



Event Report

Commerce Meets Community

In partnership with: Chamber of Commerce and Healthy Working Lives Lothian Team.

Tuesday 25th September 2007

Please contact **Maree Drury** or **Lara Friedman** at SBC, if you would like any more information about this event.

Summary of Event

The aim of this unique pilot event was to bring together a limited number of businesses and employability agencies to identify how they could support each other in a way that delivers mutual benefit. As a result of attending the event, it was hoped that each employability agency would form a closer link with one or two of the businesses at the event. There was however no expectation on the night to sign up to any activity with any agency. A range of businesses attended from both the private and public sector. The event was especially well attended by businesses that are engaging in the Employability component of the Healthy Working Lives Award.

At the event we heard briefly from 5 organisations that work with people who require additional support to enter the labour market. They each outlined the client group they worked with, the service they provide to their clients and touched on some of the barriers their clients had in returning to work.

After the brief presentations there was a lively discussion where the businesses were able to discuss with the agencies ways in which they could work together and what type of opportunities there may be available for businesses to support their clients. There were three main areas identified in which businesses could add value:

- Job Seeking activities (CV development, mock interviews)
- Confidence building (motivational talks, workplace tours, mentoring)
- Business Advisory skills.

Maree and Lara explained that SBC will contact all businesses after the event and broker the relationship with the employability agency to ensure that the partnership works effectively. In particular, SBC will minimise any additional pressure or call on internal business resources that involvement with an agency might bring.

The feedback from all that attended was very positive and SBC are intending on running this event again in 2008.

These agencies who attended included:

- ❖ Ali Paterson from Women onto Work www.womenontowork.org
- ❖ Susie Foster from Canon gate Youth Project www.canongateyouthproject.org
- ❖ Dughall Laing from The Action Group www.actiongroup.org.uk
- ❖ Pegs Bailey from Forth Sector www.forthsector.org.uk
- ❖ Sandy Irvine from Bridgend Allotment. www.bridgendallotment.org.uk

