

Under strict embargo until: Saturday, 26th November, 2005

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS BOSS'S EXPERIENCE IN THE DRAGONS' DEN

- William Berry sells No1 student accommodation website concept to BBC entrepreneurial experts -

William Berry, director and co-founder of the UK's No 1 student accommodation website, Accommodation for Students (www.accommodationforstudents.com), will appear as one of the entrepreneurs pitching his idea to a team of potential investors on BBC 2's Dragons' Den, at 8pm on Tuesday, 29th November.

Berry will try and convince the five dragons to invest in Accommodation for Students. The site currently attracts 400,000 students a month and has over 15,000 properties for rent. The site has recently been relaunched with a secure payment system and a user-friendly admin set-up both for landlords and students, making it an attractive investment opportunity.

Berry commented:

“So far Accommodation for Students has succeeded without significant outside investment, our principle being to keep costs to a minimum. However our very success brings its own cost and we would benefit from fresh funding which would enable us to embark on a wider, more aggressive marketing programme.

Dragons' Den is a great opportunity to pitch what we at Accommodation for Students believe is a great business idea, and get valuable feedback from the experts.

However, it isn't without its trials and tribulations. This new series was shot in the summer and it was absolutely sweltering in the Dragons' Den studio. I can also confirm that it is as nerve-racking as it looks pitching to those five guys! I can't say how I got on before the programme goes out but I am very pleased that I went on the show.”

Berry set up Accommodation for Students five years ago with business partner Simon Thompson. They were both ex-graduates from Manchester Metropolitan University. Berry is already a serial entrepreneur. He founded his own web marketing company, Net121 (www.net121.com) in 1999 while he was on University placement. He is also co-founder and director of Thomas Charles Ltd (www.thomascharles.com), a debt solutions consultancy helping 30 people a month get out of serious debt, and Conferences UK Ltd (www.conferences-uk.org), a venue-finding website with over 1000 venues online.

- Ends -

About William Berry

William showed signs of entrepreneurialship at an early age. At 11 he converted the family garage into a shop and sold cuttings and pot plants that were grown in the greenhouse. He used the profits from this to buy all the stock of a closing down book shop and proceeded to sell books from the garage. Many ideas (some successful and some not so successful!) then followed. William grew up in the leafy setting of the Cotswolds and couldn't wait to go to the big city to test his ideas.

He went to Manchester Metropolitan University to study Business Studies in 1996. During his time there he was elected Social President and course leader. William founded Net121 Ltd, focusing on providing online marketing campaigns that work, during his placement year in 1999. Upon graduating William had already appeared on TV and in local press as a potential future business leader. His peers voted him 'most likely to be a millionaire' at the final University ball.

After he graduated William continued to run Net121 in the background as he worked as a project manager and then consultant for Tesco and William Hill. He became a full time entrepreneur in 2004 when he founded two new companies: Thomas Charles Ltd and Conferences UK Ltd.

William ultimately plans to found a new business academy that brings new age technology to market. He hopes to start this incubator in 2007 and is currently looking for suitable premises in West London. The technology he plans to investigate is Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence and Nanotechnology.

All four of his companies are generating healthy profits and are revolutionising their sectors by using the internet to its fullest potential.

Net121 Ltd

Founded in August 1999 whilst on placement at University

- Marketing agency specialising in online campaigns
- Over 40 clients (including Tesco, EDS, and Fujitsu)
- Strategic links with a number of design, marketing and PR firms to ensure massive impact of marketing campaigns.

Accommodation for Students

Co-founded with Simon Thompson in October 2001

- UK's leading search engine for student accommodation
- Most advanced student accommodation search engine in the world. Includes housemate finder, housing and larger housing search, chat room, notice board, guides and statistics.
- Receives over 300,000 student visitors a month

Conferences UK

Co-founded with Simon Thompson in August 2004

- Event management company
- Clients include Wimbledon Tennis Championship and Ryder Cup Golf Tournament.

Thomas Charles Ltd

Co-founded with James Falla in September 2004

- Specialist company that helps people get out of debt
- Turnover circa £1Million

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