



Most of the teams with the Dragons, from left Nigel Park from TPS Consulting, Steve Waller from Waller Associates, Mike Caridia MD of MCA and SNE editor Matt Ramsden

Pictures: Andy Payton PD1989686

Pupils feel the heat in Dragons' Duel

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CREATIVE youngsters pitched their inventions to a panel of judges as part of a Dragons' Den style competition.

House keys replaced by a fingerprint scanner and a cow-shaped machine that makes hot drinks and milkshakes were among the ideas put forward by Year 10 pupils at Highsted grammar.

The judging panel, which consisted of Matt Ramsden, editor of the Sittingbourne News Extra, Steve Waller, of Waller Associates in Sittingbourne, Nigel Park, owner of TPS Consulting International Ltd in Canterbury, and Mike Caridia, owner of The Presentation Team Ltd in Tenterden, were impressed with all the ideas put forward.

But there could only be one winner and that was Micromasters, designers of Easyfind, a keyless door entry system.

The team now goes through to the final, which will be held at the school in Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, on March 21.

They will be up against four winning teams from other schools across the county that also took part in The Dragons' Duel event organised by the charity CXK Ltd.

Mr Ramsden said: "It was fascinating to hear some of the ideas which ranged from the mainstream in terms of the keyless system to the downright bizarre in the case of the drink dispensing cow. It was a great event and I wish Micromasters the very best in the final."

To get the creative juices flowing the day started with Mr Caridia giving a talk to students about how to run a business and how it can be hard work but also fun.

He also offered hints and tips



Micromasters' Elle Bushell, Enya Williams and Sophie MacKenzie, all 15, make their pitch. Top right, Dragon Nigel Park of TPS Consulting quizzes the teams. Bottom right, Two of the judges, Mike Caridia, MD of MCA, and Steve Waller, of Waller Associates Ltd listen intently

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on how to pitch a business idea and things they should and shouldn't do.

To help them come up with ideas the students played a storyboard game based on two char-

acters who were both faced with different problems. One was an elderly lady who'd lost her keys, the other was a young man whose bins were overflowing.

The 120 pupils were then split

into teams of four to work on their products.

Marion Ward, business and enterprise consultant for CXK, said: "We've been running this event with Highsted for six years

and it's always well received.

"It's about getting them ready for the world of work so we put together these projects so they can come off timetable for one day and think outside the box."

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