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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

It's never too early to get some practical experience



Ask James
James Caan

Dear James

I'M only 13 but I loved watching you on Dragons' Den. Have you got any advice for me and the sort of subjects and qualities I might need to venture into business?

Dan

I AM delighted you're taking such a keen interest in business at such an early age. You already appear to have the biggest quality an entrepreneur needs – passion. The success of a business depends on just how driven the people are.

In terms of school subjects, obviously Business Studies is a key area. Maths and English are important in any walk of life but even more so in business. A language may also be useful given how global the world of business is now.

But just as important as your grades is your experience. It's never too early to get some sort of practical business experience. Even if it's just watching somebody at work in a shop – you will gain knowledge of the simple things which make such a difference in business such as pricing and selling. Are there any after-school clubs you can join? Find other like-minded pupils such as yourself – bounce ideas off each other and see what comes of it.

You'll need somebody experienced with you. It may be a family member or a teacher, but find someone who can guide you if and when you need it.

Finally, never underestimate the

importance of hard work. People often see the lifestyle led by successful business people but remember this only comes through determination.

■ *The Business Class* airs on CNBC tonight at 10pm.