

...WE'RE GOING TO PUT THE BOOT IN

Date : 26.03.07

Plymouth is about to become the first city in the UK to hold a gruelling business bootcamp. As the BBC prepares to air the third series of its hit *The Apprentice*, Plymouth's very own business challenge starts today.

The Entrepreneurs' Bootcamp event will see 11 up-and-coming businessmen and women put through a series of demanding mental and physical challenges.

The aim is to give them five years'-worth of business experience in just five days.

Organisers are hoping that as a result of taking part in the bootcamp, businesses started by all 11 will take off, helping Plymouth's under-performing economy grow.

Bootcamp designer Sue Windley said: "This is all about restoring confidence in the city.

"Part of what we are trying to say is that there are amazing things going on but most of the time we don't know anything about it."

She added: "The whole idea is that the 11 business ideas will become a reality and will contribute to the local economy."

Around 25 men and women made it through to the final selection stage of Entrepreneurs' Bootcamp.

Judges then chose 11 people to take part.

Each will be mentored through the event by one of 11 public- and private-sector organisations in the city which are supporting the bootcamp.

The idea is that in addition to the week-long bootcamp event, the participants will receive follow-up support and advice as they put into practice the lessons they will learn during next week.

Precise details of the bootcamp are being kept under wraps by organisers so that participants do not know until the last-minute what challenges they will face - to make the scenarios as lifelike as they can possibly be.

But the week will see the 11 put through their paces by Royal Marines, taking part in exercise sessions, meeting finance experts and being given the chance to pick the brains of entrepreneurs who have made it in Plymouth.

The Herald will be covering the Entrepreneurs' Bootcamp in detail. See Business Herald and www.thisisplymouth.co.uk every day next week.

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