



pro-manchester
Impact Report 2019

“Succeeding
in business is
all about
making
connections”

Richard Branson

A message from our Chief Executive



We've had a record-breaking year at pro-manchester and it has been my absolute pleasure to lead such an amazing team. We have achieved so much in such a short space of time and we are excited to share all of this with you with the production of the first ever pro-manchester Impact Report.

In the last year, we have welcomed over 10,000 delegates to nearly 140 events. Our reputation for delivering excellent events continues to thrive and our membership continues to diversify.

Perhaps most importantly to us, our retention rate for members has reached an incredible 85%. This figure is a strong indicator of the great relationships with our members and firmly secures our position as a pillar of the business community.

Putting this report together with the team has been enlightening. Hearing first-hand stories of the impact our vast network and the wonderful, hardwork of the team has had on businesses and individuals is hugely rewarding.

Members are at the heart of everything we do and we will continue to strive to provide the exceptional levels of service our members have come to expect of us.

I do hope you enjoy the report as much as we did pulling it together.

SAM BOOTH
Chief Executive



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Our year in numbers...

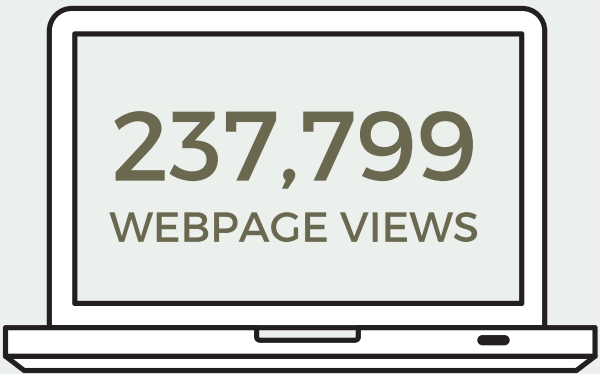


85%
member retention

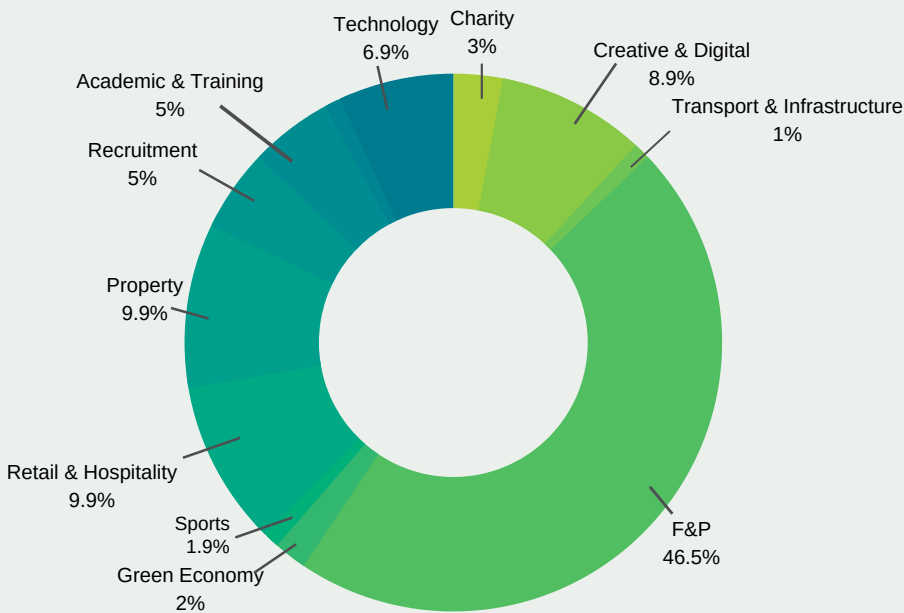
94%
rated our events
good or excellent

284
members

22,000+
engaged
professionals on our
database



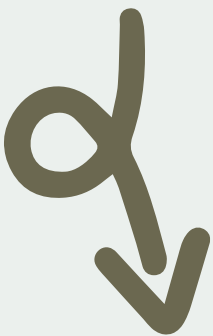
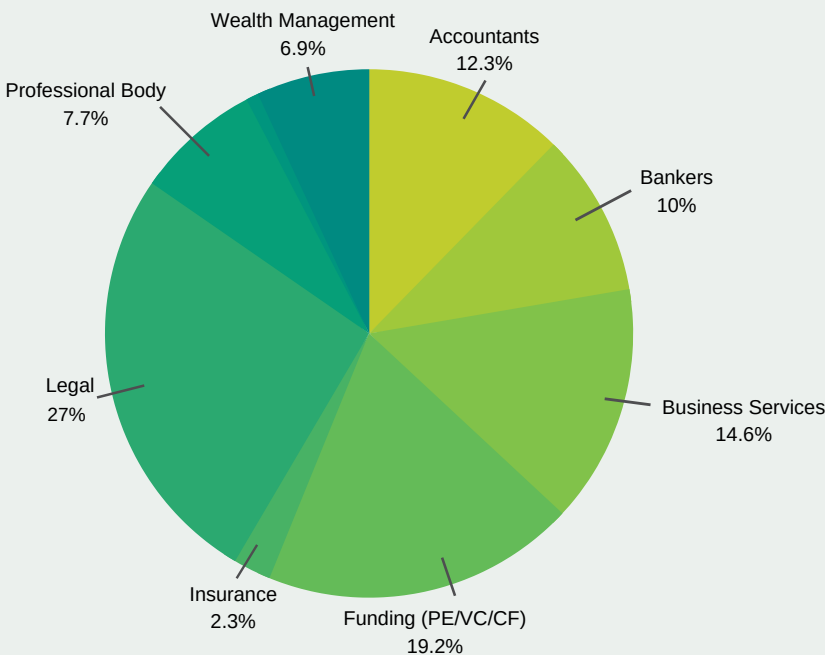
Our sector split



23k+
social media
followers



F&P sector split



10,203
Registrations

Mark Robinson - Finch



Mark hosting a panel at the Trailblazing Technology Conference 2019

Mark Robinson is Client Director at Finch. Finch is one of Europe's largest independent insurance broking and employee benefits groups and has been a member of pro-manchester since 2014, but never really utilised their membership until recently.

When Mark began working with the business 18 months ago, he began to attend pro-manchester events and aimed to get Finch to use their membership to its fullest. This has resulted in Mark becoming co-chair of the newly-founded Fintech Committee.

"Since we got serious with our membership, it's been great for our brand awareness," says Mark.

"People see our brand and assume we're just insurance brokers, but by getting in front of the correct senior-level people, we've been able to inform them we're a trusted advisor which understands the sector and knows what we're talking about."

Mark has worked in insurance for some time and confessed himself that he often turned to London for collaboration with other businesses: "Attending pro-manchester events has helped both myself and the business to learn about the size of the technology sector in Manchester, particularly the fintech sector. We will freely admit that we didn't realise just how big the fintech sector in Manchester was and often went to London to make connections. Being part of pro-manchester has really opened our eyes to collaborate in Manchester.

"Getting to know individuals in the sector through the sector group programme has also showed me that Manchester's technology community is hugely collaborative.

"Businesses are really keen to share their skills with other businesses in order to boost Manchester's economy, and we've met these businesses thanks to our involvement with pro-manchester."

2019 saw our first Trailblazing Technology Conference, which Finch was a premium sponsor of. As premium sponsor, Finch were

entitled to speak at the conference – chairing a panel discussion – they also had an exhibition stand, which Mark says was excellent exposure for them.

Of the event, Mark said: "The contacts and people we're now actively working with thanks to the conference made a huge difference to us. That sponsorship took us away from being just insurance brokers who people perceive as salespeople, to trusted individuals who genuinely want to help your organisation.

"Next year we will be sponsoring the event again due to how well the event was run, the quality of attendees and the quality of speakers. It's a really important event in the Manchester technology sector's calendar, which we really want to align ourselves with."

In terms of ROI, Mark says Finch will start to see a huge return on their investment in due course: "Most businesses have very strong insurance relationships, which we're very conscious we need to break. Sometimes this means those individuals are tied to a contract, but we're now in a position where we are making solid relationships with the decision makers who we have got excellent quotes for, to begin when their contract ends.

"This forward-thinking business is great for us and between two and three years down the line, we're going to see a huge return on our investment. The brand awareness we've had alone from working with pro-manchester has given us the kick back we wanted as a business."

"People are recognising our brand more thanks to the speaking opportunities available to us at a variety of events and the PR and comms opportunities we utilise.

"If I was to give anyone advice on becoming a pro-manchester member, I would say you get out of membership what you put in. Finch has been a member for five years, but didn't get anything from it until I started attending events, putting my name forward for things and we got fully immersed into the programme."

"Being part of pro-manchester really opened our eyes to the size of the fintech sector in Manchester."

Mark Robinson - Client Director at Finch and Fintech committee co-chair



Amy Hinks - The Booth Centre



Amy Hinks (L) on a panel discussing confidence at B Works

"The pro-manchester team understands the importance of relationships"

Amy Hinks, Development Manager at The Booth Centre



The Booth Centre is a day centre offering advice, activities and crucial support to homeless people across our city.

After being pro-manchester's Charity of the Year in 18-19, as chosen by Chair, Alistair Cree, Amy and The Booth Centre team saw great value in continuing to be pro-manchester members.

As Charity of the Year, the chosen charity is entitled to some pro-manchester membership benefits, including promotional activity, content support and event attendance. They are also invited to join us at a number of events, including our Annual Dinner.

So why did a small, grassroots charity like The Booth Centre see the value in becoming a pro-manchester member?

"When we were charity of the year, the connections we made were invaluable to us," says Amy. "The pro-manchester team understands the importance of relationships and where we as a charity needed to develop.

"They have helped us make some really solid connections. At the Andy Burnham Dinner, I was placed next to a partner in a large law firm who was later a catalyst in creating three volunteer days for their team and donated £1,000. That is already our membership fees returned to us, but he also introduced us to other potential donors that I'm really excited about pursuing."

Amy recently spoke at our 'Being Confident, Always and Forever' event, where she explained how their centre boosts the confidence of its users.

"The Booth Centre is about focusing on people's strengths and knowing that everybody who works there, or we come into contact with has something to give," said Amy.

"Regardless of that person's situation or however low they may be feeling, there is hope for them and helping them to see their strengths rather than their problems has a hugely positive impact."

Speaking at this event helped Amy to make even further connections.

"As a small charity, while it's slowly changing, a lot of the time people don't know who The Booth Centre is.

"Speaking at the confidence event helped me to share just how important our centre is to our users and how we help them with, not only somewhere to get some food, but somewhere that can help boost their confidence. Our aim is to be much more sustainable help for those people who are living on the street.

"Speaking opened people's eyes to the difference we're making in the city, and it was great to have so many people approach me afterwards to learn a little more."

So what are the benefits of being a pro-manchester member for Amy?

"I genuinely look forward to attending every event I attend with the pro-manchester team and am always in awe of how slick such a small team makes every event.

"I feel like however big pro-manchester gets, the team will still be very connected to their members. They develop relationships with us to gauge exactly who we need to make solid connections with to improve our businesses. I'm really looking forward to working with pro-manchester in the coming years and we are really grateful for what they have done for us so far."

Sian English - seventy7

Sian English is chair of pro-manchester's Retail and Ecommerce sector group, as well as a member of the Creative and Digital committee, so is fully immersed in the pro-manchester programme.

In her day job, Sian is Head of Multichannel Strategy at award-winning creative agency, Seventy7.

Sian is also last year's winner of the Creative, Digital or Media Professional of the Year at MIMA.

"Being chair of the Retail and Ecommerce committee has opened up doors, where I've been able to host a multitude of events, including the annual Retail Lunch at Manchester Hall."

"It's been great personal exposure for me as an individual and has improved my confidence immensely. One thing I've come to realise, is when I speak at a pro-manchester event, there is always someone worth impressing in the room," says Sian.

Sian hosted last year's Retail Lunch, inviting her client, M&S.com to speak on a panel. Thanks to the inclusion of such a strong advocate for the agency, Seventy7 received a direct recommendation from their client to new business in the room who were looking for creative and digital services.

"Heading up the Retail and Ecommerce committee, as strange as it sounds has also helped us [Seventy7] with client retention. Being able to invite our clients to share their knowledge and insights in front of leading Manchester business people has opened doors for them, meaning they see even more value in staying on as a client with us."

As well as her involvement with the Retail and Ecommerce committee, Sian is heavily involved in the Creative and Digital committee.

"I believe the Creative and Digital committee has genuinely helped to mould and shift perception of the industry in our city and supported each other as a committee to drive collaboration.

"One thing I love about the creative events, and all of pro-manchester's events, is that they're really useful," continued Sian. "They're put together by people who know what they're doing, thanks to the committees. Because of this, we can see individuals sharing industry-based knowledge. We hear from individuals that genuinely know what they're doing and what they're talking about.

"Thanks to pro-manchester's vast network and reach, I've had opportunities I couldn't have dreamt of without their support."

What would Sian recommend to someone thinking about getting involved in pro-manchester?

"Take advantage of the intros that come from the Business Development team. I don't use them enough, but I am often introduced to people who have asked for my skills," says Sian.

"It's a really soft way of going in to a potential new client when you already have your pro-manchester membership in common. With the introductions sent my way in the last year, I would say Seventy7 has been able to directly help about 80% of them, in various ways, including giving us new business. Those I haven't been able to help, I've been able to refer elsewhere, so it really is a win-win.

"The last thing I would say is utilise the programme to its fullest. Join a committee, go to events, meet people. It really does make a huge difference for both your business and you as an individual when it comes to growth."

"Thanks to pro-manchester's vast network and reach, I've had opportunities I couldn't have dreamt of without their support.."

Sian English, Head of Multichannel Strategy at Seventy7 and Chair of the Retail & Ecommerce committee



Sian collecting her 2019 MIMA for Creative, Digital or Media Professional of the Year

Sean Williams - Yorkshire Bank



Inside B Works on Market Street in Manchester city centre

"No one else in Manchester offers what pro-manchester does. They have it all!"

Sean Williams, Head of Customer Banking - Manchester at Yorkshire Bank

In January 2019 B Works, Yorkshire Bank's flagship co-working and retail hub, opened its doors in Central Manchester. Since then, the Market Street store has become a go-to spot for the city's small and medium-sized firms to learn, work and bank.

When looking at ways to enhance the space for the SME's of the city and surrounding region, partnering with pro-manchester seemed like an obvious choice for Sean Williams, the Bank's Head of Customer Banking for Manchester.

"I don't think we would have seriously considered anyone other than pro-manchester to partner with on our B Works project," says Sean.

"For us, pro-manchester was the only organisation in the city that had found a great balance between its relationships with the established business community, its leaders and the SME cohort.

"Manchester is fast becoming an economic powerhouse, attracting increasing levels of investment from far and wide. It's at the forefront of the Northern Powerhouse initiative, and pro-manchester is at the very heart of the city.

"We wanted B Works to act as a stimulus for more economic contribution into Manchester, and the footfall we have had at SME Club events has had a real impact as we've been able to help many really exciting businesses so far."

Sean and his team approached pro-manchester to help establish a programme of business events to help SMEs grow and prosper, allowing the Yorkshire Bank team to meet an increasing number of exciting start-ups and SMEs across the city and wider region. Since the store's inception, B Works has been the home of pro-manchester's SME Club. home to pro-manchester's SME Club.

The SME Club was developed nearly 10 years ago and provides free and useful information to small and medium sized businesses, supplying them with the tools and information needed to accelerate growth and achieve business goals.

Together, pro-manchester and Yorkshire Bank now put on up to 10 events a month, free of charge to everyone.

"We want people to learn with us, but fundamentally, from a business point of view, we want people to bank with us," explained Sean. "We don't want to force products or services on potential clients, rather we want to create something experiential. Over 90% of delegates who have joined us have rated the events as good or excellent. From an impact point of view, it's been great to have been able to turn the footfall and experience for individuals into actual brand advocacy and have people start banking with us.

"It's still very early days in our partnership, but we've been really blown away with what pro-manchester has been able to do for us. The team is phenomenally good at what they do."

"They don't only put on events, they put on slick, efficient, polished events that are thoroughly enjoyable.

"If you are looking to partner with an organisation to develop events for you, I'm not sure why you would look anywhere else. If you're serious about aligning yourself with the city agenda and serious about the growth potential of your business, pro-manchester is the place to be as a networking organisation. It gives you an opportunity to be engaged, access key stakeholders across the city and meet organisations you can collaborate with.

"In my opinion, no one else in Manchester offers what pro-manchester does. They have it all!"





The pro-manchester board



JENN HAZLEHURST
**19-20 Chair &
Head of Liverpool - EY**



ALISTAIR CREE
**18-19 Chair &
Partner - Eversheds**



ALISON LOVEDAY
**16-17 Chair &
Partner - Kennedys**



SAM BOOTH
**pro-manchester
Chief Executive**



NICOLA MCCORMICK
pro-manchester COO



ISABEL RILEY
**pro-manchester
Finance Director**



ANTHONY MORROW
**Chief Executive &
Founder - OpenMoney**



NICK ROSE
**Sales Director -
Sharp**



JULIA CLARKE
**Pro-Vice Chancellor &
Dean of Faculty of
Business & Law - MMU**



DANIEL NOLAN
**Marketing
Consultant**



JASON TRIGG
**Area Commercial
Director - HSBC Bank**



SEAN WILLIAMS
**Head of Customer
Banking - Yorkshire
Bank**



ROBERT RACE
**Head of Wealth
Management -
Manchester - WH Ireland**



DANNY SIMPSON
**CEO - MID
Communications**



STEVE COX
**Engineering &
Technical Director -
Electricity NW**



The pro-manchester team



SAM BOOTH
Chief Executive



NICOLA MCCORMICK
COO



ISABEL RILEY
Finance Director



ILONA ALCOCK
**Sector Group
Manager**



KATHERINE BARR
**Membership &
Events Manager**



MEL HILL
**Communications
Manager**



KATIE ROBSON
**Membership &
Engagement Manager**



CLAIRE TURNBULL
**Events & Marketing
Manager**