

SPEAKER PROFILES

DR PAUL THOMAS

Dr. Paul Thomas is on a mission to rid the world of managers. He believes the workplace would be better off if we ditched the traditional way of managing, and instead gave every single member of staff a say in the running of the business. His aim in life is to make organisations democratic, fun and enjoyable places to work. Paul is a familiar voice to listeners of BBC Radio Wales as The Business Doctor. The series follows him as he tries to prove to companies that his unconventional views really will make them more productive and profitable.

An expert in complexity theory. Paul is the founder of a think-tank called DNA Wales. About three years ago he was speaking at a conference when he was challenged; if he really knew how to make businesses better, why didn't he stop talking about it and start actually doing it? So he did – now Paul works with private and public sector organisations of all sizes, including multi-nationals, trying to show them there is another way to run the workplace. But don't call him a consultant – that's the ultimate insult to Paul. He says consultants will try to impose their own solutions on a company. He believes in unlocking the potential of the staff to solve the problems themselves. Paul says his dislike of management is nothing personal – he just thinks the way most businesses are managed is outdated. The idea of “command and control” just doesn't work in the 21st century, he says, and we need to move on.

Paul is currently Head of Leadership at Glamorgan Business School and Director of the Welsh Research Unit for Governance and Leadership. His work has taken him to India, China, Malaysia, Pakistan, the USA and many European countries. He has recently completed a global action research project on leadership and complexity thinking, visiting 19 countries in six months. Paul is a fascinating and impressive business speaker, and is much in demand throughout the world.

ROY NOBLE

Roy Noble is a former Head Teacher. His move to broadcasting was gradual and part-time at first but Roy is now one of the best loved and most listened to broadcasters in Wales. His unique brand of humour, easy-going personality and power of verbal communication has made his daily BBC Radio Wales programme one of the most popular in Wales for which he received a Sony Award in 1999. Roy has also had a highly successful career in television - Network BBC and S4C - working both in the medium of Welsh and English.

Roy also co-presented 'Children in Need' for several years and his most recent television series for BBC Wales, 'Secret Wales', which he co-presented with Sara Edwards, was another huge success, achieving higher viewing figures than 'East Enders' on BBC at the same time. Roy is very much involved with charity organisations throughout Wales. He is also privileged to be one of the good-will ambassadors for UNICEF. He has been awarded the OBE for services to the community and for charity support in Wales.

Roy is very much in demand as an 'After Dinner Speaker' at many organisations, clubs, societies etc. These have included engagements overseas in Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Canada and, most recently, New York. His inimitable style of story-telling leaves his audiences spellbound.

PAUL RAGAN

Paul Ragan left school at a young age, with few qualifications, to set up his own small Insurance Brokerage in Cardiff. Having had a helping hand along the way from his dad, Paul went on to sell Protectagroup and in so doing, became one of Wales' youngest multimillionaires.

Experienced in numerous fund raising events to execute over 20 acquisitions, in addition to a number of Management Buy Outs and trade sales, Paul is now currently involved in a wide variety of businesses across differing industries at alternative levels of involvement, ranging from Non Executive roles to Equity Shareholder.

Today, Paul manages a large portfolio of companies as well as speaking publicly at many business support seminars and has engaged significantly with the media such as press, radio and TV since realising his wealth.

JAMES LEEDAM

Qualified as a Chartered Building Surveyor and working in the property sector for twenty years, James had the task of finding a suitable green burial ground for his aunt who died in 2002. The search made him realise that most sites in operation were far from natural, and did not meet key demands.

The experience inspired him to set up Native Woodland Ltd in 2003, to develop and manage authentically natural burial grounds. Native Woodland uniquely works in partnership with landowners across the UK. With five operational natural burial grounds, another two due to open shortly, he is actively seeking exciting new opportunities nationwide.

His strong conviction that natural burial can provide a sustainable alternative to conventional cemeteries, prompted James to accept the position of a trustee of the Natural Death Centre charity, which offers independent funeral advice to the public, and which manages the Association of Natural Burial Grounds. He was also selected to join the Ministry of Justice's advisory panel which drafted the government's Guidance for the Operators of Natural Burial Grounds, published in December last year.

ALISON TOD

Alison Tod was born in Abergavenny and after making a name for herself as one of the UK's top milliners, she returned to Abergavenny in 1990 and opened her fabulous hat business, Aristohats. Her hats are exciting and innovative and for sale in top stores across the world including Harrods. She has hats on permanent display in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff. She has won numerous awards for her designs including Welsh Designer of the Year for two consecutive years.



**Selected Independent Funeral Homes
European Group Conference
June 12th to June 15th 2010
Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, Wales**

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