

# 2001: 'Mind Your Own Business!'

Title: 'Mind Your Own Business!'

Produced by: *Group Western Mail and Echo Ltd.*

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## • Introduction:

'Mind Your Own Business!' was a groundbreaking six-week Newspapers in Education project designed to help teachers set up a mini-enterprise in their classroom. This year, the National Assembly for Wales launched an 'Entrepreneurship Action Plan' which aims to promote an entrepreneurial culture in Wales. It also plans to target primary and secondary age children particularly in the Welsh valleys. With this in mind, the project fulfilled the need for a simple step-by-step guide to this complicated and often neglected

area of the National Curriculum. 'Mind Your Own Business!' provided an opportunity for schools in this target area and across Wales, to develop entrepreneurial skills by using newspapers in the classroom.

## • Aim:

The aim of the project was to promote young entrepreneurs through the medium of the newspaper, meet National Curriculum guidelines for Vocational Education, provide an NIE project suitable for secondary level pupils and increase newspaper sales.

## • Titles Used:

The project was run across all nine Western Mail and Echo Ltd. publications as follows:

- The Western Mail, daily national title, circulation of 53, 474
- The South Wales Echo, daily regional title, circulation 71, 066

- The Gwent Gazette, weekly title, circulation of 12, 857
- The Glamorgan Gazette, weekly title, circulation of 21, 351
- The Cynon Valley Leader, weekly title, circulation of 10,761
- The Pontypridd and Llantrisant Observer, weekly title, circulation of 10,502
- The Rhondda Leader, weekly title, circulation of 11,869
- The Merthyr Express series, weekly title, circulation of 19,266
- The Neath and Port Talbot Guardian, weekly title, circulation 10,607

To participate, schools simply completed and returned the registration form, specifying which title they would like to use to complete the project.

• **Time Scale:**

NIE runs a school project each academic term. 'Mind Your Own Business!' took place in the summer term of the academic year 2000-2001 and ran from the week commencing June 4, 2001 until the week commencing July 9, 2001.

• **Research:**

The NIE coordinator was aware that mini-enterprise activities in schools had no specific structure. Many of the existing initiatives relied heavily on the dedication of the class teacher, as there was very little printed material available.

On recommendation, we visited a local primary school that had produced a progressive scheme of work for mini-enterprise. It was with their co-operation and experience that we put together the basic activities for the project.

Once the activities had been written and designed, we held a 'Mind Your Own Business!' teacher workshop day at our newspaper offices, to gain feedback from teachers who were interested in participating in the scheme. The day was organised as a joint venture with an Education and Business Partnership Co-ordinator from Careers Wales West. Thirteen primary and secondary teachers from the Carmarthenshire area, spent the day reading through the project in draft form, making alterations as they thought necessary. These changes were then included in the finished product.

• **The Launch:**

To launch the project a mailing was sent to every school in Wales giving details of the project and how to

register. An example of this is included in appendix 1.

'Mind Your Own Business!' was not sponsored but was supported by Education and Business Partnership coordinators from four local authorities in Wales. The partnership meant that funding was provided for schools in target areas that wished to take part. The coordinators also assisted in launching the project by writing to Career Advisors and Head Teachers in support of the project and providing an opportunity for the NIE coordinator to speak at their open days. The support of the EBP coordinators meant that the project was a great success, with many secondary schools participating in an NIE project for the first time.

**• Age of Pupils:**

The project was written for pupils between the ages of 10 and 14. Those involved are in the last two years of primary school and the first two years of secondary school.

**• Resources:**

The resources for 'Mind Your Own Business!' were written, produced and designed in-house by the NIE coordinator and former teacher, Erica Williams. Each child received a newspaper each week for the duration of the project, an eight-page activity booklet containing the six main activities to help in the planning of a mini-enterprise and a full colour certificate awarded to each child at the end of the project. Each teacher received a step-by-step guide to the project along with some 'top tips' for setting up a classroom enterprise, and a set of worksheets containing additional activities and details of extension tasks that can be used to supplement the workbook. Samples of the resources produced are included in appendix 2.

**• Project Structure:**

'Mind Your Own Business!' featured six activities for children to complete with the help of a newspaper, which guided them through the process of setting up a mini-enterprise. This is the same format as previous Western Mail and Echo Ltd. projects, as teachers across Wales are now familiar with implementing our NIE schemes in their classroom.

Registered schools were sent a work pack containing all the information that they needed to get started. A newspaper per child was then delivered to schools each week, for use with the main activities. At the end of the project, each child received a certificate as a reward for running a successful business venture.

Once the pupils decided on the type of product they wished to manufacture, they completed the workbook tasks to act as the marketing department, the production department, the finance department and the Human Resources department and produce a final business plan. The product was then manufactured and sold to make a profit. Please note the detailed activities outlined in the workbook, included in appendix 2.

The teachers' notes gave practical support, specifying how to go about the project. They covered every aspect, from linking with a local business to selling shares, raising funds and starting the manufacturing process. Please note the content of the teachers' notes included in appendix 2.

In order for the project to be a success, the structure needed to be as flexible as possible as running a mini-enterprise can be a time consuming venture. Therefore, 'Mind Your Own Business!' was designed to allow teachers to adapt the way that they use the resources to suit their timetables and the diverse range of products that the children could choose to manufacture.

The suggested sheets supplemented the workbook activities, but were not essential to the success of the business, especially if time was limited.

In addition to the project, each title provided regular editorial coverage of participating classes across Wales. Examples of these articles are included in appendix 3.

**• Additional Activities:**

Research has shown that secondary schools enjoy a competitive element to mini-enterprise ventures. As a result of this we decided to set up a competition to find the 'NIE Mini-Enterprise 2001'. Schools participating in the project have been given the opportunity to enter their idea to win the title and a prize. Two awards will be given at the close of the project, one to the best Primary project and one at secondary level. For further details on 'NIE Mini-Enterprise 2001' please see the competition details, included at appendix 4.

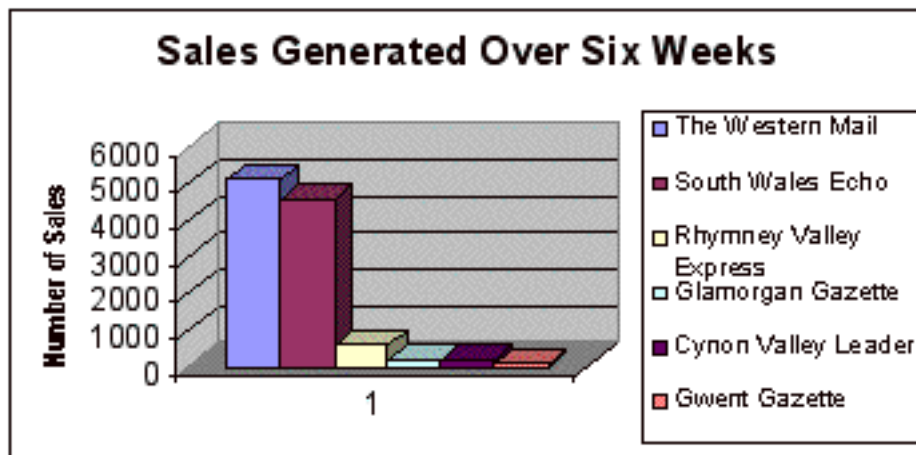
**• Curriculum Links:**

As well as being great fun, the importance of enterprise projects have been recognised by ACCAC and consequently, enterprise activities have been included as a key learning activity in the recently published framework for work-related activities.

In order to encourage teachers to dedicate some of their timetable to the project, we laid down clear learning objectives in the teaching notes that accompany the workbooks. The learning objectives were taken directly from Technical Paper 12, the Inspection Framework for Vocational Education. The 'Mind Your Own Business!' learning objectives were,

- To encourage initiative and enterprise
- To promote positive attitudes to learning and individual self-confidence
- To introduce children to the experience and capabilities needed by people at work.

In addition to these specific learning objectives the project provided opportunities to cover some of the National Curriculum requirements for maths in accounting activities, design and technology in planning and modifying a product and literacy in marketing the product.



• **Citizenship:**

From August 2002, schools will have a statutory responsibility to teach citizenship at key stages 3 and 4. 'Mind Your Own Business!' goes some way towards preparing children for this new

area of the curriculum.

Learning through enterprise and NIE contributes to improving motivation and raising achievement by helping pupils make connections between what they learn in the classroom and the world outside. The project helps pupils learn about business in the wider community. It provides opportunities for them to explore how self-employment contributes to communities, understand the role of community based enterprise and develop a greater understanding of the factors influencing decisions about setting up, expanding and shutting down enterprises including the rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees.

In addition to this, each aspect of the project promotes the key skills for citizenship as outlined in the National Curriculum, including, communication, problem solving, numeracy, literacy, showing initiative,

teamwork, the ability to follow instructions, and leadership and management skills.

• **Newspaper Benefits and Results:**

'Mind Your Own Business' has been a great success both in the classroom and in terms of benefits to the Western Mail and Echo Ltd. A total of 1,758 pupils in 53 schools across Wales participated in the project. As each child received a newspaper each week for the duration of the project, 'Mind Your Own Business!' generated additional newspaper sales of 10, 548 across titles.

In addition to providing a tangible increase in newspaper sales, 'Mind Your Own Business!' has provided our newspapers with an opportunity to help raise standards in our most important resource, the workforce of the future. We have also demonstrated the commitment we have to our local communities.

• **Teacher Feedback:**

Teacher feedback has been extremely positive, with most commenting that the project filled the need for a simple step-by-step guide.

Comments received include:

*'The project has involved the parents and local businesses, the work book really keeps you on track and the children have responded well, we sold our product on Sports Day'* (Mrs. Robb, Holy Name Primary School)

*'The materials produced were excellent, they sparked the imagination of the children and made them think like mini Richard Bransons!'* (Mrs. Thomas, Rhydri Primary School)

The range of businesses set up has been phenomenal. The children have organised initiatives ranging from manufacturing hair decorations and washing cars to growing and selling pot plants! In addition to these encouraging comments, it has been noted that a few schools have chosen to complete the activities theoretically, without actually making and selling a product, marking the adaptability of the resources.

Further feedback will be gained at the end of the project, when all participating schools will be sent a feedback form to complete. We will also be able to gauge the response to the 'NIE Mini-Enterprise 2001' competition, however initial inquiries are encouraging.

• **The Future:**

Due to the success and support that 'Mind Your Own Business!' has gained, we intend to run the project and the competition at the same time each year. This will allow schools to plan the project into their schemes of work. Education and Business Partnership Co-ordinator from around Wales are keen to support the project in 2002 and feel that the number of schools participating would be greater, following the success of our first year.

As the project becomes an annual event and encouraging entrepreneurship in schools becomes mandatory it is expected that more schools will choose to join in.

During this project, Gordon Brown, Deputy Prime Minister, announced his plans to set up a task force to encourage enterprise project in schools across the country.

• **Contact:**

**Erica Williams**

Newspapers in Education Co-ordinator

*Western Mail and Echo Ltd.*

Thomson House, Havelock Street,

Cardiff, Wales, UK CF10 1XR

Phone: (44) 29 20583464

Fax: (44) 29 20583476

[Email](#)