Scottish Entrepreneurs Urged to Enter Britain's Biggest Small Business Contest

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Small business owners from Scotland are being encouraged to enter one of the UK's longest running business contests and help the country regain the title as the home of Britain's best small business.

Founded by BusinessZone.co.uk and UK Business Forums in 2008, The Pitch, presented in association with lead supporter AVG, has helped thousands of entrepreneurs make connections, secure top class business support and gain access to investors.

Launched as a small event in Bristol, it has since developed into a nationwide initiative and provided support to business owners across the UK.

Business support worth thousands of pounds is up for grabs this year, and entrepreneurs who want to grab a slice of the action can apply at www.thepitchuk.com. Entries close on 13 July.

During The Pitch's history, two Scottish entrepreneurs have been crowned overall champion.

In 2011, plumber Ross Dickinson won with his ingenious Kibosh invention that provides a temporary fix for burst water pipes. Karen Darby mentored Dickinson as part of his prize and with her help he licensed the product. It is now being sold all around the world.

Scotland also took the title in 2012 when Sam Zawadzki, the Edinburgh-based founder of AdvancetoGO claimed success.

Zawadzki says: "It is pretty difficult running your own business when you've got so much to do, particularly in the early stages when you've not got much money coming in. Having such a big motivational boost by winning The Pitch was one of the brilliant things about it."

In 2014, applicants to the competition will be whittled down to 100 entrepreneurs who will attend one of two intensive training boot camps in Manchester and London.

Attendees will receive advice from a range of experts on all aspects of pitching and growing their business before 30 finalists are selected after all the entrepreneurs have presented on stage.

The finalists will compete at The Pitch 2014 Final in Bristol in October in front of judges including serial social entrepreneur and founder of CrowdMission.com Karen Darby, Company Shortcuts boss Lara Morgan, who built luxury toiletries provider Pacific Direct into a £20m business, and Judith Bitterli, serial entrepreneur and chief marketing officer at AVG Technologies.

One participant will be crowned the champion and receive a huge package of business support including 12 months free access to business lounges around the world, free taxi travel, a Nokia Lumia tablet, web design advice, online business security services from AVG and PR consultancy. All attendees will also have access to investors.

Dan Martin, editor of BusinessZone.co.uk and founder of The Pitch, comments: “The Pitch has come a long way since our humble beginnings in 2008, and we are delighted to be back for a seventh year. There aren't many business competitions that have lasted that long!

“From day one, our aim has been to support Britain's innovative entrepreneurs who are so crucial to the success of the UK economy. We've helped thousands since we launched, but The Pitch 2014 is set to be the best competition yet. We can't wait to meet this year's crop of entrepreneurial talent.”

Judith Bitterli, chief marketing officer at AVG Technologies, adds: “AVG's philosophy is all about empowering small businesses to manage their technology simply and reliably so they can stop worrying about their data and concentrate on growth in today's fast changing, increasingly mobile workplace.

“As Britain's top competition for emerging entrepreneurs, The Pitch is an ideal forum to share our passionate belief that a well?connected business is an essential ingredient for success today.”

To qualify for the competition, companies must be UK-based and trading for less than three years.

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Individuals with a business idea and not yet trading can apply for the One to Watch category. The winner of that will receive £1,000 worth of business advice from an ICAEW Chartered Accountant.

The Pitch 2014 is also supported by ICAEW, Constant Contact, .co.uk and Nokia.

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

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Follow The Pitch 2014 on Twitter at @The_Pitch and #thepitch14

The Pitch 2014 is a Sift Media event presented by BusinessZone.co.uk and UK Business Forums in association with AVG and supported by ICAEW, Constant Contact, .co.uk and Nokia.

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