

Press release

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Manchester professionals have entrepreneurial edge

Five Manchester professionals have shown true entrepreneurial flair in a city-wide challenge run by future pro.manchester, part of the financial and professional organisation, pro.manchester.

Following a closely fought contest, judges have narrowed down the field in the city's debut future pro.manchester Entrepreneurial Challenge to Katherine Waugh (Addleshaw Goddard), Melissa Davis (Carter Corson), Rob Woollen (Innospace), Dan Gledhill and Victoria Richardson (both from RMS PR, Design & Marketing).

The challenge launched in September, and, set up in partnership with Innospace and Crain's Manchester Business, laid down the gauntlet to find members of the young financial and professional community with entrepreneurial skills. Celebrating the city's heritage of pioneering spirit, the challenge also demonstrates the merit of innovative thinking in a tough economic climate.

The five finalists have shown their outstanding ability in a series of written challenges set by a panel of judges including experts at Manchester Metropolitan University's Business School, chairman of pro.manchester, Sue Webster, successful entrepreneur Vikas Shah and Insider Young Professional of the year, David Hunt from Creative Lynx.

Each finalist will now face the panel in a daunting dragon's den style interview to test their ability to think on their feet. The ultimate winner of the challenge will be crowned the future pro.manchester Entrepreneur of the Year 2009 at a cocktail event at Champagne bar, Epernay, on Wednesday 2 December.

Commenting on the challenge, chairman of future pro.manchester, Alex Solk, said: “We’ve been really impressed by the calibre of competitors and their entrepreneurial flair. People have misconceptions about what makes an entrepreneur and assume it excludes members of the corporate world.

“Our challenge has not only proved this isn’t the case, but has reaffirmed Manchester’s credentials as a city of innovative thinkers.”

The challenge was supported by a season of entrepreneurship set up by future pro.manchester, with a range of seminars and discussion events hosted by respected entrepreneurs including Imran Hakim (iTeddy inventor), Steve Purdham (founder of we7), Lawrence Jones (UK Fast), Danny Schweiger (Character World) and adventurer and life coach, Suzy Madge.

For more information on future pro.manchester, visit www.futurepromanchester.co.uk/entrepreneurchallenge

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