

# PLATO™ Testimonials from Participants

**'It doesn't seem to matter what the problem is – one of us has probably encountered it before and can help. You also get to find out what's going on in the business world locally. I'd recommend being a member to any business owner as you really do get so much out of it.'**

**Dominic Bishop, Managing Director, Total Fire Solutions, United Kingdom**

**'We can be honest. You can get down to the real issues. You don't get that with other networking groups. At those everybody says how well they're doing where here we can tell the truth.'**

**Graham Ball, Ward Goodman Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers, United Kingdom**

**'If you are an entrepreneur running your own business, it's difficult to know who to talk to, especially in the current economic climate. At PLATO™ you know you'll get entirely independent advice from people who are running businesses themselves.'**

**Chris Slocock, The Minster Press, United Kingdom**

**'I believe the PLATO™ programme is a wonderful thing for small and medium-sized businesses that want to grow or become more profitable. The opportunity to share best practice and pick other people's brains is a winning formula. I found the elements of sharing knowledge and helping each other of great interest. It was a fascinating two years.'**

**Max Toti, Managing Director, Captec Ltd, United Kingdom**

**'This is a highly practical programme which is like an MBA with all the case studies but without the book learning. I ran my own business once before but it wasn't a great success. The two years I spent on PLATO™ and the lessons I learnt gave me the confidence I needed to go it alone and I now run a successful HR consultancy.'**

**Barbara Brown, Director, Effective People UK Ltd, United Kingdom**

**'As an initiative designed to be a personal and business development programme for entrepreneurs and owner-managers, I believe PLATO™ has no equal. It gives you the courage to say "I can go out and try" and have no fear of failure.'**

**Graham Ellis, Managing Director - Ellis International Transport Consulting Ltd, United Kingdom**

**'As well as being a good confidence-builder, becoming a member of PLATO™ is a great motivator to be involved with people who are enthusiastic to learn more about running their businesses and sharing their experiences and skills. It is a fantastic opportunity for small businesses to benefit from top-level external contributors who will tailor their advice to the specific needs highlighted at the meetings. Learning from others who have already "been there and done that" is a very effective way of developing business skills – and, of course, there are many useful contacts to be made.'**

**Adrian Jones, Senior Manager, MOL (Europe) Ltd, United Kingdom**

**‘Academic courses are very useful but I felt that PLATO™ would be more relevant to me at this point in the development of my business, offering as it does real-life solutions to business problems by people who have, as it were, been there, done that.’**

**Sarah Wearing, Director, The Art of Balance, United Kingdom**

**‘My main motivation was to learn to change my attitude from that of the owner of a small company. This particular mindset 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.’**

**Guy Bagshaw, Proprietor, The English Garden Carpentry Company, United Kingdom**

**‘Having clear goals has been crucial to my success and the PLATO™ programme has helped develop these and keep me focused.’**

**Mark Effenberg, Chief Executive - Healthy Pets, United Kingdom**

**‘PLATO™ has been the most beneficial process I have been involved with in my 12 years as an owner-manager.’**

**Pat O’Mahoney, Managing Director, Advanced Technology Products, Ireland**

**‘I was not expecting anything, but I thought that PLATO™ might open my eyes. It has helped me by seeing what other people are doing better than me in my company and it has allowed me to realise that I’m managing my business quite well. It also provides me with a chance to voice my problems and concerns with people from the same background and share things in common. PLATO™ is helpful to anyone in business.’**

**Paul Gibbons, Managing Director - Edina Power Ltd, Ireland**

**‘The PLATO™ Programme revitalises you, you don’t fall asleep. There is a buzz about it. We get plenty of ideas from it and always look forward to the next meeting. With PLATO™, you get down to business straight away.’**

**Colm Matthews, Managing Director - National Agrochemical Distributors, Ireland**

**‘The greatest strength of the PLATO™ group is the individual members, their willingness to discuss and exchange problems and offer solutions. The benefits are immeasurable and the relationships developed in the group will continue long after our programme has come to an end.’**

**John Mangan, Managing Director - Mangan Wholesale Ltd, Ireland**

**‘Of any of the state organised activities for business that we have been involved with, this is the best. The companies are becoming better. It has increased the level of confidence as SME’s mix and removes the isolation. PLATO™ gets you out of a bunker. Two years is about right.’**

**William and David Tallon, Managing Director – Wm Tallon and Sons, Ireland**

**‘PLATO™ was the beginning of the further development of our company and made us think about the market of the future.’**

**Patrick Uytterhoeven - Watco, Belgium**

**‘PLATO™ is the unique access to the resources you need for the SME as for the large company as well.’**

**Kurt Masui – Brepols, Belgium**

**‘It should be realised that SME managers are polyvalent and in the beginning our know-how is specific bound to a sector or activity. PLATO™ enabled us to develop other aspects of our company such as accountancy, strategic management and others around the table in an informal way. This aspect was significant because we all dreamed about training but we never came to it. With PLATO™ our dream was fulfilled during the monthly evening sessions.’**

**Stéphane Gatot – TWT, France**

**‘Our company was ready to grow but it seemed as if we would not get past a certain threshold. That’s one of the main reasons why I joined PLATO™ two years ago. I was hoping to learn a few things from my colleagues and overseeing other companies about how they managed their business, so we could achieve growth. I can only say that it was a tremendous success.’**

**Vossen - Nuevo Design, The Netherlands**

**‘Participation has led to enhanced professionalism, increased turnover and profit and a demand for additional employees.’**

**Björn Dryselius - SME Business Support, Sweden**