

Inspiring greater business productivity

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£395m

Since Be the Business was founded in 2017, we have generated £395m in Gross Value Added for the UK economy.

£1bn

By 2025, we want to increase our impact to reach £1bn of additional Gross Value Added to the economy.





CEO's message



Be the Business are the small business productivity champions.

When Be the Business was founded in 2017 by Sir Charlie Mayfield, with the support of Government and a prestigious selection of the UK's leading companies, we knew we had a massive task ahead of us: to improve small business productivity for the benefit of the UK economy as a whole.

Six prime ministers, one pandemic, and an on-going cost of living crisis, inflation, supply chain and skills shortage later, our task is no less enormous. But, there is hope too.

Be the Business has been on a journey in the last five years: we've worked alongside the UK's thriving business community, building strong relationships and gaining comprehensive insights into their needs and wants. Since our inception, we've generated £395m in productivity uplift for the UK economy,

by engaging over 13,000 individuals in business-boosting activities. Our work delivers lasting and significant impact to the businesses we work with and the economy in general.

As we move into the next phase of Be the Business' development, we remain as ambitious and determined as ever. There is a huge opportunity for us to build upon the initial success of the last five years – which is why I've set us the target of achieving £1bn of GVA for the UK economy in the next three years.

This task is no mean feat, and will require a concerted effort between Government, the business support ecosystem and small business leaders themselves. But who is better placed than Be the Business to achieve this goal?

Anthony Impey, MBE
CEO, Be the Business

Our work delivers
lasting and significant
impact to the businesses
we work with and the
economy in general

“

Notes from our Chair

When I founded Be the Business five years ago, I was under no illusion as to the challenge ahead: the UK's poor productivity record has long been a weight around our necks, and it is only by coming together that we will achieve a decisive productivity uplift.

I'm immensely proud of all that Be the Business have achieved since 2017, from the inception of the industry-leading free business support programmes to the continued drive and enthusiasm of the team working behind the scenes for the betterment of the UK economy.

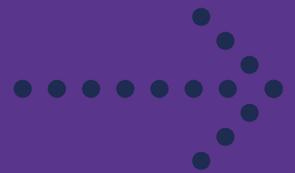
Sir Charlie Mayfield
Chair, Be the Business



The UK's poor productivity record has long been a weight around our necks, and it is only by coming together that we will achieve a decisive productivity uplift



We are
Be the Business



About us

Be the Business brings together companies – big and small – to improve small business productivity. As a not-for-profit, we work with leaders to gather insights and create products and services that make their businesses more productive.

Our goal is crucial for the UK's economy

Productivity levels have a tangible effect on our nation's prosperity. So much so that the average UK worker would be £5,000 better off each year, if historic levels of productivity growth were maintained over the past decade (ONS).

Closing the productivity gap requires concerted action from government – improving our infrastructure, and fostering a supportive environment

to do business, but much of our productivity gap can be closed by improving the performance of small-and medium-sized businesses.

By helping these firms reach their potential, we improve the UK's position overall, and everyone benefits.

£5,000

The average UK worker would be £5,000 per year better off if the UK had continued its pre-2008 trajectory

£130bn

A modest increase in productivity could add £130bn in GVA to the UK economy each year



Discover more about
Be the Business by
scanning this QR code



How we transform the UK's productivity outlook

At Be the Business, we focus on two key drivers of productivity: leadership and management and tech adoption. By helping small business leaders in these areas – and others – we can create real, recognisable results, both for businesses and the economy more broadly.

Our history

In 2015, the then Prime Minister David Cameron asked Sir Charlie Mayfield and Sir Richard Lambert to review the UK's ongoing productivity challenges – it was clear the UK was falling behind other economies, and something needed to be done.

Sir Charlie formed the Productivity Leadership Group with some of the country's leading businesspeople and began a 12-month review of the UK's productivity situation.

The review found that the UK's productivity levels could be improved by increasing the management skills of business leaders and accelerating the adoption of certain business technologies.

It also found that even a modest increase in business productivity could have a huge impact: greater productivity could potentially add an additional £130bn in GVA to the UK economy each year – even by omitting the 25 per cent most productive firms.

The review called for a movement, led by business, to tackle the UK's productivity challenges.

Be the Business is that movement.

Our impact

Since we were founded in 2017, Be the Business has supported thousands of small- and medium-sized businesses across the UK. From our in-depth interventions like Mentoring and Boards to a library of free resources, we help businesses to improve their performance, and in doing so build stronger and more resilient local economies.

£395m

Gross Value Added to organisations working with Be the Business

13,000+

Individuals from firms across different sectors and regions have participated in our activities

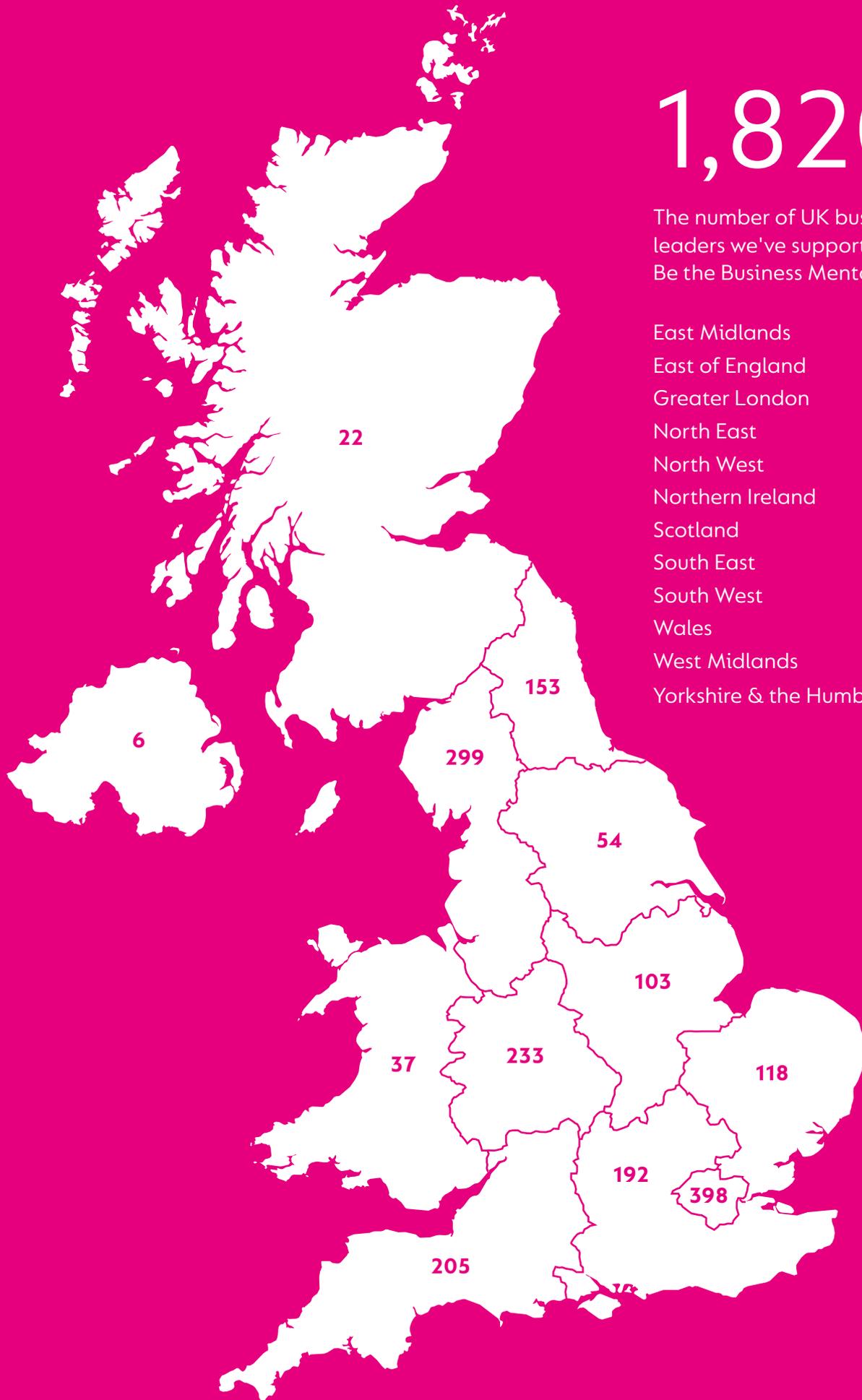
£1bn

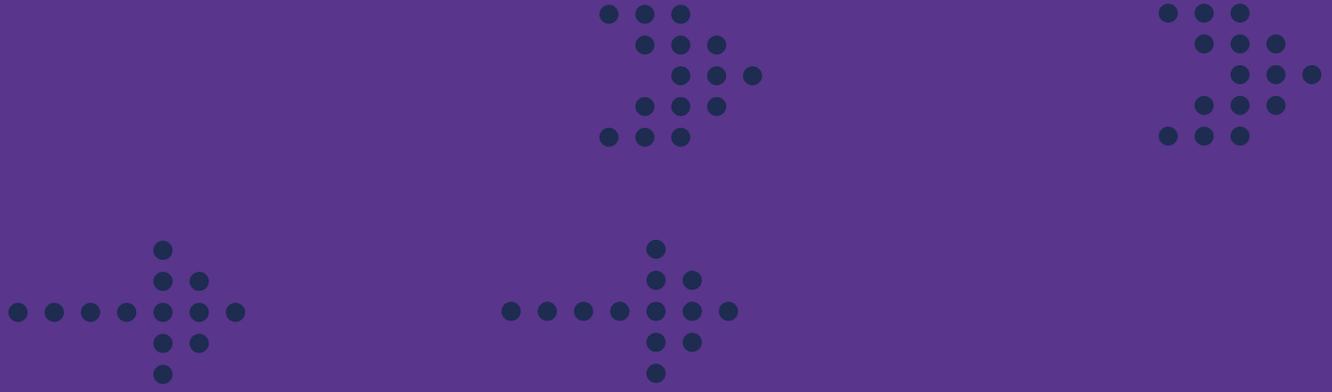
By 2025, we want to increase our impact to reach
£1bn of additional Gross Value Added to the economy

1,820

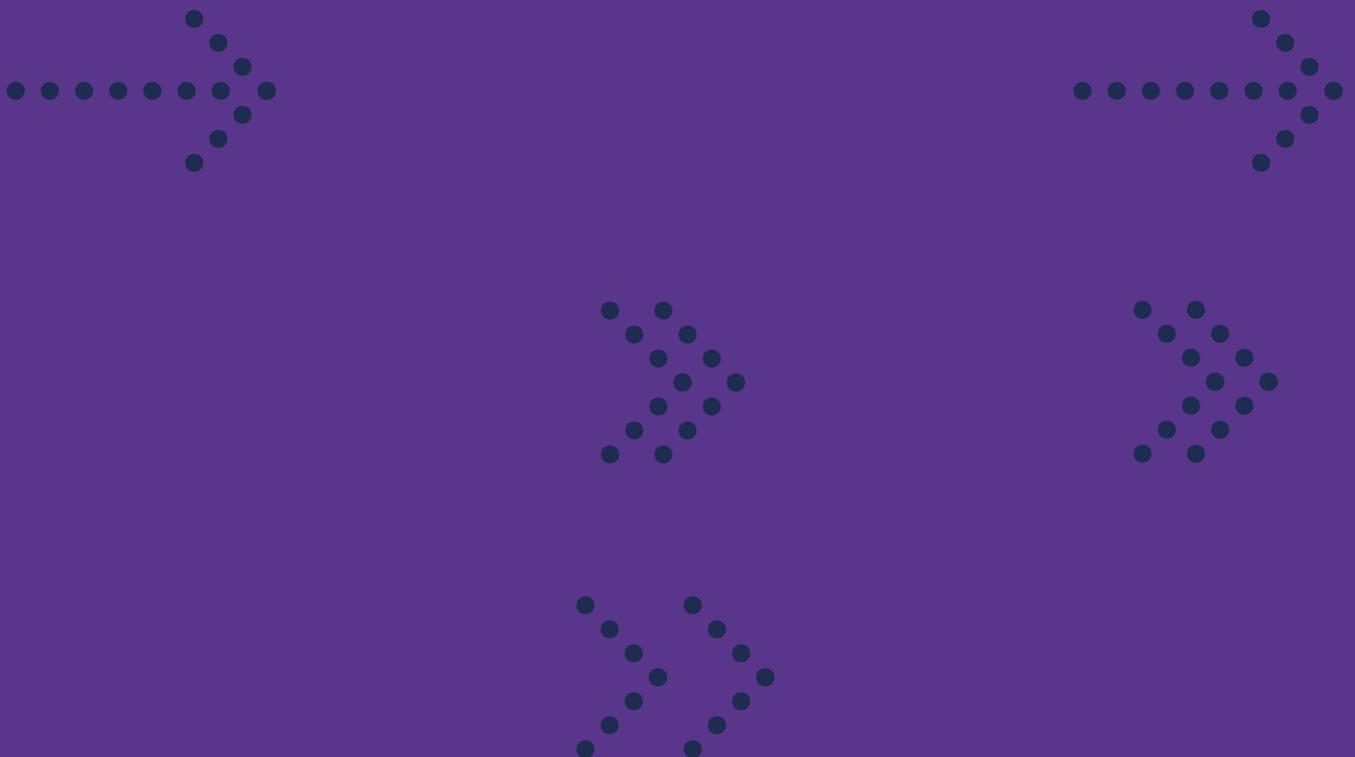
The number of UK business leaders we've supported via Be the Business Mentoring

East Midlands	103
East of England	118
Greater London	398
North East	153
North West	299
Northern Ireland	6
Scotland	22
South East	192
South West	205
Wales	37
West Midlands	233
Yorkshire & the Humber	54





Our programmes



Be the Business Mentoring 21

Discover our flagship business support programme, which has been carefully pairing business leaders with senior executives from the UK's most successful companies since 2018.

Be the Business Boards 27

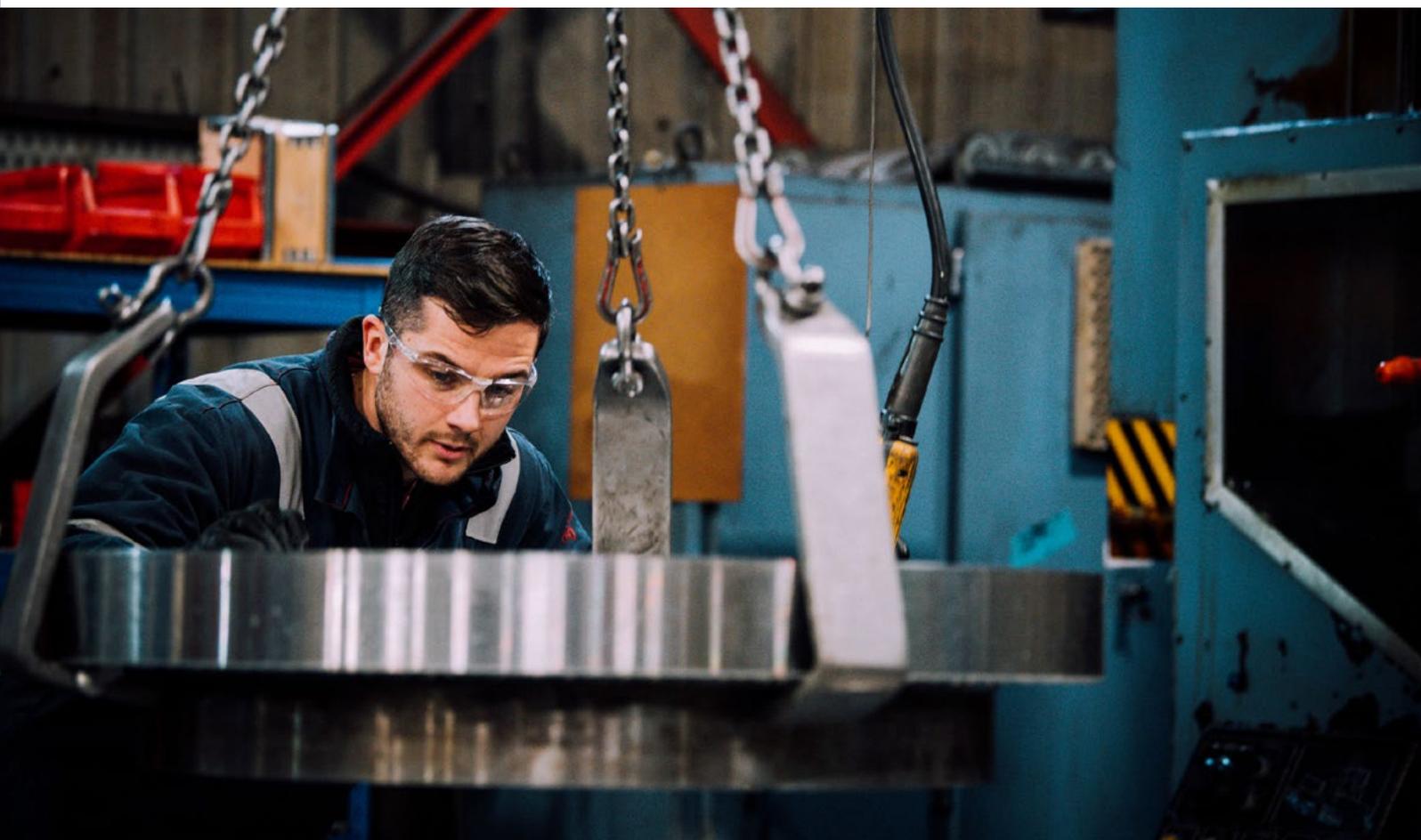
Learn more about how this free business support programme pairs a small business leader with their own non-executive director-style board.

Power Up 31

Developed to support business owners from underrepresented backgrounds, find out how this programme provided free expert advice on digital tools and processes.

Strive 33

Find out how our partnership with Mastercard Impact Fund, supported by Mastercard's Center for Inclusive Growth, empowers ethnic minority business owners.



Our programme partners

Without the support of our partners, we would not be able reach or support business leaders as effectively or proactively. From helping us to deliver our programmes, including Mentoring or Boards, to recruiting business leaders facing tough challenges, our partners are an essential part of our productivity mission.

Accenture	Landsec
Amazon	Lendlease
American Express	Lloyds Banking Group
BAE Systems	Mace
British Land	London Chambers of Commerce & Industry
Cisco	Mastercard
Deloitte	Morrisroe
EY	Sage
Meta	Shopify
GlaxoSmithKline	Siemens
Greater London Authority	Silverstone Technology Cluster
Great Portland Estates	Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd
Hargreaves Lansdown	Skanska
HSBC	Smurfit Kappa
Innovate UK	TSB
JPM Power-Up	

“

The response to our programmes has been fantastic. We see business leaders going from strength to strength thanks to the dedicated support of mentors and advisory board members from some of the UK's most successful firms.

Sheena McDermott
Head of Leadership & Management

Be the Business Mentoring

Our flagship programme, Be the Business Mentoring, has been carefully pairing business leaders with experienced and committed senior executives from the UK's most successful companies since 2018.

Learn more about Be the Business Mentoring by scanning this QR code



This fully funded programme is available in two formats: the 12-week programme is designed for business leaders who need immediate support; whereas the 12-month programme is for business leaders seeking long-term development.

This allows us to support a wider range of business leaders, regardless of needs.

In each instance, the business mentor acts as a sounding board, providing one-to-one, impartial advice.

Throughout their involvement, the mentee and mentor meet regularly to discuss business challenges and develop leadership skills, all while making the most of access to the online resources that will make the connection a success.

Be the Business Mentoring offers both the mentor and mentee new experiences and fresh perspectives, vital for long-term business improvement.

Where our mentors come from

Our mentor pool comprises successful entrepreneurs who have scaled their businesses and want to give back; and senior execs from some of our best-known firms.

Together, they offer a breadth and depth of experience that ambitious leaders can benefit from.

10,900+

The number of business leaders who have participated in our programmes

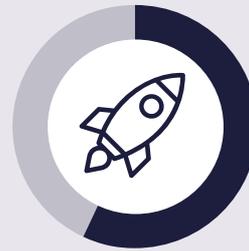
Be the Business Mentoring in numbers

Be the Business Mentoring has resulted in a tangible increase in leadership and management skills for our participants:



73%

of mentees say that they improved their **knowledge and skills**



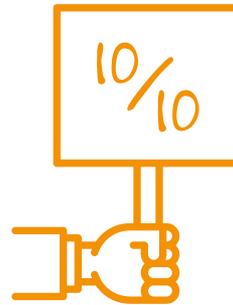
57%

of mentees reported **productivity gains**



73%

of mentees gained **greater confidence** in their management and leadership abilities



51%

of mentees gave the **highest possible rating** for likelihood to recommend mentoring to others



54%

of mentees say that they adopted new **management and leadership practices**



60%

of mentees reported **positive effects** on overall business performance

Spotlight on

Bethan Thomas, founder
of HotTea Mama &
Be the Business mentee



Bethan Thomas was matched with Be the Business mentor Tim York-Dunne as part of our mentoring programme.

The results of their mentoring relationship have been monumental for HotTea Mama: Bethan anticipates that turnover this year will rise to £500,000, thanks to a new contract with a major high-street retailer.

Bethan attributes at least 20 per cent of this predicted turnover directly to her mentor, Tim. With his support, she hopes to launch her products in a second high-street retailer in the autumn.

“Tim’s been extremely important to this business. Freeing me up from the day-to-

day, and helping me get access to money, has allowed me to do things more quickly, efficiently and effectively than I would otherwise have done – not to mention a lot more enjoyably and less stressfully,” Bethan said.

“

Tim’s been extremely important to this business. Freeing me up from the day-to-day, and helping me get access to money, has allowed me to do things more quickly, efficiently and effectively.

Keith Softly, managing
director at Lloyds
Banking Group &
Be the Business mentor



Keith Softly is an experienced mentor, having spent plenty of time working with and listening to other business leaders, both within and outside of his area of expertise.

As part of Be the Business Mentoring, Keith was matched with Stephen Ellis, the newly-appointed operations and technical director at Evac Chair.

“I’m experienced in working with the manufacturing sector but it’s incredible just how diverse, knowledgeable, creative, pioneering and entrepreneurial SME leaders are,” Keith said.

“I was delighted to find such synergy and positive energy in our mentoring relationship,” he went on.

The mentoring relationship wasn’t just of benefit to Stephen, however; Keith found the experience to be relevant to his existing role at Lloyds Banking Group.

“Empathy and insight into how businesses operate, listening and taking a client-first approach are competencies encouraged in our leadership programmes at Lloyds [Banking Group].”

“Those with mentoring experience will be even better equipped to support our clients.”

“

I was delighted to find such synergy and positive energy in our mentoring relationship.

Be the Business & London Chamber of Commerce & Industry



LONDON CHAMBER
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The London Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) continues to be the capital's largest independent business network.

As part of their commitment to the businesses of London, they partnered with Be the Business to provide their members with access to a free bespoke mentoring and support programme.

As part of this programme, LCCI members benefit from additional tailored content and opportunities to develop new skills.

Kris Vaskelis is an LCCI member who joined our mentoring programme:

"[My mentor] Paul is amazing! His energy is so effective. I finish each session with the buzz and feel that I am ready to move mountains. This is an amazing experience.

"As I said to Paul, the biggest challenge for the business owner is to find the right advice and mentoring. There are so many so-called mentors out there, but they are not interested in mentoring, they are only interested in getting paid. I spent thousands, if not tens of thousands, and my business didn't go anywhere.

"I am very grateful that I found Be the Business and Paul."

“

I finish each session with the buzz and feel that I am ready to move mountains. This is an amazing experience.



Our programmes
Be the Business Boards

Be the Business Boards

Our Be the Business Boards programme pairs a small business leader with their own non-executive director-style board. This offers each business an individually built experience that utilises the unique and varied skills of every Board member.

Learn more about
Be the Business Boards
by scanning this
QR code



Each board features a group of experienced businesspeople, comprised of leaders and senior managers from successful firms, with specialisms ranging from finance and operations to HR and marketing.

Each of our boards consists of up to five members from different organisations.

The 12-month format means that Boards meet four times a year, allowing the business leader time to act on the advice given during their 90-minute online sessions.

Each board provides business leaders with:

- Support and advice on the issues they're facing
- An external perspective and objective input
- A sounding board to talk through ideas and strategy
- Reassurance and encouragement

Where our Board members come from

Our Board members are a mix of successful business leaders with a desire to give back; and senior executives from some of the UK's best-known firms. Boards are carefully constructed to provide expertise in a range of disciplines that support participant's business ambitions.

4,621

The number of business leaders who have taken part in one of our face-to-face leadership and management programmes

Be the Business Boards in numbers

It is too early to have completed a full evaluation of our Be the Business Boards programme, but mid-programme monitoring data gives us an insight into participants' experiences to date:



95%

of both advisees and advisors are either **satisfied or very satisfied** with the programme



Individual leaders **start to see effects** after their second meeting



50%

feel more knowledgeable and confident in how to protect or improve their business performance



of business leaders say they have made at least **one change** to their business



say they have **achieved at least one** thing personally from the programme

Spotlight on

Helen Tanner, founder of
Data3 & Be the Business
Boards participant



Helen Tanner founded her technology company Data³ in 2017. In mid-2021, she started looking to scale it up by boosting the sales effort around a key product.

As the solo founder of her business, Helen had no board or formal advisers to support this change, so she looked to Be the Business Boards for expert advice.

The whole experience has been “utterly thought-provoking” for Helen. As she explained: “I’ve experimented, played, tested, succeeded, failed and learned in all areas of the business, and I’ve enjoyed every second of the process.”

Not only has the work done saved her an estimated £10,000, but it has smoothed the transition into a new phase of

growth. She is optimistic about sales of the new product, staff numbers will nearly double, and they’ve opened a franchise in New Zealand, with another in Australia imminent.

“I’m indebted to the board for the help they’ve given us,” she said. “It’s also been a lot of fun.”

“
I’m indebted to the
board for the help
they’ve given us.

Lawrence Davies MBE,
former General Motors
executive and government
advisor & Be the Business
Boards member



Lawrence Davis MBE spent much of his career with General Motors (GM), where he became UK director of purchasing and supply chain. He also worked in government for nearly a decade, most recently as chief adviser in automotive to the Department for International Trade.

With a career spanning over 40 years, Lawrence felt strongly that he wanted to give something back while his industry and government experiences were still fresh, so he joined our Be the Business Boards programme as a board member.

“Be the Business does a very good job in putting the boards together: there’s diversity, but also relevance to the companies we are working with. If we were all from the same industry,

we would not be able to give such cross-sector support.

“We are very lucky in the UK to have Be the Business, because it is structured in a way that it can help small companies .

“I would highly recommend working as a mentor or board member to others. I really couldn’t be more positive about my involvement and experiences with Be the Business over the past year.”

“

**We are very lucky
in the UK to have
Be the Business.**



Our Power Up programme was developed to support small business owners from underrepresented backgrounds with free access to expert advice on the best digital tools and processes for their business.

This programme ran from October 2021 to June 2022. It was supported by the Good Things Foundation, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Skills Enterprise, Hackney Co-operative Developments, Gateway Multiservice Consultancy, Sage and Shopify.

Via the programme, business leaders benefitted from access to free independent advice from a tech expert, tailored recommended solutions, small group workshops, digital implementation one-to-ones surrounding a digital tool, as well as prioritised support from our tech partners, including Shopify and Sage.

Reaching the underrepresented

Key beneficiaries of the programme included:

- Ethnic minority owned businesses
- Woman-owned businesses
- Migrant-owned businesses

Business owners on the programme received the following for free:

- The opportunity to review their business goals, needs and challenges and discover how technology can help
- One-to-one support from tech experts in the form of consultations
- Small group workshops from external and internal speakers focused on a specific digital solution

These business owners reported higher levels of confidence using technology as a result of taking part in the programme and accessing specialist expert support.

Testimonials for Power Up

“Thank you for the opportunity to join this programme. I never thought I would be using social media for my business because I was so against it, but through the advice you have given me, I have been able to see the benefits of it for my small business.”

Owner of a religious pilgrimage business

“This programme has boosted my motivation, enabled me to focus on my goals and draft a better business structure.”

Owner of an Ethiopian restaurant

“I cannot put a price on the support I received during the programme. The team have given me so much confidence.”

Owner of a personal training business



“

The Power Up programme was a fantastic opportunity for us to help underrepresented business leaders on their tech adoption journey.

Rebecca Clifton
Product Lead



Be the Business partnered with Mastercard Impact Fund, with support from Mastercard's Center for Inclusive Growth, on their Strive programme, alongside Mastercard UK, Enterprise Nation and Digital Boost.

Learn more about our involvement in Strive UK by scanning this QR code



Subscribe to Striving Forward by scanning this QR code



Through Strive, we are working to empower Black, Asian and other ethnic minority leaders from micro and small businesses around the country to succeed by them to the digital economy in order to grow and strengthen their businesses.

Research consistently shows that outcomes for ethnic minority business owners and entrepreneurs are worse than those for the general business population in the areas of productivity, turnover and non-financial goals, despite higher-than-average levels of entrepreneurialism and innovation.

We want to change this.

As part of our commitment to the Strive UK initiative, we are supporting business leaders from this community through fully funded access to:

- Our online resources via our digital platform
- Be the Business Mentoring
- Be the Business Boards

What we've done so far

Since we partnered with Mastercard in 2021, we have:

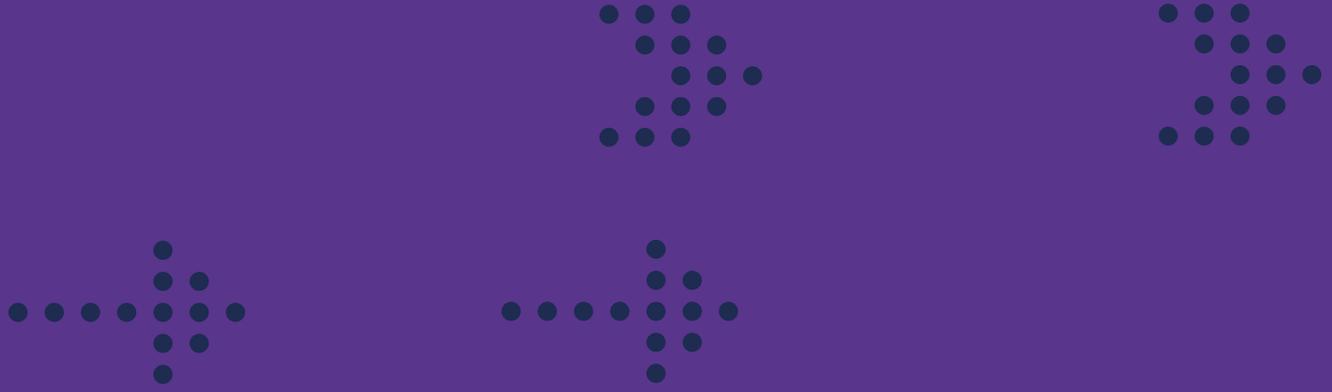
- Promoted the initiative to over 250,000 through awareness campaigns, social media, and at events
- Engaged over 125 ethnic minority business leaders in our fully funded Strive UK programmes
- Launched our fortnightly Strive UK newsletter, Striving Forward
- Attended and spoken at key conferences, including the Black Owned Business Expo and the inaugural UK Black Business Entrepreneurs Conference
- Run three successful Strive business networking events of our own (one virtual, two in-person) on the theme of "Who You Know: The power of networks to build your business"



“

**Every single business leader
has a part to play in our
productivity mission.**

Mildred Talabi
Networks Development Manager



Our partnerships





Our partnerships

Central to Be the Business' philosophy is that the solutions to the productivity puzzle lie with the business community. Partnership working is an essential part of our model, allowing us to leverage skills, experience and connections with small businesses to reach and impact as many as possible.

Find out how you can partner with us by scanning this QR code



Partners work with us to deliver productivity-boosting interventions and, in return, benefit from getting closer to and supporting UK SMEs. Every partner has different ambitions, which is why we can help them achieve a variety of goals:

We can help you support your SME customers

In an increasingly challenging time for small businesses, access to experienced business professionals is a powerful resource. We match our partner's SME customers to mentors and non-executive director-style support via our programmes.

We can help you be recognised as a productivity champion

We showcase partners supporting small businesses amongst our community of engaged SME leaders.

We can help you create products and services to help SMEs

We support partners in the creation of tools or guides that can help SMEs with a key challenge. These assets can be used to engage existing and new customers.

We can help you better understand evolving SME behaviours

We can link you with actionable insights via our industry-leading thought leadership or via our close connections with SME leaders.

40+

We're supported by over 40 corporate partnerships. Our partnerships are designed to promote the Be the Business movement in every region and every sector of the UK economy.

“

This year, Be the Business has assisted business leaders in a number of wide-reaching ways – but none of this would have been possible without the outstanding support of our partners.

Helen Puddefoot
COO

BAE SYSTEMS

Since Be the Business' inception, BAE Systems has made a major contribution to our productivity mission, helping us to develop our Productivity Through People programme. Over the course of 2020 and 2021, BAE Systems continued this support, enabling us to pivot our offering at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read the full impact report by scanning this QR code



The company's employees have also played their part by volunteering to become mentors on the Be the Business Mentoring programme and members of the Be the Business Boards programme.

Thanks to their involvement, we have been able to engage almost 200 business leaders in mentoring relationships, resulting in an estimated productivity boost of £12.2m.

In order to help small business leaders continue along the path to growth, and to tackle the UK's productivity question as a whole, Be the Business and BAE Systems will continue to work together to support our small business community.

What we achieved

- The contribution made by BAE Systems allowed Be the Business to pivot to provide support to SMEs in distress in addition to productivity-improving programmes during the pandemic
- The direct support and resources provided by BAE Systems allowed Be the Business to scale rapidly and engage thousands of SMEs at a time when they desperately needed support
- BAE Systems' volunteers have become mentors, supporting 139 12-month and 54 12-week mentoring relationships

Spotlight on

Richard Baker, Project and
Portfolio Support Director,
BAE Systems



BAE SYSTEMS

“BAE Systems has always recognised the importance of supporting small businesses that don’t have the time or capacity to develop their own skills. This took on a new urgency during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We realised that small business leaders were going to face huge challenges and that BAE Systems had a role to play in helping them to build the leadership skills and resilience they would need to get through the crisis. I’m hugely proud of how the BAE Systems team and small business leaders have worked together to weather this storm and emerge stronger than before.”

“

I’m hugely proud of how the BAE Systems team and small business leaders have worked together to weather this storm and emerge stronger than before.



Lloyds Banking Group is a core sponsor of Be the Business. Spanning an initial three years, from 2019 to 2022, this partnership has had a major impact on the productivity of UK SMEs.

Read the full impact report by scanning this QR code



Lloyds Banking Group is committed to supporting SME customers, to supporting its colleagues in helping those customers, and, in so doing, to positioning itself as the leading provider of SME banking solutions in the UK. Be the Business is helping Lloyds Banking Group to achieve this goal.

As a member of the Productivity Leadership Group, Lloyds Banking Group helped shape Be the Business' strategic direction from the outset, as well as becoming our first strategic partner.

Lloyds Banking Group partnership in numbers

- Lloyds Banking Group committed £3m, along with in-kind support of circa £1.5m, to Be the Business between 2019 and 2022
- Lloyds Banking Group's sponsorship of our Productivity through People leadership programme delivered a GVA increase of £14m
- The contribution to the Be the Business Mentoring programme has delivered a further £5m productivity uplift, equating to an ROI of 10:1
- Lloyds Banking Group has provided 47 senior managers to the Mentoring programme, offering support to 47 small business leaders with seven more taking part in our Boards programme

What we achieved in three years

- Lloyds Banking Group supported our Productivity through People programme, which helped 235 businesses with practical classroom-based learning. This led to the productivity of the participating firms being boosted by an estimated £165m
- Collaborated on a Relationship Manager engagement pilot in the East of England, providing bank branch relationship managers with the tools to offer clients strategic support
- Be the Business and Lloyds Banking Group collaborated on the *Raising UK competitiveness: Inside the mindsets of leaders of firms* report
- Partnered on the Digital Adoption programme, evaluating the success of Be the Business Digital through a randomised control trial among Lloyds Banking Group customers
- Joint marketing and thought leadership collaborations, including the *Raising UK competitiveness: Inside the mindsets of leaders of firms* report and Productivity Leadership Group interviews. Sir Charlie Mayfield's interview achieved the highest engagement of any Lloyds Banking Group post in 2019, with a reach of 112,000

Spotlight on

Glenn Bemment, Head of
ESG, SME & Mid Corporate
Commercial Banking,
Lloyds Banking Group



“From a Lloyds Banking Group point of view, our core mission is really around helping Britain prosper.

When we think about what that means for us and what that means for our clients, productivity is really at the heart of that, so for us there’s a really clear alignment between what Be the Business are doing and what we’re doing as a business in our own right.”

“

For us there’s a really clear alignment between what Be the Business are doing and what we’re doing.



construction
productivity
taskforce

Since February 2020, leading figures in the construction industry – clients, contractors, supply chain and consultants – have come together as the Construction Productivity Taskforce. The aim is to undertake practical interventions designed to make the sector more productive.

Read more about the Construction Productivity Taskforce by scanning this QR code



The Taskforce's priorities

In a construction context, higher productivity means projects completing more quickly, getting things right first time, eliminating the need to repeat work and reductions in waste produced by the construction process.

Data and metrics

Research by Be the Business found that firms which measure productivity are more likely to take steps to improve performance. The Taskforce is putting this to the test by collecting productivity and waste metrics from sites around the UK. Capital costs over hours worked, and waste produced at the construction phase were selected because they were readily available, easily comparable and impactful.

Collaborative contracting

The second Taskforce workstream hopes to encourage collaborative contracting through a “private sector playbook”. It takes inspiration from a document produced by the UK government for

public contracts and has similar aims of getting projects right from the start and building in best practice. The Taskforce's document is tailored to the private sector, especially SMEs, and prioritises increased productivity as a core outcome.

Pilot projects

Two pilot construction sites in London are currently collecting data and capturing learnings on drivers for productivity improvement: Norton Folgate and The Forge collect productivity and waste information, as well as a range of additional data.

Tips and advice generated from the sites is being gathered into a “good practice guide”, which will be shared throughout the industry.

Measuring Construction Site Productivity: A seven-step framework for success

Measuring Construction Site Productivity: A seven-step framework for success was published in May 2022 with the aim of helping businesses within the sector collect the relevant data and measure productivity, in order to increase efficiency and improve performance on construction sites.

The methodology behind the framework draws on the learnings and good practice gained from two live UK pilot project sites: Landsec’s The Forge in Southwark and Norton Folgate, British Land’s Blossom Street development.

The document offers two highly detailed and practical case studies per site, clearly demonstrating how the seven-step framework proposed by the Taskforce can be implemented.



Members of the Taskforce include:



Spotlight on

Nigel Webb, head of development at British Land and chair of the Construction Productivity Taskforce



construction
productivity
taskforce



“Like much of the UK economy, the construction industry is facing a perfect storm of price rises and supply chain challenges. This makes finding ways to increase efficiency, improve performance and enhance productivity a top priority for every business.

“The *Measuring Construction Site Productivity* report provides practical, real-world guidance on how construction sites can be improved through careful planning, development and implementation. My hope is that every major contributor to the construction industry will take this framework into the field so that we might begin building a stronger sector.”

“
My hope is that every major contributor to the construction industry will take this framework into the field.



“

The construction sector has struggled with productivity for decades, so bringing together clients, contractors, supply chain and consultants from some of the country's biggest companies in one taskforce is critical to overcoming this challenge.

Denica Lundberg
Senior Partnerships Manager



Since 2020, Meta has played a critical role in helping Be the Business to fulfil its mission in support of greater SME productivity.

Read the full impact report by scanning this QR code



Meta partnership in numbers

- Meta has delivered over **£900,000 of funding and in-kind** support to Be the Business to help in our productivity mission since 2020.
- Be the Business and Meta have engaged over **650,000 business leaders** with productivity-enhancing resources including articles, guides and checklists.
- Be the Business' SuperLeaders quiz, based on extensive research into leadership types, was boosted to reach more business leaders with support from Meta.

In particular, Be the Business and Meta have worked together to:

Collaborate to tackle critical SME policy

Meta has supported Be the Business' work to raise the profile of SME productivity, partnering on several roundtables with MPs and government ministers. Meta is also a core member of Be the Business' Technology Productivity Taskforce. Meta has also supported Be the Business' policy engagement, partnering on several MP roundtables.

Support a mass audience of business leaders to rebuild from Covid-19

Meta has supported Be the Business with Facebook ad credits, which Be the Business can use to reach and understand

millions of UK Facebook and Instagram users. This was particularly important in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic as Be the Business pivoted to help SMEs with practical support.

Drive digital adoption

Be the Business research shows that the successful adoption of digital technology is a key driver of productivity. As a social technology company and one of the most innovative tech businesses in the world, Meta is opportunely positioned to support such adoption amongst SMEs. Meta also provided mentors to the Be the Business mentoring programme to drive digital innovation.

650,000

The number of business leaders Meta and Be the Business have engaged with business resources

Spotlight on —

Steve Hatch, VP, Meta
Northern Europe



“A desire to help business leaders respond to the immediate pressures of Covid-19 brought Be the Business and Meta together in 2020. Transforming the success of British businesses requires the entire business community to work together.

This focus on building a network of leaders who share what makes them successful is what makes Meta such a natural partner for Be the Business.”

“

Transforming the success of British businesses requires the entire business community to work together.

Roshan Paramananthan, Client Partner, Meta & Be the Business mentor



Roshan Paramananthan leads the Facebook and Instagram strategy for Meta clients in the retail sector.

As a Be the Business mentor, he was paired with a mentee looking to build their digital marketing strategy.

Roshan was able to support his mentee, showing them how best to analyse data and create reports, but also found himself learning in the process.

“The Be the Business mentoring programme is not only very good, but also incredibly important.

It’s about sharing knowledge across lots of different organisations in a structured way, allowing mentors, mentees and their respective businesses to all benefit. It’s win win win.”



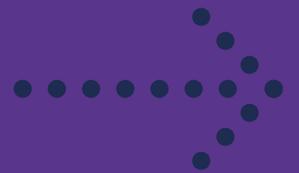
The Be the Business mentoring programme is not only very good, but also incredibly important.







Our thinking



Productive Business Index

Be the Business has developed a major new research programme, the Productive Business Index (PBI). This programme is designed to measure and track changes in UK micro and SME business performance and capabilities over time.

Read our latest PBI report by scanning this QR code



With the support of Oxford Economics, Be the Business developed a bespoke index model to track how major investments of time and resources by SMEs affect behaviour, performance and productivity both currently and looking ahead.

Be the Business has extensively researched the productivity puzzle and identified five distinct areas that are major drivers of firm-level productivity. Through the PBI, we measure the capability of micro and small and medium businesses in these five areas:

- Management and Leadership: does the business have a plan for the future and a strategy to get there?
- Technology Adoption: is technology, in various guises and even at the simplest levels, embraced?
- Training, Development and HR: is the environment to learn and improve built into the company systems and structures?
- Operational Efficiency: is there a constant focus on improving elements of everyday performance?
- Innovation and Ideas: are the conditions fostered to create and test new ideas that will enhance the business?

Trends from our first five editions

Since the publication of our first PBI in early 2021 through to we have observed a number of trends.

- The influence of the pandemic was initially very obvious, with large changes in business performance. Business capabilities responses have been more consistent, and trends are beginning to emerge:

Our latest edition finds that:

- In 2022, there has been a decline in the number of business leaders who believe their management teams have the right blend of skills.
- However, determination and the drive to improve shine through, with increasing numbers expecting to spend more time on management and leadership activities in the next 12 months

1,500

Business leaders surveyed every six months on business performance and capabilities



“

By establishing how businesses plan to improve their performance in the near term, we can make our interventions higher impact.

James Gribben
Head of Communications

Skills for Success: Supporting business leaders with digital adoption – in partnership with The Open University

Be the Business worked with The Open University on a report to understand the skills that are needed to help support SMEs with successful technology adoption.

Read the full Skills for Success report by scanning this QR code



We know from our previous research that three years' worth of innovation took place in three months as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. However, we also know that most of those businesses (53%) that adopted technology, did not get the expected return on investment.

Both digital skills and leadership and management expertise play a role in increasing the likelihood of successful technology adoption.

This report sought to answer the key questions around digital adoption, skills development and what more needs to be done to stimulate economic growth and raise firm-level productivity.

Our findings

Be the Business and The Open University conducted research with 1500 small business leaders. The report found that:

- Only a minority of business leaders see technology as having a positive impact on increasing efficiency (39%), revenue (31%) and profit margin (27%).
- One fifth (21%) of all business leaders don't think adopting technology could have a positive impact on their business at all.
- Only 54 per cent of business leaders think they make good purchasing decisions about technology, of which only one in ten (12%) make very good decisions.
- Fewer than a quarter of business leaders (23%) think they have all the necessary technical skills to successfully adopt and implement technology and only a third (33%) believe they have all the leadership and management skills needed.
- Only half (50%) of leaders who felt their employees lacked skills in these areas have either a formal or loose plan to address the skills gap in the next 12 months.
- One quarter of business leaders (25%) spend no money on training and learning.
- Time and cost were raised as significant barriers to adopting technology with nearly one third of business leaders (30%) considering digital tools too expensive and 16 per cent put off by the time needed to train staff.
- Covid-19 accelerated the implementation of digital tools in more than half (54%) of the SME population.
- Of the business leaders who adopted new technology or accelerated its use due to Covid-19, at least 85 per cent planned to continue using it at the same level once restrictions were fully lifted.

Spotlight on

Jane Dickinson, Digital Skills Lead, The Open University



“The pandemic forced many business leaders to rapidly reassess how they do business and the role of technology. Digital skills are now front and centre to current thinking across all sectors as businesses look to successfully adopt digital technologies.

“SMEs provide great environments for talented workers to fulfil their potential through lifelong learning. If business leaders can adopt a ‘grow your own’ approach, then it is a win-win-win for the employee, employer and the economy. But there are some barriers to overcome – not least the time and cost investment and our report reveals how SMEs can chart a path to grow the digital skills for the future.”

“

If business leaders can adopt a ‘grow your own’ approach, then it is a win-win-win.



The Productivity Institute

In early 2022, Be the Business signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The Productivity Institute, the research network for exploring UK productivity.

Read the full press release by scanning this QR code



The MoU reflects our two organisations' commitment to collaborate to better understand and improve the productivity of UK businesses.

The MoU signifies a shared ambition from the two organisations to address UK business productivity under-performance and, in particular, bridge the gap between research insights and practical application.

Together with The Productivity Institute, we are focusing on developing a deeper understanding of SME behaviours and firm level productivity and using this insight to design and deliver new support programmes to enhance the productivity of UK firms.

The Productivity Institute is a UK-wide research organisation funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Its mission is to lay the foundations for an era of sustained and inclusive productivity growth

Spotlight on

Bart van Ark, managing director, The Productivity Institute



“The collaboration between The Productivity Institute (TPI) and Be the Business provides a unique opportunity to leverage both organisations’ strengths. TPI provides a broad-based research capability to better understand the drivers, barriers and opportunities for productivity, including leading research from ten academic institutions across the UK.

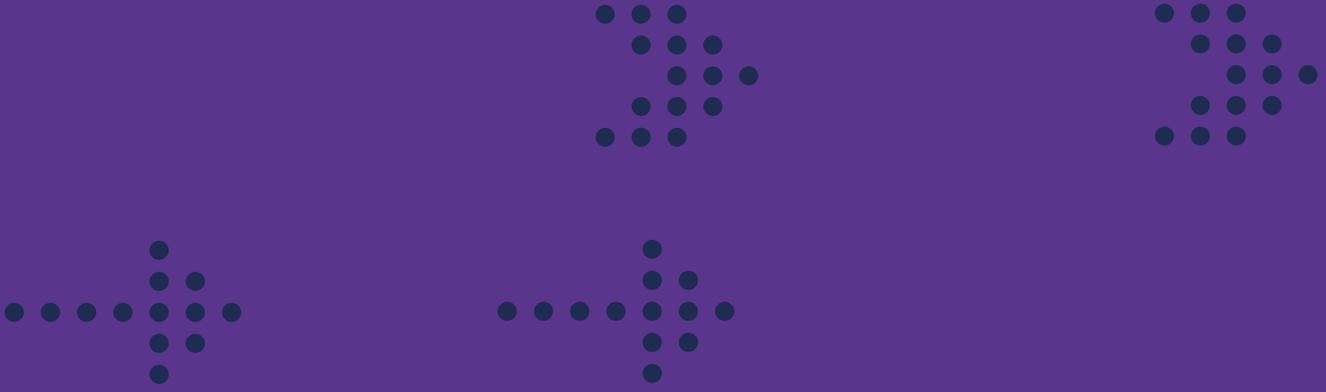
“Be the Business provides a well-developed and sophisticated platform to help translate those insights into

concrete actions which businesses can undertake to improve firm performance and strengthen productivity.”

“

Be the Business provides a well-developed and sophisticated platform to help translate those insights into concrete actions.





Our campaigns



SuperLeaders

Be the Business' SuperLeaders campaign was a dynamic and fun creative campaign designed to drive understanding of the importance of management and leadership skills among business leaders.

Taking the format of a quiz, the campaign was designed to reach and engage a wide range of business leaders. Based on their answers to six questions, leaders were offered a range of tailored business support via the Be the Business website. SuperLeaders included original superhero-style artwork and was supported by an extensive digital campaign.

Small business leaders are SuperLeaders

The SuperLeaders quiz was boosted with support from Meta. In total, over 5,000 business leaders took the quiz to understand their leadership style and began a productivity journey with Be the Business.

Our campaign evaluation found that SuperLeaders was successful in raising awareness of Be the Business and stimulating behavioural change:

- 60 per cent were planning to implement changes to their management and leadership practices as a result of the campaign
- 52 per cent learned about Be the Business from the survey
- 40 per cent were very likely to consider Be the Business for help with business goals



Bootcamps

Be the Business Bootcamps offer a clear online learning journey to help business leaders become more productive.

Each Bootcamp contains a range of tailored content around a particular theme, with the aim of providing business leaders with inspiration, practical advice and tips, and tools to take the next step in their own business.

Be the Business content tends to fall into the following categories: guides, tools, templates, articles and top tips, action plans and business inspiration ('other businesses doing what I do').

Depending on audience, content theme and partner, Bootcamps vary in length, intensity and frequency. Some are, by design, light-touch with short, direct articles for time-poor small business leaders. While others tackle a more complex theme requiring more time

and input from the leader to effect change within their own company.

Currently, Bootcamps are delivered via email newsletters with links to the Be the Business website to access the content, as well as additional support via Be the Business programmes and third-party sources.

The aim is to introduce business leaders to the wealth of free inspiration, information and planning tools available to support them on their business journey. By packaging up content each week around a particular theme we hope to increase engagement with business leaders and improve the performance and productivity of their businesses.



Be the Business Bootcamp



Get **Stronger**



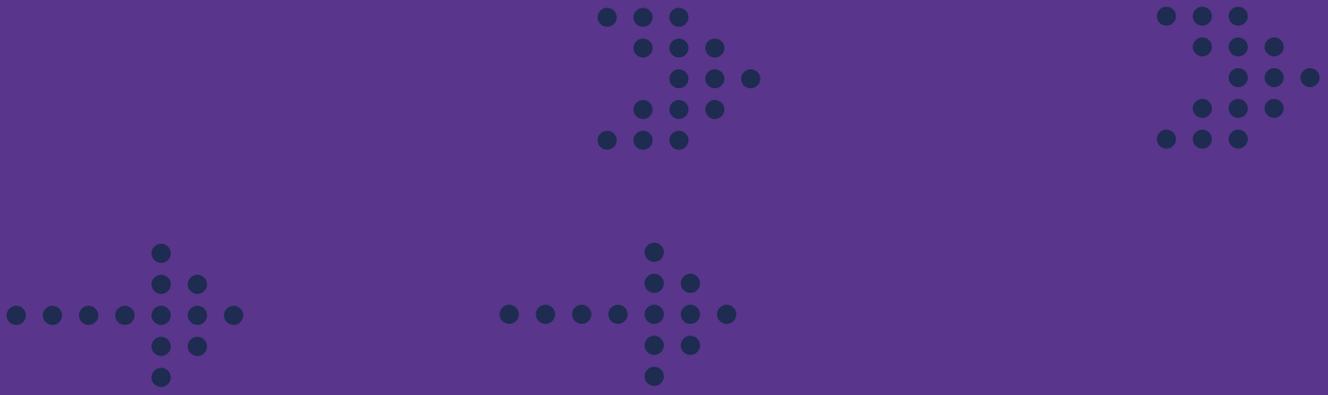
Get **Flexible**



Get **Fitter**



BEHRE



The Bolt



Designed to “bring flashes of inspiration to the inboxes of the Be the Business community every fortnight”, the aim of The Bolt is to “be the place small business leaders go to find all the must-reads and the need-to-knows from the business-sphere”.

Subscribe to The Bolt by scanning this QR code



The first edition of The Bolt was delivered to our audience on 9 June 2021 and continues to be sent to subscribers bi-weekly.

In each edition of The Bolt, we promote content that will help small business leaders boost their productivity. Regular inclusions are:

- **The free guide** – a long-read article – filled with first-person stories, facts, mistakes to avoid and top tips – relating to a timely issue
- **The need-to-know facts** – the latest information on policy changes that may impact small business leaders, such as new small business loans
- **The real-life story** – a first-hand account from a small business leader relating to how they improved productivity in their business
- **The tech tips** – information from our Digital site, promoting the adoption of digital tools in relation to specific business challenges

- The must-read insights – the latest piece of thought leadership, either from Be the Business or other related organisations, such as Federation of Small Business

We also use The Bolt to promote events, our programmes and small business-related content from corporate partners.

8,500+

Subscribers to The Bolt



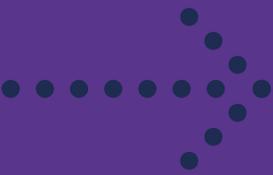
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We created The Bolt for two reasons: to inspire and to inform our ever-growing business community.

Eleanor Roots
Press & Communications Executive



Our events





Be the Business Festival 2022

After a two-year pause, we hosted our free, in-person Be the Business Festival at the Royal Armouries in Leeds on 31 March 2022.

Watch highlights from the Be the Business Festival 2022 by scanning this QR code



The Be the Business Festival was an interactive event, focused on bringing the best in British business together at a time when companies were still prioritising their post-pandemic recovery. The Festival was designed to provide attendees with three things:

- **One new way to overcome a business challenge**
- **One new contact**
- **One new idea for innovation**

A day of business-boosting activities

The day's agenda was designed with business leaders in mind. Following welcome speeches from **Rishi Sunak MP** (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) and **Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire**, a day of talks, interactive activities and support opportunities started:

Our guest speakers

Sir Charlie Mayfield, in conversation with Sonia Sodha

Arctic explorer **Alan Chambers MBE**

Cisco's Director EMEAR Collaboration Sales, **George Dunn**

Roland Palmer, Alibaba Group's general manager for the UK, Netherlands and Nordics

Glenn Bemment, Head of ESG at Lloyds Banking Group

And many more...

Free business support

Meet a Mentor: Business leaders met some of our expert mentors and discovered how Be the Business Mentoring could support them

Digital MOT: Our on-hand experts helped leaders reflect on their products and services and plot out those all-important next steps

Meet an Advisor: Some of our experienced Board members were on hand throughout the day to answer questions about Be the Business Boards

MSDUK: The UK's leading diversity advocacy organisation was on hand to support business leaders

Building connections

Connect over Coffee: A dedicated networking space for business leaders

Solution Stand: A problem-solving stand that helped business leaders share challenges and gather advice from other attendees

Business Confessional: Our anonymous confession booth allowed business leaders to share their leadership strengths and weaknesses

Meet the Community: An interactive Q&A stand for business leaders to ask each other for their top tips

Event sponsors



LLOYDS BANK





be the business FESTIVAL
Festival agenda What's on and where

Time	Royal Armouries Hall	Bury Theatre	Wellington Suite
09.30	Doors Open		
10.00 - 11.00	Interactive stations and stalls open Tea and coffee available	'Ambition beyond growth' report launch and panel Anthony Impey MBE, Be the Business Seema Malhotra, MP Martin McTague, FSB Sandy Neatham, West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce	How to create a great place to work culture (in a talent desert) Adrian Simpson, Wavelength
11.00 - 11.30	Welcome Video address Rishi Sunak MP Chancellor of the Exchequer Keynote address Tracey Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire		
11.30 - 12.15	Keynote: How I grew my business from £0 to £100m Tamara Lohan MBE, Mr & Mrs Smith		Invite only lunch
12.15 - 12.45	Lunch available 12.30 - 14.00 Tea and coffee available	Developing skills to lead Round table talk	Invite only lunch
12.45 - 13.00	Opportunity for attendees to engage with interactive stations and stalls		Gr8 Minds: Driving organisational change Sir Charlie Mayfield, in conversation with Sonia Sadha
13.00 - 13.15		Exporting made easy Roland Palmer, Alibaba Helen Tonks, Hydraulics online	
13.15 - 13.30			Business performance essentials Barry Leahey, Playdale playgrounds
13.30 - 13.45		How to innovate by collaborating George Dann, Cisco	
13.45 - 14.00			Becoming a four-day week Trailblazer Rachel Garrett, CMG Technologies
14.00 - 14.15		Building a business of the future Nick Taylor, DAZN	
14.15 - 14.30			Finance options you have not thought about yet Glenn Bemment and Steve Harris, Lloyds Bank
14.45 - 15.00	Keynote: Leading from the edge Alan Chambers MBE		
15.05 - 15.15	Closing remarks		

Inspire

In response to the continuing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Be the Business launched its Inspire series.

Catch up on the series so far by scanning this QR code



Designed to bring small business leaders prominent voices from the world of business discussing the timely topics of the day, the Inspire series is comprised of one-hour virtual webinars, with a 45-minute talk from the speaker or panel and 15 minutes for Q&A.

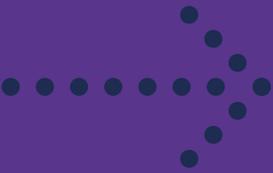
To date, we have hosted four Inspire events:

- **“Just keep going”** with Joe Foster, Reebok founder
- **Linking theory to practice in strategic brand management** with Dr Tom Williams, FUZE Research
- **Post-pandemic recruitment and engagement strategies** with Andrew Collis (Money Penny), Alison Ramsay (BAE Systems) and Matt Carr (Carrs Pasties)
- **Beating the cost of doing business crisis** with Richard Bearman (British Business Bank), Jurga Zilinskiene MBE (Guildhawk) and Sanjay Aggarwal (Spice Kitchen)





Final comments



“

Since 2008, the UK has had an average annual growth in output per hour of just 0.2 per cent, compared to 2.5 per cent in the previous decade.

If you're looking for a metaphor, consider the humble lightbulb. Traditional halogen bulbs waste a lot of energy on generating heat in addition to light, which is their primary function.

Conversely, a 5w LED bulb can exceed the illumination of a 60w halogen bulb, consuming less input in return for an equal – or greater – output. Call it something of a lightbulb moment.

The good news is that improving the nation's productivity isn't such a 'puzzle' as it's often described. In fact, now's the time to unlock the huge potential of small businesses across the UK.

So far, Be the Business has generated **£395m in GVA** for the UK economy.

By 2025, we want to increase our impact to reach **£1bn of additional GVA**.

Our mission is huge but crucial - both in the current economic climate and for the country's future prospects.

Luckily, the fantastic Be the Business team, with the outstanding support of our excellent partners, is on the case.

Join us in our task today.

Anthony Impey MBE
CEO, Be the Business

Our mission is huge but crucial - both in the current economic climate and for the country's future prospects.



**be the
business**