

ncge

flyingstart

Chris Quickfall



Picture © David Glen Walker

Name:	Chris Quickfall	Age:	28
Business:	Invate Ltd – assistive learning	Website:	www.invate.co.uk
University:	Northumbria University, Newcastle	Degree:	BEng Mechanical Engineering

Chris Quickfall attended the first FlyingStart Programme in Cambridge in July 2005, and co-founded Invate with business partner Sheldon Gold in 2006. The company was founded on a desire to improve on the technological support he was offered as a dyslexic learner while at university. Invate Ltd is now a leading assistive-technology supplier and developer based in the North-East and expanding nationally.

The Business

Chris's company provides a one-stop-shop solution for universities, further education institutions, schools and businesses looking to source software and hardware adapted for disabled users. Invate collates the software, installs and tests it and then provides the delivery and training on products for its clients.

How the NCGE has helped

"FlyingStart was instrumental in the early development of the company," said Chris. "The team even helped us get a licence to operate." He had little knowledge of business before the FlyingStart Programme. "I'd had no previous contact with other entrepreneurs and the only thing I knew about business was that the difference between the amount of money you bring in and the amount you spend is profit. It turned out even that was wrong!"

At a glance...

Started Trading:	2006
Employees:	11
Investment & loans:	£57,500
Turnover (2008-09):	£500,000

Through FlyingStart, Chris gained industry contacts and knowledge, and found networking with like-minded entrepreneurs boosted his enthusiasm to set up his business.

Business Growth

The company is now one of the fastest growing in the region. It has just launched a new online e-commerce division that helps users select the technologies they need. Two leading experts in neuropsychology work with the company to develop its training school for assisted technology support – the only one of its kind in the UK. So far around 500 people have undertaken Invate's training.

Invate has also just developed a software application named Bulletproof, which is the only software in the UK designed to automatically repair a PC system with specialist disability software installed on it.

Last year Chris was nominated for the Young Business Executive Award in the North East Business Executive of the Year Awards.

About the FlyingStart Programme

This 12-month business start-up programme for new entrepreneurs is delivered by the NCGE and supported by the UK Government's Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). An intensive three-day residential training course is followed by 12 months' specialist mentoring and support. The aim is to have 66% of all graduates trading within one year. FlyingStart ensures all new graduate businesses have a ready-made national and regional network, a dedicated mentor, appreciate the 'know-hows and know-whos' of practical business, and understand how to make money.