

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Matthew Collins – Marketing Co-ordinator or
Greg Thomas – Innovation Manager

Business & Technology Centre (btc)
Bessemer Drive
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 2DX



Tel: 0845 371 0891
Email: matthewcollins@wenta.co.uk / gregthomas@btcstevenage.co.uk
Web: www.btcstevenage.co.uk

“It’s not about Meeting People...”

“It is not about meeting people and selling products...” said Bob Ferguson from Confident Communications. As a first time networker, let alone speed networker this was news to me! I had always envisaged networking events to be about meeting as many people as possible and doing the hard sell but during this event Bob proposed something very different.

Bob’s mission is to help people unlock their true potential through confident verbal communications. He aims to show his clients how to ‘create and deliver high impact communications’ and his networking events provide a medium to display the effectiveness of these skills and allow people to practice some of what he teaches.

This Speed Networking Event was held on Friday 26th March 2010 at the Business and Technology Centre (**btc**) in Stevenage. It is one of many seminars in the centre’s ‘Innovation Events Calendar’ that are designed to help develop the business skills of people in the region and therefore inspire innovation and growth in local businesses.

As the ‘Speed Networkers’ assembled we were given instructions as to how the event would work and were told we were to split into groups of three. Each member of the group was given a minute to introduce their company and at the end of each ‘session’ we would move on to meet two more people. Rather than feel like we were on a conveyor belt Bob would add recommendations or useful quips before we moved. For example he suggested we take the time to absorb the information on someone’s business card and to think about how we can target aspects of our business to the audience rather than providing a pre-ordained standard response.

His comments weren’t rocket science but useful, commonsense actions that could be easily adopted. As the event progressed it was obvious that most of the delegates agreed as the recommended techniques were tried and tested. Learning these skills not only made the event engaging but also gave us the confidence to fully adopt the idea of ‘networking’. Tiffany Thompson a Marketing Manager at a firm based in Harpenden called TjL Marketing Limited, was one of the delegates I met at the event. “...the speed networking was great...” She said. “I have attended a lot of networking events and it was definitely one of the best.”

I had no previous networking experience to compare it with but I realised my perception of networking had changed. The day had not been about “Meeting people and selling products...” but providing the benefits and value our business can be to those we met. I know from the conversations I had on the day that many of the more experienced delegates were able to finely tune their networking skills but for me I’m happy with my core learnings from the event. I no longer view networking as a cold sales process and I vow not to just take business cards and push them

into my pocket! Let's hope I remember this for the next Speed Networking Event at the **btc**; I hope to see you there!

If you would like to find out when the next Speed Networking Event is scheduled or would like to see what other seminars, events and courses are booked at the **btc** please call **0845 078 0700** or visit www.btcstevenage.co.uk.

Notes for Editor

- The Speed Networking Event was organised by Wenta Innovation, a division of Wenta which is one of the leading Enterprise Agencies in the East of England
- Wenta is a not for profit organisation independently funded through the ownership and management of its two business centres in Watford and Potters Bar and management of the **btc** in Stevenage. These business centres comprise workshops and offices with a combined space of over 100,000 square feet, let on monthly licence terms to small businesses. Wenta also attract funding from a number of public sector organisations including Business Link East, Job Centre Plus, local authorities in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and EEDA.
- Wenta Innovation also runs two Incubation Centres under the 'MyIncubator' brand at The Business & Technology Centre in Stevenage and The Business Centre in Luton. These centres are designed to help entrepreneurs and create successful businesses. The Incubation Centres offer start-ups a work station for 3 months free of charge on the proviso that they work with our onsite advisory team to ensure that they are ready to sell their product or service, raise money or become investor ready and importantly connect them with other individuals and businesses to network.
- In addition to incubation and managed workspace Wenta's service offering includes business advice, guidance, training, graduate and undergraduate work placements and a comprehensive enterprise awareness programme to schools, colleges, and universities.