

Maxim news

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Macclesfield College sits down with East Cheshire's business community



Engagement party: 40 invited guests joined key figures from Macclesfield College and Maxim Business Training, to celebrate the ongoing success of strategic partnership and collaboration, at the recent Chief Executive's Dinner.

SOME of the College's key partners and stakeholders came together in June, to celebrate their success in re-invigorating the local economy, through strategic collaboration.

This glamorous, black-tie event - held in the College's Silk Room Training Restaurant, was attended by 40 invited guests from across Cheshire, all representing businesses, SMEs and organisations throughout the county that have supported and believed in the vision set out in the College's three-year Strategic Plan, published in Autumn 2015.

These guests included some of the region's most influential business leaders, such as the Chief Executive of the Macclesfield Chamber of Commerce, Sue Bowden, Deputy Chief Executive of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), Mark Livesey, and the Business and Education Co-ordinator at the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Trevor Langston. Other key guests at the evening were MP for Macclesfield, David Rutley, Labour

Candidate and Macclesfield South Town Councillor, Neil Puttick, the local authority MD of Skills and Work, Julian Cobley and his colleague, Skills & Growth Manager, Roz Atherton.

The gala dinner, which was hosted by the Principal and Chief Executive of Macclesfield College, Rachel Kay, *(pictured right)* was expertly prepared and served by Head Chef Mark Boswell, assisted by Pastry Chef John Parrott and selected Level 3 learners on Catering and Hospitality courses. It was also sponsored by luxurious, five-star hotel De Vere Cranage Estate, located in nearby Holmes Chapel, which also matched and supplied the wines for this unmissable, red-carpet evening.

During the event, Rachel Kay took the opportunity to formally launch an exciting new collaborative partnership with De Vere Cranage Estate, which will help the College to put its truly

fantastic Catering and Hospitality courses on the map, and further strengthen its offering in this very dynamic industry sector.

David Rutley, MP for Macclesfield, led the toasts and rightly praised the College for its success in forging such strong links with businesses on a local and national scale, referencing high-profile local companies like Siemens, AstraZeneca and Seddon Construction. He was also effusive in his praise for the College's ongoing commitment to first-rate apprenticeships, via Maxim Business Training.

"Macclesfield College is making positive progress in engaging with the business community. It is great to see the College increase the number of apprenticeships it provides from 200 in 2014/15, by an extra 350 just 18 months later.

The positive interest in apprenticeships and technical training is very good news for the local economy," continues David, "but, most of all, for the young people whose lives are being transformed by the opportunities they offer. The College is a real asset to Macclesfield, and I wish it continued success in the years ahead."

Speaking after the event, Principal and Chief Executive Rachel Kay said: "It was great to welcome our key connections, to thank them for their ongoing collaboration, which has taken the College to exciting new heights.

"Our outline strategy has been underpinned by engagement with the regional business community, and the Government's agenda, to create great opportunities for local learners, and we've reaped excellent results, with 97% of learners going on to work, take apprenticeships, or pursue a higher level course with us."



Maxim helps to brew something very special in Macclesfield



Raising the bar: Macclesfield gypsy brewery and Tap & Bottle, Fiveclouds is about to be transformed thanks to Maxim Business Training.

FOR everybody connected with Macclesfield College and Maxim Business Training, solid, results-driven commercial engagement with local businesses and SMEs sits at the very top of the agenda.

Particularly as the College and its dedicated employer-responsive arm seek to continue building on the strategic vision set out in Autumn 2015, following the appointment of current Principal and Chief Executive, Rachel Kay and Director of Employer Enterprise and Commercial Services, Tracy Cosgrave.

Fiveclouds certainly fulfils the 'local' criteria based, as it is, in the heart of Macclesfield's historic Market Place. Run by Partners Josh Sharples and

Tom Lewis, Fiveclouds is a small, artisan gypsy brewery, tap & bottle that channels all of its energy and expertise into the creation and production of modern, progressive seasonal beer in keg, can and cask.

Born out of Tom and Josh's shared passion for excellence in premium micro-brewed beer, Fiveclouds is a young and ambitious start-up business that is now looking to develop and expand, with the help of Maxim who will be delivering expert training and skills provision, backed by ESF funding support.

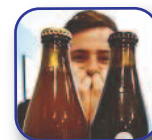


Local lads Josh and Tom are looking to increase their turnover and recruit new staff over the next 12 months, either permanently or via Maxim's proven apprenticeships programme. Their ambitious, exciting expansion plans include a move into catering and hospitality, by offering a limited, yet high quality food and small plates menu, complemented by a selection of fine wines from around the world.

Since its establishment back in 2014, Fiveclouds has grown rapidly, and there hasn't been enough time,

resources or, indeed, finances for Josh and Tom to take stock of their options and standardise training with their existing staff in the areas of their proposed expansion. What's more, their need to take on additional staff in order to realise their expansion plans will, of course, necessitate extra training, which is where Maxim comes in.

"Money and time are finite," Josh Sharples elaborates, "and we were quick to recognise that we needed help identifying the right training, not only for ourselves as a business partnership, but also for our team, both now and in the future."



"We were fortunate to form a strategic partnership with Macclesfield College and Maxim. Working with them, we completed a basic review of our skills and training needs.

"This is a game changer for any small business," Josh continues. "For us, it means training can become an immediate reality. It also gives us the level of confidence to invest and grow, as the additional support we are receiving makes us a better, more streamlined business."



Maxim helps marketing firm to embrace apprentices



Welcoming local talent: Macclesfield College alumnus, Ashleigh Walker is now an Account Executive at Bollington-based Embrace Marketing.

SINCE its launch in October 2015, Maxim Business Training has been swift to recognise and harness ambition and enterprise in local companies, helping them transform their skills set and revolutionise their day-to-day business practices.

An excellent case in point is Maxim's ongoing strategic collaboration with Bollington-based marketing agency, Embrace. Led by its energetic founder and Managing Director, Becky Reardon, Embrace describes itself as "young, vibrant and creative", and can boast a full team of in-house, highly experienced professionals including marketers, designers, digital experts and photographers.

Furthermore, it has been shortlisted in two categories - New Business Set-up of the Year and Skills, Education & Training at the E3 Business Awards, taking place this month at the Macron Stadium in Bolton, Lancashire.

Being shortlisted for an award in Skills, Education & Training, is as pleasing to everyone at Maxim as it is to the team at Embrace, as this dynamic and vibrant agency are extremely passionate about apprenticeships, and tirelessly dedicated to investing in the development of individuals throughout their career.

Recently, Embrace has taken on three College learners in a variety of different apprenticeship roles within the company, where they will join up with Macclesfield alumnus, Ashleigh Walker. Ashleigh joined Embrace in July 2016, and is currently employed there as an Account Executive.



Local care centre looks to Maxim to deliver training improvements



Safe haven: the East Cheshire Housing Consortium provides temporary and long-term accommodation for vulnerable individuals throughout the region.

SINCE its high-profile launch back in Autumn 2015, Maxim Business Training has built up a solid and dependable service within the Health and Social Care sector, and this is about to be augmented still further, following confirmation that it is to enter into a strategic partnership with the East Cheshire Housing Consortium.

Based in the heart of Macclesfield, the East Cheshire Housing Consortium (EHC) is an independent registered charity with over twenty five years of experience in caring for vulnerable individuals, primarily those with mental health problems, through the provision of short and long-term housing and support.



Led by CEO Brenda Wright (*pictured inset left*), EHC is well known and highly regarded within the Health and Social Care

sector, with a reputation for excellence and efficiency across its entire service portfolio, back by a level of empathy, compassion and understanding that is second to none.

EHC provides safe, clean and comfortable housing - either on an ad-hoc basis or fully supported 24 hours a day - for people living with a range of mental health issues. Up to 80 people can be accommodated at any one time across a range of

properties located throughout the East Cheshire region, and the core aim of the EHC is to help their tenants develop their life skills sufficiently to be able to move on to independent accommodation, generally within a two-year timescale, depending on individual needs and circumstances.

Representatives from EHC recently came to Macclesfield College to meet the team at Maxim and give a short presentation. From this meeting, it has now been agreed that Maxim will deliver fully bespoke, advanced training programmes to EHC staff at the Weston Community Centre, run by Cheshire East Council.

"We are constantly striving to offer new services and ensure that our staff are always equipped to do so," comments EHC CEO, Brenda Wright. "All staff receive a comprehensive induction and are highly trained. Some of our senior staff are qualified to Level 5 in Health and Social Care - the highest level - and, as a minimum, all staff either have - or are working towards - Level 2 to 3.

"From our meeting with the team at Maxim," concludes Brenda, "we have total confidence in its ability to deliver the ongoing improvements we will require to continue providing the level of service for which we are renowned throughout the industry."

Tracy is Maxim's driving force



The vital spark: Director of Employer Enterprise and Commercial Services, Tracy Cosgrave.

A KEEN sense of ambition and a meticulous approach to ensuring a consistently high level of performance across work-based FE and HE training programmes, led Tracy Cosgrave to re-locate to her native North West, to become the College's Director of Employer Enterprise and Commercial Services, and spearhead the launch of Maxim Business Training in Autumn 2015.

A highly-skilled, dedicated professional with an inherent ability to bring out the very best in people and teams alike, Tracy is an extremely self-motivated individual with a proven track-record for delivering the goods, in the face of the most stringent demands, pressing deadlines and exacting commercial targets.

Since joining Macclesfield from a Northamptonshire-based college nearly two years ago, Tracy's achievements in the areas of business engagement and apprenticeships development have been both highly commendable and hugely significant.

By reacting to today's constantly evolving and challenging FE and HE environment with a proactive, positive approach to encouraging professional advancement and addressing workforce skills gaps, Maxim has managed to grow by 150% - in terms of apprentice numbers - in just under two years. "This was achieved in the face of a perennially challenging educational environment, which makes it all the more satisfying," comments Tracy.

In May 2016, the apprentice provision delivered by Maxim was officially judged as being "Good" which, given all the changes implemented in Autumn 2015, was a particularly strong achievement.

Apprenticeships top of the agenda at key schools breakfast meeting



Morning assembly: Business Development Managers from 18 schools across East Cheshire, including Wilmslow High School (pictured above), attended a breakfast meeting and presentation in June, held jointly by Cheshire East Council and Macclesfield College, at the Silk Room Training Restaurant situated on campus.

THIS June saw Macclesfield College and Maxim Business Training join forces with Cheshire East Council, to present and discuss reforms to apprenticeships with leaders of local authority maintained schools throughout the region, in a concerted effort to ensure they reap the full benefits of all the changes brought about by the Government's new Levy.

Business Development Managers from 18 schools across East Cheshire and beyond - including some from the independent sector - descended on Macclesfield College to attend a breakfast meeting and networking event, held in the Silk Room Training Restaurant.

This event also comprised keynote speeches and presentations given by the College's Director of Employer Enterprise and Commercial Services, Tracy Cosgrave and the Senior Workforce Development Manager and leader of the apprenticeships programme at Cheshire East Council, Abigail Rushton.



The event began with Abigail Rushton explaining how the new Apprenticeship Levy applies to schools, and how to effectively make use of - and manage - their funding. She then proceeded to detail the local authority's support programme in place for maintained schools across East Cheshire.

This comprehensive programme includes one-to-one business planning for Levy funds, and broad-based advice and guidance on both the selection and procurement of high quality training providers, such as Maxim, the local authority's preferred partner in this key growth area.

Furthermore, it encompasses the advertisement of apprenticeship opportunities within the schools themselves, advice on recruiting and selecting apprentices, full assistance with making apprenticeship agreements and commitment statements, and access to peer learning and development sessions for apprentices and their supervisors alike.

Abigail Rushton (*pictured below right*) then moved on to detail how the schools can access Levy funds through the Workforce Development Team at Cheshire East Council, before setting out the local authority's core procurement guidelines and outlining its preferred supplier framework, at the centre of which is, of course, Maxim Business Training.



"It was pleasing to see so many school Business Development Managers attend the apprenticeships breakfast meeting held recently at Macclesfield College," affirms Abigail Rushton.

"They are a vital interface between ourselves and local schools, which is why it was so important to convey to them the full benefits of the Government's new Apprenticeship Levy. I hope they found the event useful and look forward to helping them implement the necessary funding and procedural changes into their day-to-day operations."

The focus of attention then switched to the programme Maxim has put together over the past 18 months, to transform work-based learning and optimise employer engagement across East Cheshire and beyond.

Macclesfield College's Director of Employer Enterprise and Commercial Services, Tracy Cosgrave - who has been instrumental in the rapid rate of progress and development made by Maxim since its launch in 2015 - then went on to set out the changes to training and apprenticeships delivery affected by the introduction of the new Levy.

These include the automatic termination of Skills Funding Agency contracts, following its merger with the Education Funding Agency to form the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in April of this year. They also incorporate the launch of new funding bands, price negotiations with employers, the removal of age bands, and incentives to employers taking on 16 to 18 year-olds.

Tracy then outlined the new systems in place to help standardise the delivery of apprenticeships, up and down the country, the new funding bands that have been implemented, end point assessments and grading for apprentices.

Tracy concluded her presentation to local school BDMs by highlighting the apprenticeship opportunities open to them, via Maxim Business Training, including IT Technicians, AAT Accountants, Art and Design Technicians, Business Administration and Management.

