

Surrey Youth Festival, first past the post at Epsom

The going was good for students attending the 2011 Surrey Youth Festival at Epsom Racecourse. The event was aimed at students in years 9-11, and included a careers fair, with local and national employers showcasing potential opportunities for apprenticeships and careers in a wide variety of industries.



A stable of front-runners from the Institute of Directors was also out in force holding workshops on topics aimed at helping students become more employable.

Janet Preston, Director of Cold Fuzion, a business consultancy, and Education Liaison Officer for the IoD in Surrey, and her colleague Jeremy Webb (Director of SatNav4 Business) ran workshops on key employability skills. Janet explained "we took the simple concept of a general knowledge quiz to test students' awareness of current affairs, team working, communication skills and numeracy – all key skills that employers are looking for when they recruit school leavers".

At the same time, Richard Maybury (Director of Attitude Solutions Priority Management) and his colleague Mark Russell ran workshops on Social Styles, aimed at enhancing students' self awareness and ability to work more effectively in teams. Richard commented "This is a very useful skill in the workplace and will help new joiners to the workforce to fit in better and get the most out of their working lives".

Robert May, Managing Director, and Paul Mew, Technical Director of ramsac, an IT consultancy supporting SMEs in Surrey, ran workshops on Social Media, giving guidance to students about how to make sure their public on-line presence presents a professional view. As Robert explains "Increasingly employers look candidates up

on social media sites to see how they are presenting themselves in the public domain. Some applicants' profiles include indiscreet comments or inappropriate user names, so it is not surprising that they don't even get invited for interview".

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In addition to an on-line first impression Pennie Evans, Director of Integra Training Limited, ran workshops on how to make a good first impression in person. As Pennie

says, "we only get one chance to make a first impression and most people take between 3 and 7 seconds to make their minds up about a person when they meet them for the first time. If we can help young people to think about the first impression they are making we will be able to get more of them successfully into employment".

The event was attended by some 2000 students, from over 80% of the schools in the county. "Our members are very vocal about the lack of employability skills in our school leavers. In supporting an event of this scale, we can help schools and colleges to make sure the up-coming generation has the skills that employers are looking for, as they are very much at the heart of the prosperity of Surrey and the UK in the future" explained Janet.

The Surrey Youth Council, along with many other organisations, such as Young Enterprise and Satro, have now begun their activities for the new school year. They are always on the look out for business people to run short workshops on such things as preparing CVs or interview skills; or to help out with day-long business games across all age ranges in schools.

If you would like to get involved in helping young people develop robust employability skills contact Janet Preston, our Education Liaison Officer, via email at: jp@coldfuzion.co.uk

Thank you

We would like to thank the following IoD members who gave their time freely to actively help our future workforce and potential business leaders in their preparation for future careers:

- Pennie Evans, Director of Integra Training Limited
- Robert May, Managing Director of ramsac
- Richard Maybury, Director of Attitude Solutions Priority Management
- Paul Mew, Technical Director of ramsac
- Janet Preston, Director of Cold Fuzion, (Education Liaison Officer for the IoD in Surrey)
- Mark Russell, Director of AVN Picktree and Real Business Edge
- Jeremy Webb, Director of SatNav4 Business