

Leah wins big at Investing Women

An online booking specialist has won an £18,000 pitching competition organised by Scotland's only female angel investment group.



Appointedd was selected by a distinguished judging panel from more than 100 entrants in Investing Women's AccelerateHER event as the angel group's first Ambition & Growth Conference in Edinburgh.

Appointedd chief executive officer Leah Hutcheon was presented with a £5000 cash prize by Scottish Government Minister Annabelle Ewing, MSP, at a gala dinner held tonight in Edinburgh Castle. Appointedd will also benefit from a £13,000 package of mentoring, legal and accountancy support from AccelerateHER sponsors Chiene + Tait.

LINC Scotland, the umbrella group of Scotland angel investor organisations, added an extra £5000 to the prize fund which will be shared between the five runner-up businesses.

The Edinburgh-based start-up has revolutionised the way small businesses sell their timeslot appointments online. From personal trainers to massage therapists, driving instructors to photographers, Appointedd enables online booking, and offers small businesses access to CRM, marketing and business management tools.

The business claim to be the world's first truly multi-time zone online booking system, enabling people to take bookings across different time zones seamlessly and to build repeat business and customer loyalty through smart promotions.

The pitching competition and Edinburgh Castle reception were highlights of Investing Women's inaugural Ambition & Growth

Conference which concludes tomorrow at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. The 200-plus conference delegates include start-up and young-growth entrepreneurs, business leaders and established angel investors.

Neil Norman, entrepreneurial partner at Chiene + Tait, said: "Appointedd has all the hallmarks of a great business. We are delighted that we are going to work with Leah Hutcheon to help Appointedd grow – it's tremendously exciting to work with emerging entrepreneurs and we are extremely proud to be helping out."

✘ Jackie Waring, chief executive officer of Investing Women, said: "Leah and the team at Appointedd typifies the high quality of emerging female entrepreneurship we have been fortunate to witness throughout the AccelerateHER process. Appointedd is a worthy winner and we will do all we can to support the company going forward and to help it achieve its full potential."

Stephen Ingledew, MD Marketing at Standard Life, said: "I was impressed by the quality of the pitches from all the finalists in the competition but Leah's entrepreneurial spirit in particular stood out. I'm delighted that through this fantastic event we can help diverse businesses, like Appointedd, to grow and prosper in Scotland and beyond."

In a message to delegates, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, said: "Tackling the enterprise gender-gap is absolutely crucial for ensuring that Scotland's economy flourishes. The bottom line is we need to champion female role models across all sectors and debunk the myths that there are roles specifically for boys or girls."

"The work driven forward by Investing Women is creating these role models at the most senior levels of successful growing enterprises. This will continue to break down and change attitudes about gender imbalance."

“That is why I am delighted to be able to support their work and look forward to the outcomes of this gathering of Scotland’s aspirational women to ensure a fairer future for women right across our country.”

The second day of the conference includes advice clinics, masterclasses and speeches by successful businesswomen including Minister for Youth and Women Employment, Annabelle Ewing, MSP, Susan Preston, a world expert in female angel investment, Mei Shui, managing director of Virgin StartUp, Standard Life marketing chief Stephen Ingledew and leading corporate lawyer Jacqueline Law, managing partner of Aberdeen Considine.