

## **The Self-organising University**

The University is a business network for people working in software and new media. The primary aim of the network is the professional development of its members.

The short-term goals of the University are to:

1. Get a group of founding members on board.
2. Encourage members to sign up together for short courses, using services like Coursera, Edx and Udacity.
3. Set up one or more strategy groups.

Longer term, the goal is to build up a network that is capable of maintaining a broad programme of self-organised education and training activities, and that can provide a comprehensive body of skills for members to draw on.

Members can be self-employed, in employment or running their own business. The main requirement for membership is to want to develop skills and to do so in collaboration with like-minded people.

### **Short courses**

There has been a recent explosion in the number of short courses available online. The quality of many such course is high and a growing number of distinguished professors are offering online versions of undergraduate courses taught at well-known universities. Courses span a wide range of academic and vocational areas, in subject areas that include computer science, software development, design, management and business.

These courses typically run for six to eight weeks and require perhaps four to six hours per week of study time, making them suitable for fitting around a work schedule. Starting a course together and making a commitment to meet up regularly over its length will bring some of the benefits of University-based study that are otherwise absent from self-paced learning and is likely to strengthen the connections between our members.

### **Strategy Groups**

The Strategy Groups, for business owners and managers, originally took place at the Shoreditch Building of the London Met. Each group consisted of five to six people from different businesses, who met monthly for a couple of hours over the course of a year and took it in turns to present and critique some aspect of each others' business strategies. The ground rules were: turn up, don't be late and everything is confidential.

*D Sofer. January 2013.*