

Are people put off by The Apprentice? Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions investigate its impact on entrepreneurship

Monday 17 October, 2016

As a new series kicks off, sales and marketing firm [Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions](#) investigate whether Alan Sugar's annual search for an Apprentice helps or hinders entrepreneurship in the UK.

Since launching in 2007, The Apprentice has become one of the BBC's must watch shows, with each series attracting millions of viewers eager to see promising candidates put through their paces by entrepreneur and business owner Sir Alan Sugar in a bid to land the prize of becoming his newest business partner. However, despite its popularity, there are brewing concerns among business and recruitment experts that the show could be deterring people from following a career in business, rather than encouraging them. With viewing figures from this year's launch episode showing an audience drop of 900,000, many are now questioning the actual purpose and influence of the show.

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Research by MinuteHack found that when researching new career options, today's job hunters tap into a variety of sources, including reality TV shows – with 53.9 percent of those surveyed admitting to using these shows to determine whether a particular industry is right for them. However, when it comes to The Apprentice, it was found that two-fifths of those asked felt it was damaging to the business sector and is actively preventing people from starting their own businesses.

Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions believe that this could be due to the show being too unrealistic and farcical. Many scenes are dramatised to be 'more appealing' to audiences and as such, lack real insight into specific industries. The show may also be off-putting due to Lord Sugar's approach to firing his candidates. There is no doubt that starting a business is hard work. However, the challenges set by Lord Sugar and some of his reasons for dismissing candidates fail to paint a realistic picture of entrepreneurship. The programme also fails to address the most important skill an entrepreneur can have – the ability to rise from a failure and come back fighting.

While Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions enjoy the programme and are always impressed by the tenacity and determination of the candidates – they are concerned that the show may be giving people the wrong impression of the realities of entrepreneurship. The firm fear that without any other experiences of entrepreneurship potential business leaders could be put off from pursuing their business goals. With SMEs currently making an invaluable contribution to the UK's economy, the business world can't afford to lose out on these individuals.

Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions believe that people with interest in business and entrepreneurship should go out and get some business experience and network with professionals in their field of interest before making a final decision on whether entrepreneurship is right for them. While the firm is confident that The Apprentice's approach to business is clearly an inspiration to some as it still attracts millions of applicants eager to take part every year, they are still aware that for many the show's approaches is not motivational.

Norfolk and Suffolk Promotions offer young professionals the opportunity to learn more about entrepreneurship and hone their business skills through a series of optional workshops, activates, networking events and mentoring. As well as imparting the skills and knowledge to succeed in business, these opportunities expose young professionals to the day to day realities of business – allowing them to experience life as a successful entrepreneur.

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E. info@norfolkandsuffolk.com

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