

Date: 27th May 2016

**LJMU lecturer Alex Irving to take part in record-breaking pitchathon with
Virgin Media Business VOOM 2016.
1st June - streamed live**

Local LJMU lecturer, Alex Irving has been selected as one of 160 competitors in Virgin's business competition to go through to the next round of the UK and Ireland's biggest and most valuable pitch competition. Alex's business idea attracted over 4,800 public votes online resulting in 2nd position on the Voom leaderboard out of 4,894 other competitors.

The shortlisted businesses - those who earned the highest number of public votes - will now take part in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record™ for *Longest business pitch marathon* on 1st/2nd June 2016. The 29 hour live-streamed event will see Alex Irving pitch back-to-back against 159 other entrepreneurs to a panel of esteemed judges. Judges will whittle these down to just 40 semi-finalists who could go on to pitch to Richard Branson and international business heavyweights Tyra Banks, Sara Blakely and Marcus Butler, in the VOOM 2016 grand finale on 28th June.

Alex's business idea is a PR company to promote innovative pioneering biotech researchers in order to attract investor attention.

Alex says "By addressing the lack of funding for these pioneers, my PR company Speaking Of Human-Based Research will accelerate the discovery of cures for cancer and other chronic diseases on the rise."

She adds "Behind my business idea is the disturbing reality that according to leading medical experts, current medical research is BROKE! and fails patients of chronic diseases like cancer. Billions of pounds every year is wasted funding a traditional research method that is proven scientifically ineffective. Meanwhile, pioneering researchers developing and using effective human-relevant methods like 'organs on a chip' and human tissue tests, are starved of funding. And yet these pioneers are capable of making cures a reality for patients."

"Virgin Media Business VOOM 2016 is all about seeking out, supporting and celebrating the UK's and Ireland's most exciting businesses. It's the biggest and most valuable pitch competition out there - we're hoping everyone will find a way to get involved!" says Sir Richard Branson.

VOOM 2016 has been a huge win for many hundreds of our entrants, above and beyond the shortlist. They've honed pitches, made videos and collectively contacted millions of people to promote their businesses.

They've also participated in THE biggest mass crowdfunding campaign in UK history. Collectively, they've raised over £675,000 to make their ideas a reality.

Peter Kelly, Managing Director of Virgin Media Business said: "I'm looking forward to hearing 160 innovative and inspiring ideas over the course of 29-hour record attempt, although I am not underestimating the challenge. Like any true entrepreneur - we never do things by halves at Virgin Media Business and achieving this record will add another level of ambition to the 'VOOM 2016' competition."

To watch the pitchathon live and support Alex when she pitches, tune into www.vmbvooom.com. Could Liverpool be crowned as Britain's most entrepreneurial city?

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

History of organisation:

Alex has 20 years broadcasting experience working in network TV at BBC, ITV and Channel 4 and currently works as a senior media lecturer at LJMU. Five years ago, Alex turned to the medical science community in the UK and abroad asking why cures have not yet been found for cancer and other chronic diseases. The answers she received from leading medical science experts and clinicians about the main obstacles sparked Alex's idea for this PR business, which will accelerate the discovery of cures for diseases such as cancer.

In 2014 Alex founded Speaking of Human-Based Research (SOHBR) - a voluntary public relations organisation to promote the work and achievements of underfunded pioneering medical research scientists. Since then Alex has promoted and represented human-based medical scientists on TV, Radio and in the press throughout the UK attempting to raise their profile and attract public and private investor attention.