



## The sweet smell of success

**In January this year, Vicky Browning, Commercial Director of Probe Industries Ltd of Whitley Bay, was looking for the next level of training and education to assist in increasing her managerial skills and knowledge and extending her network of business contacts. Her Business Link Advisor recommended she spoke to Newcastle University Business School about the part time Executive MBA programme.**

Vicky met with Juli Campey, MBA & Executive Programmes Manager who explained the features of the programme, including business relevant module content, the convenient 3-day teaching blocks and the benefits of studying with experienced managers. Absolutely convinced that the programme was right for her, Vicky decided that she would apply to join the course. As an SME (small to medium sized enterprise), Probe Industries Ltd was the first applicant organisation to take advantage of the University's Voucher Scheme (for which every North East SME can apply), having decided that the £5,000 voucher would be best utilised towards Vicky's EMBA.

Vicky was able to present a recent Probe Industries innovation and gained valuable feedback from the Northern Business Angels, an event hosted by Newcastle University Business School which included a panel of local industry experts. This was part of her MBA assessment of the elective module in 'Small Business and Entrepreneurship'. The new product 'AiroPure' is revolutionary in its ability to remove all types of unwanted odour, which traditionally other chemicals would struggle to do. The new product is patent pending, environmentally friendly, and is entirely safe to use.

Vicky says "the reaction I got from the Northern Business Angels panel was very encouraging. I particularly enjoyed describing our odour testing at Probe, which consisted of applying the AiroPure to my son's dirty nappies! Not the most glamorous part of my job, but the results were astounding. The odour completely disappeared in a matter of seconds."

This new product is a fantastic opportunity for Probe, and Vicky wanted to make sure she was equipped to lead the Company through this inevitable growth and expansion phase. Vicky states "this new product and its potential really got me thinking. Probe have in the past focused on the Waste and Water treatment sector, but this new product will take us into unknown territory and it's my job to make sure we can plan our market penetration strategically to enable us to take advantage of this ground breaking product. I really feel the experience and knowledge gained from the Executive MBA will contribute hugely to my own career development, and the future success of Probe."



Following on from her 'Dragons Den' experience, Vicky continues to develop her strategy for launching AiroPure into new markets. A trial has now commenced with Nexus, which owns, manages and is modernising the Tyne and Wear Metro in a £300 million programme. AiroPure is currently being applied in Metro lifts and could be extended to other areas where odours may cause nuisance to Metro passengers. Malcolm Irving, a Technical Manager for Nexus, said: "It is very important to us that passengers using Metro enjoy their commute on a daily basis. We are pleased to be working with Probe to really concentrate on making Metro a pleasant environment for everyone who uses it. The initial trials have proven extremely successful and the AiroPure product has really impressed us."

Vicky continues to be excited about her own future potential and is thrilled to have had the opportunity to study at Newcastle University Business School. "I really needed a course that would challenge me academically, enable me to further my personal development, and give me the skills, knowledge and confidence I needed to really push Probe to the next level. I have met some fantastic people, the lecturers are highly knowledgeable and inspirational, and the students themselves have also been an invaluable resource. I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to further their career, and develop new opportunities."

**If you would like to find out more about the MBA programmes at Newcastle University Business School, come along to our next drop-in session on Wednesday 20th May between 5pm and 7pm. To register for this event, text MBA and your full name to 60777 or email [nubs@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:nubs@ncl.ac.uk)**