

Entrepreneurial Alumni

David Marshall (September 1997 – New York) is the founder and managing director of Marshall ACM www.marshallacm.co.uk/, which develops online training on a number of business critical subjects for corporate and public sector organisations. Clients include most universities in the UK, Hitachi, Volkswagen and The Bank of England. He set the company up in 2003 at the time a new law concerning race relations required all UK organisations to do diversity training. David invested 5k in building an e-learning site on diversity training...

“When I got my first job in consultancy in London I found the atmosphere of long meetings, office politics and people covering their backs a bit constraining. This was in stark contrast to the small organisation I worked for in New York during my Mountbatten Internship, who while I was there set up a hedge fund. I can’t say I loved every minute of my internship, but I got the experience of working very closely with some very driven people. This meant when I was back in London I had (unknowingly) developed a more entrepreneurial mind-set which if you had known me in my Mountbatten years no one could have guessed.

A new law involving race relations meant all UK organisations had to do ‘diversity training’, and they were investing tens of thousands in classroom training. I invested 5k in building an e-learning site on diversity training. I gave up my flat and lived at the top of my parent’s house, where they were surprised to find me cold calling every local authority in the land. I will always remember Dorset County Council saying “this is great, how much is it?” and me not being prepared with an answer... I had gone a year without earning a penny. Lucky, they purchased, I then used that money to place an ad in the trade press with a testimonial from them and a link to my website.... I’ve been busy ever since....

Right now my plan is to hire some more staff and open up a student e-learning division, so we produce digital education resources for students. People sometimes ask if I would sell the business but I do not fancy going back into a larger consultancy and stepping into those long meetings....

If you are setting up on your own, bear in mind in my opinion there is too much emphasis right now on starting a business with ‘funding’... I say , keep your costs rock bottom, accept you won’t have an easy life for a year or two, and grow your business from sales, at the end of it you won’t owe anyone anything. “