



impact

report

2014

# Re-Imagine.

# #GoDo

# Re-Shape.

# Vision

To *inspire* and *enable*  
change through the action  
of Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup>.

Our *mission* is to encourage  
Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> through the  
development of entrepreneurial  
mindsets and behaviours.



# Entrepreneuring® for all...

2014 has been a landmark year for Entrepreneurial Spark achieved only through the hard work and dedication of our Team and as importantly our partners, supporters and ambassadors.

The celebration for us was in securing the significant backing of Royal Bank of Scotland to roll Entrepreneurial Spark out across the UK building the model tried, tested and proven here in Scotland. But the real celebration was in the achievement of the high impact businesses we support; our role is simple - assist the entrepreneurs alongside our valued partners to accelerate their high growth businesses.

Why? Our backers from Sir Tom Hunter, Lord Willie Haughey and Dr Ann Gloag OBE, to the Local Authorities, Government and now RBS recognise one thing - entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of any economy. Without high growth business, indeed any business, Government can't fund anything - entrepreneurs in business and in corporates drive growth.

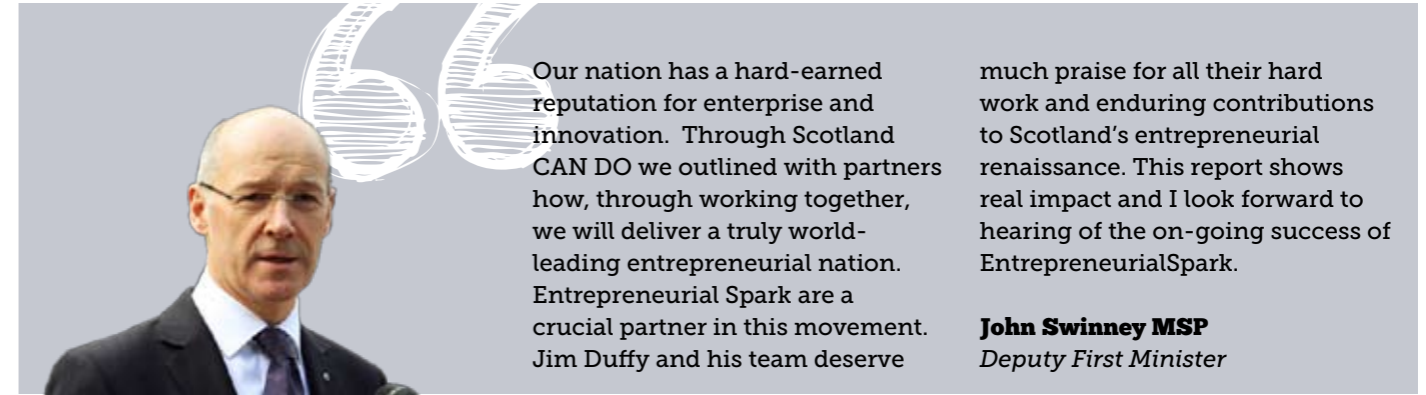
We are proud of what we do and humbled by the support we are given, but the best buzz we can ever have is in seeing the businesses we support grow, develop and beat the aggressive targets they set themselves. In this, all we are simply facilitators of growth, the stars are the entrepreneurs who put everything on the line in the belief their business will win out in the global marketplace.

Our expansion, thanks to RBS, will expand our expertise, networks and indeed knowledge - that will benefit our customers, the entrepreneurs we serve, many times over.

Finally I'd like to say thanks - to our staff, our supporters and our partners; we quite simply could not do what we do without you.

**Jim Duffy,**  
Chief Executive Optimist

**the mindset of  
the entrepreneur  
is special**



Our nation has a hard-earned reputation for enterprise and innovation. Through Scotland CAN DO we outlined with partners how, through working together, we will deliver a truly world-leading entrepreneurial nation. Entrepreneurial Spark are a crucial partner in this movement. Jim Duffy and his team deserve

much praise for all their hard work and enduring contributions to Scotland's entrepreneurial renaissance. This report shows real impact and I look forward to hearing of the on-going success of EntrepreneurialSpark.

**John Swinney MSP**  
Deputy First Minister

# Entrepreneurs in Residence



“ Who would have believed it, another year gone since the birth of Entrepreneurial Spark. Building on the

fantastic foundation laid down by Jim Duffy and his dedicated team, 2014 has been a transitional year. Entrepreneurial Spark is now recognised as the go-to place for business start ups in Scotland, I am as enthused today as I was three years ago when we started on our journey. I have no doubt that 2015 will be even more exciting, this time next year it will be established throughout the whole of the U.K. Myself and Susan are absolutely delighted to be involved with such a ground breaking initiative, keep up the great work. "SCOTLAND NEEDS YOU".

**Lord Willie Haughey**

“ It is important that fledgling businesses are given every opportunity to succeed and

Entrepreneurial Spark provides an unique environment to help make that possible. Building a business from scratch is not easy and requires a great deal of dedication and determination. No one can do it for you but services like Entrepreneurial Spark can provide added value that helps you take the next step.

I absolutely love meeting the entrepreneurs and am energised by their enthusiasm and determination to succeed. I am very proud of the success many of our Edinburgh Chiclets have had and, if I have even helped a little towards that success, then I have done my job as a mentor.

**Dr Ann Gloag OBE**

“ Entrepreneurial Spark provides a compelling support service for high growth businesses

minimising the risk of start-up whilst maximising the knowledge needed to execute accelerated growth for your business...As such it's a crucial part of the entrepreneurial landscape of Scotland.

**Sir Tom Hunter**

# What is an entrepreneur?

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Entrepreneurs see opportunities that others may not automatically spot. They gather insight and look at things through a different lens. They can create something from nothing or improve on an identified problem

that already exists. They are not risk takers, but are cognitively comfortable with the notion of risk and mitigate it, where they can. They use all the resources at hand to gain as much traction as possible and persuade and influence others to 'jump on board'.

With great focus, entrepreneurs will take action, test and validate. Their passion can be infectious. Their vision is for something special that creates value that can have social and/or commercial purpose. They know what they don't know and move outside their comfort zones to make things happen.

In short, they are driven to succeed, are action oriented with a mindset that is geared for outcomes...

## Why are they important?

Fast-growing **small firms** created

**68%**

of all **new jobs**

in the UK between 2012 and 2013, despite making up just 1% of the total business population, according to a new study.

Source: Business zone online

# What does Entrepreneurial Spark do?



Entrepreneurial Spark is the world's largest free business accelerator for early stage and growing ventures.

We have developed a proprietary 'entrepreneurial enablement' programme that takes entrepreneurs through a cognitive and action centred development process - from Bootcamps, to ideation, to shaping mindsets and behaviours, from online content to our Acceler-8® days.

The primary aim is developing entrepreneurs who have a GoDo attitude with a solid grasp of how to create value... which makes them investable.

With mentors, ambassadors and supporters, workshops, pitch practice and a full time 'entrepreneurial enabler' the focus is on the individual - shaping them up as proactive entrepreneurial leaders.

# #GoDo

Below: The Entrepreneurial Spark Team



# Our secret sauce

the MINDSET of an entrepreneur

road to success



I focus, focus, focus

I re-imagine daily

Outcomes rule my day

I am self aware  
- ALWAYS

I know my numbers

I engage my customers

I am constantly curious

My business has vision

I am humbly confident

I inspire my team to excel

Uncomfortable?  
I'm comfortable with that

I love to collaborate

I am aware... Always on

I make decisions intuitively

I take action - ALWAYS

I am constantly selling + pitching

I wake up ready to communicate

I have a lean work ethic

I develop a relevant network

I value working with mentors

I am opportunity hungry

The buck stops with me

# Making an impact

**COMPANIES SUPPORTED**

352

**JOBS**



1028

**TURNOVER**

£41,154,262

**INVESTMENT**

£18,035,920

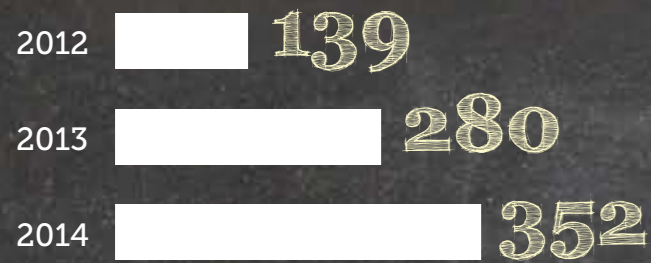
**PATENTS AWARDED**

386

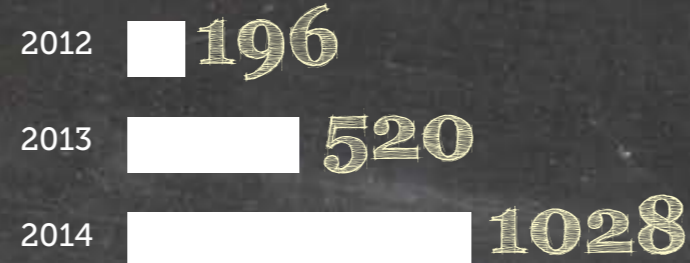


# Making an impact

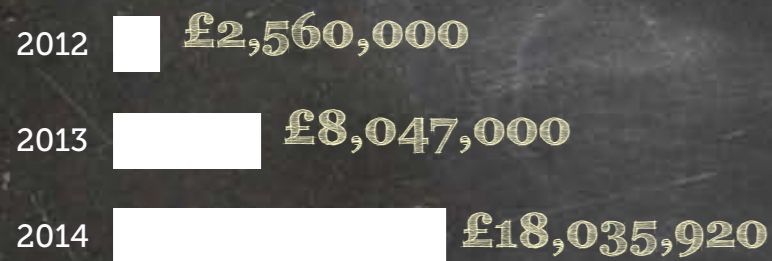
## Companies Supported



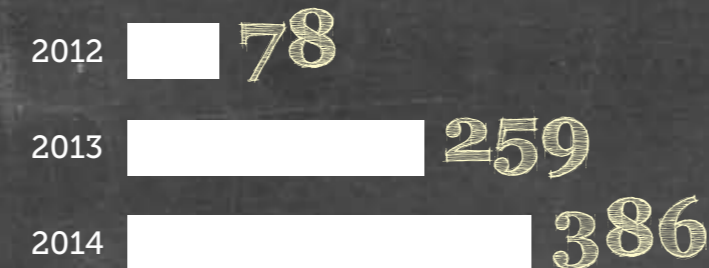
## Jobs



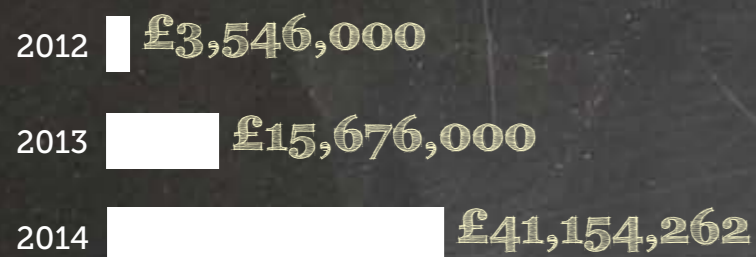
## Investment



## Patents Awarded



## Turnover



82.3%

OF COMPANIES WE HAVE WORKED WITH ARE STILL TRADING TODAY

## Demographics of people in Entrepreneurial Spark

AVERAGE AGE 37

50/50 MALE FEMALE SPLIT

FROM OVER 40 COUNTRIES

## Social media metrics

BLOG VISITS HAVE INCREASED BY

321%

TWITTER MONTHLY DIGITAL REACH -

5,402,261

28,000,000

OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE IN PR COVERAGE IN BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRINT, BROADCAST AND DIGITAL MEDIA.

# Our Ambassadors

# Positively disruptive support

Entrepreneurial Spark works in collaboration with very special mentors, entrepreneurs and professional services businesses. From lawyers to accountants, from manufacturers to investors, they all add great real-time, real-life value to our entrepreneurs. This helps them break down barriers quicker, while joining up the dots in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“ It wouldn't be overstating it to say that Harper Macleod loves Entrepreneurial Spark. As a young, dynamic legal business, everything we stand for as a



firm, everything we expect of our own people, can be summed up by the ethos of Go Do. The success of Entrepreneurial Spark has been inspirational, but that's what happens when vision and hard work come together and it's great to be a part of it.

As well being able to lend advice to help Chiclets and Nesters towards their goal, we have gained valuable experience and insight working closely with such tremendously diverse companies and it's also been great fun.

Paula Skinner  
Partner at Harper Macleod LLP



“ Entrepreneurial businesses are an important cog in Scotland's economic engine, creating jobs and wealth. PwC are proud to back Entrepreneurial



Spark's entrepreneurial revolution in Scotland. Over the past couple of years I have noticed a real shift in the country's perception of entrepreneurs, with many seen as creative and exciting role models. I am delighted to have joined forces with Entrepreneurial Spark to help nurture and develop the next generation of entrepreneurs here in Scotland.

Pauline Arnott  
Assurance Director  
PWC



“ **Enjoyable** - Very enjoyable sharing my experience and applying them to situations the Chiclets are encountering.



**Humbling** - Being able to help and advise so many talented Scottish entrepreneurs.

**Satisfying** - All the Chiclets I have been involved with are extremely well prepared, motivated and professional. I find it satisfying when I get updates of their progress and growth.

Murray Learmouth  
Entrepreneurial Spark mentor  
based in San Diego

“ Working with Entrepreneurial Spark provides us with the opportunity to give something to the start-up business community in Scotland. We have been very fortunate to work with some of the chiclets over the past few years and be part of their journey. Their #GoDo philosophy and infectious enthusiasm inspires us as a company and reminds us of the excitement and challenges of starting Junction-18.

Gerry Doyle  
Junction-18



“ Since being appointed as an accelerator for the Sirius programme in January 2013 Entrepreneurial Spark has offered invaluable support and advice to 15 Sirius entrepreneurs across



Scotland. Entrepreneurial Spark is helping entrepreneurs to transform their ground-breaking ideas into viable business propositions. By working with Sirius teams on a daily basis, Entrepreneurial Spark is creating the ideal environment for entrepreneurs to succeed. Their efforts are producing tangible results – Sirius recipient, Reinvent Life Science received a Scottish Edge Award in December 2014, the first international company to have done so.

Paola Cuneo  
Campaign Director  
Sirius Programme,  
UK Trade & Investment





# Our Ambassadors

# Our Key Partner



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The last year has been a momentous one for Scotland. It was similarly momentous for Entrepreneurial Spark.

After two years of RBS working successfully together in Scotland, we agreed in September that we would roll-out the accelerator programme across the whole of the UK.

Our new partnership will recreate Entrepreneurial Spark hubs in major cities across the country from Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester to Cardiff and Belfast. Work is now underway in earnest to get them ready for launch.

We are hugely excited about the prospect of opening up our buildings to hundreds of entrepreneurs every year, adding value to their businesses, to the bank staff who will be working with them and ultimately to the UK economy.

This marks a step-change in the way RBS/NatWest support entrepreneurs and is a huge investment for us. When we see what impact Entrepreneurial Spark has had on young Scottish businesses, including impressive survival rates, we know it will be worth it.

As well as expanding the programme, we're also keen to open up more of our network to entrepreneurs so that they can benefit from the deep relationships that we have in local business communities. Last year saw the first Opportunity Knocks events in Edinburgh and Aberdeen which were massively successful in bringing together the brightest business talent with bank staff and key members of the investment community. We're looking forward to rolling that out further next year so more businesses can benefit.

Finally, the partnership with Entrepreneurial Spark has come a long way in a very short space of time because we share a common goal: to enable entrepreneurs to grow and flourish. The impressive figures in this report demonstrate what can be achieved in Scotland alone and I can't wait to see next year's report card!

**Gordon Merrylees**  
Head of Entrepreneurship  
Royal Bank of Scotland and NatWest



# Our Ambassadors

# Cash is King



**Edinburgh Rocks, will now be able to provide additional support for 180 dads and male carers over the next three years through its Scotland network of free playgroups for dads and kids. thanks to a Big Lottery Fund award of £287,096.**

Investment Solver was awarded with a €40,000 grant from the Spanish government to build the first version of the retirement planner web application.

Flexiworkforce received £150,000 in angel funding to develop the only UK-wide job site dedicated to all types of flexible working patterns, across all genders, sectors and demographics.

**Mallzee received £500,000 worth of funding to develop "Tinder for shopping,"**

**Any business needs oxygen to breathe - cash. At Entrepreneurial Spark, we work hard with our entrepreneurs to breathe this life into their ventures.**

**Spannr secured £5,000 from the Technology Strategy Board for the development of their social network for trades.**

Birth Sparks had an extremely successful trip in Prague with just under £250,000 worth of orders in just five days!

Wet Trades have won a £250,000 contract with B&Q.

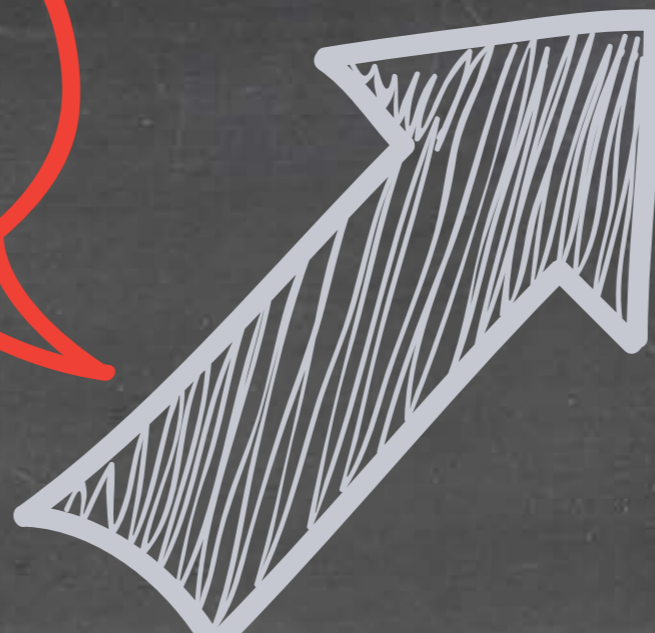
Hectares had their biggest order to date which was for over 10,000 packets of their crisps.

# Sales Fixes Everything

Guy Kawasaki

**Taragenyx raised their first customer invoice for over £80,000.**

**Fountainbridge have agreed a \$40,000 deal to provide the quality control analysis for all products of a large European company for the coming year.**



# The Entrepreneurs...



Lobster Pod Ltd is an innovative patent pending, live shellfish transportation system. It has been

scientifically proven to reduce mortalities to almost zero. Every load could save the customer £12,500 in reduced losses and fuel savings seeing a return on their investment within 8 trips.

I have made more progress in the first 5 month programme than I had in the last 5 years. The Accelerator does what it says on the tin. By helping validate my business and building my self confidence there is now no stopping me. I am opportunity hungry.

Errin Todd  
Lobster Pod



The Service Directory is a procurement and purchasing group specialising in healthcare and

education sectors. Providing a one stop system for all products and services as well as a software system that guarantees financial and operations savings.

Turnover when entering Entrepreneurial Spark was £0 – turnover when leaving was £430k (approx.)

Surrounding yourself with likemind individuals who not only understand but are facing the same issues and struggles you do is a very powerful tool. Since leaving Entrepreneurial Spark we have adopted the co-working environment in our space with 2 other business from Entrepreneurial Spark.

Gary Maitles  
The Service Directory



Trans World Soccer is a Sports Tour Operator that gives football fanatics the opportunity to experience life as a

superstar player.

We have gone from 2 part time directors turning over £100k to a team of 4 full-time (and 12 part-time) staff. We turned over close to £550k this financial year, and by opening an office in the UAE this month we are forecasting turnover over close of £1million next financial year.

I feel like my leadership capabilities have improved massively as a result of the programme. My ability to influence and communicate a vision is far greater than before. An example of this would be persuading bright young graduates to join the TWS journey rather than taking a job on more money. Sacrifice what you are for what we will become.

Scott MacFarlane  
TransWorld Soccer

# Entrepreneuring® In Action



At Entrepreneurial Spark, we are passionate that all shapes and sizes of entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to start, grow and scale. From products to food and drink, from digital to services, from manufacturing to tech, the UK has a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial talent.

As a non-sectoral business accelerator we value the diversity of all genres of businesses and indeed, this adds to the overall collaborative communion that drives acceleration.

**Let's meet some of our entrepreneurs!**

Entrepreneuring® In Action



**Business Name:**  
Silver Birch Interiors  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Alan Macgregor

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Silver Birch Interiors specialise in the supply, design and installation of fitted kitchens, bedrooms and home studies in the mid - mid upper end of the market. We cover central Scotland and our showroom soon to open on London road, Glasgow will showcase exclusive ranges from the UK and Germany.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

The main reason that I applied for Entrepreneurial Spark was to learn more of the aspects to running business, being able to scale and validating my business idea, build confidence and my network.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

I have grown so much, not only in business, but I have surpassed the goals which I set, finalised all business plans, secured premises, secured £25,000 loan, won the Entrepreneurial Spark Accel-8 award

and reached the final of the Scottish Edge, Young Edge category.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
I am more focused and more aware of the obstacles and challenges that I am going to face. I think more outside the box, definitely learned so much about several aspects of business mainly marketing and branding. I feel a lot more confident in presenting myself to a wider audience.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
Secured premises, 25k loan, accel-8 award, £130k T/O, 1 Job.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Don't be afraid to ask questions or for help, make the most of your time there and use the people round about you. It's a fantastic network and space personally it too me a while to settle in.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Showroom opening, bring on designer full-time and a better work/life balance.

Entrepreneuring® In Action



**Business Name:**  
Smash-a-Ball  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Pedro Bori

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Smash-a-Ball is all about creating the best toys and apps for the visually impaired and blind, enhancing their cognitive development.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We applied for the Sirius Programme by UKTI, and we got the amazing opportunity to be part of Entrepreneurial Spark.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

A new entrepreneurial mind

set, a GoDo attitude, plus lot of knowledge, and for us, paying special attention to tiny details that can help Smash-a-Ball to be as successful as we want.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I could list all the mindsets that we applied to ourselves, but I may call it the ESpark Mindset, allowing us to be not afraid of success and work hard in collaboration to achieve our goals.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We redesigned our company and brand, rethought our product and as everything evolve in

something better. Now, instead of having one product, we have 3 different lines of products and we're about to launch a crowdfunding campaign.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Get ready for one of the best, promising and hard working experiences ever, but don't be scared, you'll be well rewarded!

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Get a successful crowdfunding campaign and/or investment and finally have out there our first toy, having a great impact on the visually impaired and blind kids.

## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action



**Business Name:**  
**DiaryDoll**  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
**Carol Smillie**



**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

We manufacture and sell women's pants with a secret waterproof panel, for heavy periods, pelvic floor weakness and post maternity.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

Was running the business alone, and felt overwhelmed by my inexperience. I'd watched the television programme 'The Entrepreneurs' and felt inspired by the whole ethos of collaboration with others going through the same difficulties.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

Without question I have grown in confidence, with a far better understanding of how to approach buyers and apply for funding. IP and banking are less daunting, and I am able to pitch confidently in front of strangers. On a personal level, I have benefitted from being around others who have experienced the same problems albeit with very different businesses.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I have a far more 'can do'

attitude and am no longer phased by complex form-filling. Our company has gone from strength to strength. ESpark helped me win The Edge, resulting in access to GlobalScots who advised us when negotiating with Alliance Healthcare, resulting in an order for 450 stores.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We've gone from John Lewis 4 stores, to Debenhams 5 stores and Alliance Healthcare 450 stores as well as QVC. We've launched in Australia & New Zealand, and signed the Scottish netball team as ambassadors. We've now been approached by the factory owner to agree the rights to sell our product across China and France

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Anything is possible, if you're willing to listen and learn. Don't let disappointment set you back, there's often something bigger and better around the corner.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Growth and expansion... and of course world domination.

## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action



**Business Name:**  
**Plant-n-Grow Ltd**  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
**Many Bailey**

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Indoor and Outdoor Grow your Own Kits for fresh herbs, vegetables, micro-greens and edible flowers, inspiring customers to sow, grow and cook, fresh and encouraging customers to reduce waste, eat healthier and in season and save money. Each 5-step kit provides a full plot-to-plate solution for kids & beginner growers.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I had the idea for a while and was already winning running my own Garden Design business. I saw the social advert for ESpark and after a bit of research knew this was the perfect opportunity to test my idea.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

ESpark has help teach me all the aspects, mindsets and behaviours that are essential to starting & building a sustainable business. My enabler & the E-Spark team have helped with both my own personal growth potential and that of my business by providing a free, supportive and collaborative space to develop, fail, learn from it and grow.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

So much. Listening & learning from others saves you time & energy. Always be learning! Focus on the important stuff - it's easy to get diverted - you're wearing lots of hats - sales & finance for me - no sales mean no hats to juggle! Communication & sharing.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

1 year ago we had an idea and now we

have developed prototypes, launched 13 products end May '14, are Amazon Vendor-UK & secured 7 retail and 6 e-commerce listings. We have a new team member. Won www.notonthehighstreet.com start-up of the year, E-Spark's Hatchery Hi-Impact Award, Glee New Product Innovator & are finalist in Great British Growing Awards 20k rev & 2k units Learned!

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Jump in & engage fully & quickly! - 5 months goes past in a flash! Use resources available asap. Don't do it all yourself - ask for help! Help & share with others. Believe in your product & don't compare your journey to others! Aim beyond what you think possible. Listen, Focus & Execute! Buckle-up it's a bumpy roller-coaster.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Grow our listings with our strong sales pipeline.

## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action

**Business Name:**  
**Technobratz Limited**  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
**Sanjyot Shah**

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**  
 We have developed a mobile application, CliniLog - that can be used by trainee Doctors during their clinical modules at university. The application allows students to review the course materials and log their clinical assessment of patients, which is sent directly to professor for grading, this reduces plagiarism and paperwork.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
 We were placed at Entrepreneurial Spark through the UKTI Sirius programme. We had hoped of getting into Entrepreneurial Spark when we read about all the possible accelerators before applying for Sirius as ESpark.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**  
 We have gained great exposure to the

potential market from our experience at Entrepreneurial Spark. ESpark has helped us create great contacts with the right people. We have received help through expert workshops at the right time which has helped us gain great insight & helped us stay a step ahead in terms of planning our business strategy.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
 The GoDo spirit in Entrepreneurial Spark has changed our mindset tremendously. Weekly temperature checks & monthly board meetings have pushed us to set short & long term targets and achieve them. The group ideations & event nights have helped us network with fellow chickets & guests, contributing to our success.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
 We started in Entrepreneurial Spark with a raw business idea. Since then we have successfully validated our idea, interacted with our potential customers and build value to our product. Our progress has

been truly satisfying, we are on the verge of securing beta tests in Medical Schools around the UK for our product. We are working on our investment strategy.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**  
 At Entrepreneurial Spark we have had great support which has helped us organise & plan our business from daily, weekly, monthly to yearly plans for all aspects. If we could go back to start of journey, we would tell ourselves that GoDo spirit is going to help us achieve the success we strive for with unprecedented support from Entrepreneurial Spark.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**  
 To build a good product for each of our target customer universities, achieve targeted sales, build on this to get more customers on board & build a great working relationship for a longer term business association.



## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action

**Business Name:**  
**Investment Solver**  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
**Jon Balzategui**

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**  
 Investment Solver wants to support the relationship between investment providers and their customers by offering a free online Retirement Planner. We want to offer a solution to: 1) help people achieve their retirement goals; and 2) offer a cost effective and targeted customer acquisition platform to investment providers and IFAs.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
 Entrepreneurial Spark offered an unbeatable proposal which included free working space and free advice from mentors in the city where we live, so it was a no brainer.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**  
 We have learnt how to transform knowledge into a business. We have come to ESpark with an idea and ESpark helped us to challenge this idea, modified it, improved it, and finally starting to build a viable business out of these. In addition, ESpark provided this in a well structured way and every single step seem natural throughout the way. How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?  
 To be honest we shared many of

the Entrepreneurial Spark mindsets before joining and this was one of the main reasons we were immediately bought by the ESpark philosophy. Basically, I believe that without these commandments you are relying much heavier on luck for success.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
 We have pivoted substantially the idea, we deliver the same service but embedded into a more coherent strategy - We have built a team of 5 - We have raised over £35,000 in public funding - We have develop a network of mentors - We have come with a plan and resources to build the product

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**  
 Do not rush and enjoy the experience!!! Because of the unstable nature of our ventures we want to rush into the future where we expect to have a sustainable business. However, the experience is remarkable and more emphasis should be given to enjoy these challenging times rather than always looking into the future - these times will be missed!!!

**What is your main focus for 2015?**  
 Extensively beta test the Retirement Planner with SMEs and build the foundations for a solid technological infrastructure.



Entrepreneuring® In Action

**Business Name:**  
LetFix

**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Neil McInnes

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**  
LetFix is the “go to” home repair and maintenance company for property owners in Edinburgh and the Lothians (soon to be more widely!). Our team of well trained and experienced technicians dazzle customers on a daily basis with our professionalism, reliability and quality of work.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
I really enjoyed a BBC documentary on ESpark a couple of years. I didn’t think it was for businesses like ours until a meeting with someone from ESpark at a business Expo earlier this year made me realise it was.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**  
Focus. Being accountable to our board on a monthly basis has made a huge difference as it has made us focus on the things that are moving LetFix forwards. Networking with the other entrepreneurs has been great to put our own situation in perspective. The specialist workshops have also really helped in areas where we needed help.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
I’m much more focused on the priorities for moving my business forward. I’m more resilient to distractions (“It’s not about how hard you get hit...”). I’m much more steady and focused on the long-term goal in my mind through the ups and downs of running a business.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
Turnover is up 70% on the 4 months before joining Espark compared to since joining (average £33k a month compared to £19.5k). Profit is up from £6.5k over 4 months before to £19.6k for the 4 months since. By January 2015 the number of people employed in the business will have increased to 11 from 7 in August 2014.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**  
Bloody go for it and enjoy the experience! I have done both of these, btw :)

**What is your main focus for 2015?**  
Keep the momentum going. Get franchise ready by growing and piloting expansion to new region(s).



Entrepreneuring® In Action

**Business Name:**  
Planitmoney

**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Kyle MacDonald

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**  
Planitmoney.com is a financial technology company which simplifies financial planning and motivates our customers to better manage their money. Our ground breaking online banking service is available through our website and mobile apps which will be launching on the 2nd February 2015.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
Entrepreneurial-Spark’s partnership with RBS was a major factor in our decision. We believed RBS with first hand knowledge of this sector would provide us with great support and feedback, enabling us to develop an industry leading service.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**  
Working with Entrepreneurial-Spark has helped us to understand that launching a new product is an iterative process, involving both technical and user testing. Using this process we were able to discover and define the root cause of our customer’s problems, and develop an elegant solution which motivated our customers to solve it.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
As a company we are a lot more open to the idea of collaborative development and taking ownership for making the business a success, investor or not.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
The support provided from Entrepreneurial Spark helped us to further build an understanding of our customer, their problems and how best to implement a solution to help solve these problems. Our progress helped us achieve Entrepreneurial-Spark’s “High Growth Potential” award at their 2014 business awards. We are now on track to launch planitmoney.com as of the 2nd February 2015.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**  
I’d tell myself to stop focusing on on-boarding investment and just create a solution which really solved a problem and helped people. Investment comes with traction, and traction can only be achieved through understanding your customer’s problems and having measurable results which show you are solving them.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**  
Launching planitmoney.com and becoming billionaire playboy philanthropists.



Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action



**Business Name:**  
Birthsparks Ltd  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Cass McNamara

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Birthsparks has designed and developed the Comfortable, Upright Birth support; the new innovation that promotes safer, healthier births for mothers and babies worldwide.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I liked their proactive, GoDo approach to supporting entrepreneurs.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

Confidence, contacts and opportunity

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**  
I am much more confident and focused, I believe I can really make this work!

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

EDGE Award, Global Ambition Award, Turnover so far £260,000 since launch in June 2014. Three full time jobs created.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Focus, Focus, Focus and don't waste time

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

To start trading from our own distribution centre in Ayrshire

Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action

**Business Name:**  
Treacle Boutique  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Kirsty Allan

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Treacle Boutique offers your little girl traditional fun with the introduction of Mini Me Dolly. We have created a range of bespoke dolls to compliment our frilly tutus. Each doll has their own quirky personality and arrives wearing the same tutu as the child. Their very own Mini Me!

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I knew I needed guidance and had heard a few people mention ESpark. I wanted to move my Treacle Boutique from the kitchen table and turn it into a proper business. I loved the idea of the community at ESpark.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

Where do I start? I didn't have any expectations but when I attended the bootcamp in Glasgow I was blown away with the journey that chiclets had experienced in the programme and wanted the same. Before ESpark, I felt like I was pretending to run a business. Now, I understand the importance of market research and knowing your customer!

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

My mindset has done a complete 360. I have always been the person who

expects the worst so I'm never disappointed. Now, I come into the office, read the daily affirmation and expect great things to happen and guess what? Great things are happening, I go out and find opportunities.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I have come a long way in 10 months. I pitched for 500 people at HHTHS in June, was featured in the business section of The Herald, took Mini Me Dolly from an idea to market which led to an invitation to sell as a partner on Not On The High Street. My sales in November rose by 900%

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

I wish I could do it all again! I would embrace the mentor network ESpark has to offer much more. Work out what skills I lacked much quicker so I could fill the gaps in my team. Collaborate even more with fellow chiclets and remind myself that this is a once in a life time opportunity so enjoy it too!

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

I actually can't wait for 2015! The trial run of Mini Me Dolly has been received so well by consumers so I plan to use their validation to mass produce. I want to see Mini Me Dolly sitting on the shelves of the likes of John Lewis and Hamleys.





## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> in Action

**Business Name:**

**Bliive**

**Entrepreneur Name:**

**Lorrana Scarpioni**

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Bliive is a collaborative network of time exchange where people can live new experiences using time as a currency!

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

The opportunity to grow the business in Scotland having all the necessary support to grow and generate impact here.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

Now we are more prepared to the challenges that we will face in next year and more organized as a team. With Entrepreneurial Spark support we have a network and new opportunities

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We understood better the market here in UK and this helped us to make strategic decisions in order to improve the business model and sales results.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We secured a 50K investment from Brazilian investors, had our first sales and trials in Brazil and UK and we won a few prizes like Intel Challenge Latin America.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Use more the mentoring opportunities.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Business model validation



## Entrepreneur<sup>®</sup> In Action

**Business Name:**

**Hectares**

**Entrepreneur Name:**

**Kevin Harvie**

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

At Hectares we make sweet potato crisps and absolutely nothing else. Our range includes three flavours and two bag sizes.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

I wanted to be in an environment that was high energy, supportive and creative. Starting a business isn't easy and doing it by yourself from your living room certainly doesn't make it any easier.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

It has really helped me focus. Prior to joining Entrepreneurial Spark I had a number of ideas about what I could do with Hectares, but also other business ideas. I quickly learnt that to make Hectares a success it needed 100% focus over many years.

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

My mindset has shifted from looking at how I run the business, to where I want to take the business, and how I do this. This helps draw attention to areas of the business that need addressed in order to reach the long term goal.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

When I joined Entrepreneurial Spark my product was still in development. Since then we have sold almost 200,000 packets and secured EDGE funding of £50,000.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

I wouldn't do anything differently but I would remind myself that you get out what you put in.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Grow brand awareness which in turn will drive sales.





**Business Name:**  
Crucial  
Drinks T/A  
LDC Scotland  
**Entrepreneur Name:**  
Scott Watson

a constructively  
competitive group  
environment.

**Describe your business in 2 sentences:**

Crucial Drinks business Vision is to Reimagine Spirits. We export a scalable portfolio of artisan brands to top quartile distributor partners in over 40 markets looking for a foothold in craft drinks. Current brands include The Lost Distillery Company (Whisky) Six Saints Rum and West Indies Rum & Cane Merchants.

**What encouraged you to apply for Entrepreneurial Spark?**

We sought a de-risked environment that would coach us in starting a business from scratch whilst expanding our network.

**What do you feel you have gained from the experience?**

We have moved quicker, with less resources in a more focused manner without corporate clutter. E-Spark forced us to be comfortable being uncomfortable and to simply commit to a plan and Go Do. We had an idea, which very possibly would have remained just an idea. Put simply it changes our Mindset and behavior in

**How has your mindset changed since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

Informed decisions made pragmatically to constantly evolve our business. It could be a pivot on business model, brand or team but we constantly challenge ourselves to think and rethink our business and brands. Our strategy constantly evolves and we take it in achievable bite sized chunks.

**What progress have you made since joining Entrepreneurial Spark?**

+£1M turnover and further capitalised £1M through Equity and traditional finance. 7 pax work on our brands globally. Over twenty trademarked brands that continue to win industry and consumer awards.

**If you could go back to the start of the Entrepreneurial Spark journey, what would you tell yourself?**

Crack on and commit sooner.

**What is your main focus for 2015?**

Increase scale of The Lost Distillery Company and Six Saints Rum: Strategic Brands and continue to expand or portfolio of artisan brands to ease cashflow and minimise risk

# Time For Entrepreneurial Spark to Scale

Practicing what we preach with our key Ambassadors RBS/Natwest, Entrepreneurial Spark will scale its operation throughout the UK.

Our first new UK Hatchery will be in St Philip's Place, Birmingham, opening in February 2015. Birmingham is great place to start and our inaugural event with Levi Roots (Dragons Den/ Reggae Reggae Sauce) was simply brilliant!

Later in 2015/16 we will open in Leeds, Bristol, Cardiff, Belfast, Manchester with other locations to follow.



# How to get involved

If you would like to inspire Entrepreneuring® then don't hesitate to get in touch, we're always looking for new entrepreneurs, mentors and importantly the cash to help make the magic happen... investors!

**Glasgow**  
Caledonia House, Lawmoor Street, Glasgow, G5 0US

**Ayrshire**  
Olympic Business Park, Drybridge Road,  
Kilmarnock, KA2 9BE

**Edinburgh**  
36 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9EB

**Birmingham**  
2 St Philips, Birmingham, West Midlands, B3 2RB



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3873822?gid=3873822&trk=hb\\_side\\_g](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/EntrepreneurialSpark-3873822?gid=3873822&trk=hb_side_g)

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