

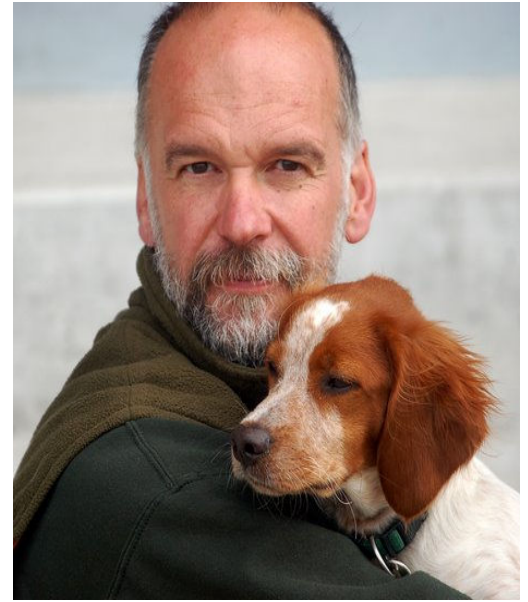
‘PLATO™ peer support proves good substitute for mentor’

When it comes to woodwork there’s not much you could teach Guy Bagshaw. A former cabinet maker, lecturer in furniture skills and NVQ assessor with an MSc in the conservation of timber buildings and a diploma in furniture restoration, Guy set up The English Garden Carpentry Company in 2002.

However, as his Hampshire-based business supplying bespoke garden structures and small buildings grew, Guy felt he needed a more ‘corporate’ approach to running the company. He thought that perhaps a period spent ‘shadowing’ an appropriate business person to assess the differences in the corporate way of thinking would provide the answers he was seeking.

It was at this point that he was paid a routine visit by a Business Link adviser and, during discussions around his concerns and ambitions, heard about the PLATO™ programme.

‘I thought it would be beneficial and, although I didn’t strictly meet the qualifications as far as company size was concerned, my application to join the programme was accepted,’ said Guy.



Guy Bradshaw, Proprietor,
The English Garden Carpentry Company

‘My main motivation was to learn to change my attitude from that of the owner of a small company. This particular mind-set was a nut I had yet to crack so I wanted to learn about, adopt and adapt, where necessary, the business strategies of larger, successful organisations.’

Each PLATO™ group has around 12 participants plus two senior executives from blue chip companies who act as facilitators. Meetings are held locally once a month for two years to discuss a wide range of management issues and undertake problem-solving in groups or working in one-to-one coaching relationships.

Guy found the peer support extremely helpful.



For more information about PLATO™ call
08457 354555 or e-mail
info@platogb.co.uk.

‘When I joined I suppose I was looking for a mentor figure,’ he said. ‘While I didn’t really find that, I did discover that hearing about other people’s experiences and sharing best practice was equally helpful. The intellectual elements behind any business are pretty similar so, while we were all involved in different business sectors, we were united by the common threads that run through every commercial organisation.’

The calibre of the group members was impressive and we gelled very well. In fact we plan to maintain contact and meet up on a regular basis.’

PLATO™ is now being re-launched to build on the proven success of the original programme. It is open to owner-managers, chief executives and senior directors of companies with 10-250 employees and turnover between £1.5m and £39.5m which have been operating for at least three years and have the potential and aspiration for growth.