

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



## CASE STUDY

**BEN WILSON**

**Inverlussa Marine Services**

Operations Director, MIT EDP 2014 Alumnus

### THE COMPANY

Inverlussa Marine Services provide a range of modern work vessels to clients throughout the UK and Europe. Their vessels are used by clients for a range of purposes including interisland ferries, marine survey work and towage. The family run business based on Mull has plans to continue its impressive growth, having doubled its workforce in the past two years, targeting both the aquaculture and renewable energy sectors.

### WHY EDP

Ben started his Entrepreneurship Development Programme journey with a liberal dose of scepticism. The idea that anything coming from an American business school would fit with the culture and approach of a business based in the West Coast of Scotland, seemed at best farfetched. But listening to him talk about his EDP experience now, it's abundantly clear that those views have changed dramatically.

It was only recommendations from previous participants in the local business community and a discussion with his account manager at HIE which made him decide to get

involved in the application process. But as soon as he was accepted for the programme he knew that he was doing the right thing. As he says himself "I loved the competitive aspect of getting onto the programme and after watching a few of HIE's online EDP videos I knew it was for me".

Ben set off for Boston with a very clear objective. Inverlussa was growing fast but **needed to develop a clearer strategy** to make sure that this growth delivered what the company needed.

"You come back from EDP buzzing. The energy it creates is unbelievable, it's incredibly inspirational"



## THE PROGRAMME

Ben's initial perception of an American business school did prove to have some basis in reality. In his words it was "very out there". As he goes on to explain "you have to be confident or you will be left behind and for someone from the West Coast of Scotland that isn't always an easy thing to overcome."

However the emphasis placed on thinking more strategically by the EDP teaching was exactly what Ben was looking for. "The quality of the people involved in the programme really stood out and helped me focus on the things he needed to address to develop a growth strategy back at Inverlussa."

"Being able to meet and learn from such a wide range of people including Paul English, the cofounder of Kayak, the travel search engine company which was sold for \$1.8 billion in 2012, was **an inspirational experience.**" This mix of high quality participants and tutors on the programme was a stand out aspect of the EDP for Ben.

While his focus stayed firmly on the strategy elements of the programme, Ben also found the **insights into raising investment** in a business a revelation. Developing a clear understanding of what's important to investors is something else which he has tucked away for future reference.

## THE BENEFITS

Ben uses the words "buzzing" and "inspirational" regularly when he describes his EDP experience. It's these two things above all else which he feels are the most important aspect of what he brought back from Boston. But in reality what does that mean when you are back in your business? As he explained "EDP gives you the **belief and confidence** that you can achieve what you want to".

That belief and confidence is now helping shape Inverlussa's approach to putting a strategy in place to **identify and develop new markets** and while it's early in the EDP journey for Ben, the signs are that it is going to have a real positive effect on the company.

The EDP has prepared Ben for helping to take the company to the next level. Part of that has been about **reinforcing belief in what you already have** and what you can achieve. But it's also clear that it has an impact on **attitude** to your whole business strategy. "Any business growth strategy has to be dynamic and capable of being reviewed and developed as markets change." The EDP has given Ben an insight into how other successful entrepreneurs do this and given him the confidence that he can do the same.

## SHOULD I DO IT?

Ben is absolutely resounding in his endorsement of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

"If you have the slightest bit of ambition for your business this is the best investment in time that you can make."

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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