



Aston University announces graduation of first Midlands cohort of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses programme and is currently recruiting for third cohort

Birmingham, 26 April, 2012 - Aston University today announced the graduation of the first Midlands cohort of small business and social enterprise leaders from the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* programme. Classes for the second cohort have begun, and recruitment for the third cohort is now in progress.

The programme, which also operates in Yorkshire, the North West and London, is designed to boost local economic growth and job creation through providing a combination of targeted, high quality, practical business education and support services to small businesses and social enterprises from across the Midlands region.

Graduates received their certificates at a dinner in Birmingham yesterday evening. Businesses in the first cohort represented a wide range of sectors, including manufacturing, business services, technology, retail and education. They ranged in size from approximately £200,000 in turnover to over £3 million. They were recruited from across the Midlands, including Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall, Solihull and Leicester.

Professor Mark Hart from Aston Business School, a globally recognised expert in entrepreneurship and small business performance, is the academic lead for the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* programme in the Midlands. He stated "The West Midlands has a large number of entrepreneurs across a range of business sectors including social enterprises, and we are proud that some of the best in the region are here graduating today. We are anticipating that they will now move quickly forward with their business growth plans and we have high hopes that they will deliver much-needed additional wealth and jobs for this area."

"Supporting entrepreneurs is vital to driving the growth of the UK economy." said Michael Sherwood, Vice Chairman of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and Co-Chief Executive Officer of Goldman Sachs International. "The *10,000 Small Businesses* programme aims to assist these entrepreneurs to maximize their potential and create jobs in the region."

The graduates in the inaugural Midlands class include the following:

- Habil Kapasi is founder of Jivaji Auto Factors Ltd, which sells car spares and accessories. Habil reports that the programme has enabled him to take a more strategic view of his business, for example in relation to suppliers, products and stock.
- Nick Morgan is co-founder of Big Cat Group, an events and marketing company founded in 2000. For Nick, participating in the programme has resulted in significant changes in his strategy for growing the business.

Applications are currently open for the third cohort of the programme in the Midlands, which will take place between October 2012 and February 2013.

The programme is designed to provide high quality, practical and focused support for the leaders of small businesses and social enterprises who are seeking to grow their business. It is open to businesses from across the Midlands and participation is by application to Aston Business School. Successful candidates will benefit from the following:

- a structured, practical learning experience focused on the challenges faced by growing small businesses
- multiple sources of high quality advice and guidance as they develop a customised growth plan to serve as the roadmap for the business's future growth
- joining a group of 25 to 30 selected small business leaders who form a trusted network that provides peer-to-peer support, challenge and guidance to one another in an open, constructive and dynamic learning environment
- the opportunity to join a growing network of business leaders from across the UK

Preview events for the third cohort are taking place from April to June 2012. This will provide an opportunity for leaders of small businesses and social enterprises in the Midlands to learn more about the *10,000 Small Businesses* programme and how to apply. Further information on the preview events and application materials for the programme can be obtained by email from 10ksb@aston.ac.uk, by phoning **0121 204 3225** or through the following link: www.aston.ac.uk/10ksb

Notes to Editors

10,000 Small Businesses UK

10,000 Small Businesses in the UK is an initiative to unlock the growth and job creation potential of small businesses and social enterprises across the United Kingdom through providing the resources they need to grow, including greater access to business education and business support services. It is based on the broadly held view of leading experts that a combination of education and support services best addresses the barriers to growth for small businesses.

The programme is based on an innovative and successful approach to supporting entrepreneurs, as developed through the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* initiative and the *10,000 Small Businesses* programme launched in the United States in 2009. A programme tailored specifically for the UK market was brought to Yorkshire in 2010 and then to the North West of England in 2011, the Midlands in autumn 2011 and London in early 2012. Programme partners include Saïd Business School (University of Oxford), Leeds University Business School, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, Aston University Business School and University College London.

10,000 Small Businesses in the UK is funded by Goldman Sachs and the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

Aston Business School, Aston University is renowned for the quality of its innovative learning and teaching, world leading research and for having a friendly and supportive culture. The School has strong business links, and offers life-transforming experiences that make a real difference to organisations, economies and the global society. Aston Business School is committed to helping small businesses realise their potential through dedicated services which are specifically tailored to meet their needs. The School also delivers cutting edge entrepreneurial research (especially on high growth firms) and is home to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor UK project.

Saïd Business School

Established in 1996 the Saïd Business School is one of Europe's youngest and most entrepreneurial business schools with a reputation for innovative business education. An integral part of Oxford University, the School embodies the academic rigour and forward thinking that has made Oxford a world leader in education and research. The School has an established reputation for research in a wide range of areas, including finance and accounting, organisational analysis, international management, strategy and operations management. The School is dedicated to developing a new generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs and conducting research not only into the nature of business, but the connections between business and the wider world. In the Financial Times European Business School ranking (Dec 2011) Saïd is ranked 10th. It is ranked number one in the UK (11th worldwide) in the FT's combined ranking of Executive Education programmes (May 2011) and 20th in the world in the FT ranking of MBA programmes (Jan 2012). The Oxford MSc in Financial Economics is ranked 4th in the world in the 2011 FT ranking of Masters in Finance programmes (June 2011). In the UK university league tables it is ranked first of all UK universities for undergraduate business and management in The Guardian (May 2011) and has ranked first in eight of the last nine years in The Times. For more information, see www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/

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