

JET is part of our DNA now

Magellan Consultancy have been partnered with the Jersey Employment Trust since 2021. At their summer party to celebrate their tenth anniversary in June, they were given an acorn-shaped trophy in recognition of their work

When Kenan Osborne was shown around Acorn five years ago, he didn't know that he would become a JET Ambassador, or that his son would be using our services. But on the day that he and his colleague saw behind the scenes, they came away knowing that they wanted to support the charity.

'We were asked if there was anything we could do that was not just about giving money,' Kenan explained. 'And that made it easy to say yes, to use the skills we've got, in an environment where we know we're making a difference. 'We're lucky enough to have a business in a beautiful island like this and you need to give back in a way that is positive and constructive. I think giving our time, giving our passion, is far better than just putting your hand in your pocket. We're happy to do that as well, but there's something about creating that personal relationship with somewhere like JET.'

Although the partnership was initially for three years, there is no sign of it ending.

'This is a relationship, I think, which will just carry on,' he said. 'I can't see this ever going away now, because it's become part of our DNA. It's not a case of, will we? We have to, and we want to.

'I think businesses forget that they can give time, time to talk to people who might not know anything about their industry. It's one of the reasons I became a JET Ambassador, to get that message out there, and share with my network. A business, no matter how big or small, can make a big difference and a big contribution to a whole cohort of our society who need that help.'

The Magellan team have supported JET through two of its toughest periods, first with the tragic loss of Dean Lowe, and then with the Government funding issue at the start of this year.

Kenan chaired the working group that set up to consider what Dean's professional legacy would look like. It culminated in the setting up of an Ambassador programme. What began with eight founder members has grown into a vibrant network of more than 20 Ambassadors, representing



different sectors of the Jersey community, including employers, former clients and HR professionals. What unites them is their shared passion for what JET does and breaking down barriers in society.

In January Kenan spoke about threats to JET's funding from the Government of Jersey.

'The fact that we got to the quickest 5,000 signatures on a petition shows that the community cares about JET, and we're very proud to be part of that community,' he said.

Kenan speaks with a passion about what JET does. 'It's more than just saying "We need to get you into work because you're a number." With JET, or with Acorn, you're your own unique, rounded individual that they focus on, care about, nurture, and want to see progress.

'That takes time and effort and real understanding. It's not something you can throw six weeks' worth of someone's time at and say, right, you're now fixed. This is not about fixing people. It's about enabling people to understand and cope with their own world and how they integrate with the rest of the world, whatever that might look like to them. And I think those are the things that mean so much personally to me, and to us as a business.'

Kenan's own son Owen is neurodiverse and has support from JET, attending sessions at Acorn twice a week.

'What he's doing there is an absolutely vital part of his mental health, getting out of the house, getting a routine, doing something that he feels positive about, that he can take control of,' Kenan said. 'He was so happy the other day. One of his pieces sold for £20 and he was over the moon. He feels he's making a valuable contribution. We can see his confidence is improving.

'People don't realise what goes on behind the scenes for an individual who faces these challenges, where it can sometimes be one step forward and two steps back, and then sometimes it's three steps forward.

'We all know people with neurodivergence, and how challenging it's been, particularly through lockdown. We've got to get this right. We've got to make sure that people don't fall through the cracks, because there's this large cohort of young people that have gone through lockdown and their social world shrunk so rapidly. Owen was just starting to build his social group and that was suddenly taken away. He lost all his confidence as a result. And he's not the only one.'

As a gesture of appreciation for Magellan's remarkable support, JET chief officer Penny Shurmer presented a Woodshack-crafted acorn trophy to members of the Magellan team at their 10th anniversary summer party, something that Kenan was delighted to receive.

'To have this in recognition of something that we're just so passionate about was the icing on the cake, because we've always made it clear that we value being part of our community,' he said.

Looking to the next 10 years, while acknowledging progress made in the workplace with greater awareness of reasonable adjustments and neurodiversity, Kenan says the big challenge now is with AI.

'Roles and opportunities are changing because technology now can potentially do some of our work. When Owen was at Waitrose, his biggest skill was doing the reconciliation of the supply of goods to getting them on the shelves. No one liked doing spreadsheets and data. He loved it, that attention to detail, being able to match things up. And from what I can gather, he was the fastest one at doing it.

'Technology now potentially could do that but it still needs a four-eyes check at the end of it. Would they give that check to someone like Owen? Or would they give it to a manager? That's where some of the challenges lie.

'What we must do now, as JET and as businesses, is challenge ourselves to the next level. What other opportunities have we got? And that's the next part of the journey, for the Ambassadors. That's where Dean would have been focussed, he'd be so close to businesses now and saying, OK, so these opportunities are slowly slipping away. How do we look for the new set of opportunities? And that is the challenge I hope my fellow business leaders pick up and run with, making our Island truly inclusive now and for the future.'