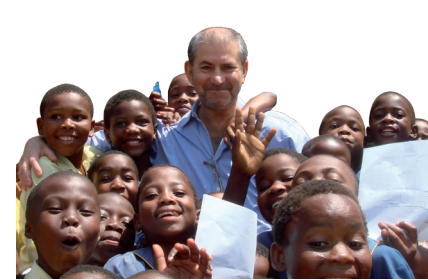


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MIKE STEVENSON
A FRESH AND POWERFUL VOICE IN A TIME OF CHALLENGE



Mike Stevenson, Managing Director of Scottish motivational agency Thinktastic, offers an informed, entertaining, insightful and inspiring option to editors seeking a fresh and powerful voice on today's immense social and economic challenges.

He created Edinburgh-based Thinktastic to challenge outmoded thinking and create new ways forward for Scotland. He is one of the most sought after speakers on the Scottish circuit and regularly leaves audiences from Aberdeen to Berwick open-mouthed and inspired.

His background and experience are far from conventional. After being kicked out of school aged 15 Mike started his adult life sleeping on the streets of London, he went on to busk in Dublin, cork French wine, carry hods of bricks, pack Moss Bros suits, help produce shortbread and Jaffa cakes, work as a steel worker, a dishwasher, hospital orderly and then strut his stuff on stage and screen. He was a community worker, ran children's playschemes and earned a reputation as an exciting singer/guitarist. He was a founder member of the Wise Group in 1984 where he worked as marketing director for more than nine years. Before setting up his existing company Thinktastic, he founded and led Design Links, a communications agency that he ran successfully for 18 years - achieving at its peak a £1.3million annual turnover.

Mike's stories are shocking, uplifting and utterly compelling. But entertaining as his talks are, it's his ability to captivate people and take them on a journey of personal discovery that marks him out. He challenges the 'business as usual' culture - working with public services and companies to shift thinking from the 'it's too difficult' zone, and he works with young people and communities to engage them in shaping their communities and destinies. At 61 he is energetic,

entertaining and distinctive. He describes Thinktastic as a business "intent on shaping a new, ambitious, innovative and 'can do' Scotland". Real advancement, says Mike, starts not in the corridors of Westminster or Holyrood or glass panelled executive offices – but in living rooms, sheds, pub corners and in street conversations. History tells us this again and again, yet we still look to politicians, academics and business leaders for ideas. "Our greatest currency is the resourcefulness of our people, says Mike, and when we unleash their creativity and often unspoken ambitions we create something powerful and positive. I know because, I have spoken with more than 10,000 people of all ages and backgrounds over the past 5 years."

There are few sharper and more creative thinkers in Scotland today and Mike offers powerful new ideas on improving the nation's health, creating opportunities for young people to walk tall and empowering communities to shape their own futures. He sees business, public service and the wider community forming close and productive partnerships and believes that corporate social responsibility has to move from a business policy to a way of life.

He is often asked why he hasn't stood for Parliament. His answer is clear: "Political parties are too narrowly focused, political debates have become stultifying and the initiation of the new invariably comes from outside the political classes.

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FACTS IN BRIEF

- His company Thinktastic recently became one of a small exclusive band of UK based companies to be re-awarded Business in the Community's prestigious Community Mark – the company is described as a true exemplar in how it invests in the community
- Attended Kirkcaldy High School at the same time as Gordon Brown. "Gordon", he says, "was in an accelerated class while I stayed in neutral."
- Was presented with Scottish Small Company of the Year 2008, two consecutive Merrill Lynch sponsored awards for raising the attainment of young people and received a 2011 nomination for an IoD Director of the Year Award - just a few recent awards and accolades.
- Worked with leading 'blue chip' clients such as British Gas, BskyB and Scottish & Southern on programmes of staff engagement.
- Thinktastic works with Quest for Excellence, the UK training partner of Disney Institute, Florida, on customer service and business leadership programmes
- First to feature the faces of supporters and scarf-wearing city icons on the cover of a football programme, when he edited the Hibs FC matchday magazine - recording at the time the highest ratio sales in Scotland.
- His campaign to recruit foster carers in Edinburgh, achieved a 37% increase in one year. Colour, fun and the quips of foster carers were the key features of the campaign while Lorraine Kelly became the voice of the 24hr fosterline.
- While busking on Dublin's Grafton Street in 1968 he befriended Phil Lynott and Brian Downie of the newly formed Thin Lizzy – a year later in London's Piccadilly Circus he heard his name shouted across the street: it was Phil and Brian proclaiming their entry into the British charts with 'Whiskey in the Jar'.
- Provided the warm up speech and then led an hour-long creative session with 200 attendees at the 2011 Herald Society Awards.
- Starred in a Scottish made road movie 'To a Girl' and made brief appearances in Taggart and a children's drama series 'Harry and the Wrinklies.'
- Was the first ever artist to perform at a Radio Clyde Festival. That was 1978 and in Kelvingrove Park and was host performer at the Edinburgh Fringe Club in the late seventies.
- As its chair, helped Leith FM get its full-time broadcast licence from Ofcom – the community radio station has been on air ever since.
- Thinktastic's predecessor, Design Links won nine Communicators in Business awards for clients as diverse as Standard Life, BskyB, East Lothian and Inverclyde Councils and the Scottish Prison Service.
- Wrote a regular inspirations column for teachers in Teaching Scotland magazine and three years ago spoke to pupils in two township schools, then to students in the University of South Africa during a trip to Durban.

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Mike can provide specific comment and expertise, and access to other professionals, in the following topic areas:

- **YOUNG PEOPLE** – developing ambition, training and social engagement. Specifically here, Mike can provide comment on how to get beyond dull issues of ‘employability’ to engage young people on their terms
- **FOSTER CARE AND CHILDREN’S SERVICES** – particular expertise in recruiting carers and constructing campaigns that appeal to positive motivations
- **SCHOOLS AND ENTERPRISE** – closing the gap between business and schools – practical ways in which businesses can work with schools and develop enterprising thinking and attitudes
- **BUSINESS** – how to create business that gets real community engagement that goes way beyond any tired models of corporate social responsibility
- **PUBLIC SERVICES AND HEALTH** – shaping service development to give consumers real choice; so, for example, creating health services that help people to stay healthy by working with them
- **GOVERNMENT** – how services need to be revolutionised to meet the needs of a changing society; ways of developing services that are local and much more cost-effective
- **HOUSING AND REGENERATION** – creating affordable housing and working with communities on job creation and service development: housing as a catalyst to creating better health, wealth and educational opportunity
- **MARKETING** – how to create brands that start with a human cause rather than from a mere profit/turnover imperative
- **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT** – how to treat employees as consumers and motivate them to perform at their peak
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE** – how to develop models for public and private sector organisations by using models drawn from Thinktastic and Disney

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IN THE MEDIA

THE GUARDIAN

How to tap into innovative community thinking...
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/edinburgh/2010/oct/14/edinburgh-leith-thinktastic-mike-stevenson-public-services>

SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY

Thinktastic brings Disney Insitute and Disney ideas to Scotland
<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-29613346.html>

THE HERALD

Driving ambition in an economic downturn
<http://www.heraldscotland.com/life-style/real-lives/ambition-is-key-to-survival-in-current-climate-1.1134222>

Thinktastic work to change drink attitudes among young people
<http://herald.vlex.co.uk/vid/bid-to-change-drink-attitudes-75061753>

THE SCOTSMAN

New thinking for changing times
http://www.scotsman.com/business/stevenson_rockets_ahead_with_new_idea_1_761058

PRESS & JOURNAL

The power of a sense of belonging – young men and the Boys Brigade
<http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/1912660>

BUSINESS SCOTLAND MAGAZINE, October – December 2011

Issue 9, pg33 How small, inexpensive communications can make people feel better and prompt them to behave differently
<http://www.businessscotlandmagazine.co.uk/>

MARKETING WEEK, August 2010

<http://www.marketingweek.co.uk/analysis/features/consumer-superpower-lives-marketer%E2%80%99s-dream/3016614.article>

RBS BUSINESS NOTES MAGAZINE

Why business needs to invest in community
http://www.thinktastic.co.uk/pdfs/media/RBS_Business_Notes.pdf

THE SOCIAL ISSUE BLOG

Putting warmth and imagination into business and community
<http://thesocialissue.com/2010/10/what-the-golden-arches-reveal-about-community-aspiration/>

THE SCOTTISH EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL – Dec 09

Lessons from South Africa in ambition and motivation
http://www.thinktastic.co.uk/pdfs/media/EIS_SEJ_Dec09_pg28.pdf

Sunday Express

“Mike isn’t one of these airheads given to business speak bullshit – let’s run this thing up the flagpole and see who salutes it – but a down to earth Leither.”

The Daily Record

“A former busker who went from drifter to entrepreneur now hopes to help businesses become more dynamic and forward thinking. He will try and convince businesses that adopting a positive outlook will make the entire nation more dynamic and forward thinking.”

Edinburgh Evening News

“With negative thinking an anathema to Mr Stevenson, he’s launching his efforts to unleash a “social virus” that will sweep its way through Scottish business, sport, education and everyday life.”

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WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT MIKE

"This morning everyone is talking about what they did differently at the weekend... so inspiring."

Ruth Connolly, Head of Scottish Parliament Film Unit

"My sincere thanks for your uplifting speech at our UNISA KwaZulu-Natal Students' Street Law Programme Award Ceremony. I was particularly pleased with the words of wisdom and encouragement you shared with our students, giving them a welcome boost."

Magnate Ntombela, Regional Director, University of South Africa - Kwazulu Natal

"Mike is an extraordinary person, a fantastic facilitator, who conveys a positive spirit and inspiring attitude. He is very humble, entertaining, engaging and positively challenging in his approach. It has been fantastic working with him."

Dr Thilo Kroll, School of Nursing & Midwifery, University of Dundee

"...a fantastic presentation yesterday. It was or rather you were "inspirational. I was greatly impressed by how you won them over with your excitement, passion, enthusiasm and humour, and then went for the jugular and challenged them all to sit up and take stock."

Christine Murphy, Manager, Scottish Business in the Community, West Lothian

"... Your session was compelling and original – the ideal balance of humour and seriousness of message to inspire our audience and have them contemplate the possibilities for the journey ahead."

George Wilson, Head of Human Resources, The National Trust of Scotland

"I've been talking about 'amazing you' in Yorkshire – you are inspiring by proxy"

Nina Fedenczuk, Consultant, Working Together

"Mike stoked the fire of inspiration and innovation and his ideas and stories have made be a better leader – all to the good of Scottish Gas."

Eugene Taylor, Training & Design Manager, PAYGE, Scottish Gas

"Seeing at first hand 270 under pressure health professionals inspired to run with and pledge to new ideas was uplifting. Mike used fun, humour, motivation and positive participation to lift, energise and empower people to go and make change happen."

Jacqui Lunday, Chief Health Professions Officer, Scottish Government

"Mike challenged us to step away from the 'it's too difficult' zone, then left us buzzing, enthused, inspired and up for change."

Dr Anne Hendry, National Clinical Lead, Long Term Conditions, NHS Scotland

"Mike absolutely 'gets' what it means to be enthusiastic and confident and is prepared to shout about it from the highest mountain tops. This country needs more people like Mike."

Beth Edberg, Founder, Bee all you can

"...a virtually unique skill set of being able to apply motivational and lateral thought to projects that have become stale and reached a point of inertia. Mike breathes life into the challenges that are laid before him and leaves a wake of happy, inspired and positively redirected people behind him. This is a rare skill indeed..."

David Reid, Managing Director, Because Brands Matter

"... a fantastic communicator who, unlike other motivational speakers, is a natural at getting close to people and making you feel there's no distance between you and the ideas he champions. He also has an excellent grasp of modern management approaches and knows how to get people at all levels involved and contributing to their full potential."

Robin Burley MBE, Eskhill & Co

"Mike is spectacularly good at seeking out the untapped views of people who wouldn't normally be asked. He gets people to reflect on the value of what they do, often in ways they'd never previously considered which greatly adds to the outcome."

Dorothy Hill, Directorate Business Manager, The City of Edinburgh Council

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