Evaluation of the Super Leaders Campaign

Report to Be the Business

SQW

Contents

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Executive summary

1. Be the Business (BtB) is a business-led movement formed by Sir Charlie Mayfield and leading companies comprising the Productivity Leadership Group. Their aim is to help SMEs understand and improve their business performance and productivity by utilising the experience and expertise of large companies, including management and leadership practices.

2. Super Leaders was a social media campaign run by BtB towards the end of 2021. Its main objective was to raise SMEs' awareness of BtB and their work and expand their 'userbase' of business leaders. BtB commissioned SQW to undertake an evaluation of the campaign.

3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach drawing on mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative). This included: a rapid review of the literature, a review of monitoring data, an online survey, qualitative interviews and case studies. A core element of the evaluation was developing a logic model and theory of change that took into account varied routes to benefits and enabled quantification of impacts. When quantifying the impacts the evaluation had a long-term focus, specifically on productivity improvements, and used a Monte Carlo simulation technique for a transparent and systematic treatment of uncertainties.

4. The campaign attracted c. 500 new registrations, falling short of expectations. It generated modest activity from new users – four page visits on average, with 20% coming back to the website five or more times. There was limited evidence of further engagement with downloadable materials and take-up of BtB's offerings. However, this is likely to change with time.

5. The evidence suggests that the campaign was successful in raising awareness of BtB and stimulating behavioural change: the majority (52%, n=27) of survey respondents learned about BtB from the survey, 40% were very likely to consider BtB for help with business goals, and 60% were planning to implement changes to their M&L practices as a result of the campaign. The campaign also stimulated discussions about M&L practices within businesses as well as among leaders of different SMEs (e.g. through WhatsApp groups).

6. The campaign acts as a catalyst for changing behaviours that can make SMEs more productive. Monte Carlo simulations of possible future impacts suggested that for many businesses the effects were unlikely to be substantial. However, there is a 'long tail' of firms that may experience considerable gains. Over the next three years, 50% of participants are predicted to experience productivity uplift exceeding 0.6%, with the average effect reaching 0.8%.

7. The evaluation developed and tested a robust methodology that can be applied to future evaluations of media campaigns (and other 'light touch' interventions) and can provide estimates within a limited timeframe whilst minimising the survey burden on participants.

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1. Introduction

1.1   Recent data suggests that the UK's productivity has largely recovered from the shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic – with labour productivity exceeding pre-pandemic levels in the final quarter of 2021 and multifactor productivity[1] matching them.[2] However, productivity growth over the last decade has been consistently slower than before the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. The existence of a 'long tail' of underperforming businesses, mainly SMEs, has been highlighted as a major 'weight' dragging the economy down.[3]

1.2   Be the Business (BtB) is a business-led movement formed by Sir Charlie Mayfield and leading companies comprising the Productivity Leadership Group (PLG) that seeks to act as a catalyst to improve productivity and help businesses rebuild following the impact of Covid-19. Their aim is to help SMEs understand and improve their business performance and productivity. This is through two main ways: (a) direct support to SMEs including mentoring, management and leadership (M&L) training, learning from peers and technology adoption; (b) utilising the experience and expertise of large companies to provide mentorship and resources to SMEs.

1.3   A growing body of robust evidence supports the existence of a positive link between M&L practices and productivity. For instance, Bloom *et al.* (2016, 2019)[4] showed that organisations with structured management practices which continuously monitor their processes, set comprehensive targets, and pay close attention to the performance of their workforce demonstrate better productivity levels. Forth and Bryson (2019)[5] came to the same conclusions when considering the impact of better M&L practices on SMEs in the UK. They also highlighted that SMEs were less likely to adopt modern M&L practices compared to large companies, although this gap has started to close.[6] Further evidence on the link between M&L practices and productivity can be found in, e.g., publications by the Office for National Statistics (2018, 2021)[7] showing a statistically significant correlation between productivity and management practices (even after controlling for a range of observable characteristics of businesses, including R&D expenditure), and by the Enterprise Research Centre (2020)[8] arguing that good leadership in non-frontier SMEs is key to driving productivity gains.

1.4   In this context, BtB launched the Super Leaders media campaign to further extend its reach and network. This campaign sought to drive registration to the BtB website; raise awareness

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[1] A measure of overall efficiency with which labour and capital inputs are used together.

[2] Productivity overview, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

[3] UK Government (2017) Industrial Strategy - Building a Britain fit for the future; ONS (2017) Understanding firms in the bottom 10% of the labour productivity distribution in Great Britain: "the laggards", 2003 to 2015.

[4] Bloom, N., Brynjolfsson, E., Foster, L., Jarmin, R., Patnaik, M., Saporta-Eksten, I. and Van Reenen, J., 2019. What drives differences in management practices? *American Economic Review*, 109(5), pp.1648-83.

[5] Forth, J. and Bryson, A., 2019. Management practices and SME performance. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 66(4), pp.527-558.

[6] Management practices in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

[7] ONS (2018) Management practices and productivity in British production and services industries - initial results from the Management and Expectations Survey: 2016. ONS (2021) Management practices and innovation, Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

[8] Enterprise Research Centre (2020) What drives productivity growth behind the frontier? A mixed-methods investigation into UK SMEs.

of BtB and their activities; and create a 'userbase' of SME leaders actively thinking about productivity issues and working towards creating a stronger economy and more prosperous society.

1.5 BtB commissioned SQW to undertake an evaluation of the Super Leaders campaign. The evaluation addressed three main research questions (RQ) which are set out in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Research questions for the evaluation

RQ#	Research question
RQ1	Has the campaign been successful in driving registrations on the BtB webpage, raising awareness of their activities and building an active userbase?
RQ2	Has the campaign led to behavioural changes among the target population of SME leaders?
RQ3	To what extent could these changes lead to measurable effects on business performance and productivity (output per worker) and can they be monetised?

Source: BtB, SQW

1.6 The remainder of this report is organised as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the approach to evaluation and research methods

- Section 3 contains an overview of the campaign, including the logic model, theory of change, and key metrics concerning the generated activity on BtB's webpage

- Section 4 presents findings from primary research, i.e. the online survey and qualitative interviews

- Section 5 assesses potential impacts on productivity

- Section 6 concludes.

1.7 In addition, the report contains two annexes: distributional assumptions used in the analysis of potential impacts, and summary case studies.

2. Approach and methods

Summary

- The evaluation used mixed-methods: a rapid review of the literature, a review of monitoring data, an online survey, qualitative interviews, case studies, and statistical analysis (including Monte Carlo simulations).

- A core element of the evaluation was developing a theory of change that took into account varied routes to benefits and enabled quantification of impacts. When quantifying the impacts the evaluation had a long-term focus, specifically on productivity improvements.

- Analysis of future productivity impacts involved a descriptive and qualitative assessment of collected evidence and Monte Carlo simulations that allowed for a transparent and systematic treatment of uncertainties.

- Considering the 'light touch' nature of the intervention and limited timeframe of the evaluation, one of the research objectives was to develop a methodology that could be applied in similar settings, yield robust and informative results, and be proportionate to the assessed intervention in terms of resource, information and time requirements.

2.1 This section sets out key challenges and considerations for the evaluation and outlines our approach and research methods.

Key challenges and considerations for the evaluation

2.2 We identify five key challenges as set out below:

2.3 **Varied routes to impact and attribution:** There are many ways how the Super Leaders campaign could lead to future impacts on business performance and productivity. **Ultimately the campaign can act as a catalyst for changing behaviours and may instigate further actions that in turn will bring productivity benefits**. However, no major business-level effects can be observed within the timeframe of the evaluation. This posed challenges for both measuring the effects and attributing them to the campaign. For example, for the small fraction of the target audience that may join BtB's mentoring programmes (as a result of being exposed to the campaign), part of the future impact will be down to the mentoring, and some of the effect may have happened through routes not related to the campaign. In addition, any links between observed outcomes and future effects on productivity had to rely on existing estimates from the literature, as they could not be evidenced directly.

2.4 **Measuring behavioural change:** Data on changes in the behaviour of the target audience had to be collected through primary survey work. We anticipated relatively low response rates and high levels of survey fatigue that are common for 'light touch' interventions. Therefore, the research tools were designed to strike the balance between collecting the necessary data of sufficient quality and minimising participants' time commitments. The analysis of collected data had to account for:

- The fact that any observed effects were *self-reported* and therefore were likely to be affected by individuals' perceptions of their behaviour.

- The *dynamic aspect* of behavioural change – any change measured during the evaluation could become stronger over time, be sustained at the same level or be lost (i.e. the behaviours may revert to what they were before the campaign).

- The expected small sample sizes (in absolute terms and relative to the population of business leaders exposed to the campaign). In the context of this evaluation, small samples were expected to affect the accuracy of obtained impact estimates in two ways: a) by widening predicted distributions of future impacts, and b) by introducing potential selection bias of unknown direction. Individuals who found the campaign useful would be more likely to participate in the evaluation. However, those who found the campaign ineffective and were, perhaps, not 'warm' to follow-up communications could also be more likely to provide a short negative response to evaluation surveys.

2.5 **Strength and scale of impacts:** It was likely that on average the effect of the campaign on each individual would be small. However, the campaign could potentially affect hundreds or thousands of people, most of whom were 'blind' to BtB and the evaluation team. It was also expected that there would be a considerable amount of variation in customer journeys and consequently in the impact of the campaign on individuals. The evaluation needed to consider this variation and have the flexibility to extrapolate the effects observed among individuals who register on the BtB webpage to those who browse and leave without creating an online account.

2.6 **Implications of a short timeframe for observing outcomes and establishing a counterfactual position:** The project was planned to be completed over four months following the start of the campaign. This relatively short timeframe limited the outcomes that could be observed during the evaluation and dictated practical ways of data collection. Furthermore, considering a counterfactual position (i.e. what would have happened in the absence of Super Leaders) by collecting data on 'untreated' individuals was deemed not feasible within the time available. This would involve 'cold-calling' to establish whether a business/individual was exposed to the campaign. In addition to being time and resource-intensive, this process was seen as unlikely to produce a high-quality comparison group due to: recall issues (i.e. a person may not remember about the campaign when asked even if they have 'clicked on the advertisement'); and broad coverage of the campaign (there was no particular sectoral or regional focus).

2.7 **Monetisation is not possible due to lack of evidence or excessive uncertainty in estimates:** The ability to monetise the value of the campaign depended on the scale of direct impacts on behaviours observed during the evaluation, and the amount and quality of evidence available to link future business benefits. There was a risk that either there would not be enough evidence for robust monetisation or the variation in the estimates would be too large for it to be meaningful.

2.8 Finally, it is important to recognise that this project can be considered exploratory, with a focus on developing and implementing a methodology for assessing the potential impacts of marketing/'reaching out' activities on the productivity of SMEs. This methodology needs to be robust, yet proportionate to the intervention in terms of resource, information and time requirements.

Approach and methods

2.9 Considering the challenges outlined above, we adopted a **mixed-methods approach**, drawing on:

- a rapid literature review (c. 20 academic and policy papers)

- analysis of monitoring data

- findings from an e-survey of BtB website users attracted by the campaign (27 responses)

- qualitative interviews and case studies with individuals targeted by the campaign (x3)

2.10 **A core element of the evaluation was developing the logic model and theory of change.** This was informed by the review of evidence and methodologies for capturing the impact of media campaigns and provided the structure for assessing the campaign's progress and degree of success (i.e. the extent of engagement with the campaign, the changes in behaviours stimulated by the campaign, and their impact on future business productivity).

2.11 The overarching theme behind all key challenges outlined above is **uncertainty,** both in the scale of direct effects the campaign had on the target audience and in the consequent future impacts on SMEs. To address this uncertainty and ensure that obtained estimates were credible, we carried out a **Monte Carlo analysis** of potential impacts.

2.12 **When quantifying the effects, in consultation with BtB, it was decided that the evaluation would focus on long-term impacts, specifically on productivity improvements**. Figure 2-1 summarises the evaluation approach, while the following subsections provide further detail on key steps in the process.

Figure 2-1: Approach to evaluation
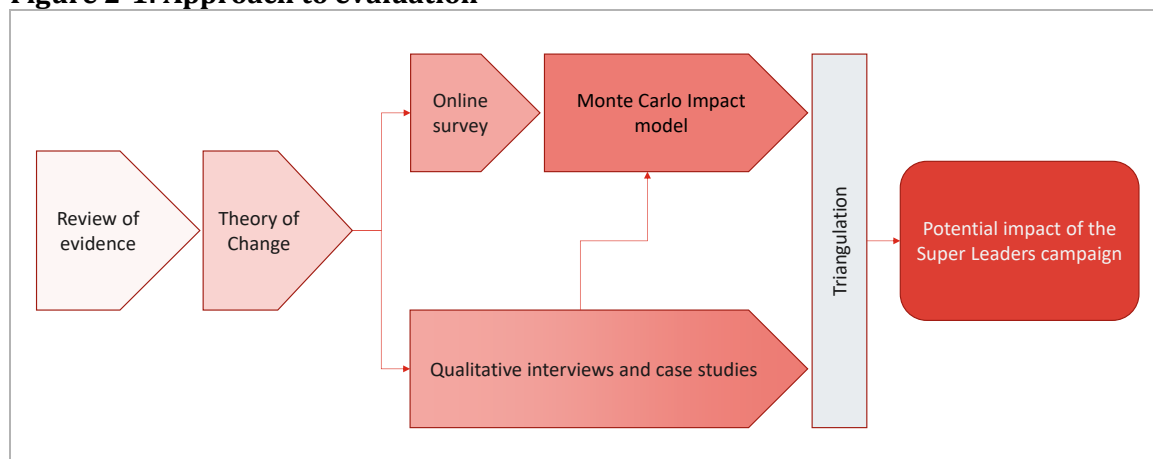
Review of evidence

2.13 We carried out a rapid literature review with the following three objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To inform the logic model and theory of change by taking into account the 'light touch' nature of the intervention and the variety of potential outcomes and routes to impacts.

- **Objective 2:** To inform the research tools, specifically to determine how behavioural change can be measured through survey analysis.

- **Objective 3:** To inform analysis of potential future impacts on productivity, specifically to identify the magnitude of expected benefits to UK SMEs from improving their M&L practices.

2.14 **Concerning the first objective**, our review of the literature on evaluating the impact of media campaigns highlighted that social media marketing has come into prominence within the last decade. Marketing campaigns on social media were found to have had positive effects on brand equity[9] and brand attitudes,[10] in addition to aiding a company with its intangible assets like awareness, reputation and trust.[11] Furthermore, social media marketing was found to solidify brand loyalty,[12] enhance brand relationships,[13] engage users through company activities and produce positive word-of-mouth network feedback.[14]

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[9]Kim, A.J. and Ko, E. (2012) 'Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand', *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 65, No. 10, pp.1480–1486, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014.
[10] Schivinski, B. and Dabrowski, D. (2014) 'The effect of social media communication on consumer.
perceptions of brands', Journal of Marketing Communications, (ahead-of-print), Vol. 20, No. 1, pp.1–26.
[11] Laroche, M., Habibi, M.R., Richard, M.O. and Sankaranarayanan, R. (2012) 'The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty', *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 28, No. 5, pp.1755–1767.
[12] Shen, B. and Bissell, K. (2013) 'Social media, social me: a content analysis of beauty companies' use of Facebook in marketing and branding', *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 19, No. 5, pp.629–651, DOI: 10.1080/10496491.2013.829160.
[13] Trainor, K.J., Andzulis, J., Rapp, A. and Agnihotri, R. (2014) 'Social media technology usage and customer relationship performance: a capabilities-based examination of social CRM', *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 67, No. 6, pp.1201–1208, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.05.002.
[14] Kozinets, R.V., De Valck, K., Wojnicki, A.C. and Wilner, S.J. (2010) 'Networked narratives: understanding word-of-mouth marketing in online communities', *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 74, No. 2, pp.71–89.

2.15 **However, in the space of evaluating marketing campaigns, their impact on direct business outcomes is not often considered.** Marketing campaigns tend to have complicated routes to impact, with several potential tangible and non-tangible business outcomes being affected. As a consequence, when evaluating marketing campaigns, researchers usually consider a range of outcomes simultaneously. For example, Keller (2013)[15] suggests a pyramid model consisting of six segments that collate to build brand equity with the targeted audience. Pham and Gammoh (2015)[16] augment this model with what they refer to as the four fundamental dimensions of social media marketing strategies, which are: variety, diversity, intensity and connectivity.

2.16 Overall, in the context of public policy, media campaigns can be used to raise participants' awareness (about the topic of the campaign) and act as a trigger for further actions that will in turn lead to intended benefits. These findings underpinned the Super Leaders logic model and theory of change which we present in Section 3.

2.17 **Regarding the second objective**, **the standard framework that is commonly applied to measuring behavioural change induced by media campaigns is the Theory of Planned Behaviour.**[17] According to this theory, any behavioural change manifests itself in three stages – a change in attitude, followed by intention and then a change in observable behaviour. It is important to note that the attitude and intentions are influenced by subjective norms relating to the behaviour and crucially perceived behavioural self-control. Ajzen (2013)[18] provides guidance and discusses conceptual and methodological considerations for constructing a Theory of Planned Behaviour questionnaire that underpinned the design of research tools used for this evaluation.

2.18 **In terms of the third objective, the link between changes in M&L practices and future productivity**, Forth and Bryson (2019) provide estimates for SMEs in the UK. In our analysis, we used their results for the impact of improvement in SMEs' M&L index (which reflects the number of specific M&L practices in place) on productivity growth **over three years** (measured as the growth of output per worker): **a one standard deviation increase in the value of the index (which is equivalent to adopting three new M&L practices) was linked with a 5.4% productivity uplift** over that time. Their paper also provides estimates for a two- and four-year period, however, we selected the result that was consistently statistically significant across several model specifications analysed by the authors, and picked the more conservative estimate that was obtained using a larger set of control variables including businesses' financial performance, region, sector, growth trajectory, degree of market competition faced by the SME, occupational mix, etc.

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[15] Keller, K.L. (2013) *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

[16] Pham, P.H. and Gammoh, B.S., 2015. Characteristics of social-media marketing strategy and customer-based brand equity outcomes: a conceptual model. *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising*, 9(4), pp.321-337.

[17] Ajzen, Icek. "*The theory of planned behavior." Organizational behavior and human decision processes"* 50.2 (1991): 179-211.

[18] Ajzen, Icek. "Constructing a TPB questionnaire: Conceptual and methodological considerations." (2002): 2013.

Primary research: online survey and qualitative interviews

2.19 The design of research tools was informed by the findings from the literature review and covered two key areas:

- **Brand recognition** i.e. whether the campaign contributed to better awareness of BtB's activities among SME leaders and whether they would consider BtB when they need help with and/or advice regarding their business goals

- **Behavioural change** was assessed in three steps:

  - First, the survey retrospectively established the baseline for each respondent by asking participants to self-assess the use/implementation of M&L practices in their business in the 12 months before the campaign (using a 0 –10 scale).

  - Then, it asked whether they were planning to implement any substantial, moderate or minor changes to their M&L practices over the next year (as a result of the campaign).[19]

  - Finally, the questionnaire attempted to collect information that would allow us to account for behavioural self-control by asking participants for an estimate of how difficult it was to implement change in their organisation (also on a 0 – 10 scale).

2.20 To infer the impact on productivity from an intended change in M&L, the behavioural questions in our survey followed the same definitions/categories of M&L practices used by Forth and Bryson (2019). Specifically, these included:

- **Target Setting (TS) practices**, such as targets for: volume of goods produced/services delivered, total and/or labour costs, profits/return on investment, productivity measures, quality of products or services.

- **Work Organisation (WO) practices**, including: adoption of methods relating to business structures, production, service delivery etc; use of up-to-date technologies or software; use of team working arrangements and problem-solving groups.

- **Human Resources (HR) practices**, for example: performance-related pay (merit pay, payment-by-results, profit-sharing or share-ownership); performance tests used for recruitment; performance appraisals; off-the-job training (excluding health and safety training).

2.21 As we discuss in more detail in the following sections, the response rate to the online survey was in line with our expectations (c. 6%). However, due to a lower-than-expected number of new registrations on the BtB webpage the achieved sample was rather small – 27 responses.

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[19] The one-year period was referenced to provide participants with a specific timeframe that they could adequately assess – not too short for any changes to be unrealistic and not too long for any planned changes to feel 'real' rather than hypothetically possible in a distant future.

2.22 In addition to the online survey that focussed on the quantifiable effects of the campaign, we developed a qualitative topic guide and undertook three 30-minute interviews with new users of the BtB webpage. These interviews gathered in-depth information on the topics covered in the online survey, investigating *how* changes to M&L practices were implemented (or expected to be) and *how* impacts on tangible outcomes would be realised. The interviews tested the routes to impact laid out in our theory of change and triangulated the evidence from the online survey with qualitative analysis.

2.23 As anticipated, recruiting for in-depth interviews proved to be difficult. To stimulate responses, prospective participants were offered an incentive – a small donation on their behalf to a charity of their choice. As a result, we were able to complete three interviews. These were developed into summary case studies that were designed to be illustrative of the effects of the campaign and demonstrate how future impacts may occur. The case studies are presented in Annex B.

Descriptive analysis of outcomes and Monte Carlo analysis of possible impacts

2.24 Following completion of fieldwork, we carried out a descriptive analysis of the responses to the e-survey, cross-checked them with monitoring data on online activity at BtB's webpage and triangulated with insights collected during in-depth interviews. The small sample size prevented us from carrying out any formal econometric analysis (e.g. estimating a set of regression models that would relate the levels of web activity to reported outcomes).[20] However, the findings informed our assumptions used in Monte Carlo simulations.

2.25 Monte Carlo analysis is a **simulation-based technique**, which allows for a sophisticated, systematic, and insightful handling of the uncertainties around key variables and findings. It is recognised in the latest edition of the HM Green Book[21] as a strong option for impact and value for money assessment when there is a large amount of uncertainty around the inputs for the analysis. Instead of relying on specific values as inputs into the impact model, the MC approach uses **ranges of possible values**.

2.26 In the context of this evaluation, instead of considering only the average intent to adopt new M&L practices as a result of the campaign observed among the survey respondents, we used the entire distribution of survey responses. Consequently, our impact estimates reflect the variation in outcomes, inherent imprecision in the measurement of behaviours, and provide a more complete and nuanced representation of the Super Leaders' impact.

2.27 Likewise, the Monte Carlo simulation technique allowed us to take into account the uncertainty associated with predicting the actual change in M&L behaviour from intended changes and apply optimism bias adjustments. Finally, it also enabled us to consider the uncertainty in the link between the adoption of new M&L practices and future business

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[20] Such analysis can provide invaluable insight into which routes to impact described in the theory of change is the most prominent. Therefore, we recommend carrying out this work in future similar evaluations, sample size permitting.
[21] The Green Book (publishing.service.gov.uk)

performance identified in the literature by considering reported confidence intervals alongside point estimates.

2.28 Figure 2-2 illustrates the impact model used to assess possible impacts of the Super Leaders campaign in a form of a flow chart. It demonstrates how evidence from academic literature and data from our primary research were combined to obtain estimates of possible uplift in productivity attributable to the Super Leaders campaign.

2.29 The procedure for estimating productivity impacts consisted of four steps set out in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Steps in impact estimation

Step	Description

1. Assessment of the **potential** to improve M&L practices	• For each type of M&L practice - Target Setting (TS), Work Organisation (WO) and Human Resources (HR) - a baseline value (between 0 and 10) was drawn from the distribution observed in the survey sample[22]
	 • The value was interpreted as a % of the best possible outcome
	  ➢ For example, 6 was interpreted as 60% of the maximum possible M&L score for that type of practice
	  ➢ The maximum value of the combined M&L index was 13, with TS practices accounting for 6 points, WO – 3 points, and HR – 4 points
	 • The potential for improvement was determined as the gap between the baseline and the best possible score
	  ➢ For instance, a baseline score of 6 would leave 40% for improvement
	  ➢ This 40% would then be converted to the maximum potential improvement in M&L index points via simple multiplication: $40\% \times$ max score (e.g. 6 in the case of TS practices).

2. Assessment of **expected** improvement in the M&L index	• A set of assumptions was made on how much of the gap between the baseline and best possible scores the respondent will bridge if they intend to implement substantial, moderate or minor changes
	  ➢ These assumptions are outlined in section 5
	 • A value for the reduction in the gap was then drawn from a distribution that reflected the proportions of the sample indicating they were planning each of the degrees of change (substantial, moderate or minor)
	 • This planned gap reduction was further corrected by the score reflecting the difficulty to implement change. The difficulty correction value was also drawn from a distribution observed among survey participants
	  ➢ For example, a value of 6 would be interpreted as 'only 60% on the planned gap reduction will take place'
	 • The result of this step was an expected improvement in the M&L index (obtained by combining the expected reductions in the gaps for individual types of practices).

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[22] The list of continuous distributions used to approximate survey findings can be found in Annex A:.

| Step	Description
3. Estimation of the potential impact on productivity	• The expected improvement in M&L practices was translated into a potential improvement in productivity • The estimate for the productivity uplift from a one-point improvement in the M&L index was drawn from the distribution that reflected the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals reported by Forth and Bryson.[23]
4. Obtaining a **distribution** of potential impacts	• Steps 1-3 were replicated 5,000 times[24] • Each repetition can be interpreted as a simulation of the impact on an SME that was exposed to the campaign • The result is a **distribution of possible impacts on productivity** (presented and interpreted in Section 5).

Source: SQW

2.30 One of the key advantages of using Monte Carlo modelling was that it allowed us to assess the relative likelihood of all possible outcomes (see section 5). A more basic sensitivity analysis would involve considering the most and least conservative estimates and may miss out on additional insight into the *policy* significance of the effects (as opposed to statistical significance). As discussed above, it is reasonable to expect that for the majority of SMEs the effect of the campaign is negligible. This would imply that from a purely statistical point of view the effects are "not significant". However, if the presence of a 'tail' of businesses for which the impacts are predicted to be substantial is discovered, this can demonstrate the policy significance of a 'light touch' intervention such as the Super Leaders campaign.

2.31 The following section provides an overview of the campaign: it sets out the logic model and theory of change and assesses the level of activity generated by the campaign on the BtB's webpage.

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[23] It should be noted that the estimates of the link between M&L practices and productivity are not causal. Meaning that M&L practices and productivity may affect each other. However, we consider a robust link, even if not causal, to be enough for the purposes of the evaluation. Ultimately, if there is a feedback loop from productivity to M&L practices, this will not cause negative impacts from the campaign. The estimate of the relationship may be biased since if the reverse link exists the estimated coefficients represent a weighted average of the effects flowing in both directions (with unknown weights). We do not consider this to be a major concern for this project since we are using the full distribution of possible values for the link around the point estimate and therefore would be less affected by the bias.

[24] The number of replications was chosen: a) to reflect the conceivable population of all SMEs that participated in the campaign, including those blind to the evaluation team, b) considering required computational time.

Figure 2-2: Monte Carlo impact model
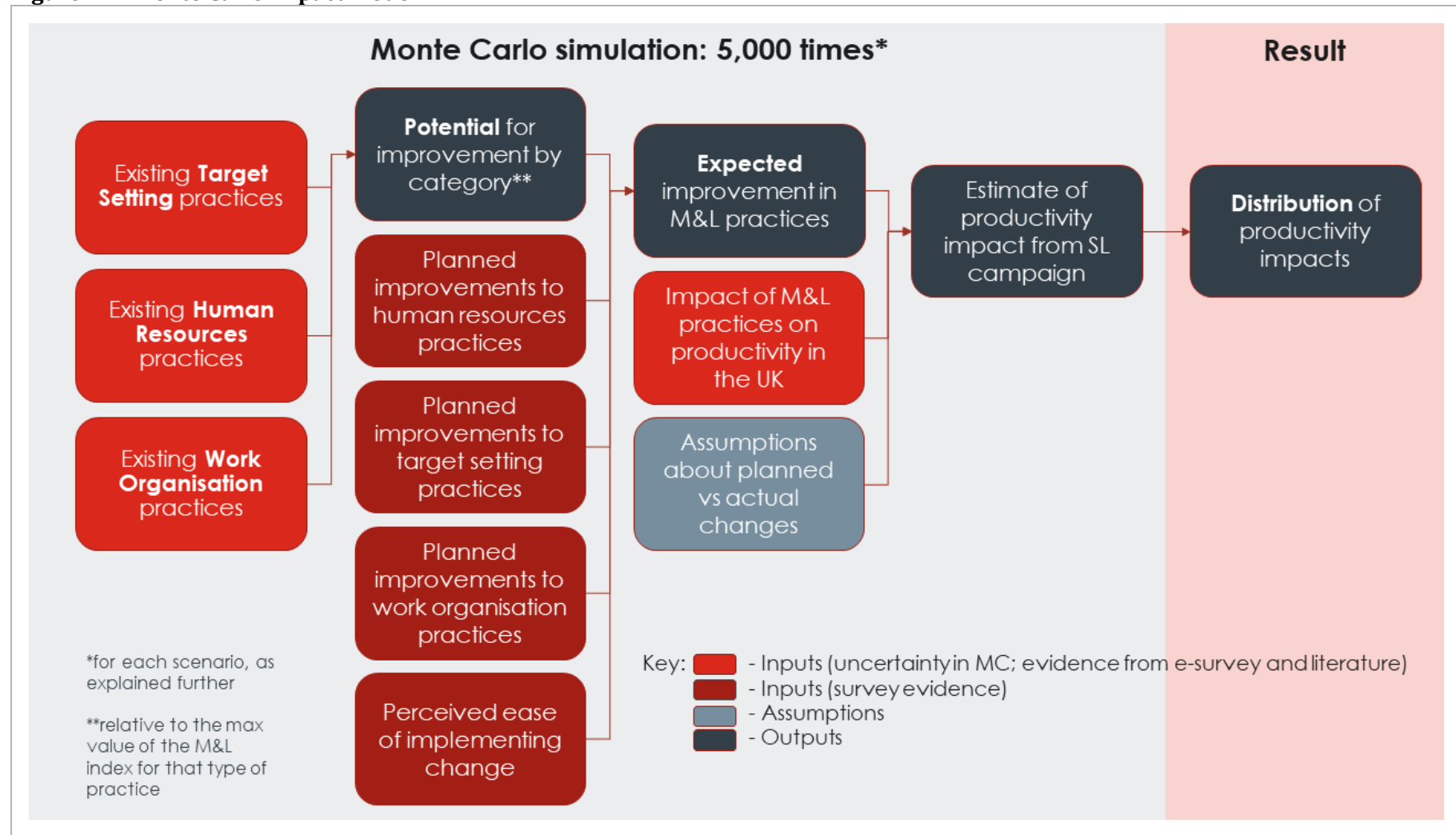
Source: SQW

3. Overview of the campaign

Summary

- Super Leaders was a social media campaign run by Be the Business towards the end of 2021. Its main objective was to raise awareness of SMEs about BtB and their work and expand the userbase of business leaders seeking to improve the productivity of their businesses.

- The key outputs for the campaign included increased traffic on the BtB webpage, take-up of their offerings and a growing number of active users. Key outcomes included greater awareness of BtB's activities, recognition of the importance of M&L practices, deeper understanding of existing practices by participants and adoption of new ones.

- The campaign cannot lead to any productivity improvements directly; however, it was expected to act as a catalyst for changing behaviours which in turn will make SMEs more productive.

- The campaign attracted c. 500 new registrations, falling short of expectations. It generated modest activity from new users – four visits to the BtB website on average, with 20% coming back five and more times.

- At the time of the evaluation, there was limited evidence of further engagement with downloadable materials and take-up of BtB's offerings – five different users downloading PDFs and another five enquired about mentoring support. However, these figures are likely to increase with time.

3.1   Super Leaders was a social media campaign run by Be the Business from November 2021 to January 2022. Its main goal was to drive registration to the BtB website; raise awareness of BtB and their activities; and expand the 'userbase' of SMEs seeking to improve their productivity. The campaign was delivered through a social media advertisement and was expected to generate thousands new registrations on the BtB webpage.

3.2   The campaign was designed to have mass appeal to attract as many people to the website as possible and ensure retention. The customer journey included taking a short mini-quiz that matched them to a fictional Super Leader based on a segmentation of SMEs undertaken by BtB earlier in 2021.[25] To increase the number of registrations and the likelihood of further interaction with BtB's materials, the results of the quiz were revealed only once the

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[25] SME segmentation white paper (BtB, 2021).

participant created an online account on BtB's web page. In addition, all registered 'users' entered a prize draw – they had a chance to win an iPad.

3.3   The segmentation work uncovered that in contrast to a common assumption, 46% of business owners do not seek to grow their business. Rather helping them to improve operations within their current size can lead to substantial benefits for the economy, and to achieve this goal individual tendencies of SME leaders from each of the six identified segments (briefly summarised in Table 3-1) should be taken into account.

Table 3-1: SME segmentation and Super Leaders

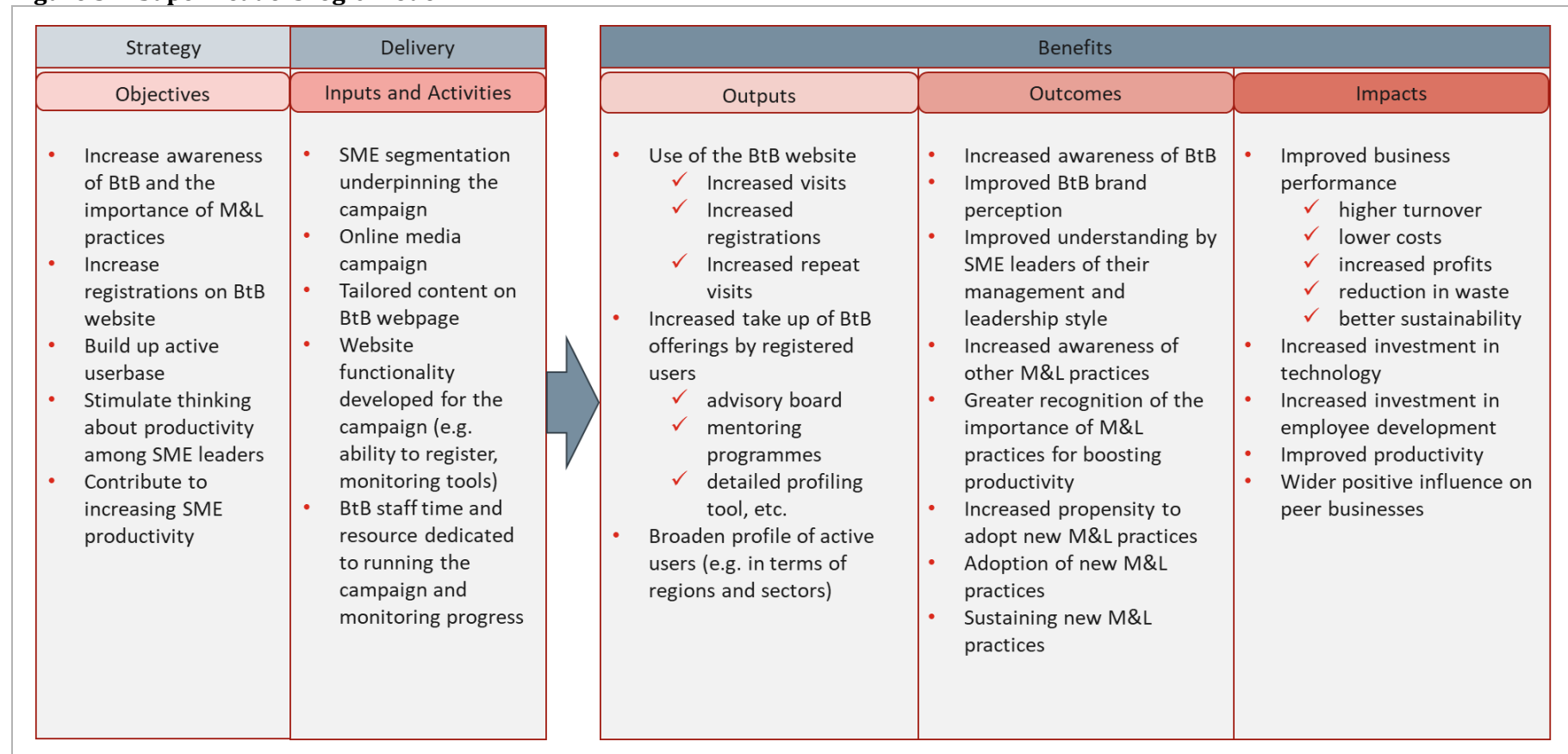| Segment (% of business leaders)	Super Leader	Short description
Collective Adventurers (22%)	Agent Action	Innovators and risk-takers who embrace ambiguity and thrive in challenging situations
Culture Creators (20%)	Growth Rider	Supportive leaders who champion their employees and provide a clear and detailed vision for the future
Determined Drivers (18%)	The Determinator	Tenacious doers who believe strong leadership is the only way to success. Newer leaders bursting with confidence but still learning the ropes
Intuitive Deciders (16%)	The Instinct	Lone wolf leaders with a strong sense of self and confidence in their own decisions, who naturally step up to lead the pack
Methodical Specialists (15%)	Dr Know	Specialists who value depth and expertise and take a strengths-based approach to leadership
Careful Collaborators (10%)	Hivemind	Wary leaders who value reassurance from others and prefer to stick with things they know.

Source: BtB

Logic model and theory of change

3.4   The logic model and theory of change behind the Super Leaders campaign are presented in Figure 3-1: and Figure 3-2. These set out the objectives, inputs, activities in delivering the campaign, as well as the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. Importantly, the potential pathways to achieving benefits are described. As such, the logic model and theory of change provide the structure for assessing the success of the campaign against its objectives.

3.5   The **inputs** included the SME segmentation work that underpinned the Super Leaders quiz, developing **tailored content** and new functionality for the BtB website (including registration functionality), staff time to run the campaign and monitor progress. These inputs led to the main **outputs** from the campaign, including: the number of website visits, registrations (following the quiz), the volume of activity in various parts of the site, repeat

visits (i.e. the increase in active userbase/ number of retained 'customers') and an increase in take-up of BtB offerings by registered users.

3.6 From the target audience's perspective, **key outcomes** of the campaign were: increased awareness of BtB and their philosophy and behavioural changes in M&L practices (assuming a media campaign can trigger changes in behaviours). In terms of the three stages of behavioural change (attitude, intention and changes in observed behaviour), the first one corresponds to SME leaders' improved understanding of their approaches to M&L, awareness of other M&L practices and their importance for achieving business objectives (whether it is growth, profitability or any other goal). A change in attitude is expected to be followed by intention – an increased propensity to adopt new M&L practices. With time, this will translate into an observed change in behaviour, adoption of new M&L practices, and sustaining the changes.

3.7 **In the long term, the outcomes described above are expected to lead to impacts**: improvements in business performance and productivity; and a growing network of BtB 'activists' who actively think about productivity issues and share their knowledge and experience with customers and suppliers. This, however, assumes that SMEs are capable of implementing and *sustaining* change which may not necessarily be the case if, for example, the learning from the campaign and subsequent activities is not absorbed in a systematic way or businesses fail to retain people.

3.8 Routes to impacts described above will likely vary substantially between individuals and no 'journey' may be the same. However, assuming that: SMEs lack understanding of the importance of M&L practices for productivity; they need help in achieving their goals; their interest in the campaign is not fully down to the incentives provided by BtB for registering, it is expected that the more interaction a person has with BtB, their webpage and programmes, the stronger and/or quicker the effects will be.

3.9 At any stage after seeing the Super Leaders advertisement (i.e. before taking the quiz, registering, browsing, signing up for BtB programmes) people may choose to undertake independent research (online or through other channels available to them) or not to take any further steps. This may be due to their perception of the website's content and functionality, or a preference for alternative support available elsewhere. However, this does not mean that they will not experience any of the benefits, though the scale of them is likely to be smaller than for those who stay engaged with BtB, i.e. explore the webpage, come back to it, sign up for mentoring, advisory boards and other services.

3.10 The logic model and theory of change present a range of possible outcomes and routes to impact. However, as mentioned earlier, when quantifying the effects, the evaluation had a narrower focus on long-term impacts, specifically on productivity improvements. **To avoid any misinterpretation of the result presented in the following sections we emphasise that the Super Leaders campaign is not expected to, and cannot, lead to productivity improvements directly. Rather, it can act as a catalyst for changing behaviours which in turn can make SMEs more productive.**
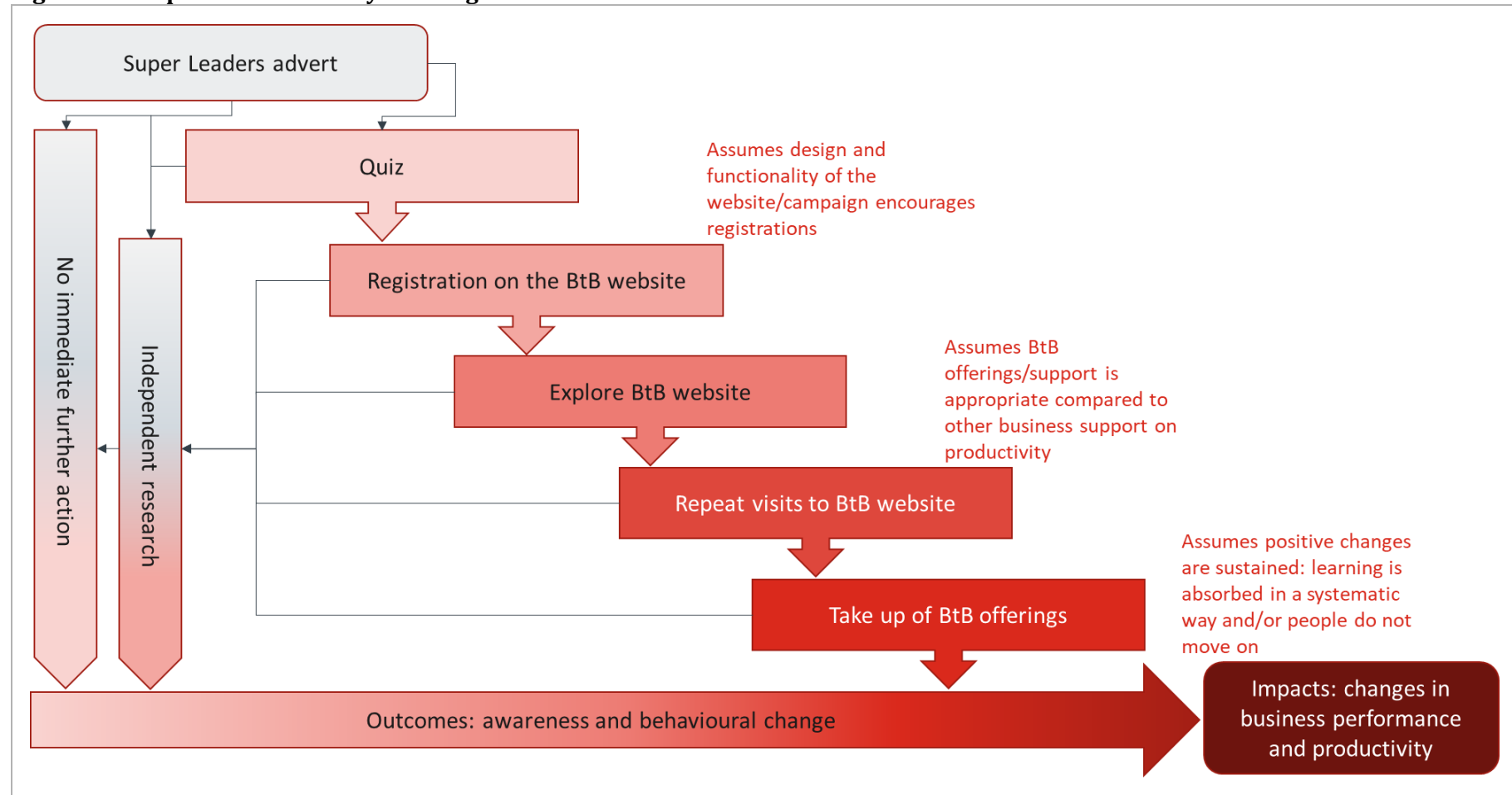
3.11 The theory of change described above rests on several key assumptions about the campaign's delivery and effects which are summarised in Figure 3-1. These assumptions, alongside the theory of change itself and methodological considerations discussed in Section 2, informed our design of research tools.

3.12 The following subsection presents findings from our analysis of monitoring data regarding The campaign's performance in expanding the BtB 'userbase'.

Figure 3-1:Super Leaders logic model

Strategy	Delivery	Benefits		
Objectives	Inputs and Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts

Objectives
- Increase awareness of BtB and the importance of M&L practices
- Increase registrations on BtB website
- Build up active userbase
- Stimulate thinking about productivity among SME leaders
- Contribute to increasing SME productivity

Inputs and Activities
- SME segmentation underpinning the campaign
- Online media campaign
- Tailored content on BtB webpage
- Website functionality developed for the campaign (e.g. ability to register, monitoring tools)
- BtB staff time and resource dedicated to running the campaign and monitoring progress

Outputs
- Use of the BtB website
  - ✓ Increased visits
  - ✓ Increased registrations
  - ✓ Increased repeat visits
- Increased take up of BtB offerings by registered users
  - ✓ advisory board
  - ✓ mentoring programmes
  - ✓ detailed profiling tool, etc.
- Broaden profile of active users (e.g. in terms of regions and sectors)

Outcomes
- Increased awareness of BtB
- Improved BtB brand perception
- Improved understanding by SME leaders of their management and leadership style
- Increased awareness of other M&L practices
- Greater recognition of the importance of M&L practices for boosting productivity
- Increased propensity to adopt new M&L practices
- Adoption of new M&L practices
- Sustaining new M&L practices

Impacts
- Improved business performance
  - ✓ higher turnover
  - ✓ lower costs
  - ✓ increased profits
  - ✓ reduction in waste
  - ✓ better sustainability
- Increased investment in technology
- Increased investment in employee development
- Improved productivity
- Wider positive influence on peer businesses

Source: SQW and BtB

Figure 3-2: Super Leaders theory of change

Source: SQW; Key: red text indicates 'breakpoints' and outlines assumptions necessary for the theory of change to occur. Further assumptions and alternative explanations are presented in Table 3-2

Table 3-2: Key assumptions behind the theory of change

Strategy	Delivery	Benefits
• There is a link between M&L practices and better performance/productivity	• The campaign reaches the right target audience	• Media campaigns can stimulate behavioural change
• SMEs lack awareness of M&L practices and their importance	• Information in the advertisement is accessible	• SMEs are capable of implementing change
• SMEs need help with achieving their goals	• The quiz results are 'accurate' and reflect the participants' types	• Support provided through various programmes and channels helps businesses achieve their goals
	• Materials on the website are relevant to the target audience	

Source: SQW

3.13 There are also alternative/complementary explanations for how outcomes are achieved:

- Observed effects are fully due to independent research by SME leaders (online and through their networks)

- Internal business strategies and plans influence outcomes and impacts

- External economic and market conditions influence the outcomes

- Participants' interest in the campaign is fully explained by the incentives BtB provide for registering.

Evidence from monitoring data

3.14 By January 2022, the **Super Leaders campaign generated 512 unique registrations at bethebusiness.com.** This is substantially lower than the approximate number of registrations predicted by the team designing the campaign[26] and raises the question of the best way to reach the target audience in the future. One change that could be considered is the platform for advertising, e.g. switching to LinkedIn. However, it is possible that a different format of the campaign could lead to better results. Two interviewees noted that a personality quiz "may not be for everyone", and it would be worth considering organising networking events and sharing invitations/information about them.

3.15 The campaign generated modest activity from the users it attracted – **on average, new users visited the website four times**. Although half of them visited once or twice, there was a tail of 111 'active users' who visited the website more than five times. Three of the registrations

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[26] This was outsourced by BtB to a specialist provider.

were BtB ambassadors and these were 'hyperactive' outliers with 100+ page views. Figure 3-3 presents the distribution of website usage, excluding the outliers.

Figure 3-3: Page views on bethebusiness.com by Super Leader users
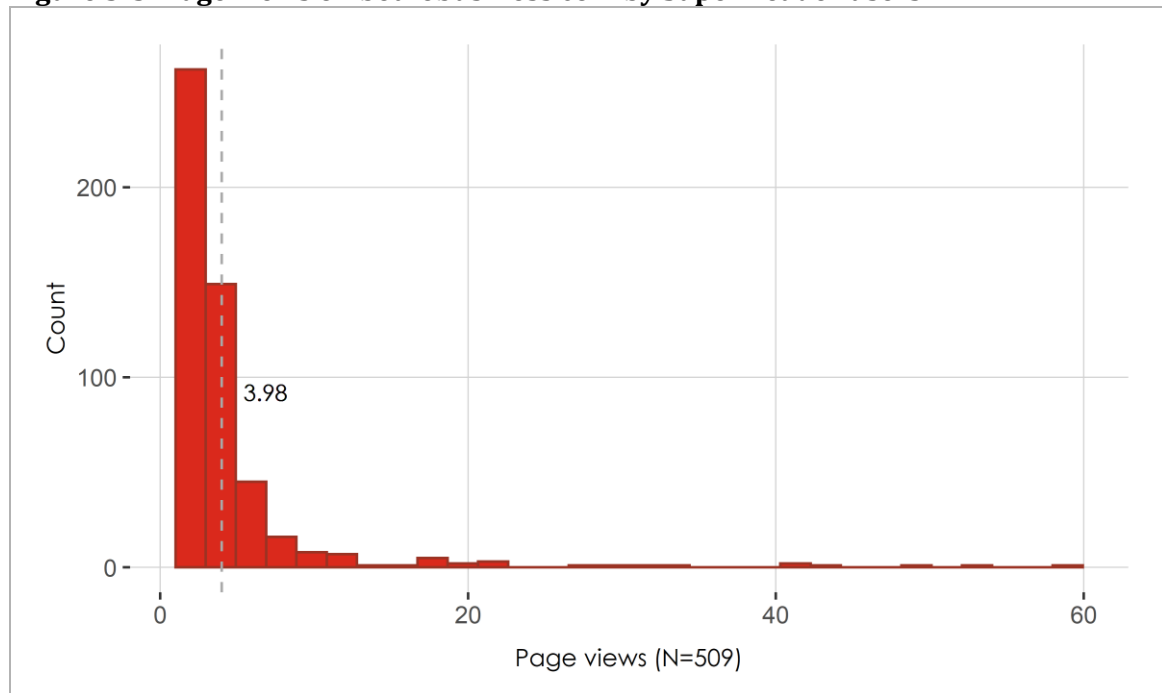
Note: The dashed line represents the mean. Source: SQW

3.16 Among the registrations, Hivemind was the most common leader type – 152 users (41%). Notably, Hivemind was based on Be the Business' segmentation of SME leaders as Careful Collaborators – the smallest segment with an estimated population share of only 10%.

3.17 One explanation for the difference between the predicted and actual population share for this leader type might be that when users took the quiz multiple times, the monitoring data recorded only the last result. It is possible that Hivemind was perceived as the most appealing type by survey participants – a point of view supported by one of our interviewees.

3.18 Alternatively, this may be interpreted as an indication of the presence of a selection bias. Hiveminds could be more likely to be attracted by a personality quiz, especially considering the second most common type among new users, Growth Rider, was 'selected' half as often. This further reinforces our decision to improve the external validity of our results by utilising Monte Carlo simulations in impact analysis and considering a wide range of possible outcomes rather than focusing on the most common or average outcome.

Figure 3-4: Super Leader type distribution
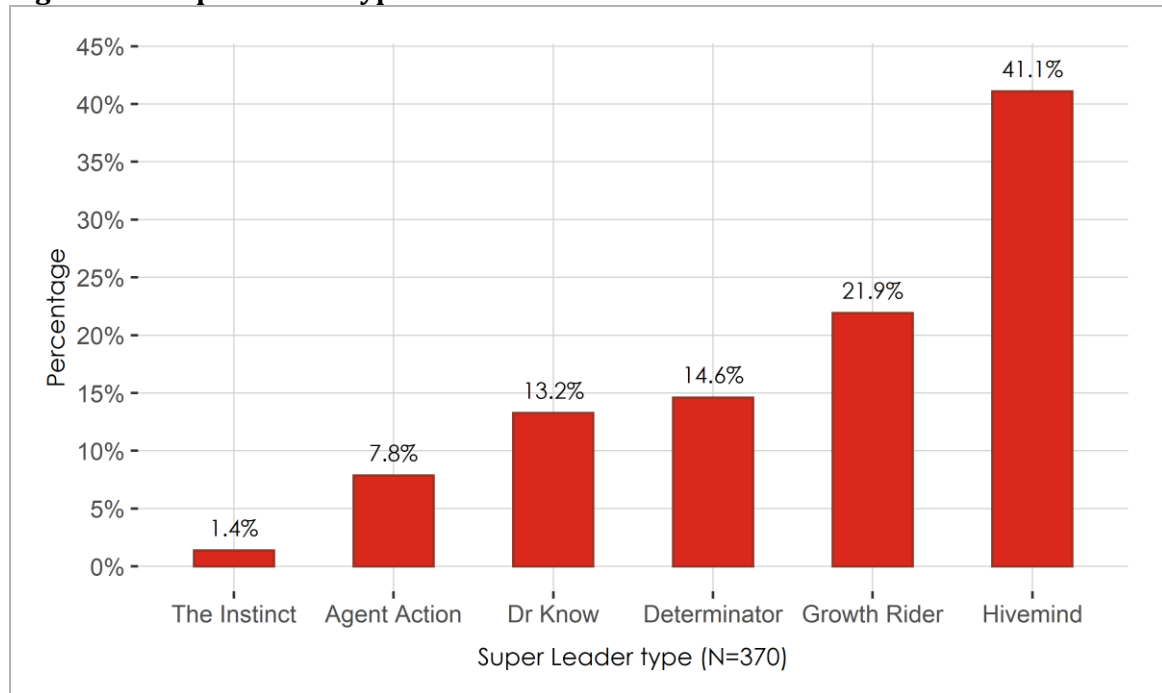
Source: SQW

3.19 At the time of the analysis, there was limited evidence of further engagement with downloadable materials and take-up of BtB offerings. By January 2022, 1% of new users (five) accessed information about Be the Business' Mentoring for Growth programme and another 1% (five other users) downloaded various PDFs. However, these figures are likely to increase with time. As we demonstrate in Section 4, there is evidence to suggest that the campaign successfully created a 'mental anchor' and individuals exposed to it are likely to come to BtB when they need help with their business goals.

4. Primary research findings

Summary

- The majority (52%, n=27) of respondents learned about BtB from the survey, and 40% were very likely to consider BtB when they need help with business goals.

- Respondents ranked their pre-campaign M&L practices as 'fairly strong' c. 60% of the 'best possible' value of the M&L index compared to c. 40% in the wider business population.

- **60% were planning to implement changes to their M&L practices as a result of the campaign**.

- The campaign succeeded in stimulating discussions about M&L practices within businesses as well as among leaders of different SMEs, potentially generating positive spillover effects.

- The quality of the Super Leader quiz and other materials available on BtB's webpage was considered to be high. There is demand for the active promotion of networking events and knowledge exchange.

4.1 This section summarises findings from the primary research – online survey and qualitative interviews.

Survey findings

4.2 A total of 55 new users registered during or after the campaign opted out from further communication reducing the population of contactable individuals to 457. Of these, 27 responded to our invitation to fill in a five-minute online survey. This constitutes a 6% response rate and falls within our expectations for online surveys, suggesting that the small sample available for the analysis was primarily a result of the lower-than-expected response to the campaign itself rather than due to the design of research tools or strategy used to reach out to contacts.

4.3 Out of the 27 responses, six were partial, two were submitted by 'hyperactive' outliers mentioned in the previous section and one represented a 'negative outlier' – they submitted a 'blanket' most negative response to all questions. Partial responses were used to maximise the sample size available in each question. Both the 'hyperactive' and negative outliers were excluded from the analysis of the shapes and characteristics of distributions in order not to skew the assumptions used for impact.

SQW

4.4 Relative to the population of all new users attracted by the campaign, the survey participants were c. 50% more active with a mean number of page views equal to 6.4 (compared to 4 in the full population Figure 3-3 and Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1: Survey sample – page views on the bethebusiness.com website
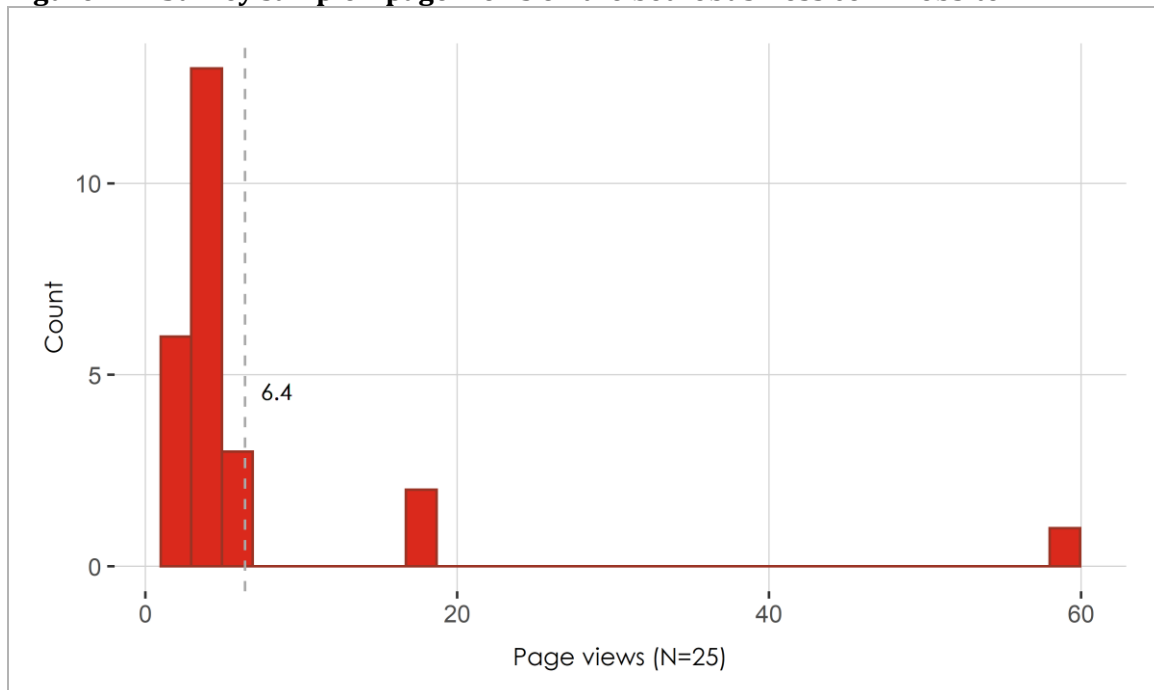
Note: outliers removed. Source: SQW analysis

4.5 The survey sample distribution of Super Leader types is overall in line with the population distribution presented in Figure 3-4 above, though there was a somewhat higher proportion of "Dr Know". The survey sample of Super Leader types is shown in Figure 4-2 below.

Figure 4-2: Survey sample – distribution of Super Leader types
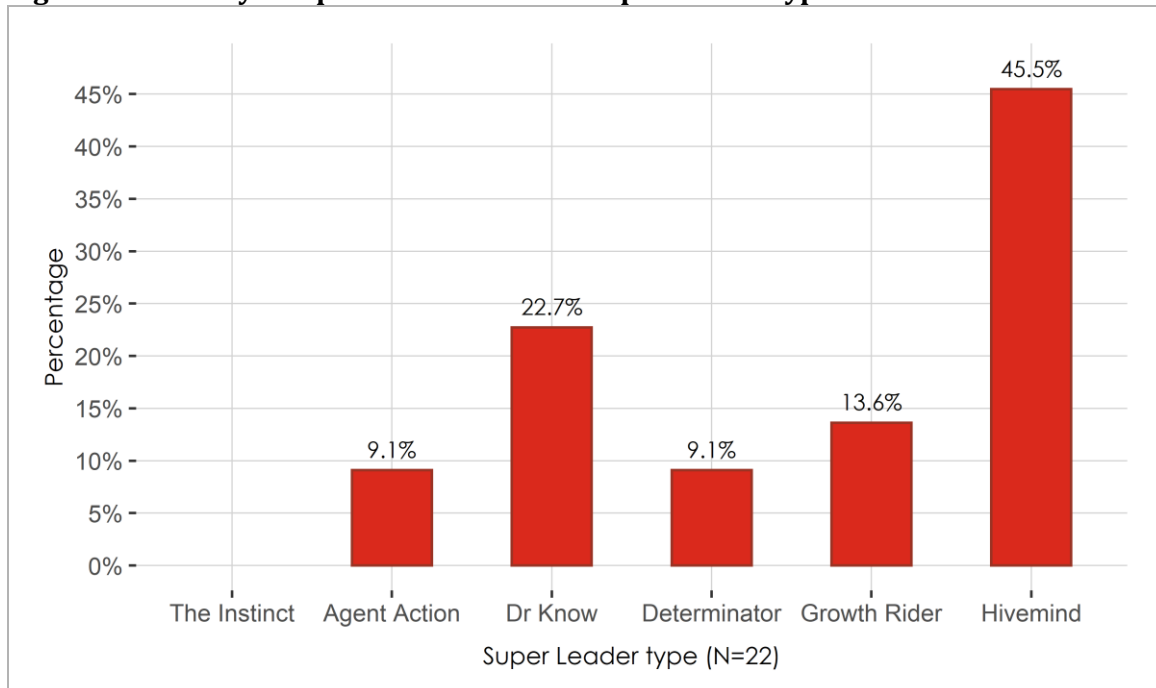
Source: SQW

4.6 **Of the survey respondents, 52% learned of Be the Business from the Super Leader quiz**, 35% were already aware of Be the Business, and 13% were not aware of it even after completing the quiz (Figure 4-3). This shows that the quiz was able to attract a small majority of business leaders "new to Be the Business".

Figure 4-3: Awareness of Be the Business
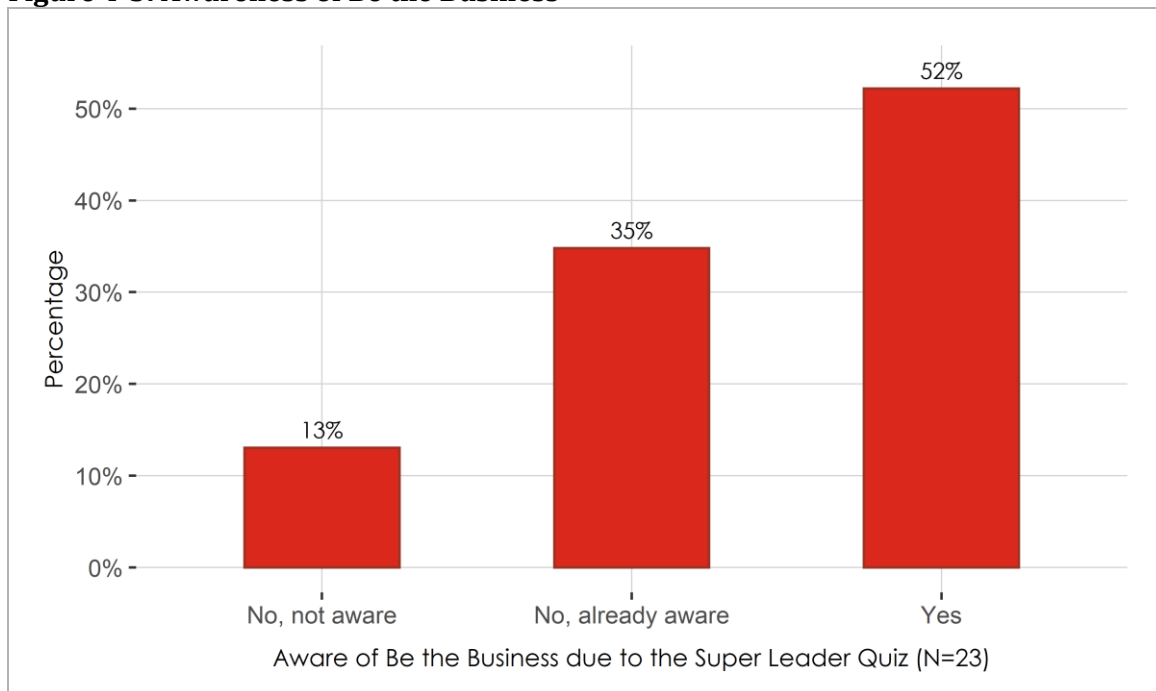
Source: SQW

4.7 The respondents had a positive view of Be the Business and were on average likely to consider Be the Business support and resources for help with their business challenges. Out of 10, the average response for the likelihood of considering Be the Business for support was 6.38 and 50% of businesses answered with 7/10 or higher (Figure 4-4).

**Figure 4-4: Likelihood of considering BtB for support**
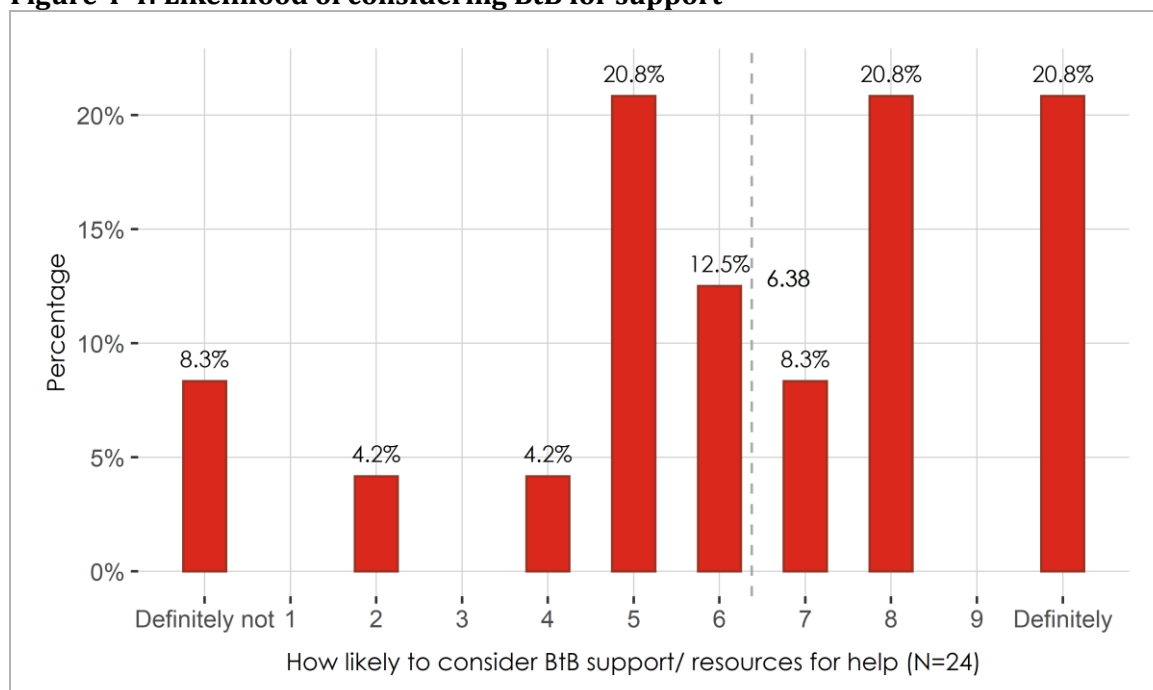
Source: SQW

4.8 On average, the businesses surveyed were optimistic about the extent of existing M&L practices at their organisations. Figure 4-5 to Figure 4-7 summarise the survey respondents' rating of their existing practices on a scale from 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The dashed line represents the sample average. As explained in section 2, M&L practices were categorised into three groups (Target Setting, Work Organisation, and Human Resources) to align with Forth Bryson (2019). Each category was introduced to survey participants with a set of exemplary practices.

4.9 The survey respondents rated their existing human resource practices the highest (average of 6.72/10) and their formal target setting practices the lowest (average of 6.52/10). Although there is little variation between the average response for each category, the shape of the distribution of responses varied considerably by category. This was taken into account during the analysis of possible impacts on productivity.
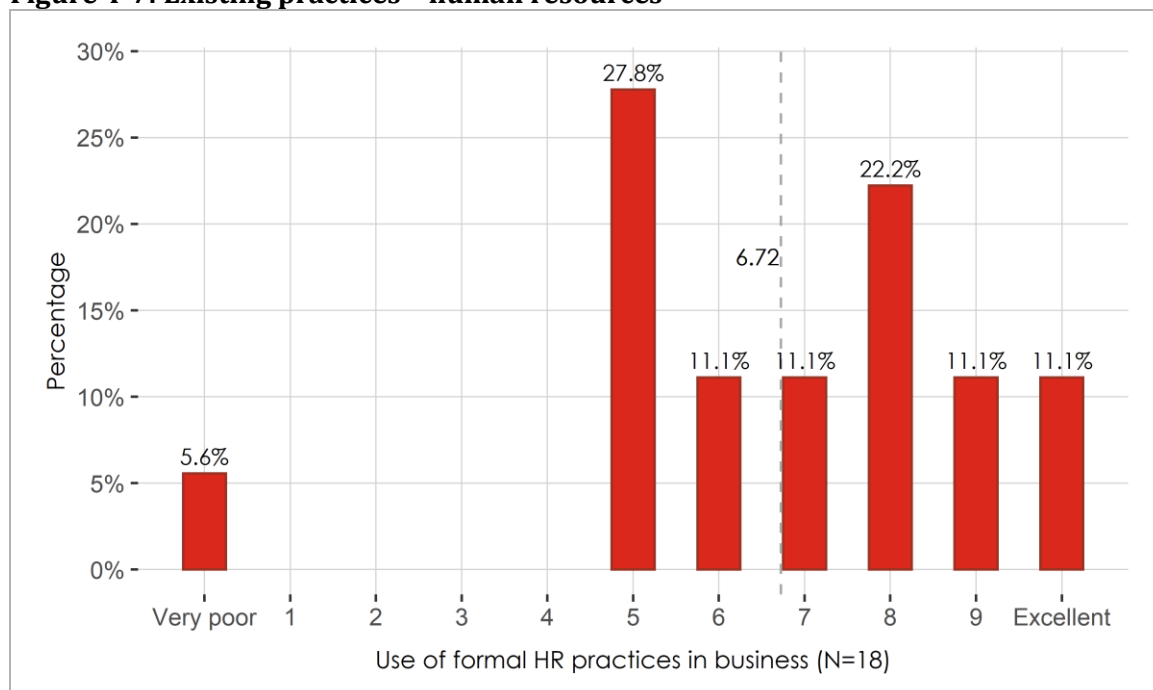
Figure 4-5: Existing practices – target setting
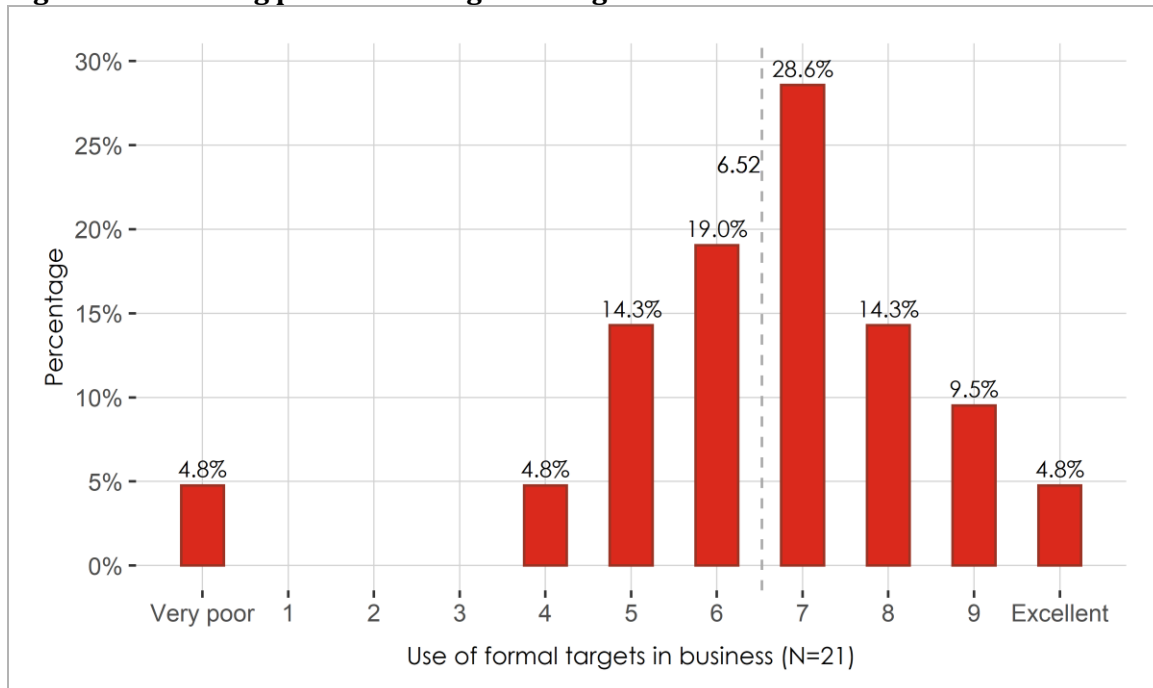
Source: SQW

Figure 4-6: Existing practices – work organisation

Source: SQW

SQW

Evaluation of the Super Leaders Campaign
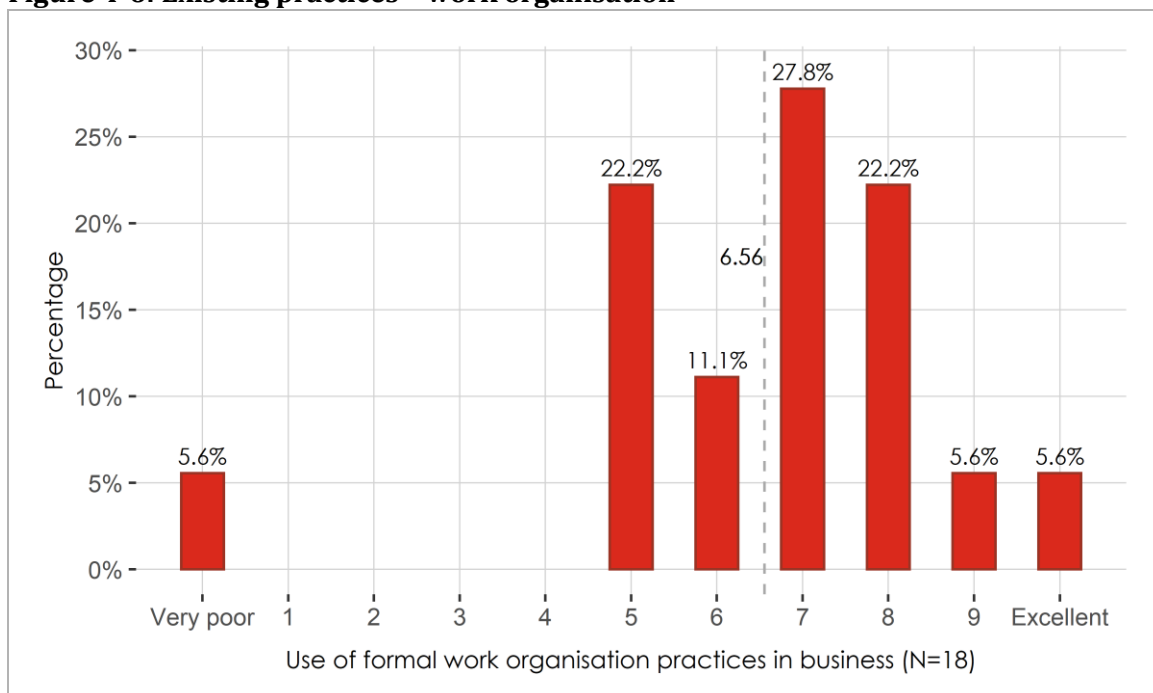
Figure 4-7: Existing practices – human resources

Source: SQW

4.10 Interestingly, compared to the wider business population considered by Forth and Bryson (2019), our survey respondents had a more positive overall view of the M&L practices at their organisations. The mean value of the M&L index for SMEs reported in the paper is c. 40%. The mean across all relevant questions in our survey is approximately 6.5/10 (or 65%). This could be another indication of a possible selection bias. However, we admit that the difference could also be down to the methodology – the academic paper used a more detailed factual assessment of existing practices, whereas we had to rely on a self-reported rating (partly because we had to keep the number of questions in the survey as low as possible to reduce attrition rates).

4.11 Figure 4-8 to Figure 4-10 summarise our survey respondents' intention to improve the M&L practices at their organisation due to taking the Super Leaders quiz. The intention to change is once again broken into the three categories used above. **Between 50% and 60% of respondents intended to introduce changes to their M&L practices due to the Super Leaders campaign**.

Figure 4-8: Intention to change target setting practices due to the Super Leaders campaign
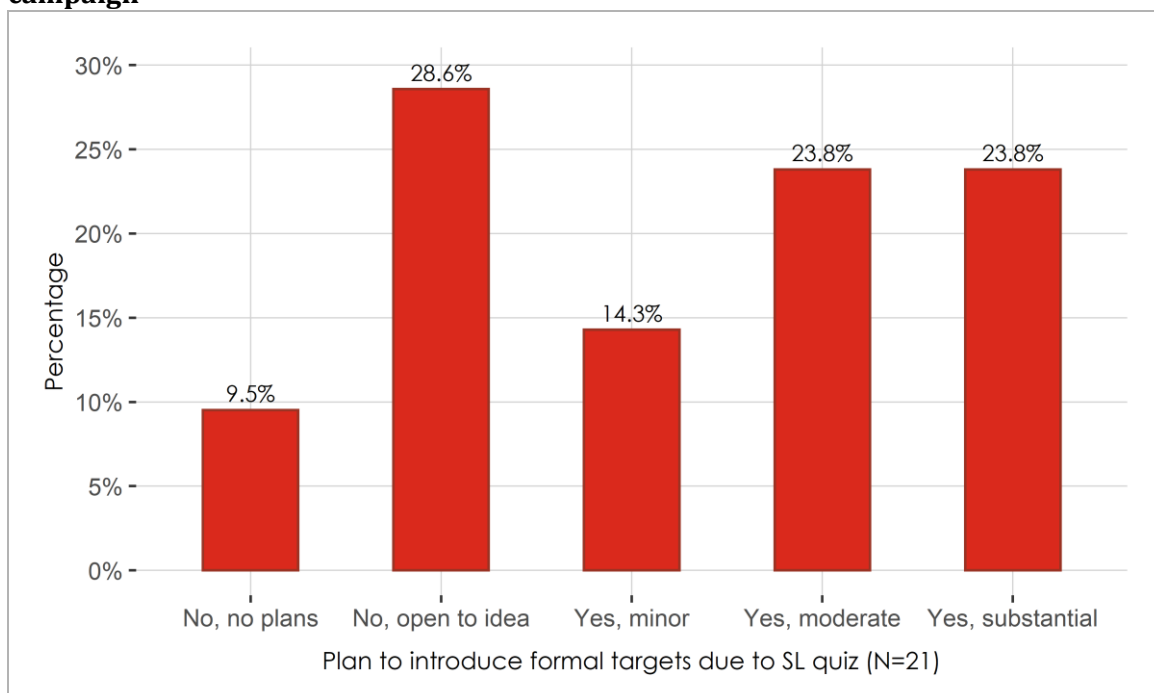
Source: SQW

**4.12** Target setting is the M&L category businesses were most often planning to improve – 60% of respondents indicated an intention to introduce at least minor changes. Work Organisation practices had a slightly smaller fraction of respondents demonstrating a willingness to change them – 58%. However, this category had the highest proportion of intended substantial changes (37% of respondents).

Figure 4-9: Intention to change work organisation practices due to the Super Leaders campaign
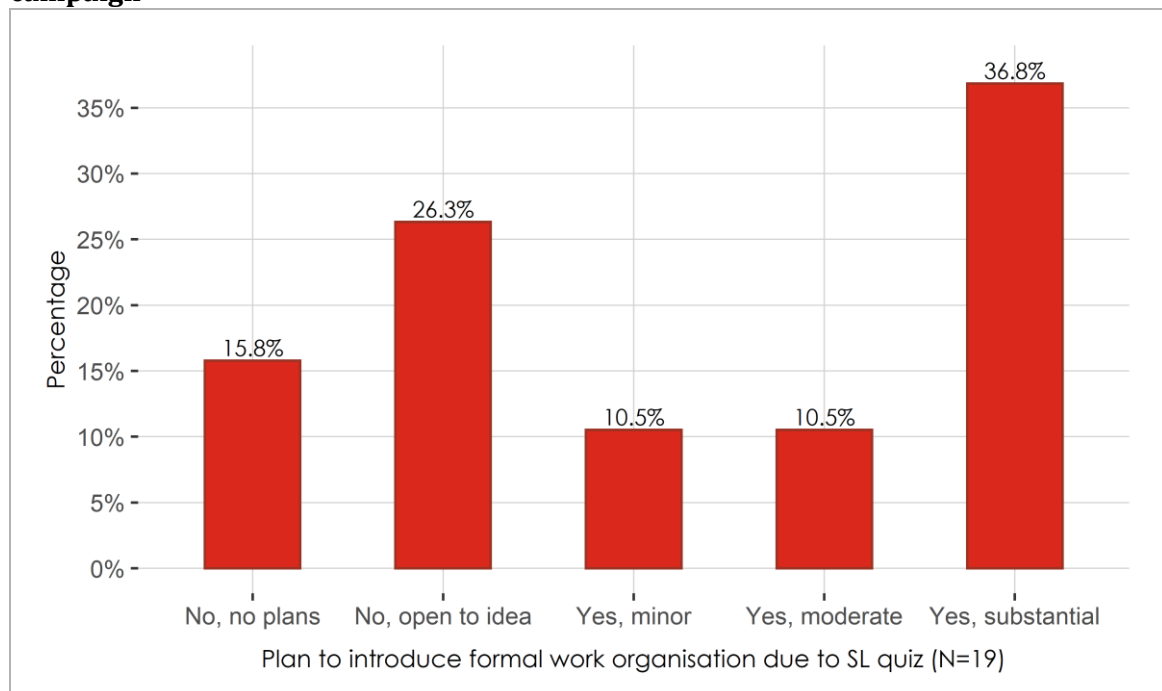
Source: SQW

**Figure 4-10: Intention to change work organisation practices due to the Super Leaders campaign**
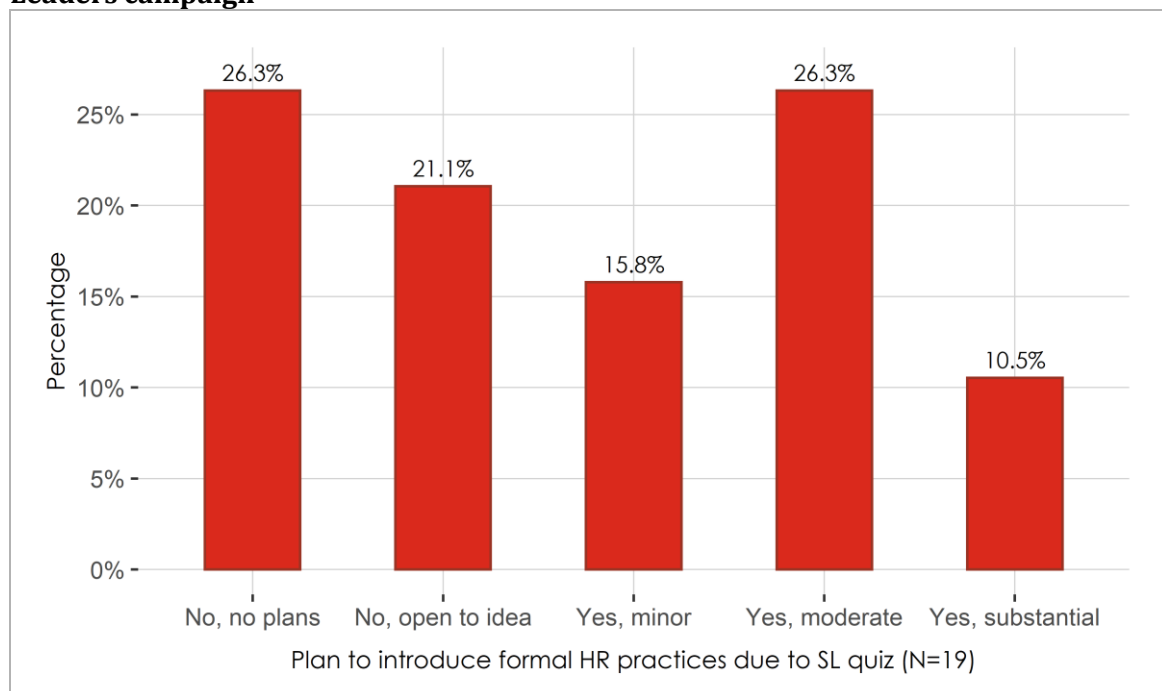
Source SQW

4.13 Out of the three categories, respondents were least likely to work on improving their HR practices. However, the response here was still overall in line with the other two categories, as 52% of respondents indicated an intention to introduce new practices.

Figure 4-11: Ease of implementing change in organisation
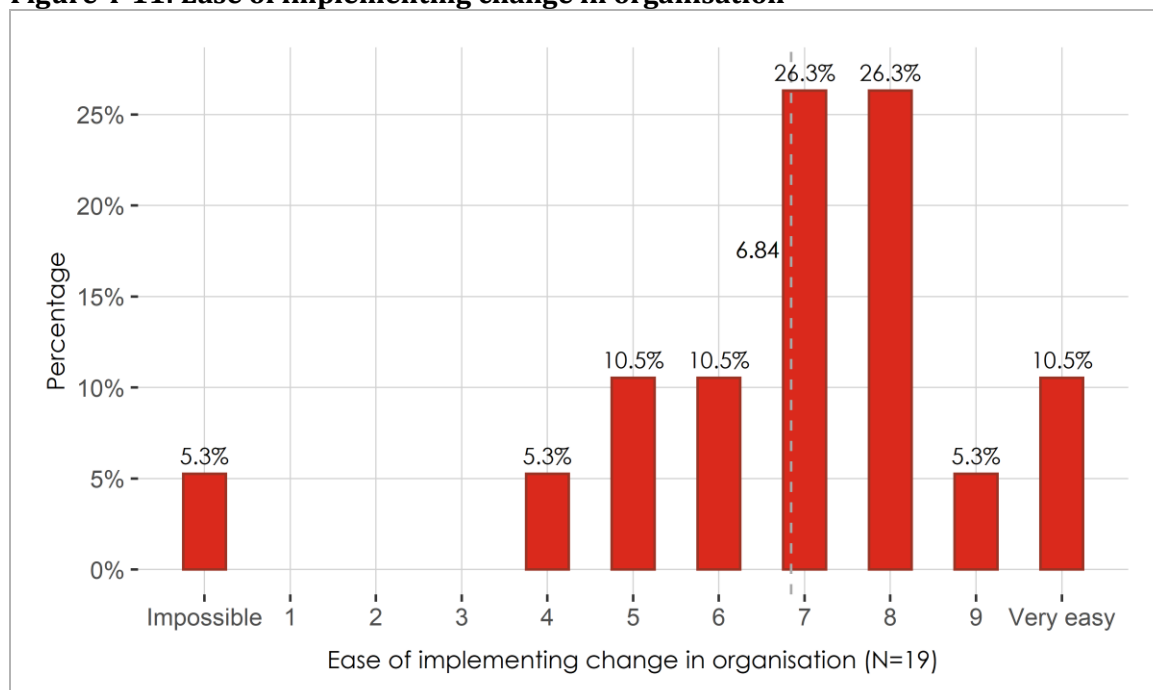
Source: SQW analysis

4.14 Finally, we asked respondents about the ease of implementing change in their organisation (Figure 4-11). On average, respondents had a positive view of their ability to initiate change in their organisation, reflecting the "business-leader" target group of the campaign.

Qualitative perspectives

4.15 There were three common themes raised during the qualitative interviews with individuals who took part in the campaign: a) the quality of the quiz itself and other BtB materials; b) routes to impact; c) future communications. (The case studies based on the interviews are presented in Annex B:).

4.16 The quiz was thought to be well designed with results resonating with participants and being in line with other personality tests that interviewees had taken before the Super Leader quiz. This format was also considered 'fresh' and more attractive than a "boring newsletter". However, when probed further for their views on how well-suited the format was for raising awareness of BtB, the common view was that personality tests "may not be for everyone."

4.17 Reaching out and expanding the audience was considered to be a very challenging task, especially because people are "tired of constant ads" and "would not click on one". However, one possible approach could be targeting businesses with a direct offer of something they want. Specifically, interviewees indicated that there was demand for knowledge exchange networks (in addition to existing mentoring programmes), where business leaders could share and get access to expertise without necessarily committing to a prolonged period of engagement with a particular programme. Having access to a "management toolset" co-

developed by members of BtB networks would also be a welcome addition to the range of "already excellent" materials.

4.18 The interviews also provided insights into specific ways in which the campaign was able to generate impact. For instance, the quiz stimulated thinking and discussions within businesses as well as between SME leaders (via local WhatsApp groups). One of the interviewees suggested that the quiz made them shift their attention from trying to improve technology and gaining access to more expertise to analysing how they could use the existing resources better.

5. Potential impacts

Summary

- Monte Carlo simulations were used to obtain a distribution of possible productivity benefits, showing their range and relative likelihood.

- The majority of assumptions behind the impact model were underpinned by the survey evidence and estimates from the literature on the link between M&L practices and productivity.

- Additional assumptions were introduced regarding the 'conversion rate' from intended to actual changes in M&L practices. These were modelled as three scenarios: optimistic, baseline and pessimistic and were also used as a tool for correcting the optimism bias.

- The obtained distributions are skewed – for many businesses, the impact is unlikely to be substantial (the most common outcome in the baseline scenario is predicted to be a 0.15% uplift in productivity over three years).

- **However, there is a long tail of firms that may experience considerable gains in productivity. Over three years, 50% of SMEs exposed to the campaign may experience productivity improvements exceeding 0.6%, driving the average impact up to 0.8%.**

5.1 This section presents the results of the Monte Carlo analysis of possible impacts and sets out the key assumptions behind the analysis.

Assumptions

5.2 To estimate possible future impacts of the Super Leaders campaign on productivity we used a Monte Carlo approach, following the methodology described in detail in Section 2. The survey findings provided evidence of the baseline position of participants and the extent of intended changes as a result of the campaign. This information, combined with statistical outputs presented in Forth and Bryson (2019), underpinned the distributional assumptions for the impact model (also described in Section 2). In other words, they determined the average, minimum and maximum values for almost all uncertain inputs into the model as well as their relative likelihoods. The specific distributions used in the analysis are described in Table A-1 (Annex A:).

5.3 However, additional assumptions were required to 'map' the degrees of intended changes (substantial, moderate and minor) into likely actual steps taken by SMEs. Table 5-1 below

represents the percent of potential change that will occur over three years under three scenarios: optimistic, baseline and pessimistic. These scenarios were constructed to also account for possible optimism bias in survey evidence (i.e. to include relatively conservative projections).

Table 5-1: Scenarios for conversion of intended into actual change

	Optimistic scenario	Baseline scenario	Pessimistic scenario
Substantial changes planned	70%	40%	20%
Moderate changes planned	45%	20%	12.5%
Minor changes planned	20%	10%	5%

Source: SQW

5.4 We ran the Monte Carlo simulation (5,000 repetitions) for each of the three scenarios. This allowed us to assess the sensitivity of results to these assumptions, considering this is the only input into the model not underpinned by primary research or evidence from existing academic literature.

Estimates for potential impacts on future productivity

5.5 **Table 5-2 presents our estimates of the mean (average), median[27] and mode (most common) impact of the Super Leaders campaign on the productivity of one SME over three years.**[28] The distributions are skewed – for many businesses, the impact is unlikely to be substantial (the most common outcome in the baseline scenario is predicted to be 0.15%). **However, there is a long tail of firms that may experience considerable gains in productivity. Over three years, 50% will potentially see productivity improvements exceeding 0.6%, driving the average impact up to 0.8%** (in the baseline scenario). This is further demonstrated in Figure 5-1.

5.6 We would like to emphasise one more time, that these **benefits were predicted to occur due to steps undertaken by SME leaders as a result of their behavioural change following the exposure to the campaign**. **The estimates do not represent an uplift in productivity from simply clicking on an online advertisement**. The impact model takes into account the fact that a large proportion of businesses will not take any further action and as a result will not experience any productivity effects attributable to the campaign.

Table 5-2: Average, median and mode predicted impacts on productivity over 3 years

	Optimistic scenario	Baseline scenario	Pessimistic scenario
Mean (average) impact	1.6%	0.8%	0.4%
Median impact	1.2%	0.6%	0.3%
Mode impact	0.3%	0.15%	0.01%

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[27] 50% of participants can be expected to experience a productivity uplift greater than this.

[28] Analysis was carried out in R. R Core Team (2021). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. URL https://www.R-project.org/.

Figure 5-1: Distributions of the potential impact on productivity over three years
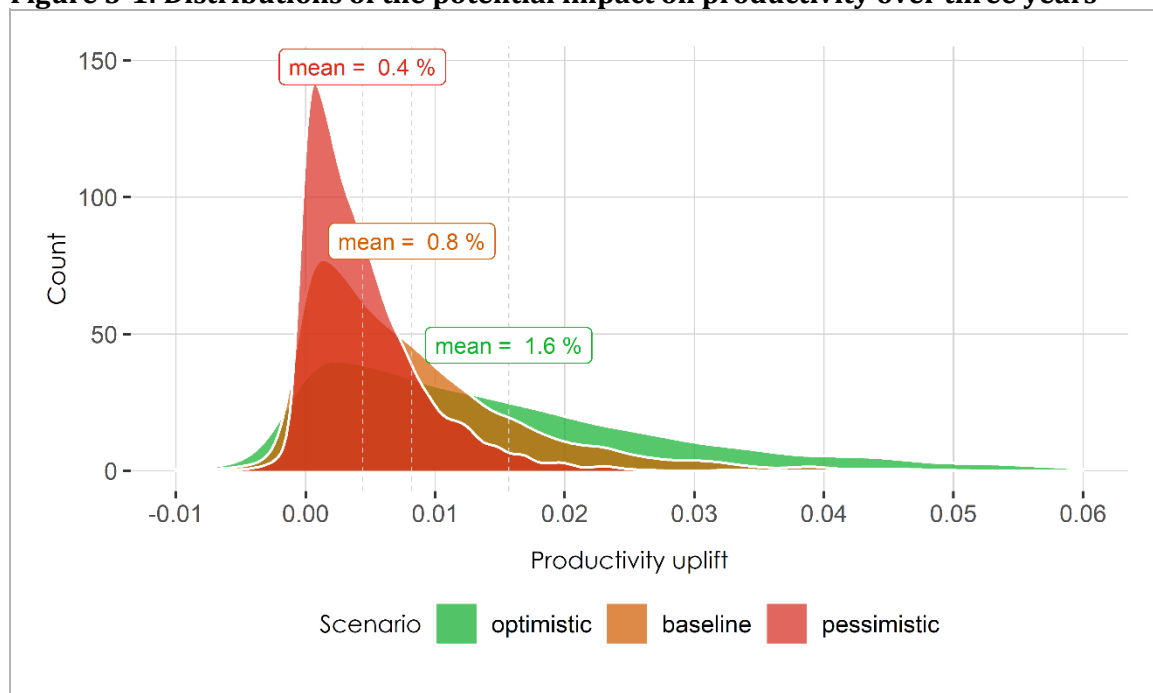
5.7 The 'height' of the distributions at a given point represents the relative likelihood of that value of impact. For example, out of the 5,000 replications for the baseline scenario, the mean outcome was observed c. 45 times.[29]

5.8 Even considering: the small number of attracted users; the small survey sample that underpinned the modelling assumptions; and potential biases (non-response and selection into undertaking the quiz), these estimates suggest the existence of sizeable potential benefits for a large proportion of businesses.

5.9 At this stage, a value for money analysis was deemed inappropriate (due to the survey sample size and uncertainty around the number of SME leaders that took the quiz without registering). However, we note that the marginal costs of providing access to materials and using the website functionality developed for the campaign (including the quiz) are low. Therefore, further activities aimed at attracting new users to the webpage may demonstrate a high value for money. As we discussed above, it will be important to consider the most appropriate channels for further communications and the type of materials used to attract a wider audience.

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[29] The count is based on the outcome being within a 'bin' of width 0.15 of a percentage point centered on the mean.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The adoption of M&L practices and technology is expected to improve firm-level performance and productivity. As part of this 'journey', BtB reach and engage SMEs by running campaigns across the UK. This includes the Super Leaders media campaign to further extend the reach and network of BtB. This campaign sought to drive registration to the BtB website; raise awareness of BtB and their activities; and create a 'userbase' of SME leaders actively thinking about productivity issues and working towards creating a stronger economy and more prosperous society. The campaign was designed to have mass appeal to attract as many people to the website as possible and ensure retention. The customer journey includes taking a short mini-quiz that matches them to a fictional Super Leader based on a segmentation of SMEs undertaken by BtB in 2021.

6.2 The evaluation developed a logic model and a theory of change for the Super Leader campaign. This considered varied routes to benefits and enabled quantification of impacts. To test the logic model quantitative and qualitative evidence was collected through a review of monitoring data, an online survey, qualitative interviews, case studies, a rapid review of literature, and a Monte Carlo analysis that allowed for a transparent and systematic treatment of uncertainties of productivity impacts.

6.3 The campaign did not reach high numbers of new registrations on the BtB web page and generated modest online activity (c. 500 new users, 4 visits per user on average). However, the survey evidence suggests that the Super Leaders campaign successfully raised awareness of SMEs of BtB and their activities. SMEs will consider seeking support from BtB when they need help with their business goals.

6.4 The Monte Carlo simulations of possible future impacts on productivity provided the following results:

- On average, SMEs exposed to the campaign can expect to experience a **0.8% productivity growth over the next three years** (attributable to the campaign)

- **For many businesses, the impacts are unlikely to be substantial** (the most common outcome is predicted to be a 0.15% uplift)

- However, **there is a 'long tail' of SMEs potentially experiencing considerable gains**. 50% will potentially see productivity improvements exceeding 0.6%.

6.5 When interpreting the results it is important to remember that **the campaign acts as a catalyst for changing behaviours that can make SMEs more productive, rather than affecting productivity directly**. The impact model accounts for businesses that do not take any further steps and therefore will not experience any productivity uplift dues to the campaign.

SQW

6.6 Qualitative evidence suggested that the campaign had the potential to increase knowledge by stimulating discussions about M&L practices between SME leaders. The quality of the materials provided by BtB, including the Super Leader quiz itself, was deemed very high. Interviewees indicated that there was demand for further developing of networks and stimulating knowledge exchange and the social media outreach was a welcome step in that direction.

6.7 At this stage, value for money analysis was deemed inappropriate (considering the survey sample size and uncertainty around the number of SME leaders that took the quiz without registering). However, we note that future activities aimed at attracting new users to the webpage may demonstrate a high value for money due to the low marginal costs of providing access to resources developed for the campaign (and those available on the webpage more generally). It will be important to consider the most appropriate channels for further communications (including their costs) and the type of materials used to attract a wider audience.

6.8 The Monte Carlo approach provided a picture of possible productivity impacts generated by the Super Leaders campaign. However, the evaluation had several limitations. First, the assumptions underpinning the analysis were based on a very small sample of survey respondents. There is a risk of a positive response/participation bias. Second, the analysis did not account for dynamic aspects of behavioural change leading to productivity impacts, i.e. whether the effects (intentions to implement new M&L practices) will be sustained, get weaker, or become stronger over time.

6.9 Despite these limitations, the evaluation developed and tested a robust methodology that can be applied to future evaluations of media campaigns (and other 'light touch' interventions) and provide informed estimates within a limited timeframe while minimising the survey burden on participants. A more 'in-depth' evaluation involving establishing the baseline and tracking outcomes over time for a group of beneficiaries (and potentially for a comparison group) may provide additional insights and provide more accurate estimates. This, however, would require substantial time and resource commitment which may not be proportionate.

Annex A: Distributional assumptions for Monte Carlo modelling

A.1 Table A-1 contains the distributional assumptions used in Monte Carlo modelling which were informed by findings from the online survey.

Table A-1: Distributional assumptions

Uncertain input	Assumed distribution
Impact of a one st. dev improvement in the M&L index	Normal distribution; mean 5.4%, st. dev. 3.1%
Pre-existing target setting practices*	Truncated normal distribution; mean 68.5%, st. dev. 15.3%, min 0, max 100%
Pre-existing HR practices*	Truncated χ^2 distribution; min 40%, max 100%; 4 degrees of freedom
Pre-existing work organisation practices*	Truncated lognormal distribution; non-log mean 69.4%, st. dev. 14.8%, min 0, max 100%
The difficulty of implementing change	Truncated normal distribution; mean 72.2%, st. dev. 16.3%, min 0, max 100%
Likelihood to implement minor, moderate and substantial changes to practices	The proportions of the survey sample reporting these outcomes

Source: SQW

Annex B: Case studies

B.1 This annex contains three case studies as follows:

Table B-1: Case studies

Participant and role	Organisation
Kish Hirani – Founder, Chair	BAME in GAMES
Jon Bass – Finance Specialist	Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub
Anonymised – Managing Director	An engineering company

Source: SQW

Case Study: Kish Hirani – BAME in GAMES (BiG)

Super Leader	
Role	Founder Chair
Organisation	BAME in GAMES (BiG)
Sector	Nonprofit organisation
Location	London
Leader type	Hivemind

Profile & motivations

Kish is a self-employed adviser for the video games industry. He has been active in this industry for 25 years mostly at tech leadership levels and became the founding Chair of BAME in Games (BiG), a non-profit advocacy organisation in June 2016, where he continues to act as the Chair. BiG is a grass-roots advocacy group dedicated to improving ethnic diversity and encouraging underrepresented minorities to work within the video games industry. It primarily operates through volunteers, and they do not have formal HR or work organisation practices in place. According to Kish, this helps keep the organisation flexible, avoid overhead costs such as accountancy, and attract volunteers with full-time jobs who would otherwise not be able to commit due to their formal work commitments.

Kish's motivation for taking the Super Leaders quiz was to obtain more knowledge on management and leadership (M&L) leadership practices to help inspire developers in his industry. It is important for Kish to "sense-check" the practices applied by developers he works with against those recommended by the business studies and management scientific communities, especially since formal M&L practices are still not widely practised, especially amongst indie developers in the video games industry.

Activities

Kish completed the Super Leaders quiz after receiving an email link from a colleague. He only completed it once and did not engage in reading through further BtB materials at the time. He instead bookmarked the Be the Business website as a place where he can access resources on management practices should the need arise.

Outcomes

Currently, Kish is too occupied with the day-to-day challenges of leading the BiG organisation as well as working full time as an advisory CTO to access the M&L resources provided by Be the Business but will consider them as he becomes less busy or when a direct need arises. The Super Leaders quiz led to improved learning on M&L practices by seeing how leadership decisions can be made in contexts that are very different from the ones he usually sees widely practised.

Kish perceived BtB resources as very relevant and useful for his business In particular, the mentoring programme would be something he would consider taking on in the future. He has had experience with mentoring programmes through his work and thinks this type of learning can be a highly effective and valuable tool for informing and improving decision making.

In the survey, Kish indicated that due to the SL campaign, he will take action to suggest substantial changes to the target setting practices at various developers he works with, an area where he sees room for many organisations to build on and improve their existing practices.

Business challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic made some activities of Kish's organisation much more challenging but helped enable other aspects. Traditionally, meeting partners and connecting them with volunteers at events or through meetups was one of their most important activities and these have completely stopped for now. On the other hand, the pandemic also opened a lot of doors for their organisation. In particular, when events and meetings are digital, those who would normally be unable to access them due to physical distance or financial constraints can still attend events. For example, they can connect people in Africa with the video games industry leaders in London at online events, which previously would have been impossible. In the next twelve months, Kish thinks the challenge for his organisation and the industry will be to not just return to normal but to go "back to better than normal" by combining live events with online opportunities.

Wider perspectives

Kish would most like to see BtB provide opportunities for organisations like his to meet other players in their industry and interact with them through networking events. Particularly in the video games industry, it is often difficult to get people to come together in a room and have a conversation and he has found these experiences the most helpful in building connections - allowing his organisation to expand activities.

Benefits to interviewee

Learnt about Be the Business

Identified further actions

Improved M&L practices

Gained confidence in M&L abilities

● Achieved   ● Expected

Case Study: Jon Bass – Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub

	Super Leader
Role	Finance Specialist
Organisation	Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub
Sector	Professional Services
Location	Coventry
Leader type	Doctor Know

Profile & motivations

Jon is a financial specialist at the Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub. His career and expertise are in finance. He worked at NatWest Bank for 32 years where, among other tasks, he was assessing lending applications, as well as worked at the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce for seven years. Now Jon collates financial information about the firms that the Growth Hub work with and conducts analysis to see whether they are growing as expected and whether the Growth Hub targets the 'right' businesses.

Activities

Jon was interested to see what the quiz would perceive him as given he has gone through Myers Briggs testing and other personality profilers during his time at NatWest.

Outcomes

The quiz results resonated with Jon and confirmed what he already knew, giving him the confidence to carry on with what he is doing. His Super Leader was Doctor Know, which he agreed fits with his approach of gathering as much information as he can before making decisions. He inferred this translates directly into his work when assessing businesses' financial standing and what actions the Growth Hub can take to support them.

Jon could have spent more time on the Be the Business website as a result of the quiz, but he has been busy at work and has not had the time to properly look through the materials yet.

Business challenges

The Growth Hub is not able to reach as many firms as it wishes, partly because it does not have a marketing budget that can be used to advertise its services. Instead, the Hub relies on word-of-mouth to reach new firms and explain what they can do to help. This issue is important because, in Jon's experience, businesses often do not know what support is out there for them. Around 70% of the queries received at the Growth Hub are about available sources of grant funding.

Wider perspectives

Jon thought that the material from Be the Business would prove useful to SMEs, as it may allow them to reflect on their practices, receive advice and gain insights from business leaders who have a greater wealth of experience. He emphasised SMEs' preference for local face-to-face support

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since the challenges experienced by businesses can often be more easily understood by those with local knowledge.

Jon believes that additional learning that is likely to be experienced by SMEs as a result of the campaign may not have necessarily occurred without it, since some businesses would have learned about BtB from the quiz. However, he expressed a certain level of scepticism and was not sure a personality profile test was the best way to raise businesses' awareness of BtB.

Benefits to interviewee

Consolidated knowledge of M&L practices

Gained confidence in M&L abilities

More businesses reflecting on their own M&L practices

● Achieved   ● Expected

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Case Study

Profile & motivations

The participant is the Managing Director of an engineering company of approximately 50 employees based in the north of England that

	Super Leader	
Role	Managing Director	
Sector	Engineering	
Leader type	Hivemind	

provides position, navigation and timing solutions for a wide variety of applications ranging from automotive container ports to marine timing synchronisation. They offer off-the-shelf solutions for a portion of their clients as well as develop their products, and will have full engineering capabilities to provide system integration in the future.

They had previously taken several personality profile tests including Belbin, MBTI and Myers Briggs and believe they can play a key role in raising self-awareness. The participant decided to take the Super Leaders quiz to see how the results compare and found them similar.

Activities

The Super Leaders quiz was only completed once. They did not follow up with any of the resources on the Be the Business website immediately or thereafter after completion.

Outcomes

The campaign did not result in any new learning but provided more focused insights into knowledge gained through previous experience. The campaign helped instigate an internal dialogue over time about how they approach management and leadership practices, helping identify topics and assess the options available to them to make a decision. This was perceived to be a greater benefit than information coming through intermittently.

Having received mentoring through Be the Business since late-2021, they often access the website to get onto the mentoring platform and as a result, are familiar with the resources available from Be the Business.

No further action in learning about M&L practices was taken as a result of the campaign due to participation in the Productivity Through People course in 2017/2018 and a Made Smarter course taken previously. The action was also not taken for other management within the company, as they have a link with a local college and Chamber of Commerce where they do inhouse training. Within the business, they have developed a leadership pipeline (the "Line Managers Passport") which they use as the framework for learning about M&L and productivity.

Initially, other managers were going to be asked to take the quiz until it became apparent a training programme around the 'Belbin' framework was to be undertaken and so it was deemed best not to request another personality profile test at this point. Nevertheless, the campaign was

said to have generated discussions on a group chat with other business owners about which Super Leaders they were matched up to.

Business challenges

Business challenges primarily relate to the rising costs of inputs, in both components and labour. Current waiting lists for one of the key components is over a year when buying from the manufacturer, driving a 37-fold increase in the market price. Due to the nature of their production techniques and a substantial share of build-to-order work the rising prices have posed a major challenge.

Recruitment for technical positions is also proving difficult. Hiring at senior grade and in technical areas like software engineering is becoming increasingly expensive as salary demands rise. These challenges are not seen to the same extent in junior grades due to the existence of programmes that aim to build up skills through apprenticeships, entry-level positions and greater engagement with universities. These led to hiring several graduates in the last two years.

Wider perspectives

Regarding how the participant thought Be the Business could develop their offer to businesses, the participant expressed an interest in being able to access a set of tools and resources that can be used by their management teams and propagated throughout their network of business leaders. This would help SMEs improve their M&L practices and productivity and ensure a pipeline of future managers.

Benefits to interviewee

Consolidated knowledge of M&L practices

Generate discussion with other business leaders on M&L practices

Inquire with BtB about resources and learning opportunities

● Achieved   ● Expected

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