



DIARY OF AN ENTREPRENEUR

Dan McGuire, MD of Broadbean Technology, on Vegas, young entrepreneurs and surviving a slowdown.

Post the world's online adverts

Those five words were the extent of our business plan back in late 2002 when we had no customers and were, I'm certain, the only dotcom in the world without a website. Here we are in early 2008 and that dream is fast becoming a reality. We just opened our European HQ in Amsterdam, and our first office in the US will open in LA later this year. We already distribute 1.2 million online job adverts a month and, with these two offices, we'll be at two million a month by the end of the year. I've always loved what I do, but the challenge of taking the business international has got me so fired up I seem to have even more passion and enthusiasm for it now.

Business & pleasure

As much I enjoy running my business, I always make sure I let my hair down once in a while. Fortunately, my job affords me an active social life – a lot of my networking takes place in bars! I like to get away regularly and my favourite place to go at the moment is Las Vegas. Okay, it's not exactly a relaxing beach holiday (I save that for Ibiza), but it has everything a single, 27-year-old entrepreneur wants in one town. I spent Christmas there before meeting with clients in Milwaukee, Chicago and New York on a three-week tour of America. I even had time to spend five days in Mexico in the middle of it all. Anyone who says you can't mix business and pleasure hasn't got the mix right.

Start 'em young

More kids than ever want to grow up to be an entrepreneur. For me, running a successful business is about as cool as it gets, and I love spending time in schools motivating the next generation of entrepreneurs.

I do a lot of work with Young Enterprise, a charity that has done a phenomenal job of bringing quality business education to schools and colleges. I'm looking forward to the charity's celebration event at the House of Commons in a few weeks, although I'll have to turn up in black tie as it's on the same evening as the National Online Recruitment awards. I'm also getting involved with Tim Campbell's Bright Ideas Trust, which aims to give away £1m a year to budding entrepreneurs. You'll know Tim as the first winner of *The Apprentice*. I've been impressed at how he's used his public profile to do something so worthy – unlike most other reality TV "stars".

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The future's bright

I recently attended the *Real Business Growing Business Awards* celebration dinner and spent a great evening with fellow winners and finalists. Over dinner and a few glasses (bottles) of wine, we talked about the current economic climate and the likely impact on business this year.

It was fascinating to hear the different views on the subject, including those from Texperts founder Sarah McVittie and my co-Young Entrepreneur of the Year Ollie Bishop. Everyone's outlook was largely the same: slightly cautious but still expecting strong growth. The money men in the room seemed a little more worried than we entrepreneurs but, well, they always do.

I'm mindful of a slowdown but I don't fear one. The strong thrive when the weak struggle and, although Broadbean's only five years old, we have great experience of growing in a tough market because we started just after the dotcom bust.

For all the talk of acquisition, growth and international expansion, Multimap founder Sean Phelan's comments about keeping an eye on the exit weren't wasted on anyone. He told us it was also a great time to sell – but he's just sold Multimap to Microsoft, so I guess he would say that, wouldn't he? Still, I understand it went for a handsome price, and it gives us aspiring internet millionaires something to aim for. Nice one, Sean.