

Meaningful Learning Experiences

Strategic Commitment	✓	Part of a careers initiative across Greater Manchester
Curriculum Provision	✓	Application of learning about 'Sources of Finance'
Employer Partnerships	✓	Involving a successful, established, local SME business
Reflective Young People	✓	Encouraging consideration about future financial realities
Informed Career Choices	✓	Providing a reality check about running your own business

SME van hire business inspires thinking about 'Sources of Finance' in GCSE Business Studies

The Head of Business Studies at Essa Academy in Bolton suggested several GCSE topics that could be enlivened, including Tax, Business Start-up, Cash Forecasting and Sources of Finance – settling on this last option and keen to involve an SME firm located near to the school.

Majestic Self Drive Hire agreed to take part. Established in 1960 and run by husband and wife directors, this small firm has built a successful business in the face of many large, international competitors. Students had seen the white vans on local streets and many had also seen the Reliant Robin three-wheeler vehicle that is used to promote the business.

With a reminder about possible use of different forms of funding - owner's money, borrowed money and grants - students were introduced to Majestic Self Drive Hire in a Powerpoint slideshow and a short informal video in which the managing director, Warren, told the students that, *'In the future we hope to expand into long-term rentals, but we need a bigger fleet to do that.'* They were challenged: *Using what you have learned about sources of finance and about Majestic Self Drive, what would you propose about the best way to develop this well-established business? A selection of your proposals will be sent to be considered by Warren and Rebecca, who will give you their feedback.*

The end of the project coincided with a period when three of Warren's team were off work, meaning that he could not spare time to visit the school. But he responded to each of the student groups' Powerpoint proposals in an email, also offering some general advice about business funding.

Benefits for the Students

- *'I'm very thankful to Warren for wanting my ideas. I will try my best to help him.'*
- *'I feel nervous because I don't know if he's going to like our ideas – if he thinks it's suitable.'*
- *'Teachers' feedback – if it's not good enough – will have a consequence to it ... he's probably a nice guy.'*
- *'It's scary in a way because you see a person who's going through financial business problems – and it might happen to me.'*
- *'It makes me want to improve my behaviour...'*

Benefits for the School

- As well as specific feedback and encouragement about students' work, the managing director provided his views and experience about sources of finance, particularly the value of long-term leasing, but also warning that, *'With regards to borrowing money off friends and family, this sometimes puts you in a bad position if there are delays in paying back the money'*.
- A previous staff survey had revealed little involvement of employers in subject learning across the school, making this a priority for the Careers Leader.

Benefits for the Employer

- The project raised the profile of Majestic Self Drive Hire among the students, their families and the teaching staff – who live in the local area.
- The project involved all students in the group, but Warren did not need to leave his workplace, both when providing input and when offering feedback.
- Warren was impressed by the students' efforts: *'They have all worked well researching and coming up with ideas to make progress within our business ...'*



GCSE Business Studies students were challenged to apply their knowledge about 'Sources of Finance' by a local small firm considering expanding into long-term van hire. The busy firm's managing director provided feedback about the students' proposals by email.



LONG TERM IDEAS(FINANCE)

- To expand, I suggest you should get a loan and then you should lease some more vans and then start long term rentals, and then from this the money you make, should go back into the business to expand and even buy more vans and therefore you can also pay back your loan.
- Another way to get money for you to expand, is by borrowing money from family and friends or from your savings. This is beneficial for you and easy because it is either your own money or someone's close who will not pressure to pay back within a rush and you will feel more calm and relaxed on paying the money relatives.

