

30:30 VISION

They are your worst nightmare. They are immersed in new media. They see recession as an opportunity. And they have their eyes on your industry...

By: **Jason Hesse** Photography: **Richard Gleed**

Warren Bennett, 28 David Hathiramani, 28

Company: A Suit That Fits
Business sector: Tailoring

It used to cost thousands of pounds to get a hand-tailored suit in Britain, but those days are over. Warren Bennett and David Hathiramani, the founders of A Suit That Fits, now offer suits from £150, handmade by Nepalese tailors.

"We instinctively knew that hand-tailored suits for an off-the-peg price would be attractive to a lot of people," says Bennett. "We always knew we'd go far with it, but never imagined how far."

Today, A Suit That Fits produces 8,000 hand-made suits per year, and with a turnover of £2m, the potential for growth is huge.

"It's so, so important to listen to your customers," says Hathiramani. "From the start, they've played an integral part in developing our service, and they continue to do so."

Lucian Tarnowski, 26

Company: Brave New Talent
Business sector: Recruitment

Recently named Europe's youngest Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, Tarnowski runs Brave New Talent, a social media

website that connects people to employers. This business takes the recruitment model and flips it around. Rather than spamming potential employers with their CVs, individuals can find out whether they

Vincent McKevitt, 30

Company: Tossed
Business sector: Food

Vincent McKevitt set up Tossed – a chain of healthy-eating outlets specialising in fresh tossed-to-order salads in 2005 – straight out of university. The self-proclaimed "top tosser and founder" has since been changing the way we eat. "I've always wanted to own a large business," he explains. "I want this to be a national brand. There's no reason why there can't be as many Tossed as there are Pret A Mangers – healthy eating isn't niche any more." McKevitt expects sales to hit £3m this year, and has just completed a VC funding round.



would fit in at a company before they apply, while employers can see who is interested, what their credentials are, and if they'd be a good match.

He explains: "Social media recruiting will fundamentally change the relationship between brands and potential employees. It's the next step in recruitment." With big clients such as Allen & Overy already signed up, Brave New Talent could be a game-changer.

Tarnowski also looks after Take Heart India, a no-overheads charity that provides blind students in India with IT skills, helping them secure a job for life.

Louis Barnett, 18

Company: Chokolit
Business sector: Food

Louis Barnett is a prime example of triumph over adversity. He left school aged 11 because of his strong dyslexia and dyspraxia, to undertake a vocational education. In 2005, Barnett set up Chokolit, his own chocolate company, with a £5,000 start-up grant from Advantage West Midlands and £500 from his grandparents.

He has now launched a range of ethical chocolate bars, the proceeds of which go towards conservation organisations. Barnett now supplies chocolate to Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Selfridges, supplying in excess of 100,000 boxes of chocolate a year.

"To be an entrepreneur is to be part of a mindset," says Barnett. "It's in your blood from the start - you either conform, or you're outside of the box. You have to have faith in what you're doing."

Jamie Murray Wells, 26

Company: Glasses Direct
Business sector: Retail

Who hasn't heard of Jamie Murray Wells, the founder of £10m-turnover Glasses Direct and the youngest ever person to be awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion? Not having satisfied his entrepreneurial itch by fundamentally changing the way we buy glasses, Murray Wells is now turning to the hearing-aid market, launching Hearing Direct last month. "The gloves are on!" he says.

"The Holy Grail for an entrepreneur is finding an industry which looks as if it's been gathering cobwebs for a while. This sector is ripe for a shake

up," he explains, adding that although the average spend on a new hearing-aid device is £1,000 to £3,000, they only cost £100 to £300 to make. "The margins are extortionate, it's a complete scam."

Asked what he hopes to achieve in the next ten years, he says that he simply wants to change the way people buy and use products. "It doesn't end with glasses - glasses were a start. For me, it's being able to apply myself to other sectors and provide consumers with a better deal." Murray Wells scooped the Young Entrepreneur of the Year gong at our 2009 Growing Business Awards.

Jane Burston, 28

Company: Carbon Retirement
Business sector: Green

Carbon offsetting has been a contentious market for years. Traditionally, companies can offset

their emissions by investing in projects in the developing world. But Jane Burston doesn't think this is right. "Typically, only one-third of the money ends up going to the projects - it isn't fair," she says. What Carbon Retirement does is actually remove companies' carbon credits from the system entirely by buying their credits, forcing them to reduce their emissions and change their long-term behaviour. "It's a radical leap to what offsetting has represented in the past."

Burston's company has already signed up a FTSE 100 company as well as a wide range of SMEs. As people move away from fluffier offsetting projects to larger-scale industrial projects, retiring carbon could be the next step forward.

Hermione Way, 24

Company: Newspepper.com
Business sector: Online media

Hermione Way is a journalist and new media entrepreneur spanning the online media and technology sectors, bringing a fresh approach to how the industry works. She is the founder of Newspepper.com - a new way for companies to report news through social media and internet video - and Techfluff TV, which provides tech news in a lightweight, jargon-free format.

"In the UK, old media still seems to rule," says Way. "There are so many students trying to do media in this old way - they're not being taught that, actually, they can just have a blog and get going."

Today, Newspepper.com takes on and trains around 70 students and graduates per year, providing them with the skills to start their careers and changing the way the media industry works.

"The holy grail for an entrepreneur is finding an industry that's gathering cobwebs"

Mark Pearson, 29

Company: MyVoucherCodes.com
Business sector: Retail

Mark Pearson's business, £15m-turnover MyVoucherCodes.com, has become an internet phenomenon in the past three years. The controversial online voucher site is changing how people shop, but Pearson doesn't plan on stopping there.

His newest venture, Groupola.com, is a group-buying discount site offering location-specific deals up to 90 per cent off normal prices. This isn't a new idea, but Pearson has added a twist: there is a "tipping-point" of demand that needs to be reached before the offer actually materialises. "A couple of weeks into launching, we know it's going to be a winner. It's very promising."

Pearson believes the mobile market will be the next big thing: "That's the direction we need to push and be innovative in. Of course, in such a fast-moving business, something that happens next week could completely change the direction of where my company is going. There's so much opportunity out there, it's very exciting."

“To be an entrepreneur is to be part of a mindset. It's in your blood from the start”

Daniel Woolman, 27

Company: Binifresh
Business sector: Retail

As Britain moves towards fortnightly bin collections, our nation could end up in a stink. But rest assured, this won't happen if Daniel Woolman gets his way.

"When people were putting rubbish in their bins, I noticed they would put the bag in with their hands stretched out, so they didn't have to go near it. I thought, 'how many people up and down the country are doing this to avoid their bin?'"

So he founded London-based Binifresh, which produces compact devices for wheelie bins, automatically emitting a neutralising spray every four hours.

The take-up has been strong, with distribution deals already in place with retailers ASDA, Lakeland and John Lewis.

Victoria Lennox, 26

Company: NACUE
Business sector: Education

After setting up several ventures in Canada, including the Ottawa Dance Works, Victoria Lennox turned her focus to Britain a couple of years ago, setting up NACUE (the National Consortium of University Entrepreneurs). The 12 founding members included the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham, Essex, Warwick, and Southampton

Lennox now represents the interests of over 35,000 entrepreneurial students from more than 80 organisations and societies, and wants to take NACUE global.



Laura Bates, 30

Company: Bombay Duck
Business sector: Retail

After a stint at Deutsche Bank and Arthur Anderson, Oxford graduate Laura Bates now heads Bombay Duck, the innovative home accessories website, which her sister founded in 1993.

Since 2005, Bates has taken Bombay Duck to the US, Japan and Oz, and has expanded its stock to 2,000-plus items, sold through 1,000 stores.

"The key to success is to build long and lasting relationships with suppliers and clients," says Bates. "Make sure your goals are big."

Justice Williams MBE, 29

Company: Birmingham Media Group
Business sector: Social enterprise

As well as being the youngest black woman to be awarded an MBE by the Queen, Justice Williams is the founder of social enterprise Birmingham Media Group, which trains young people in media and business skills and has so far helped more than 3,000 people to find work. She is also the brains behind regional magazine *Tru Life* and founder of Candy Floss Music, which manages young musicians.

The next step is for Williams to franchise Birmingham Media Group's social entrepreneurship model in other countries. "You need to make mistakes to become successful - it's a learning process," she says.

Kieran O'Neill, 22

Company: Playfire
Business sector: Online gaming

Playfire is O'Neill's third business. He sold hollylemon.com, a video sharing site he built at age 15, for \$1.25m, and then co-founded PSU.com, the world's largest PlayStation community, before setting up Playfire, a social network for gamers, three years ago.

"There are tens of millions of gamers out there, and we can make some serious money through targeted advertising and selling games via the site," he says.

With £1.3m worth of investment behind him, from big names such as Bebo founder Michael Birch and Lastminute.com's Brent Hoberman, O'Neill is one to watch.

Jules Johnson, 30

Company: Mash
Business sector: Marketing

When Jules Johnson slapped a couple of thousand pounds on a table in 2004 to start marketing firm Mash, he never thought that it would be turning over £3.5m within five years and be working with brands including Cadbury, Virgin and Sony. "We just wanted to offer a better value solution to marketing," he explains.

Alongside his duties as UK rep for the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards, run by the Entrepreneurs Organization, Johnson has now launched boutique recruitment firm Dylan. "That's how I work - I spot an industry

"You must make mistakes to become successful. It's a learning process"

opportunity and I come up with new ways of executing a business," he says.

Graham Boshier, 28

Company: Graze.com
Business sector: Food

Although not everyone has necessarily heard of Graham Boshier, everyone is familiar with the businesses that he's founded, namely Graze.com and LOVEFILM.

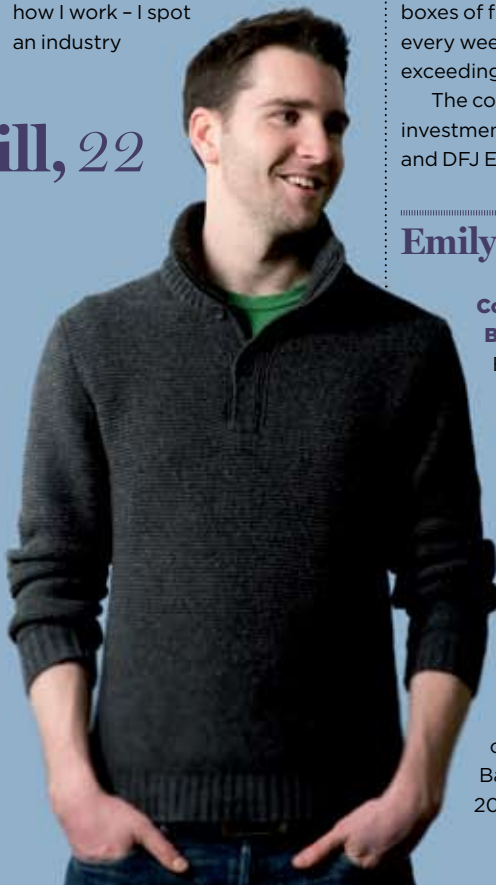
"Graham saw how well the model worked with film and thought, 'Why not do it with food?'," says Graze co-founder Ben Jones. Twenty-eight-year-old Boshier's business now delivers 50,000 letterbox-sized boxes of fruit, nuts and dried berries every week, and expects a turnover exceeding £5m this year.

The company received a £2m investment from Octopus Ventures and DFJ Esprit last year.

Emily Cummins, 23

Company: Emily Cummins
Business sector: Engineering

Thanks to her many inventions, university student and Enterprise UK ambassador Emily Cummins has been pitted to become the next James Dyson. We can see why. Her first invention, a sustainable fridge powered by dirty water, has won her a range of awards, including the Barclays Woman of the Year 2009 and *Cosmopolitan*



magazine's Ultimate Save-The-Planet Pioneer 2008. She came up with the idea while working on a school project in her grandfather's potting shed. The fridge is now improving the lives of thousands of poverty-stricken Africans.

She's now working on a more sophisticated portable model of her fridge for use in transporting medical supplies around hot countries.

"I've always wanted to work for myself, and as we're trying to become a greener planet, I'm now focusing on where there's a need. I'm determined to make a difference, creating a commercial product that is also useful for social purposes," she says. "The developing world needs to take a step forward, and we need to take a step back."

Jonathan Ma, 29

Company: Ma2T4
Business sector: Engineering

It's about economies of scale: a smaller engine leads to bigger carbon cuts. Jonathan Ma's business, Ma2T4, is working with some of the world's largest car manufacturers to develop newer, greener hybrid cars that reduce CO2 emissions by 40 per cent.

"A downsized engine coupled with regenerative braking [where energy generated by braking is stored and reused rather than wasted] adds up to massive energy efficiency gains," says Ma. "The key was linking the two up."

Its Supercharger Air Hybrid does this by using the energy created from braking to boost the downsized engine, meaning a more powerful drive for fewer carbon emissions. In a car near you soon?

Robert Matthams, 25

Company: Shiplly
Business sector: Transport

Waste not, want not - that could be Robert Matthams' motto. His business, Shiplly, allows users to list goods that they want moved or delivered, matching them with couriers and delivery companies already making similar trips across the UK and Europe. "It really shocked me that more than half of lorries run only part full," he explains. Since launching in June 2008, Shiplly has saved more than 4.8 million road miles and 2.2 million kilos of CO2.

"Anything that needs to be moved, from a small box, to cars, boats or even entire household removals can be listed on the site," Matthams explains. "Our aim is to ease monotonous consumer shipping processes, while also contributing to a greener solution."

Matthams has grown the business to over 8,000 transport companies serving nearly 100,000 members.

Rajeeb Dey, 24

Company: Enternships.com
Business sector: Recruitment

Rajeeb Dey is the 24-year-old founder of Enternships.com, which gives students and graduates the chance to learn about business and enterprise through work placements in entrepreneurial environments,

"I've always known that working for myself is the only option"

from start-ups to venture funds all over the world. Enternships isn't just about helping people find jobs, it's about planting and cultivating young people's entrepreneurial seed.

On how to start your own business, he says: "Start with an idea, but don't think you have to invent a new product. I'm not an inventor, I'm more of a service person. Gaps in the market are out there."

Tom Marchant, 30

Company: Black Tomato
Business sector: Travel

The winner of our Cisco Customer Kings awards last year, Black Tomato is an online bespoke-holiday firm (think kitesurfing off glaciers, a night in a replica of Scott's legendary camp and flights over the wilderness in a DC-3).

Tom Marchant, who co-founded the business with Matt Smith and James Merrett, is the creative force behind Black Tomato, and is responsible for its product development and brand. This company is renowned for going the extra mile for its customers, sending holiday-makers complimentary books and CDs, a personalised "Back to Reality" goodie pack when they return and free membership to The Vine, its travel club with perks such as airport lounge access, classic car hire and freephoto books

Marchant is an ex-city boy, having worked at Ernst & Young for five years before setting up Black Tomato. The company launched in 2005 and now pulls in sales of £7m a year.

James Taylor, 27

Company: SportStars
Business sector: Education

James Taylor set up SportStars five years ago with the objective of "spreading the benefits and pleasures of sport to as many people as possible". SportStars provides just that, coaching young children while their teachers fulfil their planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) duties.

Today Taylor's business has boomed: it works with 25,000 pupils in more than 100 schools each week, and the business turns over more than £1m. The next step for Taylor is to roll out the model nationwide.

"I always felt I was different - I had a bit of a problem taking orders from teachers," says Taylor. "I think I've always known that working for myself was the only option."

Priya Lakhani, 28

Company: Masala Masala
Business sector: Food

"I just couldn't understand why there wasn't a chilled ethnic section in supermarkets," explains Priya Lakhani (pictured right), founder of Masala Masala. And so the former media lawyer started selling three types of fresh Indian sauces in March last year.

Ethics is a big part of her business: for every jar sold, Masala Masala donates one hot meal in India. "It's important to have a CSR project attached to your business - it gives you that extra bit of drive to do well."

Lakhani has sold nearly 100,000 Masala Masala jars thus far, and plans to add a further 18 products to her range this year.

Tom Allason, 29

Company: Shutl
Business sector: Delivery

You may recognise Tom Allason from another successful company: he founded, eCourier.co.uk, the £7.5m London-based business courier company. But he's turned his focus on another business now: Shutl, which offers retailers same-day delivery of online orders.

"Local retailers can't compete with big online retailers like Amazon on price and product diversity, but they have local stock and can provide customers with immediate delivery," he says.

While the courier delivery market is in decline, the market for e-commerce deliveries is growing at over 20 per cent per year - Allason might just have hit the jackpot.

Fraser Doherty, 20

Company: SuperJam
Business sector: Food

When SuperJam founder Fraser Doherty first started making jam aged 14, he never expected it would grow so quickly. "It's been a really amazing

Richard Symonds, 24

Company: Seymour Green
Business sector: Green

Have you ever followed the green hedgehog? You will be soon! Richard Symonds' new business, Seymour Green (a play on "see more green", geddit?), drives a fleet of electric vans around cities to promote your brand's green credentials. Symonds, who also runs a property business, says that by sponsoring recycling initiatives, large corporates can show they care. "For the transition to a low-carbon economy to be successful, everyone has to participate," says Symonds. "Action is the best way to raise awareness."



adventure," he says. "I never thought I'd be where I am now."

The Scottish entrepreneur has already sold over one million jars, and doesn't intend to stop growing, with plans to hit the global markets with SuperJam within "a couple of years".

Asked about what advice he'd want to give to new entrepreneurs, he says: "Give your ideas a shot. Start small, and with some hard work and imagination, you can change your life."

Lucy Cohen, 27

Company: Mazuma UK
Business sector: Accounting

Think all accountants are boring? Think twice - Lucy Cohen is breaking the mould. Cohen founded accountancy practice Mazuma with the goal of setting up a young, friendly practice serving SMEs, sole traders and the self-employed. Mazuma has a fair, structured price plan based on the work required, rather than company's turnover. Services start at just £15 per month.

"It doesn't matter if you don't fit the stereotype. As long as what you do is good, make your own rules and do the best you can for yourself," she says.

Cohen, the new face of accountancy, plans on opening her 250th franchise by 2012.

Rebecca Jane Philipson, 24

Company: UR-In The Paper
Business sector: Retail

UR-In The Paper is the first producer of personalised tabloid gift newspapers in the UK. Philipson's business took off after she appeared

on *Dragons' Den* in 2006, when Duncan Bannatyne rejected her, saying: "You're going to be what I call an SME - a Self Made Entrepreneur. You don't need my investment today to become a millionaire; you're going to make it anyway. I would suggest that you start up some other businesses and develop your own business empire."

Philipson's business now prints up to 10,000 bespoke papers each week. It recently struck a deal with Tesco to sell personalised newspapers through its branches nationwide.

Dan Conlon, 27

Company: humyo
Business sector: Online storage

After setting up web-hosting firm Donhost at the age of 19 and selling

"It doesn't matter if you don't fit the stereotype. Make your own rules"

it to Pipex for £5.9m less than five years later, Conlon is already on to his second business. Online storage company humyo,

launched in 2007, now provides more than 650,000 customers with secure online storage space. Today, humyo can store the equivalent of seven billion photos on its servers in Manchester's old Bank of England blast-proof vaults.

Conlon looks like he's picked the right market: "Right now, most people use the cloud to back up their PC, but in five years' time, your PC will be a backup of the cloud," he says. "It's a central place where you can store and access all your data." Backed by technology investment firm Oakley Capital Corporate Finance, Conlon already has offices in Germany, France and the Czech Republic, and is planning to crack the US market next.

Lex Deak, 27

Company: Family Fridge
Business sector: Social network

With online Dragon Julie Meyer's help, Lex Deak is changing the way family members interact. His product, Family Fridge, is an online family organiser with a range of features, including a shared calendar, gift lists, address books, photos, and more.

But this isn't Deak's first successful business - at university he set up a property, a picnic hamper and an online furniture business. "There are real opportunities out there," he says. "The next step is to create a hub to help small firms set up."

