

Ewen Watson Music Specialist

Fresh out of university and back at home in Forres, Ewen Watson (25) knew he wanted to work as a freelance music specialist focussing on people with special needs. He was well qualified with a BA in Social Science and an MSc in Music in the Community but he had absolutely no idea how to go about becoming self-employed or where to find help and funding. His first step was to visit the Jobcentre from where he was referred to Business Gateway. Contacting the service, he was given a speedy appointment to see regional development officer for Moray, Craig Robertson. The two subsequently had a wide-ranging discussion about Ewen's business idea and aspirations.

A Skoog

Ewen explained he wanted to buy a revolutionary new musical instrument only just on the market,

called a Skoog. It's designed for the special education field and allows people of all ages and abilities, who might not otherwise be able to do so, to become actively involved in making music. The tactile, cube-shaped instrument connects via a USB port to a computer and laptop. Using the Skoog and other innovative music technology, Ewen planned to hold workshops in schools and special needs centres.



Clear vision

Following the advisory session, Ewen had a clear vision of the way forward. He was given a sample business plan and asked to prepare his own plan as well as to set out his goals for his first three years in business. Craig also instructed him on financial models for the new business. Ewen was advised how to register as self-employed and supplied with contact details for HM Revenue and Customs as well as addresses for websites where he could access information about Public Liability Insurance. He was furnished with a list of forthcoming Business Gateway courses and invited to attend. Craig then telephoned and e-mailed Ewen to check on his progress and later held a second advisory session when he looked over his completed business plan and made a couple of minor adjustments.

Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust

Business Gateway advisers in the Highlands and Moray have a dual role as area managers of the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT) and Craig felt the Trust could be a source of funding for Ewen, given his young age. He helped him fill out a registration form for PSYBT and sent it, along with his business plan and financial projections, to the organisation. Craig then arranged for Ewen to meet with PSYBT officials to discuss his new venture. The next step was to formally present his case at a PSYBT panel and, as a result, he was awarded a grant and a loan. He now has an aftercare adviser assigned to him by PSYBT.

Unique service

Ewen has now officially launched his new business - called "Ewen Watson Music Specialist" - and it is believed to be the only service of its type in the Highlands and Moray. He marketed it beforehand by contacting schools and special needs centres in the area and applied to the local authority to be put on their preferred supplier list.

Adding value

He has added value to his enterprise by becoming the accredited trainer in the North of Scotland for the manufacturers of Skoog and he is also area representative for Edinburgh based charity Drake Music Scotland which provides music making opportunities for people with disabilities. He is currently working on their behalf in Inverness on an eight week project helping a group of adults with learning difficulties to produce a sound track for a play they are performing. In addition Ewen offers private music tuition. He says: "I wouldn't be in the position I am now if it wasn't for Business Gateway. I was impressed by the personal and friendly service I received."

Business Gateway comment

Craig commented: "Starting a new business is never easy and it is a courageous thing to do. A young person starting in business faces different issues such as credibility in the market place and accessing financial support. I was delighted that Business Gateway was able to provide advice to Ewen throughout the business start-up process and we will, of course, continue to support Ewen as his business develops in the future".

Business Gateway provides practical help, advice and support for new and growing businesses in Scotland. To find out how Business Gateway can help your business, visit www.bgateway.com or contact your local office on 01463 713889 or 01343 563634.