

Formula One guru drives home the business and skills message to Derbyshire employers

- Derby flooring company inspired to expand -

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More than 300 employers heard about how skills and funding can play a key role in building stronger and more successful businesses from Formula One and Cosworth guru Mark Gallagher and business and skills advisers at a free conference this week.

At the '*Business and Skills Conference: Grow, Perform, Succeed*' in Nottingham (Monday 1 February), delegates heard from key business support agencies and employers about their experiences and the benefits of accessing Government funded services to develop the skills of their workforce and how this contributes to the regeneration of the local economy.

Keynote speaker Mark Gallagher, General Manager F1 Operations, shared his inspiration in leadership, motivation and teamwork and gave a fascinating insight into the world of top level motor sport, drawing parallels between the challenging, high speed environment of Formula One and the fast-paced business world of today.

One delegate, Alan Jones, Managing Director of AJ Floorcraft in Derby, found Mark's speech inspirational and hopes to take some of his insight from the racetrack to his own workplace.

Alan, who employs 20 staff, puts much of the success of his company down to the many apprentices he has trained over the last 20 years. He said: "I have always used apprentices as I strongly believe in giving local young people the chance to learn a trade and it also helps develop a strong team spirit within the business.

"Mark's speech was very dynamic and inspirational. The most interesting part for me was about how Cosworth branched out into new business areas and how important their investment in skills was for doing this, as I hope to expand my business in the future too."

Speaking at the event, Mark Gallagher, General Manager of Formula One Operations at Cosworth, said: "Some may see Formula One as a glamorous industry to be in, but the issues we face are exactly the same as any other engineering or manufacturing business.

"Cosworth's UK success is down to the way we train our staff and unleash their potential. We need a high level of skills in this industry which can be achieved through apprenticeships and by investing in training.

"And there is a wide range of skills initiatives available from the Government which can help businesses succeed and give young people and adults the chance to develop and grow in their careers too."

Mark was joined by Government Office East Midlands' newly appointed Regional Director, Stephen Hillier, who explained how the region is at the forefront of jobs for the future and how young apprentices can boost profits and bring vibrancy, energy and fresh ideas into a business whilst securing our future labour market.

Other Derbyshire-based businesses in attendance included Toyota, Derbyshire County Council, Balfour Beatty and Ilkeston School.

The event, which took place at the East Midlands Conference Centre, marked the start of National Apprenticeship Week and was delivered in partnership by the Learning and Skills Council, National Apprenticeship Service, Business Link East Midlands, East Midlands Business Forum, Jobcentre Plus and East Midlands Development Agency.

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Photos of Alan Jones are available on request, please call the number below.

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