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 THE TELEGRAPH

## E-learning firm in line for award

A COVENTRY supplier of eLearning development has been named as a finalist in a major awards ceremony.

E-Learning Studios, which is based in Innovation Village, has been shortlisted in the Innovation category for the annual Minority Supplier Development UK awards.

MSDUK is a membership organisation which was set up to champion supplier diversity – which is backed by major firms such as BT, GlaxoSmithKline and PepsiCo.

Nitin Thakrar, managing director executive, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for e-Learning Studios to win such a prestige award. This is the first time we have entered and it has given us a great confidence boost to try for other awards."

Mayank Shah, director at MSDUK, said: "Our annual awards are the only one of its kind in the UK that rewards ethnic minority entrepreneurs and companies who are making a real and positive impact to supplier diversity today."

"In addition, the awards also recognise forward-thinking large corporations who understand they have a social responsibility to engage and reach out to a diverse group of suppliers which benefits them, their customers and their suppliers."

The awards will be held on October 11 at the Grange Tower Bridge Hotel, London.

## Conference for supply chain staff

A CONFERENCE is being held in Leamington next month which will bring together compliance experts from government, consultancies and key industry players.

Supply chain professionals from across the region are being invited to the Third Annual Compliance and Risk Management Conference at the Mallory Court Hotel.

The event is being held on October 2 – running from 10am until 3pm – and has been organised by AEB International Ltd in partnership with Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK).

Titled Export Controls: Management Compliance to your Advantage, this annual event brings together some of the leading industry players from across the UK.

The conference offers visitors the chance to get up to speed on latest regulatory requirements, industry business challenges, best practices, legal implications and solutions.

Attendees at the event can also learn how to best manage regulatory compliance to their businesses' advantage.

# CULTURE 'HELPING CITY TO PROSPER'

By **Jenny Waddington**  
 BUSINESS REPORTER

**CULTURE is important for the prosperity of Coventry, according to the local business community.**

And recent events such as Godiva Awakes have added vibrancy and footfall to the city and to many retailers in the centre.

The results of the Planning for Prosperity Survey, which were unveiled at a recent event at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, reveal that local firms consider culture to be a key contributor to the city's success.

Organised by the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, Coventry and Warwickshire First, Champions and the Belgrade Theatre, the event provided a chance for local business people to put forward their hopes and aspirations for the city and discuss how these can be achieved.

The survey had been produced jointly by all of the partners of the event and represented the views of members of major networks in the region.

According to the results, the most important contributors to the prosperity of the city were felt to be the commercial sector, retail and safety, with culture and tourism in joint fifth.

It suggested that improving the image of empty shops, joining up the retail offer, encouraging graduates to remain in the city and developing Coventry as a cultural city were key to its prosperity.

Joanna Reid, executive director at the Belgrade Theatre, said: "It was heartening to see that local businesses understand that a coherent cultural and retail offer go hand in hand in the regeneration of a city."

"Recent events such as Godiva Awakes and the carnival attracted significant volumes of people to Coventry and I'm sure the shops in the city will have benefited greatly from the additional vibrancy and footfall."

"Wherever you see a successfully regenerated city in recent years, such as Birmingham, Liverpool or Newcastle, you find culture as a cornerstone of this success."

"Coventry has one of the lowest



**PLANNING FOR PROSPERITY: Martin Reeves (Coventry City Council), Ian O'Donnell (FSB), Louise Bennett (Coventry Chamber of Commerce), Rene Olivieri (Chair Belgrade Theatre)**

## Survey highlights priorities for development

rates of city centre crime in the UK, but people here, as elsewhere, often report not feeling safe.

"A busy and attractive night time economy will stimulate the perception of safety and the Belgrade Theatre as the keystone of the city's night time offering gives this reassurance."

"The new Belgrade Plaza car park and restaurants also add to the area's buzz and attraction and feeling safe in

this area in the evenings is a given."

Around 150 people attended the Planning for Prosperity event at the Belgrade, which featured a number of guest speakers including Rene Olivieri, chairman of the board of directors of the theatre.

Coventry University's Nick Stokes also spoke at the event, as well as Trevor Seeley from Warwick University and representatives from local

companies E.On, Penso and Wright Hassall.

Coventry City Council's chief executive Martin Reeves and city centre director David Cockcroft also attended to discuss the council's plans for the city, alongside Louise Bennett, chief executive of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, who presented the results of the survey.

# Experts give their views on Holt Review

A TRAINING group in Coventry and Warwickshire has welcomed some of the findings in a government review of the apprenticeship scheme.

Sally Lucas, executive director at CWT Chamber Training, welcomed suggested measures to raise awareness of apprenticeship schemes and make them accessible to

more SMEs following the government-commissioned Holt Review of the apprenticeship scheme.

CWT Chamber Training, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, is a leading provider of training and development, including apprenticeships for young people and adults as

well as higher education and business to business courses.

Ms Lucas said: "The Holt Review of apprenticeships recognises the vital role that SMEs have within the economy and the fact they represent real potential for economic growth."

"It can only be a move in the right direction if ways

are found to make apprenticeships simpler and more accessible, particularly for SMEs across all business sectors – a sentiment that all training providers and colleges are in support of."

With less than 10 per cent of SMEs currently employing an apprentice, any steps that raise employers' awareness of clear benefits that

apprenticeships can bring to a business – fresh ideas, skills and knowledge – is positive.

"We need practical action to stimulate engagement, such as the apprenticeship grant for employers of £1,500 which is currently available to encourage and support the hiring of a young apprentice aged 16-24."