

## **Belake CIC Business Plan 2009-10**

### **1. Vision & Mission Statement**

Our vision is of a society which is understood through mathematics and statistics, and where the development of society is guided by the application of this knowledge for the benefit of all.

Our mission is therefore to become the premier organisation responsible for developing, promoting and furthering the use of mathematical, statistical or analytical tools to inform decision making for, on behalf of, and for the benefit of all populations, societies, groups, organisations and individuals.

### **2. Aims**

Our vision and mission statements give rise to the following key aims for our organisation:

1. promote the use of such tools wherever possible
2. facilitate the identification of new tools and the identification new opportunities for the application of these tools
3. to use such tools to provide an evidence base on which to influence decision makers and the course of events
4. to educate others on the availability, use and application of these tools

where such activity is consistent with our vision.

### **3. Core Values**

There are some core values which will guide us in delivering these objectives.

- 3.1. Variation and standardisation are equally important.
- 3.2. Environment is important
- 3.3. Feedback
- 3.4. Non-predictable models
- 3.5. The individuality of utility and probability

Please see our separate Core Values document for a detailed explanation of these.

### **4. Delivering our objectives**

#### **4.1. The Public Sector**

The public sector provides the greatest opportunity to utilize social research, making decisions which affect all our lives. It therefore provides the best opportunity for implementing aim (3).

*Action: We will develop tools consistent which provide an evidence base relevant local and national government policy and decision making*

*Action: We will proactively pursue local and national government contracts, opportunities and grant funding, to allow those tools to be applied to influence decision making.*

#### **4.2. The Voluntary Sector**

The voluntary sector provides the most opportunity for Belake. Our status as a non-profit making organization will make us attractive to the third sector. Third sector organizations have limited resources and would find a low cost organization attractive compared to a typical existing operation. In addition, they may have analytical and statistical requirements, but not sufficiently great enough to require the employment of a statistician. It is also a relatively unexploited sector, with existing competitors (MORI, BMG etc.) more willing to pursue lucrative public and private sector contracts. Therefore the voluntary and community sector provides a unique opportunity for a small, dynamic organization offering a low cost service. This is consistent with aim (1), since it promotes the use of such tools amongst organizations which may not usually have access to them.

*Action: To provide a project service, where Belake CIC would be commissioned to take on analytical projects with clear project start and ends.*

*Action: To provide a 'timeshare' analytical service, where organizations pay a fixed monthly rate for a fixed number of hours access to an analyst or statistician per month.*

Conducting our analytical operations requires a great deal of expertise. It is an expertise that is commonly allied to computer, IT and software expertise. As an ancillary income stream it would be possible to offer these skills to the voluntary and community sector as an additional benefit to both sides.

*Action: to provide a low cost IT advice service to the voluntary sector on the same basis as our other analytical activities above.*

*Action: In particular to provide a web design and programming service.*

#### 4.3. The Commercial Sector

Pursuing contracts with the commercial sector is consistent with our Community Interest Company status, so that we can generate profit with which to fund our voluntary sector activities.

However it is unlikely that we will be able to compete with the established private sector providers in this area, until we are well established.

On the other hand, the small and medium enterprise sector provides a similar opportunities as the voluntary sector, and again is consistent with aim (1).

*Action: to open up the services made to the voluntary sector to SME's, but in such a way that prioritises charities.*

#### 4.4. The Grant Sector

As a community interest company, we are more eligible to apply for grant funding than other normal companies. Belake should maximize this source as potential funding, particularly for research on which we could develop new tools, which could then be supplied to the voluntary and public sectors. This is consistent with aim (2)

*Action: to pursue all potential grant funding streams as vigorously as possible.*

#### 4.5. The Education Sector

The only one of our aims with which we have not yet dealt with is aim (4) to promote education. We will therefore:

*Action: Provide an education service to organizations, where a member of the Belake CIC team will teach mathematical and statistical techniques to employees of an organizations for a fixed fee.*

*Action: Provide an education service to young people, probably initially online, to encourage them to take up statistics and mathematics, but ultimately possibly moving to the classroom.*

*Action: to work with the academic sector to promote the advancement of mathematical and analytical techniques in social sciences.*

Note that the final action here is also consistent with aim (2). Indeed we aim to be at the cutting edge of latest academic research to facilitate our aim of becoming the premier organization in this field.

## **5. Unique Selling Points and Competitors**

Unique selling points are those things which make our organization more attractive than our competitors. Our USPs are:

- Our status as a Community Interest Company, meaning that any profit from a project for which we are commissioned will be ploughed back into the community, and hence more attractive to the public and third sector, as well as the private sector, to whom we are attractive from a corporate social responsibility point of view.
- Our low cost service. Not being committed to generate a profit means we can offer a very low cost service, making us more attractive than our competitors.
- Our intention to establish close connections with the academic sector will mean that we have access to the latest techniques, making us able to provide a better service than other organizations.

Principal competitors will be the main existing and established statistical research companies such as MORI, BMG and so on. However, as the previous section suggests, we don't expect to compete with them during our initial startup phase. Instead, we will pursue the smaller end contracts which will be less attractive to them, but where our status as a low cost operator will prove an advantage.

## **6. Financial & Resource Issues**

### **6.1. Finances**

Belake has a unique business model, and therefore we don't require a great deal of financial information here, because our model does not require growth at a particular rate, in order to, for example, pay back credit. To explain further:

- We are not an organization based on credit. That is, the only time we will require credit is to fulfill contracts until they are paid – for cash flow. (e.g. for materials to conduct a project until the project is paid for by the client). It is anticipated that such credit could be covered easily.
- Starting initially with only directors as employees, we are not obliged by the Minimum Wage, therefore there is no need to cover salaries during the start-up period.

- We offer principally our expertise as our main asset. This asset is essentially 'cost free' although consideration will have to be given to maintaining this asset in the long term, but on the other hand, our work with the academic sector will achieve this in some part.
- We will have an 'officeless' operation where possible. We'll keep our requirement for an office base as low as possible, by adopting flexible and remote working practices.
- Our current workforce are officers who have full time employment elsewhere and wanted to 'make a bit on the side' or 'keep their hand in' if they've moved to less analytical roles. This means we are not committed to providing a salary for anyone, or maintaining them.

Our objective is therefore just to 'grow as fast as we can' and not make any detailed financial projections here.

## **6.2. Pricing**

Consistent with our aim of becoming a low cost operator, we will keep our pricing structure very transparent. We will offer fully itemized invoicing and billing, with a service that can be increased or decreased as the client requires. This will give our clients full control over the cost of our service, whilst giving Belake a clear outline of its costs too.

Our aim is to keep the costs to the client as low as possible, as this is the basis of our competitiveness. Indeed we may even be able to offer an 'at cost' service, where the cost to voluntary sector clients is no more than the cost it would take for them to conduct the operation themselves, but our costs would be covered by economies of scale.

## **6.3. Workforce**

As mentioned above, expertise is our greatest asset, and therefore from a workforce development perspective, we should continue to invest in our workforce to maintain such a vital asset.

In addition, one low cost opportunity to expand could be apprenticeship schemes, where a young person with mathematical aptitude could be taken on at low cost whilst learning the skills necessary to conduct our business.