and on any network. The first service, Indiluup, is a digital hub for family life, designed to provide an intuitive process for accessing, organising and sharing information between parents and schools. Indiluup is on trail with a growing number of schools already and investment is now required to take the business through to commercialisation.

Wave Craft		
£750k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>GREEN TECHNOLOGY</small>

WAVEBLADE is the brand name for a new patented technology to strip marine fouling from boat hulls, oil platforms, buoys and all other marine installations, above and below water. The company has spent a significant amount to develop a series of hand-held power tools, one of which, an underwater boat cleaning tool is now under manufacture in China and will be ready for sale in April 2010. Investment is sought to help fund product launch and further development.

Zumba Ltd		
£150k	Mar 2010	TVIN <small>THAMES VALLEY INVESTMENT NETWORK</small>

Zumba is a revolutionary new way of communicating with all your contacts. Storage on a web portal, makes possible the Zumbafone, the world's first true hands free mobile. Set to expand existing markets through innovative design and totally unique web deployed applications, both the product and service have significant commercial appeal. £150k funding is now sought to finalise development and to beta test the technology before full commercialisation.



Adapt Formwork Limited raised funding from a local investor in Cheshire, which allowed them to purchase more formwork system stock from their suppliers in Spain.

Adapt rent out their formwork system to the construction sector as it is quicker to assemble, easier to use and produces a finer finish to concrete pours than its competition. The time and cost savings can be significant. Managing Director, Anthony Gradwell, reports that the business is developing very much according to plan. A new website has been produced which highlights some of the projects the system is being used on.

www.adaptformwork.com



The Business Voice continues to add to the impressive list of global business leaders who have now recorded interviews for their

web portal. These interviews provide an insight into the thoughts and ideas behind "some of the greatest business leaders in the world" and can all be viewed from the BVO website. Jon Moulton, the ex Head of Alchemy Partners and now Chairman of Better Capital, and one of the leading figures in the UK venture capital industry, is the latest guru to join the impressive roster. Anthony Gell, CEO, is delighted that the business has successfully achieved its early milestones and is now entering an exciting development phase.

www.bvo.com



Augmentra is still progressing well, much to the approval of

its investors. It has recently launched, through major app-stores, a global version of its popular ViewRanger GPS 'off-road sat nav' application for Symbian mobile phones. "ViewRanger transforms Symbian-based smartphones into a powerful GPS that makes it an essential app for any outdoor enthusiast and rescue team," said Larry Berkin, Head of Global Alliances and GM USA, Symbian Foundation. "We are proud to see developers such as Augmentra create cutting edge Symbian applications that allow users to navigate the world's vast geographic landscape all through their mobile phone." Following this, Augmentra will soon be launching versions of ViewRanger GPS for iPhone and Android mobile platforms. Craig Wareham, co-founder and CEO of Augmentra said that he is delighted to see ViewRanger GPS hit the milestones in its next stage of development.

www.viewranger.com



Crowdbass, who presented at TVIN in May of last year, have announced that they have partnered with the largest

digital record label in Europe—Believe Digital, who raised £8.5m in VC funding last year. Believe is headed up by the former management of Oasis and they will use their first class marketing team to ensure Crowdbass artists rise up the charts. With their distribution network and deep domain experience, combined with Crowdbass's first class board (includes the former CEO of the Tote and the manager of Paul Weller and the Stereophonics), the two businesses complement each other extremely well.

<http://crowdbass.com/>



Miquel Ros, who presented his proposal for **FineFood-**

Maps last November, reports that they have been extremely busy rolling out the latest and first publicly released version of their website. The name has changed as well, but <http://gourmetorigins.com> looks to hold the same promise as its predecessor and to appeal to foodies keen to know where their food originates from. The business is currently being financed from internal resources, family and friends, whilst external investors wait for the impact of the new site to be assessed.

The latest upgrade to the site has been a major breakthrough and allowed the business to move from the working prototype to the fully released version. The new site has a streamlined design, the capability to sign-up both visitors and professional food producers, has a user interface available in five languages, an active blog and nearly 800 product references.



Menhir QQ Managing Director, Curtis MacLean, reports a highly successful recent

visit to Laboratoires Carilene in France, the manufacturers of the Silicium 44 products. Positive discussions were had with regards to the global distribution rights for the products, with a 2 year right of refusal option tabled.

Curtis was accompanied on the trip by the MD of Kent Cosmetics Limited, who have been appointed MQQ's exclusive wholesale distributor in the UK for the Silicium 44 lotion and shampoo for the retail sector. The retail sector includes multiple retail/supermarket chains, pharmacy chains both multiple and independents and department stores both multiple and independents, excluding the hair and beauty salon market. Kent Cosmetics have agreed for MQQ to sell 80 additional products which are currently sold to the retail market by Kent. The business has yet to secure the £75k investment sought to accelerate the growth of the business further but is making good commercial headway nevertheless.

<http://menhirqq.com>

growthengineering More good news for investors as

growth through people development

Growth Engineering's Managing

Director, Juliette Denny, reports a profitable year for the business. Growth Engineering more than doubled its turnover last year and, with current contracts, will triple it again this year. Two new senior managers have been recruited, Rodolfo Aspisini as a Marketing Manager and Patrick West as eLearning manager. The business has developed an Academy platform which is a flexible, user-friendly and a fully managed service, this allows their customers to quickly and cost effectively create, distribute and track training and compliance activities online. The company has just launched an online Academy for Spicers, Europe's leading wholesaler of office products. Their route to market relies on a network of 4,000 independent dealers. The www.Spicersacademy.co.uk allows them to develop and grow their dealers offering a unique value added services to them. Spicers dealers report that through using the Spicers Academy and the sales and product training content on it they have lifted sales by 28% - a significant growth rate.

www.growthengineering.co.uk

Merger/Acquisition Opportunity - Precision Engineering / Medical Devices

Samuels Corporate Ltd has been engaged to identify a suitable acquisition/merger target for a precision machining Engineering company looking to expand. Our client specialises in manufacturing precision components for medical devices in the Orthopaedic / Medical Device sectors. Components are manufactured to the highest quality and tightest tolerances, from a variety of materials including Stainless Steel, Cobalt Chrome, Titanium and Implant grade plastics. Further details from Darren Hurdle on 01737 241 414 or djh@samcorp.co.uk.

Dry Run Panels

TVIN members who would like to form part of the dry run panel that provides help and guidance to companies on the style, format and content of presentations before Investment Meetings are invited to contact the Network Manager for more details.

UK Trade & Industry - Enabling Innovation Initiative

As part of its Enabling Innovation Initiative, UK Trade and Investment is organising a major programme of business activity in China. Launched in October 2008, with support from some of the UK's leading industry players such as ARM, BT, Sony Ericsson & Vodafone, the initiative has helped over 100 UK companies to better understand the market opportunities and potential technology collaborations with top Chinese multinationals. The activity programme includes trade delegations of around 50 companies during the week commencing 5th July. For more information on these missions, please contact:

Richard Lewis, Project Manager
Telephone: 020 7215 4823
e: richard.lewis@uktradeinvest.gov.uk

New Members

TVIN is always keen to welcome new investor members. If you would like to attend one of our regular investment meetings, without obligation, please contact us with your details and we will be pleased to meet you.

Sponsorship Opportunities

If you are interested in exploring how you or your company can become involved with TVIN, please contact the Network Manager, Leo Dunne, for an initial informal discussion.

Economic Analysis and Reports



For those of you interested in such things, RBS produce a series of short reports on the UK Economy from their Macroeconomic Unit. They are generally good reading and the March update, "Assessing risks to the recovery" is particularly worthwhile. Copies of this are available from Leo or sign-up for your own at

<http://globaleconomicinsight.rbs.com>

New Internship scheme

Part of a national initiative to help both local companies and graduates seeking quality work experience, the University of Bedfordshire has launched a new internship scheme, which offers businesses an extra, high calibre resource, at a low cost. Graduates bring keen minds and fresh ideas, along with enthusiasm to learn and contribute to the company and business can benefit from this without long term commitment.

For further information visit www.beds.ac.uk/knowledgehub/internship

Newsletter Contributions

TVIN is happy to include any items of business or personal news in this section from any of its members or Newsletter readers. Please contact Heni or Leo for further details.



This Newsletter is produced for the information of the members of TVIN, its colleagues, associates and friends. None of the information provided has been verified or qualified and no responsibility is taken for any opinion herein expressed. For further information on any item within this Newsletter, please contact a member of the TVIN team using the details provided.

TVIN Dry Run Venues

TVIN is continually looking for Thames Valley based organisations to host and participate in the dry run sessions attended by companies due to present at TVIN Investment Meetings. At each dry run session, between 4 and 8 companies deliver their 10 minute presentation to an invited panel of between five and seven members. The panel is generally formed from TVIN sponsors, guests, investor members and the Network Manager. Anybody interested or aware of an organisation that may be interested, please make contact for further details.

Cleantech IP

Maurice Alphandary, of TVIN Business Member Collier IP Management, has let us know that they have been working with a number of businesses in the clean-tech and renewable energy sectors. The work looks to realise greater commercial benefit from the breadth of intellectual property in these companies and the sector may become of interest to TVIN members. Contact details available on request.

TVIN Sponsors

TVIN Gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors.

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