

# **Robert Ashton**

**Big Society Advisor, Business Author and Consultant at Robert Ashton**

Norwich, Norfolk, GB

A challenging speaker with a unique style. Every presentation is different, reflecting the needs of the event.

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## **Biography**

Robert Ashton helps individuals, organisations and communities achieve greater social impact through economic self-sufficiency. He is a best-selling business author, experienced charity trustee and creative social entrepreneur.

He is driven by a strong sense of social justice; addicted to the passion that drives ordinary people to do extraordinary things for the benefit of others, as well as themselves.

He finds himself compelled to help them succeed, then shares their experiences in ways that encourage others to follow their example.

Robert is challenging conference speaker, attacking complacency and challenging perceptions. He campaigned for the establishment of Norfolk Community Foundation, now a major local grant maker. He speaks from experience; from the heart and moves people to reflect on and often change their own lives.

His current project workload includes setting up a development trust to kick start a stalled urban regeneration project; developing a new way to fund building new school; brokering a public/third sector partnership that will improve palliative care services and affordable, factory-built community shops.

Robert is also Chief Executive of Swarm Apprenticeships Ltd, a social business he founded to help small businesses benefit from the energy and talent of enterprising young people.

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## **Availability**

Keynote, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Author Appearance

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## **Industry Expertise**

Business Services, Corporate Training, Agriculture and Farming, Writing and Editing, Public Relations and Communications, Housing, Education/Learning, Health and Wellness, Health Care - Services, Corporate Leadership

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Big Society, Social Enterprise, Mental Health, Business, Networking, Marketing, Charity

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## **Sample Talks**

## **Understanding Big Society**

It's a term you can't really get away from and yet so many people are not quite sure what Big Society actually is. Robert helps participants to look beyond the jargon to discover their Big Society opportunity. Banish cynicism and eliminate fear. Let Robert inspire your people to become part of the future.

## **Enterprise for Charities**

Public spending cuts, individual budgets and a growing demand for services mean that charities have to become more enterprising. But how do you reconcile commerce with compassion and money with mission? Robert has helped countless charities become more enterprising without compromising their values. Hear about how he did it and find out how you can do it too.

## **How to Start Your Business**

Most start a business because their career is not delivering the opportunities they deserve. Robert will give you an insight into the realities of starting and growing a business. He speaks from experience when he says; 'starting a business is like having a baby; terrifying and exhilarating all at the same time.' Join him and turn your dream into reality. These sessions are based around Robert's bestselling business book, "How to Start Your Own Business", a second edition of which will be released in 2012.

## **Networking for Success**

Are you a networking wallflower? Do you nervously scan the room, but never manage to connect with the right people? Does a trip to the dentist hold more appeal than getting your teeth into a business breakfast? If so, this session is for you.

In a safe, non-threatening environment, you and the rest of the group will; grow your confidence, learn and practice some simple techniques and discover your networking talent. You'll even make new contacts! Robert will allow a period of time after his workshop to receive questions from attendees and allow them to network amongst each other.

## **Why social enterprises are tomorrow's enterprises**

A fast moving, light hearted, practical session that highlights how many of the shortcomings of today's 'for profit' business model create real, immediate opportunities for those developing a social enterprise.

Target audience:

Social entrepreneurs, charity CEOs and Trustees wanting to build a social enterprise. Also entrepreneurs keen to become more socially responsible.

What will it cover?

- Why social enterprise is going to continue to grow and customer appeal;
- Understanding what business you're in and who your real customers are;
- A reality check on how clear your vision is and how deliverable the goals are;
- Why success needs both passion and practicality, and how to balance the two;
- How to avoid trying to be what you're not and how to build partnerships;
- 10 top tips for today's successful social enterprise.

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## **Event Appearances**

### **Title**

Community Housing Cymru Housing Management & Maintenance Conference

**Title**

Managing Tomorrow's Company

**Title**

CIC's at The Forum - Your Society in Action

**Title**

UK Council on Deafness Big Society, Big Opportunity? Conference

**Title**

RunCoCo Beyond Conference

**Title**

Developing the Workforce

**Title**

Big Society GTX – Oiling the wheels of social change

**Title**

Big Lottery Funding East

**Title**

National Outdoor Events Association Convention 2011

**Title**

Norfolk & Waveney Mental Health Partnership Recovery Team Away Day

**Community Sustainability**

Empower Sustainability Conference

**Entrepreneurship as an agent for social change**

"Learning from Experience/Successful Projects"

**Social enterprise in action**

The Challenges the Sector Faces in its Future Operating Environment

**Social Enterprise and Philanthropy**

TEDxCCN

**Localism: Community Assets at a local level**

CIH South East Conference & Exhibition

**Looking to the Future**

CIH The Midlands Annual Conference, Exhibition & Regional Gala Dinner

**Social Impact = Profit**  
CMI Eastern Region Conference

**Seven Steps to Social Enterprise**  
Collaborative Communities conference

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