

Strategic Management Partners &
University of Sussex:
First Generation Scholar Internship
2015.

Overview



The Learning Journal

This learning journal is a collection of notes, observations, thoughts and other relevant materials built-up over the duration of my placement at Strategic Management Partners as part of my internship funded by the University of Sussex as part of the First Generation Scholar scheme. The purpose is to enhance and record my learning through the process of writing and thinking about my learning experiences.

What this journal includes:

- My opinion on issues raised on placement
- What I have found challenging
- What new knowledge, skills or understanding I have gained
- How my opinions or values changed during to experience
- How I identified the next step(s) for furthering my development

Strategic Management Partners:

SMP is an independent consultancy. They provide strategic planning advice, training, coaching and support to organisations both large and small, across a wide range of sectors. They are based in South East England and provide services to an international client base. SMP are registered by professional standards bodies to advise on:

- Continuity Planning
- Background Personnel Security Vetting
- The Responsible Business Standard
- Environmental and Social Governance
- Innovation and Intellectual Property protection
- Mediation and accelerated dispute resolution

They have an active membership of:

- The Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce
- The British Computer Society
- The Institute of Consulting
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- The Fraud Advisory Panel
- The Organisation for Responsible Businesses

These provide access to current best practice across a wide range of sectors for research, HR management, process improvement, manufacturing, marketing, sales and customer service.

Founded in 1989, Strategic Management Partners operates as a consortium of professionally qualified and highly experienced business managers. They are supported by innovative specialist experts, selected per project. This allows them to offer a wide choice of services so clients can avoid the problems of multiple supply sources. It also reduces costs

ABOUT ME

A third year student at the University of Sussex, happily studying towards a B.A honors in Media and Communications. As a first generation scholar my move towards higher education has provided me with the knowledge and network to establish and further my aspirations of a professional career within the business communications environment.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

The University of Sussex is a leading higher education and research institution near Brighton, in the south of England. Sussex was the first of the new wave of UK universities founded in the 1960s, receiving its Royal Charter in 1961. The university's position as a leading research university has been reflected in the 1014 Research Excellence Framework, with over 75 per cent of research activity at Sussex categorized as world leading or internationally excellent.

since consultants are not an ongoing fixed overhead, which means clients pay only if and when they are contracted for delivery on site.

Clive Bonny - Principal Consultant and Founder:

Clive has over 25 years commercial experience in delivering bottom line benefits for client teams from the MD to the receptionist. Many years advisory experience with Investors in People, Innovation and Enterprise Agencies has produced many national award-winning projects. Clive has delivered over 50 government funded business growth schemes for small to medium sized businesses through enterprise support programmes. Clive also works closely with large corporates and the public and not-for-profit sectors. Results have brought clients increase in turnover with more sales, reduction in costs with process improvements, and improved recruitment and retention with employer branding and employee vetting. SMP's associates are qualified and experienced advisors. Clive is a founder of a not-for-profit Innovation Forum and delivers consultancy funded by government bodies to bring innovative products and services to market. Previous roles have included Chairman of a national business consortium, and Programme Developer for professional institutes.

His business research on best practice has been published by The Economist and endorsed by industry leaders including the Director General



VALUES SUSTAIN VALUE

<http://consult-smp.com>

of the Institute of Directors, Chairman of Investors in People and the late Sir John Harvey-Jones, past Chairman of ICI. Clive's Business Writing and Salesperson's pocketbooks can be purchased online from management Pocketbooks.

Our First Meeting (23rd March):

Interview with Clive Bonny of Strategic Management Partners

I met with Clive in response to my application to work for his firm for a role assisting with the growth of two of his clients and a charity project he is involved with by utilizing crowdfunding platforms. It provided a brilliant opportunity for Clive to get to know my interests and reasons for applying. I had taken the time to research Clive's business, himself

WHAT IS

CROWDFUNDING?

A high-value application of crowdsourcing in which the principles of crowdsourcing are applied in order to receive donations (or capital or resources) for projects, causes, start-up companies and campaigns that require funding. Typically uses the Internet to connect diverse individuals who pool their capital to achieve a specific result.

Benefits:

- Minimizes fundraising process (and its associated time and cost) so entrepreneurs spend more time on the business, meaning those who lack the economic capital are not as severely disadvantaged.
- Enables a wide audience to participate.
- Allows niche ideas to be funded by presenting them to a wide audience
- In recent years, proven extremely successful e.g. Kickstarter
- Allows not-for-profit organisations to source any resources that may be required e.g. volunteers, advertising, capital funds.

“...the world is becoming too fast, too complex and too networked for any organization to have all the answers inside.” – Yochai Benkler, Yale University (from *The Wealth of Networks*)

and browse a few case studies, however this meeting offered me a chance to directly question Clive about his business and gain valuable insight. I was given brief details about each client and the project as well as asked to perform two tasks; conduct an in-depth investigation of crowdfunding and provide a copy of a recent university assignment. The purpose of this was to demonstrate my research skills and allow me to truly see if this was the right opportunity for me. The following evening I sent the requested information, which to my delight Clive was pleased with. Within following correspondence we arranged to meet at his office to fix the terms of my 10-week internship, and set initial plans to outline how I can provide support.

Crowdfunding Research: A Recipe For an

Alternative Route to Accessing Funds

Method:

- Set objective, for example: Build awareness and establish brand of the [COMPANY NAME] business. Crowdfund initial operating funds to open business. Develop an engaged audience. Broadly define target crowd and its relations with peers.
- Target crowd: customers, members, subscribers, partners, brand fans, etc.
- Identify third party crowds: third-party mailing lists, competitors' customers, etc.
- Gain a meaningful understanding and

harness the motivations of the different people in your crowd. Leverage this knowledge to pique interest and to continuously engage them.

- Identify categories within the crowd: Who already uses, or would use, the commodity or seek our services? Via which method are people interacting with us? Presumably social media. In which case, HOW are people reaching our online presence? Who else could potentially be involved in the crowd? To investigate, examine article reposts, competitor websites, industry associations, content comments and other points of interaction that take place online. Demographics.
- Diversify the investor base.
- Articulate a clear and comprehensive message.
- Present participation rewards in multiple forms for investors.

Benefits of using social media to engage an audience in the project:

- Presents more possibilities for audience interaction with the project
- Leveraging the psychology of natural inclination towards involvement.
- Presents an interactive medium in which organizations can engage with

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

STANDARD AWARDS

The Responsible Business Standard is a national standard that independently verifies best practices for business sustainability, environmental management and social responsibility. With organisations being increasingly required by law (Companies Act 2006) to ensure they meet specific standards in environmental and social governance enterprises are being asked to demonstrate their social and environmental credentials. By applying for the Responsible Business Standard Awards it shows evidence of sustainable operations and business continuity against an approved national standard.

Clive applied for the awards for Strategic Management Partners and was awarded with the following:

Overall Award: Gold
Workplace: Gold
Community: Gold
Ethics, Values and Transparency: Gold
Environment: Gold
Marketplace: Gold
Business Processes/Continuity: Gold

Additionally, his work to support the local community, enthusiasm for helping young people, social enterprises and small start-up businesses was recognized. To be able to work for a business leader recognized for operating to the best principles and standards in his business was a privilege.

communities, something that has been proven challenging with other platforms.

The Induction: Meeting at the Office (28th

March)

I was extremely pleased to be offered a chance to come on board to support some really exciting crowdfunding projects. My involvement in these would offer a fantastic opportunity to not only enhance my personal profile, but to also work closely with Clive, an award winning, professional consultant and founder of the firm. Furthermore, Clive had offered me an opportunity to begin working for Strategic Management Partners three months earlier than the start date of my internship. The plans for each of the three projects was outlined to me, each would be seeking alternative access to capital through crowdfunding. I had heard of crowd funding before in the form of the Kick-starter platform, as it is an up-and-coming method of seeking funds. However, as well as funding small projects, it also offers a brilliant way for people to invest in businesses and in some cases, even obtain equity shares. I was informed that the first of SMP's clients that I was to meet, an innovative healthcare technology supplier, was to use crowdfunding to raise £500,000 for marketing purposes. Clive provided me with all I need to know about crowdfunding processes on leading crowdfunding platform Crowdcube along with

current real life examples to study. I was tasked with reviewing the process and learning as much as possible regarding crowdfunding prior to meeting the supplier later in the week.

Meeting The Supplier: Innovative Healthcare Technology

Following our previous meeting, I accompanied Clive to meet an innovation technology company, one his clients that I would be providing support to over the following weeks.

The supplier is an e-commerce health technology company that will supply global markets. The supplier had developed a wearable health device that energizes body micro-currents to repair and regenerate cellular tissue. After 12 years development the latest product patent has been successfully lodged, with new brand trademarks and designs being fully registered and protected by the Intellectual Property Office in the UK and abroad. Device currents have been refined by the world's leading authority in electrotherapy and tested at University of Hertfordshire in a clinical trial.

The innovative product is drug-free, non-invasive, affordable and easy to use to re-boot body energy, enhance immune systems and reduce pain. It uses minute, sub-sensory

sequences of electrical currents that safely mimic those naturally occurring within the body. Since the suppliers began trading in 2012 over 1000 users have reported positive results. In 2015 the suppliers received government grant funded Growth Accelerator support. The suppliers developed an evolutionary design to be used by humans and an additional device for pets. Smaller than a smart phone it has just two buttons for ease of use, worn on a small strap.

Micro-current technology mirrors the body's natural current to promote quick and speedy healing. Tissue, including muscle, tendons, ligaments, skin and bone, is formed from a large mass of similar cells that perform specific functions. These cells use tiny sequences of electric current, measured in millionths of an amp, to organizer, monitor and regulate a stable state within the body. The product mimics these sequences. By introducing the correct sequences of current to damaged or diseased tissue the body's natural electric circuitry is replicated and kick starts and accelerates normal functioning. Research has shown that microcurrent technology radically increases ATP. This is a high-energy molecule that stores and transfers energy within all cells so that normal activity can take place. In theory, animals should be able to provide all the ATP needed but this does not always happen and any healing process requires large amounts of ATP, which can become depleted. Microcurrent stimulation increases ATP production by up to 400% and when introduced can enhance and

accelerate healing in a fraction of the normal time. Pain is also minimized and effectively controlled.

The chance to work closely with the supplier was an amazing opportunity. The technology is revolutionary and the company is currently global leaders in the commercial market for microcurrent therapy. I was extremely skeptical at first, a device that can systemically heal the body while you sleep sounds too good to be true! But it does exactly what it promises, has been trialed for the past three years, and is backed by a substantial amount of research. Furthermore, the case studies they have archived are an unbelievable testament to the incredible capabilities of their products.

Having traded since 2012 within the equestrian market with their product, the company were preparing for the launch of two new products, devices for humans and pets respectively. This initial meeting with the suppliers allowed me to meet with the creators of the products, obtain a valuable insight into the company, and map out methods in which I can provide support for them. It was brilliant to meet the passionate people behind the business. Furthermore they provided me with countless case studies and academic research into the development of the technology, all of which was fascinating.

The supplier's success so far had been mostly through

THE BENEFITS OF E-MARKETING

E-marketing gives businesses of any size access to the mass market at an affordable price and, unlike TV or print advertising, it allows truly personalized marketing. Specific benefits of e marketing include:

- Global reach
- Lower cost
- Trackable, measurable results
- 24-hour marketing
- Personalisation
- One-to-one marketing
- Interesting campaigns
- Better conversion rate

WHAT IS AN ANGEL INVESTOR?

An angel investor is an affluent individual who provides capital for a business to start-up, usually in exchange for convertible debt or ownership equity. As crowdfunding is becoming a more widely accepted method of acquiring funding a small, but increasing, number of "angels" have organized angel groups and networks to share research and pool their investment capital.

word of mouth and networking, however, their target was to use crowdfunding to raise capital for marketing. Furthermore, I learnt the following week the supplier was to be present and exhibiting at the Gadget Show LIVE at NEC Birmingham, to showcase their latest innovations. However, the main reason of this meeting was to agree on key actions that each member of the team was to perform and identify how I can support their development. My task was to list potential Crowdcube (the chosen platform that the crowdfunding rounds would utilize) investors, donors and PR contacts for human units by obtaining information via magazine and online research. Following this I was to assist with the start of an e-marketing campaign, liaising with the suppliers as well as the companies Business Development Manager.

The Suppliers:

- E-Commerce Health Tech
- Unique innovative product
- Finalists for British Invention of the Year 2015

This task would provide me with a chance to demonstrate my research skills that I had been developing while studying at university while performing a task relevant to my chosen area of studies, media and communications. Furthermore, this was a brilliant opportunity to be involved with a high-growth potential client with a high potential and interesting product.

Clive suggested that I begin my research by

browsing healthcare related magazines at my local news publication retailer, which provided good grounds for me to begin collecting the contact details for various editors within the press industry.

This preparation for the crowdfunding was essential; as to launch the round of funding with success requires generating and utilizing positive press and momentum regarding the company. By "warming-up" the "crowd" we would be able to realistically see how many people express interest in the products, being potential users, or want further information. Further more it would be an opportunity for me to investigate and source possible angel investors.

The Crowdfunding Plan:

- Two rounds of funding
- £250,000 each
- Offer a total of 20% equity
- EIS and SEIS tax relief available

Market Research and Building Contacts

For the following weeks I undertook market research regarding potential avenues for exploration for the health tech supplier while continuing to build on a database of contacts for the upcoming crowdfunding.

Field Trip: Crowdfunding London (23rd April)

For further information regarding the potential of crowdfunding Clive had arranged for me to attend the Crowdfunding London event at The Crystal Building, Royal Victoria Dock, which served a wealth of knowledge and inspiration for over four hundred attendees.

This amazing event provided me with a chance to hear from the co-founder of one of the UK's leading crowdfunding platforms, Crowdcube, as well as allowing me to seek the wonderful advice of Nicola Horlick, an international investment advisor and all round brilliant woman. However, the true "wow" moment was getting to hear from Michelle Mone, OBE, founder of Ultimo. Her inspirational words and "can do" attitude was a testament to the outcomes of hardwork and passion.

The Social Enterprise: Auntie Vals

While continuing to support the supplier Clive introduced me to another business he was supporting, Auntie Vals. Auntie Vals are a fantastic artisan producer of traditional and unusual marmalades, jams, chutneys and preserves. However, aside from being an internationally recognised brand they're also an amazing social enterprise. Their enthusiastic production team actually consists of special needs and/or those with disabilities, who are offered full training and amazing opportunities to work towards qualifications. My requested role was to provide additional support and advice regarding the potential for crowdfunding to raise capital for additional machinery, which would in turn create more jobs for people.

Question Time: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development is a professional association for human resource management professionals. It is headquartered in Wimbledon. Clive had arranged for us to visit a CIPD "question time" event at Brighton University in which I could learn how to develop and implement creative and strategic HR solutions that drive organisational performance. This provided me with a great opportunity to develop my understanding of business HR knowledge that employers look for.



<http://www.cipd.co.uk>

The Food Exchange

By far my favourite event so far, Clive provided me with the amazing opportunity to visit the Microsoft London Victoria office for the Food Exchange, an event for food related businesses with a focus on matching young brands with big retailers while providing expert advice from business leaders and entrepreneurs. It was a great chance to hear the success stories of several businesses and even provided me

with a chance to talk to and learn from buyers from Sainsburys and Fortnum & Mason.

Changing the community: Beacon Hub Brighton

Being a proud resident of Rottingdean Clive has a wish to promote and educate the heritage and conservation of the local area. Along with a group of like-minded community members they form Beacon Hub Brighton; a small group of local residents who wish to make a meaningful contribution to the quality of their communities lives. Their primary project is to turn the disused golf course and golf kiosk at Rottingdean Windmill into the heart of the local community, by transforming it into an educational centre.

Clive allowed me to attend a monthly meeting with them to understand their aims and objectives as well as presenting me with a chance to offer my assistance and be involved with a great local community-centric project. It was a brilliant experience meeting the group, and I offered to assist with various tasks regarding databases and rallying support.

Go Green: Brighton Eco-Technology Show

To help me learn about sustainable business practices and network, Clive arranged for us to attend the Eco Technology Show 2015 at the AMEX stadium, Falmer. The aim of the event was to highlight how embracing innovation in technology and low carbon solutions could save money and deliver genuine benefits to businesses, cities and communities ongoing.

Some of the great organisations I got to meet included Sea Shepard, RSPB, UK Trade & Investment, Rift R&D Tax Credits and more! Being at the eco-tech show also offered a chance to me to seek expressions of interest and support for Beacon Hub Brighton from like-minded businesses.



A SeaShepard representative and I
<http://www.seashepherd.org.uk>



A UKTI representative and I
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-trade-investment>



I also had a chance to meet Clive's acquaintance and founder of Enterprise Nation, Emma Jones. Emma's early experience with starting, growing and selling a business gave her the impetus to create Enterprise Nation in 2006, since then the company has expanded to become a small business community of over 75,000 people who benefit from the amazing network, events and funding.



Myself, Emma Jones (Founder of Enterprise Nation) & Clive Bonny
<https://www.enterprisenation.com>



Access to capital: Enterprise Nation & KPMG
– Show Me The Money

In order to further my understanding of crowdfunding and access to capital Clive arranged for us to attend an event where we could network with investors and further my learning. Additionally, this served as a chance for us to potentially find investors for suitable clients. It was also an opportunity to hear from three key speakers and their own stories.

Application to Entrepreneurial Spark Brighton
Entrepreneurial Spark is a free business accelerator powered by Natwest, designed to support entrepreneurs nationwide.

Having recently opened a new “hatchery” in Brighton Clive decided to apply on behalf of the supplier, as those that are accepted receive a wealth of benefits, such as free office space, mentoring, access to support from KPMG and Natwest and much more! Having been successful with the application I attended the interview process with Clive where he had to pitch the business in just 60 seconds. His performance was brilliant and the supplier were accepted for a 6 month period at the hatchery. It was decided that I would be allowed to represent the supplier at the hatchery along with Clive, providing me a great location to support them from.

The Importance of Networking: Juice 107.2
Breakfast Club

Juice Brighton Breakfast Club is a networking event in association with The Sussex Sign Company and Sussex Promotions, hosted monthly at local locations in and around Brighton and Hove. It’s an informal event for like-minded businesses and business persons, bringing them together in a socialble and friendly environment. By attending these events with Clive I was able to get an insight into the business community as well as practice and develop my personal networking skills.

<http://www.juicebrighton.com>

More Networking: Third Friday Brighton

Similar to Juice Breakfast Club, Third Friday Brighton is another great networking event. Part of the First Friday Networking Group, Third Friday takes place every third Friday of the month at Merkaba Bar in Brighton.

The event is run by Susan Beckingham and Richard Russell of Solid Web Strategies, whom invited me after initially meeting them at the Juice Breakfast Club. Third Friday has no industry sector lock-outs, no referrals and no presentations. It brings people together in a warm and welcoming environment.

<http://thirdfridaybrighton.co.uk>

Team Building: Entrepenerial Spark Boot
Camp

Prior to being able to use the Espark facilities we had to attend a mandatory two day “boot camp”. This boot camp was designed to bring together the members of the hatchery through collaborativ team-building exercises in a style similar to that of The Apprentice. We had to identify a problem, and create a theoretical solution while seeking validation from our intended users. So, as a team we designed an app to provide familys with access to low-cost and free events within their local area, allowing them to get involved with their community while saving costs!



Boot Camp With E-Spark
<http://www.entrepreneurial-spark.com>

THE FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

As experts in business, the FSB offers its members a wide range of vital business services including advice, financial expertise, support and a powerful voice in government. Their mission is to help smaller businesses achieve their ambitions.

Entrepreneurial Spark Brighton Hatchery Official Launch

After the boot camp sessions Espark marked the launch of the new hatchery with an official event, which saw members of the Federation of Small Businesses, Brighton Chamber of Commerce, Sussex Chamber of Commerce, Natwest, KPMG, Angels Den and many more, as well as mainstream media outlets, come to show support. It was a brilliant opportunity for us to network with local businesses as well as show the community what the brilliant businesses around had to offer. As he is an FSB member Clive introduced me to the National Chairman, John Allan, who described the numerous ways in which the FSB can support small businesses. As an organisation, the FSB is certainly worth joining for the wealth of benefits its members receive!



Myself and John Allan (FSB National Chairman)
<http://www.fsb.org.uk>

Surprise Visit: ESpark meets Corbyn

Following the Labour Party 2015 Conference, which was held in Brighton, national political figure Jeremy Corbyn decided to visit the hatchery to meet and support local businesses.

With the supplier with me, this provided us a great chance to present the supplier and the capabilities of the innovative product, not only to Jeremy, but also to our colleagues and peers at the hatchery. The morning was filled with presentations, pitches and Jeremy expressed genuine interest in hearing what we all had to say. It was inspirational to see him wishing all of the members of the hatchery support with the future of their businesses. This was by far one of my favorite events.



Green Growth Platform

Clive introduced me to the University of Brighton's business support network called the Green Growth Platform, of which he is a mentor and coach for, supporting innovation clients within the environmental and social enterprise sectors. Much more than just a green business network, GGP provide businesses with the support they need to take them to the next level, offering members a unique package of business support, events, innovation and training delivered by a team of industry experts,

INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY,
TRADEMARKS AND
DESIGN

Clive taught me the importance of intellectual property and its role in fostering innovation. Without protection of ideas, businesses stand to not be fully compensated for their creations and/or inventions and cultural creativity would suffer as a result. IP has become some companies biggest asset and protecting it can help preserve assets that may be integral to the core services of the business and overall long-term viability.

business advisors and leading academics. I was introduced to Lorraine Bell, GGP's Business Support Manager, who taught me about the brilliant services that the network offers. Working with Clive, I provided market research and database construction support as he mentored businesses.

<http://about.brighton.ac.uk/business/green-growth-platform/index.php?PageId=120>

Stay Alive: Suicide Prevention App & The
NHS Innovation Summit Awards

Being a supporter of the NHS, SME's and innovation, Clive was chosen to present at the NHS Innovation Summit as one of the judging panellists, recognising local businesses whose innovative ideas positively and meaningfully improve patient care. Clive presented local business Grassroots with an award for their StayAlive mobile application.

Grassroots support communities to prevent suicide, teaching suicide alertness and intervention skills to community members and professionals with the goal of making communities safer from suicide. Based locally, since 2006 they have trained of 5,000 people in suicide prevention and mental health. I was provided a chance to meet Chris Brown, founder of Grassroots, and hear all the wonderful things that have been achieved

communities safer from suicide. Based locally, in the last year their app has been used by over 5,000 people for suicide prevention and mental health awareness. I was provided a chance to meet Chris Brown, founder of Grassroots, and hear all the wonderful things that have been achieved with the app so far.



Tiffany Ansari, Chris Brown, Emma Wadley of
Grassroots and I
<http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk>

Inspiration: Start-Up Sussex

With my internship period coming to an end I felt that I had learnt so much from my experiences and had been greatly inspired by Clive to create my own business based on an idea I had for quite a while. So I applied to Start-Up Sussex. Start-Up Sussex is a business start-up accelerator, similar to that of Espark, however, it is for the students of the University of Sussex. I felt privileged to be one of the 63 students accepted onto the program.

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/careerchoices/startupsussex>

The End: Or is it?

With the official duration of my internship with Strategic Management Partners coming to an end Clive presented me a brilliant offer. He would allow me to continue to support him and develop my skills! I could not have been happier. The personal development I feel I had achieved under Clive's mentorship is amazing. Over the course of a few months Clive helped me develop skills that will last a lifetime and contribute to my future career progression. The people I have met and opportunities faced while with Clive have been invaluable, and I have gained a great teacher, mentor and friend.

Furthermore, I have been hugely inspired! Thanks to the experience of this internship I am currently in the process of starting up my own businesses. While in its early days over the past month it has flourish from an idea and concept into a prototype digital platform that has been tested on students nationwide!

While unable to currently discuss the specifics I'm extremely excited about the platforms future developments.

Choosing to undertake a first generation scholar internship via the University of Sussex is something that I recommend every student attempts. The self-development, personal achievement, and sense of accomplishment gained while experiencing a live working environment within a business and this experience will stay with me for life as I look forwards to my future after university.

Clive has agreed to support me with my future endeavors as I continue to support him with his new service, Check-Invest, that helps investors and investee fund-raisers improve their Returns on Investment by allowing investors and investees to validate the potential sustainability of their business by verifying their intellectual property rights, management skills and responsible business processes.