



Learning from Dunfermline: the first TestTown

TestTown 2013

*"These are not young people hanging around street corners:
they are the ones rejuvenating them"*

The Courier

TestTown 'enterprise saves towns'

TestTown 2013 was a pilot project, asking young entrepreneurs to develop innovative businesses, that could be delivered using vacant spaces in a town centre environment.

Young people across the UK applied through an national online system, over a three month period. 11 ideas were picked to come together for a popup finals festival event in Dunfermline, at the end of June 2013. Each finals business was given a small development grant, mentoring and support.

They had just two days to set up in a vacant town centre unit, and then traded to the public for two and a half days under the watchful eyes of mystery shoppers, judges, consumers and the TestTown staff.

Our aim was to see if young people had something new to offer town centres; to provide them with chances to test out and grow new businesses; and to see how consumers responded to a different experience happening



“This was just a little idea in my head, and now I’m doing it. It’s just unbelievable.”

Jenna Fairgrieve,
2013 Champion

in their town centres. We think that TestTown 2013 was a measurable success, against each one of these ambitious aims.

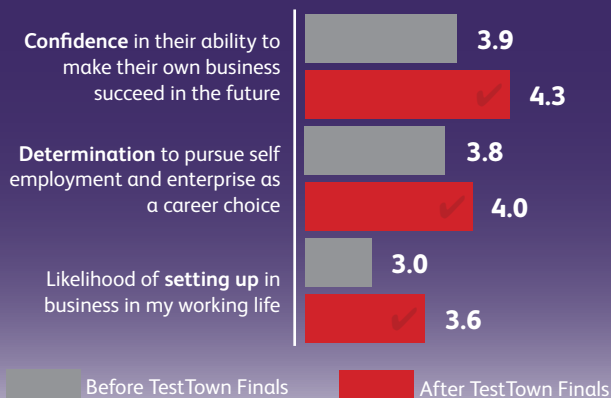
This leaflet captures some of the key findings from the pilot year of TestTown. We hope you find it useful. Above all, we want to thank our outstanding first group of TestTown finalists for contributing so much.



What did the finalists have to say?



The TestTown 2013 Finalists Their distance travelled



Agreement scale from 1 to 5; data from surveys conducted via email.

As a result of TestTown...

56.3%

strongly agreed that they felt more confident in handling new working challenges

62.5%

strongly agreed that they had gained new skills that would help them start up

81.2%

strongly agreed that their personal enterprise initiative would lead to business success



Online momentum and smart marketing were keys to success

- 1000 people followed us on Twitter, 600 liked us on Facebook, our website was hit 47,000
- 1450 tweets reached an audience of 3.2 million
- 4500 viewed online videos about TestTown
- 1500 registered as TestTown entrants, mentors, bloggers

- 66 print newspaper articles about TestTown
- 8 regional and national radio features
- TV appearances on BBC Scotland and ITV
- Marketing campaign delivered through transport branding, online, colleges and schools

HEAD Lines

TestTown 2013

at a glance, one month on...

550 16-30s entered the competition

32 finalists chosen, in
11 business teams

112
business ideas
were submitted

£45,000 of in-kind
support from our partners

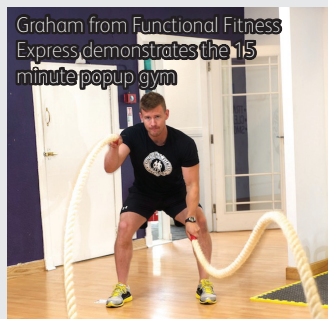
10,000
takings, in 20 hours of trading

Young people entered
TestTown from all four
nations of the **UK**, and
every one of the English
regions

“TestTown provides an amazing opportunity to start up. There are so many great units in our town centre and it's great to see them put to good use.”

TestTown 2013 customer

Graham from Functional Fitness Express demonstrates the 15 minute popup gym



As word spread, twice as many people visited day two of the festival as came on day one.



Lights across Dunfermline, on our February launch night

TestTown floating island image by George Pearson www.georgepearsonartwork.com



Mystery shoppers

A specialist team of 15 expert mystery shoppers helped us put the first TestTown finalists through their paces.

Overall, they scored the 11 topup businesses:

- 7.5/10 for presentation
- 8.4/10 for customer service
- 8/10 for innovation
- 8/10 for overall performance



Matching young people with vacant spaces on high streets up and down the country to set up new businesses: it could be done.

Sir Tom Farmer

Love it, love it, LOVE IT!
TestTown should be done on high streets everywhere.

European Commission
Enterprise Officer



have come out of it trading, 250% up

Of the 32 young finalists, 11 were in business before TestTown. One month on, 24 of them are or are starting up soon

£11,000 in startup grants invested in finalists
£17,500 awarded to the three winning businesses

Footfall on the TestTown trading streets was

doubled

Finalists B'Spoke from north London begin setting up on Bruce Street



Our top takeaways

Some top points of feedback from people involved were:

- Could we add regional and local heats to the national finals?
- Could there be more development time for finalists to design their business?
- We should have more masterclasses on practical skills, and more intensive mentoring
- Could TestTowns be themed e.g. for social enterprise, tourism, sport?

What next?

Local authorities, town centre managers, BIDs and many more partners have already expressed an interest in backing future TestTowns. We want to explore all of these opportunities, and turn our learning and resources into a practical package to help TestTown grow. We believe it can help towns and young enterprising people across the country.

Our partners

We want to thank our key partners and supporters for making TestTown 2013 a success, and we look forward to working with them in the months ahead. They include: Sir Tom Farmer, Alan Mutter, RBS, Worldpay, DM Hall, Fife Council, the Scottish Government, Dunfermline Delivers, Havelock Europa, Fife Group, Bill Fletcher, Tom Johnson and Intu Braehead, the Prince's Trust, Young Scot, Firstport, and Live Unltd.



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