

BE SUPPORTED. BE AMBITIOUS. BE CONNE-CTED. BE EMPOWERED. BE FUNDED. BE EN-TREPRENEURIAL. BE INSPIRED. BE PASSION-ATE. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE. BE MENTORED. BE ENCOURAGED. BE ENTERPRISING. BE BOLD. BE SUPPORTED. BE AMBITIOUS. BE CONNE-CTED. BE EMPOWERED. BE FUNDED. BE EN-TREPRENEURIAL. BE INSPIRED. BE PASSION-ATE. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE. BE MENTORED. BE ENCOURAGED. BE ENTERPRISING. BE BOLD. BE SUPPORTED. BE AMBITIOUS. BE CONNE-CTED. BE EMPOWERED. BE FUNDED. BE EN-TREPRENEURIAL. BE INSPIRED. BE PASSION-ATE. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE. BE MENTORED. BE ENCOURAGED. BE ENTERPRISING. BE BOLD.

BE THE BOSS

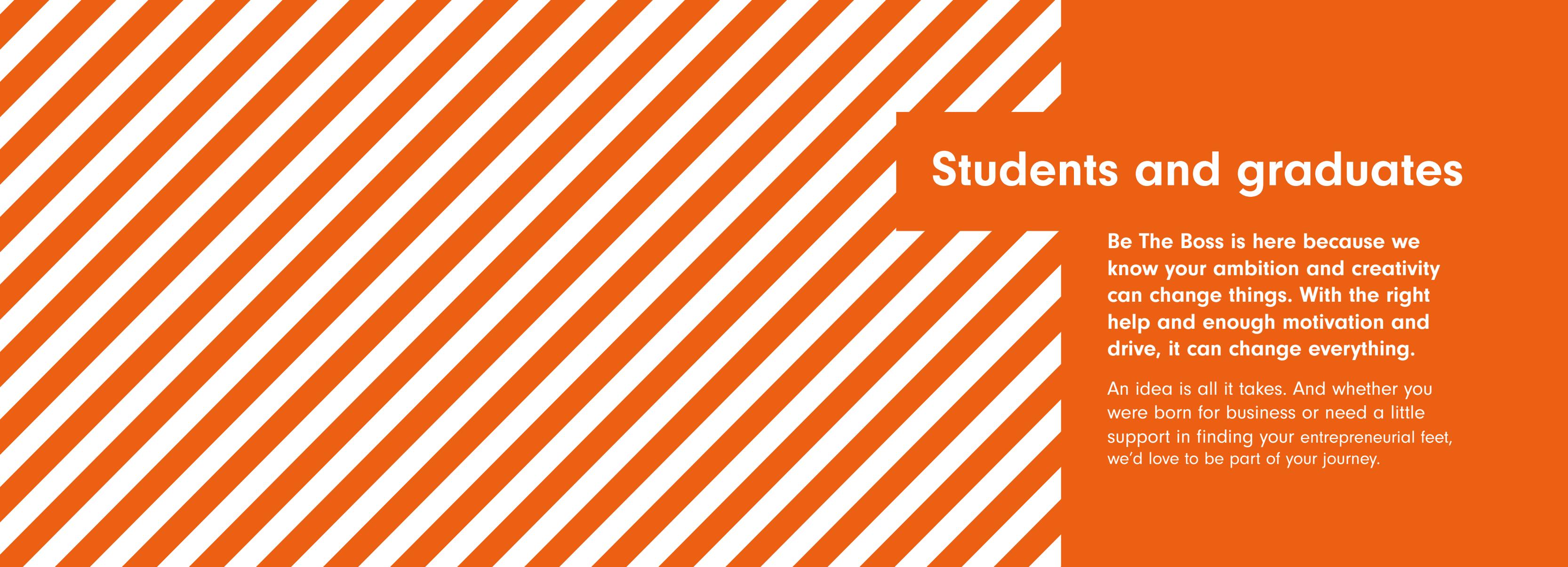


UNIVERSITY OF
DERBY

CAREERS
& EMPLOYMENT
SERVICE



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Students and graduates

Be The Boss is here because we know your ambition and creativity can change things. With the right help and enough motivation and drive, it can change everything.

An idea is all it takes. And whether you were born for business or need a little support in finding your entrepreneurial feet, we'd love to be part of your journey.

Be The Boss

Through a combination of action planning, one-to-one support provided by experienced business advisers, a series of workshops and other activities, Be The Boss will help to develop the skills you need to confidently set up and run your own business or enterprise and take the first steps to working for yourself.



Meet our Enterprise Adviser for your bespoke business consultation and [action planning session](#).

Secure [1:1 advisory sessions](#) with an experienced business professional, who will support you in all aspects of your business.



Attend [workshops and seminars](#) on a range of topics ranging from business planning to marketing strategy and sales. All delivered by experts within their field.



£1500

Receive [£1500 in start-up funding](#) when you successfully complete the programme.



Core Be The Boss Team



Ola Fagbohun
Enterprise Manager



Leanne Stevens
Enterprise Champion



Jo Wheldon
Head of Student
Employment and
Enterprise



Chris O'Gara
EDRF Project
Co-ordinator
(part-time)



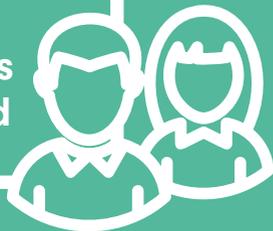
Part of the University of Derby Careers and Employment Service

The journey so far

September 2016

191

Students enrolled



131

Start-ups created



£177,000

Bursaries claimed



2845

Hours of business support

257

Workshops held



20

BTB roadshows



4

BTB networking events



March 2019



Be The Boss, Meet The Boss.

From nearly 200 aspiring entrepreneurs that have pursued their dreams with Be The Boss, we've handpicked nine success stories to inspire the next stage in your journey.

- Danielle Vassell
- Amit Gill
- Julie Cole
- Danniebelle Gunter
- Tom Storey
- David Hambling
- Tyra Tucker
- Freya Whittaker
- Adrian C Andrei





**Danielle
Vassell**
LittleMIGHT

LittleMIGHT makes custom clothing for premature babies. Each garment is adorned with empowering and uplifting messages to breathe hope and positivity into the heads and hearts of families and healthcare professionals. Tiny clothes. Hugely inspiring.

Danielle Vassell

LittleMIGHT



The Background

"I weighed one pound when I was born – about the same as a block of butter. The doctors warned of brain damage, blindness... and all sorts of other health implications. But somehow I defied the odds, and I want other families to know that their children can too. I suppose that's the mission of LittleMIGHT – glimpses of hope and humour even in the most difficult of circumstances."

The Beginnings

"I'd been studying a full-time degree in Business Management

when I finally took the leap and started LittleMIGHT in August 2018. My parents had run a successful training business that operated across the UK, and it was them who gave me the confidence and belief to start my own business. So thanks to the University of Derby's Be The Boss programme, LittleMIGHT was born and I haven't looked back."

The Discovery

"I heard about Be The Boss after receiving an email from the university, and I signed up in a heartbeat. I just knew it was right for me. Running the business takes a lot of time, knowledge

and perseverance, and I was determined to learn the skills I would need to make LittleMIGHT a big success. That meant understanding business strategy and making informed strategic decisions."

"Joining Be The Boss is one of the most important decisions I've ever made."

The Impact

"First and foremost, having the backing and belief of the University of Derby brought me a lot of confidence. And that in itself encouraged me to embrace every opportunity that the programme presented. I was given an initial start-up fund of £1500, and learned all sorts of techniques that would

help me understand my market and stand out as a business."

The Future

"LittleMIGHT isn't just a clothing line – it's a ray of hope for families. The past 18 months has been the most amazing journey, and the future will be international. I want to make sure that parents of premature children anywhere in the world can feel part of an online community where their voice and experience can inspire and support others. The clothing line is just the start."

The Programme

"Joining Be The Boss is one of the most important decisions I've ever made. And if anyone reading this is in two minds, I would say 'go for it!'. If you have the passion to launch a new venture, the hard work and effort will eventually be worth it. And the University of Derby has all the expertise and advice that any aspiring entrepreneur could ever need. So what's stopping you?"


www.daniellevassell.wixsite.com/home


Danielle Vassell


Danielle Vassell


@DanielleVassell


@danielle_Vassell



Amit Gill

Photography

Amit Gill is an independent photographer who specialises in imagery for the performing arts industries across Derby and the East Midlands. His photographic style is focused on head shots and portraits for actors, theatres and production companies.

Amit Gill

Photography



The Background

"I come from an acting background, and although that particular career path took a different direction, I've always wanted to be involved in the arts and build my own independent business and brand. That's where my focus on commercial photography comes from, and the niche focus on performing arts gives me a USP that I'm passionate about and that helps me to stand out too."

The Beginnings

"I was studying a BA in Commercial Photography at the University of Derby. I'd learned all the essentials

of studio and location photography, and it was during my third-year degree show that I gained the confidence and conviction to start my own business that focused in a sector that I truly loved. I had no equipment and very little business acumen, but I had nothing to lose either, and my course tutors were incredibly supportive and encouraging."

The Discovery

"I discovered Be The Boss through my course after a recommendation from a tutor. I could immediately imagine how it would help me to learn invaluable business skills,

so I joined the programme, grasped every single opportunity and never looked back. They helped me gain funding in the early days – and without that support I don't think I'd be the business owner I am today."

"If you get the opportunity to enrol on Be The Boss, please just do it."

The Impact

"Be The Boss gave me rounded advice that was tailored to my personal circumstances. From setting up a website to developing a business plan, building my professional network, and attending all sorts of workshops and events. I learned an awful lot through the success stories of other students too – that gave me real

confidence and I could definitely relate to their challenges."

The Future

"It's early days for Amit Gill Photography, so I'm still in this continual cycle of working hard to save money to spend on more sophisticated equipment and technology. And at the same time I'm continuing to build my portfolio and connections across the industry. My immediate future is about building more hands-on work experience, but also connecting with like-minded photographers so I can learn from their work too."

The Programme

"If you get the opportunity to enrol on Be The Boss, please just do it. You obviously need to take the time to research your market opportunity, but once you decide that the life of an entrepreneur and business owner is right for you, this is the perfect programme to guide your first steps and beyond. The opportunities they've given me have been brilliant – simple as that."



www.amit-gill.format.com



Amit Gill



A.G.Photography



@Gil61725904Amit



@britishlions2016

Julie Cole

Fitness



Julie Cole runs a circuit training class that focuses on weight-based exercises blended with dumbbells and boxing. Her focus is on helping people to maintain the optimum form, posture and technique to improve strength and avoid injury when using weights.

Julie Cole

Fitness



The Background

"I haven't always been a fitness enthusiast, but having been overweight for a large part of my life I managed to lose 102lb - the weight of an average 13-year-old! As part of that personal journey I developed a genuine passion for fitness, as well as a real understanding and appreciation of what people are going through when they start out on their path to a healthier way of living."

The Discovery

"My lecturer at the University of Derby told me about the Be The



Boss programme when they found out about my love of fitness and desire to have my own business. After graduating I enrolled on the programme, and have juggled setting up my own business with

a full-time job at Derbyshire County Council. It's hard work, but it's all part of a longer-term plan."

The Impact

"The programme has been brilliant. I've been introduced to other like-minded people, gained plenty of new knowledge from different trainers and advisers, but above all it's given me the confidence and skills to become self-employed. Although I purchased a lot of the equipment from my own savings, the grants received through Be The Boss allowed me to invest in more equipment, room hire and new qualifications."

"From a personal perspective, their funding and support has been invaluable."



The Future

"The business is already really busy, but I'm eager to continue building my skills through more advanced training and I'm planning to build a USP by developing a bespoke menopause course. By 2020 I'm aiming to be doing this as my full-time career, and the support, funding and confidence I've received through Be The Boss will be central to me achieving that goal."

The Programme

If you get the opportunity to join Be The Boss, my advice would be simple: do it, embrace it, enjoy it. From a personal perspective, their funding and support has been invaluable. In terms of advice, it's definitely important to plan your time properly, and remember - business can sometimes be a cut-throat world - so you need to have thick skin to continue driving forward!"



Julie Cole



Mrscoley14



**Daniebelle
Gunter**
Social-Ise

Social-Ise provides social media marketing to social entrepreneurs, charities, not-for-profits and other organisations, whilst also educating and guiding business owners towards more ethical and sustainable operating practices.

Danniebelle Gunter

Social-Ise



The Background

"I've always wanted to help people and to make a difference in my networks and community. And that was evident in my varied background before establishing Social-Ise. I'd worked as a youth support worker, training co-ordinator, and had even been the Chair of my own community organisation - Project COFFE."

The Beginnings

"I was studying a BSc in Child Family Health and Wellbeing at the University of Derby, whilst also volunteering in a number of different roles both at the

university and in my community. And it was during this time that I noticed a gap in the market that would combine my skills and passions, whilst helping other organisations to make the world a better, more sustainable place for future generations."

The Discovery

"I discovered Be The Boss through the Careers and Employability Service at the University of Derby. I've always felt entrepreneurial and passionately believed I could run my own business - Be The Boss helped me to do this. Their bursary was especially helpful in those early days -

"If you have entrepreneurial aspirations then this programme is definitely for you."

it helped me to set up a website, arrange business insurance and cover travel expenses and other essential purchases."

The Impact

"The programme has had a real impact - from the practical advice to honest truths. I was given my own business mentor and attended a series of brilliant workshops covering business planning, market research, pricing, strategy and selling. We also presented our business concept to experienced business leaders... that day changed my life. It was the day I realised my ideas could make money whilst making a difference - and Social-Ise was the result."

The Future

"Social-Ise will support people to create social impact and ultimately play their part in changing the world - no matter how small the improvement. The business also has a fundamental role in helping business leaders to find fulfilment through their community contributions. We're already expanding into Social Entrepreneurship Workshops, and Social Media Marketing workshops, and there are more big ideas to come too."

The Programme

"If you have entrepreneurial aspirations and want to build your own business, then this programme is definitely for you - so go for it. There are so many people who are genuinely excited about your potential, and the help they can give you is truly invaluable. You'll make mistakes - I know I do every day - but the key thing is to embrace them, learn from them and improve yourself thanks to them!"



www.social-ise.co.uk



Danniebelle Gunter



Social-ISE



@socialise80



@socialise80



Tom Storey

Big Storey
Productions

Big Storey Productions is a creative media business that specialises in professional videography and photography services across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Their bespoke service is tailored to small business, weddings, promo videos and events.

Tom Storey

Big Storey Productions



The Background

"I'd always been fascinated with both photography and video – it's been a lifelong passion. And after several years working in the media industry and taking on small independent projects in my own time, I decided to start Big Storey. And the rest is history. Oh – and I somehow found the time to be a brand ambassador for Canon too!"

The Discovery

"I was a Media Production student at the University of Derby when I first heard about Be The Boss from a Careers Adviser

who visited one of our lectures. I knew I wanted to start my own business. But I also knew there were a lot of gaps in my knowledge... there was probably a fair bit of naivety too, so I saw the programme as the perfect



opportunity to fill those gaps and give myself the best possible start in business."

"The advice and knowledge that the programme imparts will be genuinely invaluable."

The Impact

"The programme has had a real and lasting impact on me – and it's given me the skills, knowledge and mindset I needed to make Big Storey a success. The workshops were particularly in-depth and valuable, but I've also been able to build my professional network and met some genuinely inspiring people. I had some savings when starting up, but their bursary gave me the buffer I needed to invest in some top-notch equipment."

The Future

"Since establishing Big Storey in 2017, I've had the privilege of working with – and for – some really lovely people. And I'm very proud that we've attracted some very well-known brands too – Alton Towers springs to mind as one of my favourites. So the future is exciting – I'm looking forward to building our brand reputation and continuing to work hard on Google and Social Media to make sure people think of Big Storey when they think about high-quality, tailored photography and video."

The Programme

"If you're genuinely planning to start a business, then you should definitely take part in Be The Boss before doing so. The advice and knowledge that the programme imparts will be genuinely invaluable. And it's free – so why wouldn't you take advantage? For any aspiring entrepreneurs looking for advice, I'd say to stick

by your idea, have the courage in your convictions, and be ready for a bumpy ride – at least in the early years. Owning a business is hard work, but it's worth every bit of it."



www.bigstoreyproductions.co.uk



Tom Storey



Big Storey Productions

[Click to view some of Tom's work](#)



Our 100th business

David Hamblings

The Joy of Pages

The Joy of Pages is an editorial, proofreading and typesetting service that works with self-publishing authors, ghost writers and publishing companies. Their range of work spans everything from manuscripts to books, short stories and marketing materials.

David Hambling

The Joy of Pages



The Background

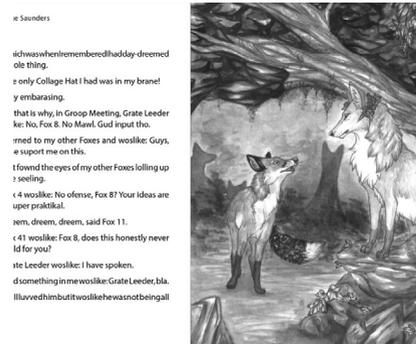
"I started The Joy of Pages while I was finishing my MA in Publishing at the University of Derby. I'd always loved writing and really liked the idea of working for myself and being my own boss. The original idea was to go freelance so that I could gain real publishing experience for myself and on my own terms... standing on my own two feet as a self-employed business owner."

The Discovery

"I suppose it was my entrepreneurial ambition that helped me to discover the Be The Boss programme, and I knew instantly that it was right for me. Having experienced working under employers in

"You'll learn to be an effective and entrepreneurial leader."

small businesses, it's refreshing to be part of a programme that empowers and supports people to establish and operate a business their own way."



The Impact

"The majority of my start-up funding came from the Be The Boss bursary, but they've done much, much more than give me a financial footing in the business world. The programme has helped to understand all the ins-and-outs of running

a business, and it's helped me to establish and successfully market The Joy of Pages in a really competitive market."

The Future

"Business so far has seen a slow and steady growth for The Joy of Pages, but we're staying focused and have some exciting growth plans for the future. We're currently aiming to expand to become a publisher of children's books. I'm already in talks with an author and can't wait to continue building the business, surrounded by talented and inspiring people in an industry that I truly love."

The Programme

"Anyone who is fortunate enough to be offered a place on the Be The Boss programme should do it. The experience alone will give you the skills necessary to run a business, and even if you end up pursuing a career within an established

business, you'll learn to be an effective and entrepreneurial leader. If you're starting up I'd say it's important to stay patient, keep your eyes on the prize, be open to change and embrace every new experience."


www.thejoyofpages.co.uk


The Joy of Pages


@thejoyofpages



Tyra Tucker

Culture Scoop

Currently in its final stages of development, Culture Scoop is a website that will inspire and educate visitors by connecting them to diverse and engaging news and content from different world cultures. Perfect for anyone planning short trips or longer travels.

Tyra Tucker

Culture Scoop



The Background

"No one can accuse me of not being keen! I first started my business at the tender age of 15... as you'd expect I had no idea what I was doing and things didn't really work out. But that was an early sign of my entrepreneurial spirit, and many years later Culture Scoop is the result of all that early ambition and excitement. I'm more mature this time around, and I've had invaluable guidance to get me where I am now."

The Beginning

"I am currently study a degree in International Relations and Diplomacy, whilst at the same time volunteering with a range of different cultural institutions. And I suppose it's that passion for experiencing different cultures and my love of international

"I knew it was an opportunity that I couldn't miss."

travel which inevitably formed the foundations of my business idea. So those were the foundations that started Culture Scoop."

The Discovery

"I was in my first year when I encountered the programme. And that was that. The timing was just perfect and as soon as I left the introduction workshop I knew it was an opportunity that I couldn't miss. I already had plenty of motivation, but I felt that Be The Boss would give me the guidance and knowledge that I needed to be a success."

The Impact

"From my perspective, I found the step-by-step guidance extremely useful – and it covered everything from starting the business to stabilising and maintaining it. The review meetings and specialist workshops were especially useful. They helped me to focus my

attention and prioritise my efforts to make sure my time was spent on the most meaningful tasks. It sounds simple, but there are distractions everywhere."

The Future

"The future of Culture Scoop is bright! I can't wait to launch the website and begin building my small start-up business into an online empire!"

The Programme

"If you're thinking of joining the programme, you should absolutely 100% go for it. Don't let anyone – including yourself – stop you from pursuing your passion. It's hard work and there'll be disappointments along the way, but the journey is just as good as the prize! The programme surrounds you with knowledgeable people, so be sure to listen carefully, ask questions, take notes and plan every single step!"



www.culturescoop.com



Tyra Tucker



CultureScoopweb



@culturescoops



@culture_scoop

Freya Whittaker

FREYA 963



FREYA 963 is a fashion collection and lifestyle brand that boldly celebrates identity and individuality regardless of age or gender. The clothing line is supported by a lifestyle magazine, with underpinning consultancy services from its founder Freya Whittaker.

Freya Whittaker

FREYA 963



The Background

“Working for myself and having my own label had always been a dream, but a placement year at some of London’s well-known fashion houses gave me some truly valuable insights. I saw how staff members let work take over their lives, and I decided to take control by being my own boss. I’d graduated with a First Class Degree in Fashion and some amazing awards recognition, so I had confidence in my ability and I was genuinely determined.”

The Discovery

“As a designer I felt confident in creating my own brand, but when it came to the business side of things I had no idea how to get



Patrick Grant, Freya and Arne Davies

started. I discovered Be The Boss through a friend on my course; she was setting up her own business too and the programme sounded like something I’d learn a lot from. So I looked into it and very quickly decided it was an opportunity that I just couldn’t miss.”

“Be The Boss doesn’t just help with the practical side, you’ll meet like-minded people and begin to build industry connections too.”

The Impact

“From creating a business plan to the basics of book-keeping and

learning how to promote my brand through social media, Be The Boss has had a genuine impact on FREYA 963. My business needed a lot of investment to be able to start creating products, and both the bursary and time management training allowed me to invest my time and savings in the right areas to start generating awareness and cash flow.”

The Future

“I’m in the process of setting up my own studio space, and I’m constantly building new connections and partnerships. I’m currently exploring an opportunity with the British Fashion Council, which stemmed from winning a high-profile award for my recent collection. One day soon there’ll be an ecommerce platform so that I can start selling direct to customers too. There are so many opportunities out there, and I’m just trying to take one step at a time.”

The Programme

“Be The Boss doesn’t just help with the practical side of setting up a business, you’ll meet like-minded people and begin to build industry connections too. And as someone who had underestimated the upfront costs of establishing a business, I can vouch that the bursary is extremely valuable. In terms of advice for aspiring entrepreneurs, I’d say: stay strong, work hard, and be ready to prove people wrong.”



Freya Whittaker



@freya_963



Adrian C Andrei

Filmmaker

Adrian C Andrei is an independent producer of film and video content for both domestic and international clients. His specialisms range from full-service filmmaking to bespoke video editing, camera operating and motion graphics animation.

Adrian C Andrei

Filmmaker



The Background

"I've always been creative and found my love for filmmaking at an early age. So when I first applied for my degree in Film Production at the University of Derby, I already knew I wanted to be self-employed when I graduated. Whether the business was successful or not, it's that kind of initiative that can help to establish a portfolio and open opportunities with clients or employers."

The Discovery

"Before I discovered Be The Boss everything just took a lot of time and patience. I was hungry

"The mentoring, support and guidance you'll receive is genuinely valuable to aspiring business owners."

to learn the A to Z of running a business, and needed some guidance. So when I heard about the programme it seemed to perfectly suit my situation and aspirations. It was actually a friend from university who told me about the programme, and as soon as I looked into it, I knew it was an opportunity I had to grasp."



The Impact

"I'd been preparing for self-employment for a while, which meant I already had some savings for equipment

and start-up. Even so, the bursary from Be The Boss was a huge help in those early days. The programme has put me in touch with so many local business owners, whilst the events and workshops have been really helpful. Above all I've met people who have given me the confidence to grow and evolve my own business – it's been quite inspirational."

The Future

"At the moment a lot of my work is focused around promotional content for businesses. I'm grateful for every project that I've completed and it's all part of building a portfolio... but I'd love to evolve towards filmmaking with a more unique or creative narrative. Something that will allow me to indulge my artistic side, whilst still building a profitable business would genuinely be a dream come true."

The Programme

"If someone is serious about running their own business, then I really cannot understand why they wouldn't aspire to be part of the Be The Boss programme. It's free and it offers really valuable, tailored information within engaging formats. And as someone who's been part of the programme, I can testify that the mentoring, support and guidance you'll receive is genuinely valuable to aspiring business owners."



Adrian C. Andrei



Adrian C. Andrei

Hear more from some of our success stories

▶ [Click here to view a Q and A with
some of our programme members.](#)



Award-winning programme

The University of Derby won the 'University of the Year' at the Midlands Business Awards 2018 in recognition of the Be The Boss enterprise support programme.

[Click to read more](#)

The future of Be the Boss

Due to the amazing achievements of our graduate entrepreneurs and the impact of our programme leaders, we're proud to announce that Be The Boss will continue to be funded as an independent initiative of the **University of Derby**.

We would like to thank the European Regional Development Fund for helping to make the first phase of this project such a success and we're excited to see what the future holds.

Here's to tomorrow's aspiring change-makers.
We're ready when you are.

[Call](#), [email](#) or visit our [website](#) to find out more.

Special thanks and acknowledgements

Bruce McLeod (who designed and launched Be The Boss)

Janiece Whittingham and **Hristo Yordanov**
(student interns who supported Bruce)

Be the Boss Business Advisers: **Rachel Fletcher** and **Julie Mather** of FCS Associates; **Rachel Hayward** of Ask The Chameleon, **Fatimah Razak** of AFR Accountancy and **Francine Pickering** of Clarity Marketing

Alina Ungureanu (graduate intern).



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