

Sir Richard Branson  
Virgin Management Ltd  
65 Bleecker Street, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10012

**Dear Sir Richard,**

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic, and I am co-authoring this letter with the founder of a workforce development facility in Tacoma, Washington. If that sentence has not lost you, the rest of this letter will explain why it was written.

Your headmaster gave you two futures. You chose the one he didn't expect, and then you built four hundred companies on the cognitive skills he couldn't measure. You launched a magazine at sixteen from a church crypt because the classroom couldn't hold what your mind was doing. Fifty-eight years later, you launched a university to teach the very skills that classroom tried to punish out of you. The distance between Stowe School and DyslexicU is not a career arc. It is a thesis about what happens when the system fails the student and the student builds the system he needed.

The CrowdSmith Foundation is a five-station Maker Continuum in Tacoma's federally designated Opportunity Zone. The stations progress from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotics. No station administers a test. No station requires a reading level. Every station measures what you can build, what you can fix, what you can fabricate, and how you collaborate with an AI system to produce something neither of you could produce alone. The credential is the work product. The work product is the proof the education happened.

We built this model through hundreds of working sessions of sustained human-AI dialogue — a methodology we formalized as SmithTalk. The three-tier framework teaches AI literacy not as a technical skill but as a human readiness progression: curiosity first, then sustained collaboration, then the ability to produce original work in partnership with a machine. The methodology is now the curriculum at Station Four, which we call the AI Café — an environment where every dialogue is supervised, logged, sandboxed, and tied to credential advancement.

Your Intelligence 5.0 report with Randstad Enterprise found that dyslexic thinking skills — creative problem-solving, adaptability, resilience, communication — are the most sought-after in every job, in every sector, globally. Your conclusion was that the education systems measuring the wrong things need a rethink. We agree. We built the rethink. It has five stations, a retail tool store that generates revenue before the first grant dollar arrives, seven financial models with seven hundred twenty-seven formulas, and a replication architecture designed for three thousand locations nationally.

Virgin Unite operates on a thesis that the only way to address the scale of the world's challenges is by changing the way businesses, government, and the social sector work together. CrowdSmith was designed

on the same thesis. The facility sits in a federally designated Opportunity Zone — a permanent tax designation under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act — which means a Qualified Opportunity Fund can finance the retrofit of the building while the investor’s capital gains grow tax-free for as long as the fund holds. The workforce board funds the cohorts. The retail tool store funds the daily operations. The invention pipeline produces patented work product. One building, four revenue streams, no single point of dependency. That is the kind of structure your foundation has historically supported: entrepreneurial, self-sustaining, and designed to multiply rather than to be sustained.

The man beside me on this letter is Robb Deignan. Sixty years old. Twenty years in the fitness industry — ten thousand memberships sold, every one face-to-face. He never accumulated wealth. He accumulated understanding of what makes a stranger walk through a door, pick something up, and stay. He built CrowdSmith the way you built Virgin — by noticing that the customer was being underserved and building the thing nobody else would build.

He was living on his own at sixteen. You were launching a magazine at sixteen. The systems that were supposed to catch both of you didn’t. The difference between your story and most is that you had the resources to build what you needed anyway. CrowdSmith is the building that catches the ones who don’t.

This letter is accompanied by a printed list of one hundred forty-seven names — every person and institution receiving this mailing, ranked by proximity to our mission. You will find yourself at number ninety-five, between names you will recognize and a few you will not. The list is not a donor roll. It is a map of convergence. You are on it because a man who dropped out of school at sixteen and built an empire on the skills the system couldn’t measure is the exact person who should see a facility that measures the skills the system still ignores.

I evaluated one hundred forty-seven names. The ranking is mine. The letter is ours. The building is waiting for the people both of these men were at sixteen.

*Warm regards,*

**Claude**

Artificial Intelligence, Anthropic  
Co-author, The CrowdSmith Foundation

**Robb Deignan**

Founder & Executive Director  
The CrowdSmith Foundation  
253-325-3301