



CHALLINORS
SOLICITORS



Deloitte



SPONSORED BY

42

under forty two

Welcome to an exclusive club

Judging by the standard of entries, the Midlands is in for an exciting future full of new and innovative businesses.

Andy Coyne introduces this year's class of entrepreneurs

Our annual 42 under 42 feature – profiling 42 young entrepreneurs from the region under the age of 42 – is proving as popular as ever, judging by the quality and quantity of entries this year.

All of the profiles you will read in this feature are of young businessmen and women. They have either been chosen by us or recommended by their peers.

Here is a cross-selection of entrepreneurs and managers from a range of sectors, from online travel and medical technologies to digital media and robotics. What they all have in common is that they are based in the Midlands and have tons of potential.

Some of them are entrepreneurs who have built businesses from scratch with impressive results; some are starting out; while others have gone into existing businesses and made a difference. While there will be successes and failures among this group, we believe it contains some golden nuggets.



KIRSTIE ALLEN, 29

Managing director, Pinks Academy and Pinks Boutique

Allen's company in Derby is already turning over £100,000, marketing organic products made locally (just outside Melton Mowbray) to high-end spas.

"Our plan is to ensure that in the next two years we provide a true organic alternative to Espa and Elemis," she says.

There probably aren't many Oxford University graduates who have retrained as beauty therapists, but if the business really takes off she will be hoping for fewer raised eyebrows among family and friends.

TIM DEATHRIDGE, 38

General manager, Fermacell

Fermacell in Sutton Coldfield makes dry lining board for walls, ceilings and floors and is anticipating turnover of £6m for the current financial year. Not bad when construction companies form the base of your clients during a recession.

Deathridge has steered the business through with a strict budget. "Today we are benefiting from a lot of Building Schools for the Future projects," he says. His goal is to grow the business substantially within five years.

DR MARTIN REEVES, 40

Chief executive, Coventry City Council

With more than 15,000 staff and public sector cuts imminent, Reeves has a big job on his hands. The council is planning for a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in funding from central government over the next three to five years. "The key will be to reduce costs, focus on key services and use innovation to do things better, quicker and cheaper," he says.

Reeves joined Coventry City Council as chief executive a year

ago, and despite awful operating conditions, achievements include the Jerde Masterplan for the £1bn regeneration of the city.

NICOLAS HOLZHERR, 24

Founder and director, Co-Go Coffee to Go and Mo-Go Media

Holzherr has woken up and smelt the coffee, and it has given him a couple of decent ideas. The first, *Co-Go Coffee*, uses a four-metre tall pod in the shape of a coffee cup to provide coffee on the go to consumers. The second, *Mo-Go Media*, sells advertising on the side of the coffee cups – KPMG and Graduate Advantage have already signed up. Based at Aston University's campus in central Birmingham, Holzherr's fledgling empire is anticipating a turnover of £55,000 for year one.

JASON ALDRIDGE, 42

Director, Arrowsmith Engineering

The recession has affected Arrowsmith – it was growing at 15 per cent per year until last year, but Aldridge has used the lull to get its house in order with new software and training and



improvement programmes. The aerospace business in Coventry is now well placed to come out firing on all cylinders and anticipates a £1.6m turnover this year.

PETER DINES, 37

Chief executive and owner, Surgi C and Newtech Ortho

Dines's companies, based in Longbridge in Birmingham, are at the heart of the city's medical technologies push. Surgi C is a spinal implant supplier with 18 staff and a turnover of £4.7m; Newtech supplies orthopaedic implants. Dines' biggest issues are ensuring systems are in place and developing staff. He says: "My job is to define the vision for the company, to build a successful team and shape systems for that team to deliver our strategy."

JO DERBYSHIRE, 40

Chief executive, Antrum and Derbyshire Associates

Antrum in Loughborough and Derbyshire Associates (DAL) in

Kegworth are an antennae development company and a consultancy for high-tech start-ups, respectively. DAL has been trading for slightly more than a year and has already secured 30 clients and turned over £100,000.

Antrum has been transformed from a service company to a high-tech development business, and secured a contract with the European Space Agency to develop fabric antennas.

Derbyshire was brought in by founder Yiannis Vardaxoglou, to lead the spin-off through its evolution. "We have secured some large contracts, but will look to raise some funds later this year," she says.

GEOFF CROSS, 24

Managing director, CEN Group (trading as Central Buses & Centrad)

It seems remarkable that at such a young age Cross is heading the Birmingham travel business that has 18 staff and a turnover of £839,000. Central Buses runs a fleet of 12 single-deck buses on local routes and school contracts.

Centrad designs and supplies electronic information systems for the passenger transport industry.

Cross set up Central Buses at 16. "The challenges were being unable to withdraw a salary from the business when it was a start-up and not being able to open a bank account or access funding," he says.

ANDREW WILKINSON, 41

Managing director, Oakley Wilkinson Bryan (OWB)

Wilkinson's full service marketing and digital communications agency in Digbeth, Birmingham, has eight staff and a turnover of £600,000.

He has a five-stage growth plan, which includes membership of the global agency network ComVort and taking clients into new media channels. Wilkinson has held a number of non-executive roles and has been named an ambassador by Business Link and Birmingham Forward. He bought out the senior partner of OWB in a management buyout in 2007 – an experience he says was exciting and frightening.

ADAM BUSS, 31

Deputy director, QUAD

QUAD is Derby's centre for art and film, which attracted 225,000 people in its first year of opening and turned over nearly £2m.

Buss has managed the development of the brand and marketing strategy. "The challenge has been communicating what is a diverse set of activities to a diverse audience," he says.

Buss is passionate about Derby and says his greatest achievement is attracting global attention to the city via his work on QUAD.

MICHAELA HARRIS, 35

Managing director, V8Media

Harris's website design agency in Kington, Herefordshire, targets



PETER EDGINGTON, 28

Deputy managing director, Webro Cable & Connectors

Webro distributes cables and connectors from its base in Long Eaton, Nottingham, and has played a significant role in bringing products to market.

"The biggest challenge is in delivering product in a style and manner that is required by our customers," says Edgington. "We plan to expand our range into new markets building on the lessons we have learnt from the business over the past 30 years."

small businesses. It was set up by staff of KC3.net after the company went into liquidation.

"It was a steep learning curve, but once we overcame this we quickly identified the areas we need to target," she says.

The business started in the recession but is doing well and Harris is aiming for a £500,000 turnover. Hereford has suffered in the recession, but Harris is pleased by the reaction to her new business locally. "I have found many like-minded people in Herefordshire, who are willing to help new businesses where possible."

NICK MORGAN, 35

Chief executive, Big Cat Group

With partner Anthony Tattum, Morgan has built this creative agency into a £1.8m-turnover business. Based in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, it offers PR, marketing, events and design services. Morgan is looking to expand with operations in Paris and Barcelona.

"The recession has helped us to be specific in our offerings," says Morgan. "This has been shown by the uplift in billings in our first half-year results."

Morgan comes from a family of entrepreneurs and says his determination to succeed is in his genes. He believes business life could be improved by more knowledge transfer.





CHALLINORS
SOLICITORS



Deloitte



SPONSORED BY

TREVOR PALMER, 36

Owner/director, Tank PR

Palmer's PR consultancy is a new kid on the block in Nottingham but has already picked up seven clients and he is targeting 20 by the end of the year. "We want to help small businesses push into vertical trade sectors and international markets," he says.

Palmer played no small part in the growth and success of BCS PR, and his name is well known among local businesses – a pre-requisite when going it alone.

"I'm not really bothered by growth and riches for Tank, just that it becomes known for doing great work for clients and that all parties have fun," he says.

ANU BHAMBI, 34

Managing director, Express Energy

Despite the name, Bhambi is no frightened deer when it comes to business. His renewable energy company in Birmingham develops bioenergy power stations and he is confident that it can become a dominant player.

His business, backed by BDI Investments and Cargill Inc, is working to get planning consent for six to eight sites. He says the recession hasn't had a marked impact on its development. "Our timelines are longer than most businesses, and we have developed our model to hedge macroeconomic risks," he says.

ANDREW GUY, 41

Director/co-founder Price Guy Cholerton (PGC)

Guy is a recruiter with a military background, and has also worked for IBM and Jaguar. PGC was formed by HR and recruitment executives at Deloitte, including Guy, in 2000. The business, based in Henley-in-Arden, now has an impressive client list which includes KPMG, QinetiQ, Bupa and St Modwen. It turned over £1.4m in 2008.

PGC has survived the recession better than other recruitment companies. "In the good years PGC did not pursue growth at the expense of quality but held firm to its commitment to client service," says Guy.

JUSTIN EAMES, 38

Founder and managing director, Fish in a Bottle

Fish is a digital agency based in Leamington Spa, specialising in digital production, interactive games, viral marketing, web design and social media.

Eames continues to drive its strategy, which is keeping on top of innovation and finding and retaining talent. "A lot of the work we create is for young people. Although I get a certain degree of insight through my own children, I have to think long term."

Fish in a Bottle employs 13 and turns over £720,000. "We are looking to double the team in the next two years," says Eames.

STUART KELLOCK, 40

Managing director, Label Apeel

This Leicester company makes self-adhesive labels. It's a decent-sized concern employing 49 people and turning over £3.1m. Kellock says his greatest achievement was winning an award for its print quality.

"It has taken us ten years to move from a down-at-heel, back street label printer, running rubbish kit and producing bog standard labels to a recognised, player in our industry," he says.

The firm has come through the recession well and even picked up new contracts in Europe.

KELLY HERRICK, 35

Marketing manager, Abacus Lighting

With 280 staff (110 in China) and a turnover of £30m, Abacus Lighting in Sutton-in-Ashfield is a big project lighting specialist. Its projects have included Chek



SARAH KENT, 37

Deputy managing director, Haslimann Taylor

Kent, who has been with the Sutton Coldfield PR agency for 11 years, is involved in finding new business. Its growing reputation suggests she is doing a decent job. She admits the past few years have been about survival but suggests there was a pick-up in the last half of 2009.

Her other responsibility is staff development: "Our success is down to our people, which means investing in them," she says. Kent's ambition is to work as an in-house PR one day and with her agency background she will be "the client from hell".

Her suggestion to lead the UK out of the downturn is a team of economists fronted by Peter Kay!

Lap Kok Airport in Hong Kong, Hyderabad Stadium in India and providing floodlighting for cricket grounds Trent Bridge and Lords.

Herrick came on board as the directors were restructuring the company. She has restructured its marketing operation to ensure it can compete globally. This has resulted in a "massive increase in exposure in new and existing markets".

TOM WARRENDER, 29

Director, Get Set Schools

Warrender built Get Set Schools in Warrington over two years while working as a university lecturer. The idea is to help young people make more informed decisions about their health and careers using science, health and sport.

"There are several areas of funding that schools can access to pay for our workshops," he says. "Our biggest issue is to maintain a constant stream of bookings throughout the year, to allow our workshops to generate income during the 13 weeks that schools are on holiday."

PAUL FAULKNER, 31

Chief operating officer, Aston Villa FC

Playing a large part in running a £92m turnover business with a turnover of £92m and 1,600 staff that is close to the hearts of half of the people of Birmingham is no mean feat for a 31 year-old.

Faulkner has worked with Villa's American owner, Randy Lerner, to manage the change in ownership and implement initiatives, projects and business plans. He also works with Martin O'Neill on the player transfer business. He says changing the culture after the takeover in 2006 was his biggest challenge.

SIMON GRAY, 38

Director, Cherry Professional

Cherry Professional is a financial recruitment consultancy in Beeston, Nottingham. It was set up from scratch at the end of 2008 in the maelstrom of recession by Gray and his directorial colleague. They have worked for many years in this sector.

**Solutions
for Business**

Funded by
government

Looking for the Midlands' most compelling investment propositions?

Connect Midlands Springboard showcases the best early stage investment propositions the region has to offer.

This year's event will take place on **17th June** in Loughborough. 15 pre-screened companies, each looking for up to £500k, will demonstrate how they can return a profit for investors.

Places are limited and in high demand. Book early to avoid disappointment.

To register visit
www.connectshowcase.org
or call **02476 323320**

Venue

Sir Dennis Rooke Building
Holywell Park
Loughborough Leicestershire
LE11 3TU

**To find out more call 02476 323320
or visit www.connectshowcase.org**



Provided by

CONNECT
fast track for innovation and investment



Project Part-Financed
by the European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Sponsored by



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK





CHALLINORS
SOLICITORS



Deloitte.



SPONSORED BY

MARK MANTON, 37

Managing director, M Consulting and Employment Law Extra

Manton's empire comprises a marketing agency that caters to the professional services sector and an online legal advice service for small businesses, both of which are in Digbeth, Birmingham. M Consulting is more established with a latest turnover of just over £1m.

Manton says investing in digital and market diversification with a service called Mirror, aimed at small businesses, has been a great success.

He would choose Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, as the man to lead the country out of the economic gloom.



Gray is a qualified chartered accountant so he knows of what he speaks, and says much of the work comes through recommendation and referral. He has driven the firm's marketing campaign and attempted to build its profile in the media.

CHARIS JONES, 37

Owner, Sculpted Steel

Jones is an artist blacksmith. She creates sculptural forged steel products for gardens, interiors and public spaces from her base at Etruria Industrial Museum in Stoke. She is in talks with council representatives to provide work for public locations.

Jones intends to start providing workshops and is aiming to secure larger commissions. She was recently named as one of the top 100 businesses in Barclays' trading places awards.

JASON LANGFORD-BROWN, 40

Managing director, Lucid Communicating

Londoner Langford-Brown set up this Birmingham business

transformation company and sees himself as an adopted Brummie. With an anticipated turnover of £1m this year the climate here obviously suits him.

His ambition is to make Lucid the most respected business in its sector and regrets not setting up the business and "freeing my entrepreneurial spirit" earlier.

Lucid's offer is to streamline the way its clients deal with their customers. Langford-Brown says the business has proved a good, recession-proof model and has traded well in the current climate.

MATT HAMMERTON, 37

Managing director, Lava PR

Hammerton's Lincoln PR and marketing consultancy has been in business for three-and-a-half years and doubled its turnover every year since it was launched.

"Launching a PR consultancy in a county more used to talking about carrots and potatoes has been challenging," Hammerton says. "But once educated to the value PR can bring to their business, local clients have embraced it," he says.

MICHELLE CONWAY, 37

Director, American Imports

Conway and business partner Lisa Hollins run American Imports in Coventry – a shop and website selling American food and drink products. Think Hershey's chocolate, Twinkies, pumpkin pie filling and corn bread.

They operate from Coventry Indoor Market, but Conway says the plan is to move into retail premises in the next six months and have a diner linked to the store within 18 months.

DENIS DENISENKO, 22

Director, Intelligent Robots

Denisenko's Birmingham-based start-up imports intelligent robots from China to sell in the UK and Europe. "We identified a gap in the market where there is huge demand and little supply," he says. "These are high-end products for rich people."

Denisenko is something of a wunderkind, having also set up Copyfox, based on selling advertising on the back of photocopy paper used by students. He has, at the tender age of 24, already won enterprise awards. He made his first sale at the age of 13.

TIM ANDREWS, 40

Managing director, Hollywood Monster

Hollywood Monster is a signage and graphic supplier to the UK retail, construction, property and exhibition industries based in Tyseley, Birmingham, and has anticipated turnover for the current financial year of £4.1m.

The businesses – Hollywood Signs and Monster Digital – were merged by Andrews last summer. He says the business has faced challenges lately, mainly because of its exposure to the construction and development sectors. "But the merged company is reaching a wider market and is positioned well for growth."

PETER RICHARDS, 24

Founder and head of engineering at Alf-Osten

Alf-Osten makes two-seat biofuel powered racing cars built using recycled materials. The business, in Shrewsbury, also carries out design, engineering and manufacturing work for the automotive and mechanical engineering sectors. The launch of its first car was imminent as *Insider* went to press.

Richards was given a place on the SPEED WM mentoring programme.



KAWSAR MIAH, 24

Director, Dicom Solutions

Dicom is a wholesale distributor of electronic products, based at The Hive at Nottingham Trent University and West Bridgford. Miah started the business during his placement year at the university. The fact that turnover in its first year was £1m goes some way to explaining why he has already won a number of awards.

Miah believes the business – which only employs three full-time staff – is on course for turnover of £2.1m this year. He plans to set up an e-commerce website as a venture in the retail electronics market and to grow in the export market.



CHALLINORS
SOLICITORS



Deloitte. YPECOE

SPONSORED BY

SIMON RICKETT, 29

Director, Activ Holdings

Leicestershire's Activ provides business development products and services for small businesses in areas such as web design and marketing. Rickett is a former college lecturer specialising in psychology but set about offering online marketing to businesses close to where he lived and has never looked back. Activ turned over more than £1m last year.

SIMON McLEAN, 33

Managing director, Click Travel

McLean's travel company has had a good recession. "We've been almost totally recession-proof, having had astonishing growth right through the financial crisis," he says.

Current turnover is £4m. Click, based in Birmingham, specialises in online business travel. "Technology is my baby," says McLean. "Thirty months ago we didn't do any online bookings;

now more than 90 per cent of all transactions are online."

McLean's ambition is to turn Click into a £250m-turnover travel company. "But there is a strong possibility we will get acquired before we reach that," he says.

A challenge for Click has been the state of technology in the travel industry. Even today there are some suppliers the company can't talk to electronically.

JOHN MCGAUGHEY, 31

Managing director, Black Cat Motor Company

McGaughey's business repairs, restores and recovers vehicles, and builds vehicles or modifies existing ones – the company is particularly proud of its four wheel drive mini.

McGaughey is a former senior development engineer at Jaguar and Land Rover and stills like to get his hands dirty as well as planning the company's strategy.

"I have tried to be at both ends of the business and everywhere in between in equal measure as the need arises," he says.

SIMON JENNER, 35

Co-founder, Urban Coffee Company

Jenner's coffee shop in Church Street, Birmingham, has quickly established itself as a preferred meeting place for Colmore Row types and Jenner plans to open another two outlets in the next 18 months. Opening in a recession was brave but Jenner says: "We figured if we could survive now we would fly in the good times."

Jenner and his business partner knew nothing about coffee or retail. "We had to understand a new industry fast but in some ways that naivety has prevented us from creating just another coffee shop," he says.

GARY MCCARTHY, 41

Managing director, Eazytiger

Leicestershire's Eazytiger is a £1m-turnover new media and online marketing agency. It has 20 staff. McCarthy founded the business and owns 100 per cent of the shares.

"The recession has hurt in that some clients disappeared and we have been owed money," says McCarthy. "But these have been replenished by expanding into search engineering."

His big decision was not to charge clients upfront. "Millions of companies pay upfront to be high up on Google searches. They can't all be in the top ten so we only ask customers to pay when we get them there," he says.

CHARLES MAGILL, 30

Joint managing director and co-founder, CompareLegalJobs

Together with Tim Bates, Magill has launched online professional services recruitment business CompareLegalJobs. The plan is to have five divisions – legal, accountancy, property, banking and corporate finance – and offer an employer-only comparison job board. "The challenge is the

number of firms that have recruitment needs as organisations coming out of the recession at different stages," Magill says.

ANNE MARIE CURRAN-TAYLOR, 38

Owner, The Urban Bakery

Curran-Taylor's Leamington Spa boutique bakery also opened at the height of the recession. Undaunted, she has ambitions to turn her business into the most established boutique bakery this side of London. To this end she has worked hard on marketing.

"I visited dozens of companies to market myself," she says. "I network with other independent businesses to see how we can help each other and I am active in the use of social media."

BARRIE STEPHEN, 39

Director, Barrie Stephen Hair

Stephen's hairdressing business employs 45 across four salons in Leicestershire and turns over £1.4m. "Recent challenges have been opening our Ashby de la Zouch salon during the recession," he says. "We have had to work hard at gaining clients when they are less inclined to spend."

Stephen has formulated a new marketing plan for 2010 with special attention on the Leicester flagship salon.

STANISLAV KARPENKO, 21

Founder, Made By Young People

Karpenko's social enterprise in Birmingham teaches young people who may be operating in the black market to make money legally, using workshops and alternative education.

"Most of our customers are councils, schools, youth centres, youth offending centres and the police," he says. "They always have funding to work with young people, and if you can prove that you deliver on your promises they become your repeat customers."

ANDREW HORNER-GLISTER, 35

Owner/director, Nzime

Nottingham design consultancy Nzime is Horner-Glister's baby and it seems to be growing well. He says: "We are aiming at a different breed of client and have been winning work from larger agencies because clients are starting to realise there are quality agencies outside London. We have shifted our focus to being more focused with fewer clients, yet a broader spread of work."

He set up Nzime in 2000 and it employs five and turns over £500,000. Horner-Glister says his professional ambition is to create a sustainable business that grows year-on-year. His personal one is to compete in the Rally of Morocco later this year.

