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NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

START-UPS AND ENTREPRENEURS IN LEICESTER TO BE OFFERED INVESTMENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Technology entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Leicestershire area are to be offered places on a much sought-after investment readiness programme following a highly successful pilot in the region. InvoRed, run by the business advisory network Connect Midlands, is a unique mentoring programme led by experts in their field, tailored to the needs of small technology businesses and innovators seeking initial or early stage funding between £15k - £ 500K or beyond.

Specially constructed weekly workshops on the programme's Amber Stream, running from the end of March until the beginning of June, will provide the companies with coaching on how to understand the needs and requirements of investors, develop viable business plans and shape an investment pitch.

Webcomz Limited, of London Road, was one of only 16 companies from the entire East Midlands awarded a place on the pilot of the InvoRed programme.

Webcomz Limited is a communications service provider, delivering interactive internet, intranet and extranet solutions with data capture to a varied portfolio of organisations. The company offers a wide selection of interactive services to assist clients in achieving strategic internet communications goals and objectives.

"InvoRed has given us a totally different way of thinking about how we might attract investors, and what they would be looking for from the core management team," said **Richard Mitchell, Managing Director of Webcomz Limited**, found at www.webcomz.com

He added, "The opportunity to make contact with organisations and investors that previously would not have been available to us was also invaluable."

Ctd/...

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InvoRed's East Midlands' campaign will be co-ordinated from a regional headquarters based at the University of Loughborough Innovation Centre. The programme, which is funded by *emda* and the European Regional Development Fund, is led by a team of business management experts who will be responsible for grooming and engaging the participating companies in elements of key business planning.

"The initial InvoRed programme, which was the first of its kind in the Midlands, was tremendously successful and many of the companies that took part saw real, tangible benefits," said John Griffiths, InvoRed Regional Manager. "We are very excited about the next Amber Stream programme, and look forward to working with local technology businesses to develop their great ideas into business plans that venture capitalists won't be able to turn down."

The East Midlands InvoRed team has been completed with the recent appointment of marketing specialist Natalie Seebaransingh as Marketing and Events Manager. Natalie has extensive experience of providing business support to East Midlands SMEs, having worked with over 250 local companies in her position as business development specialist at the Mansfield-based Engineering Forum. Originally from Trinidad, Natalie completed her undergraduate and post-graduate degrees at the University of the West Indies, before moving to the UK in 1998 and completing an MSc in Management and Marketing at the Nottingham Business School.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the opportunities available to technology-based SMEs or start-ups should visit www.invored.org

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