

**be the
business**



Be the Business + Lloyds Banking Group

Partnership highlights

bethebusiness.com



Be the Business organisational highlights



Lloyds Banking Group is a core sponsor of Be the Business. Over the past three years, our partnership has had a major impact on the productivity – and, more recently, the survival rates – of UK SMEs.

Below are some organisational highlights, enabled by Lloyds Banking group.



10,900+ individuals from firms across different sectors and regions have participated in Be the Business programmes.



80% of mentees say their knowledge and skills have improved, and **75% feel more confident** in implementing leadership and management practices.



£165 million Productivity boost for the **235 businesses** that completed the Productivity through People programme and the shorter, lighter High-Performance programme.



70% of firms participating in Productivity through People have increased turnover over the past 12 months, with **78% creating additional jobs**.



Key figures

10:1

Be the Business estimated a return of £10 in productivity benefits for each £1 invested by Lloyds Banking Group.

£45 million

Anticipated boost in productivity as a direct result of Lloyds Banking Group cash and in-kind investment.

£14 million

Productivity improvement from Lloyds Banking Group's sponsorship of Productivity through People, with a further £28m to be delivered in year three.

£4 million

Productivity improvement from Lloyds Banking Group's mentoring contribution. **To date, it has fielded 40 senior mentors.**

Relationship Manager engagement

Substantial work to engage Relationship Managers on value-adding digital and leadership programmes to enhance SME offer.

£4.5 million

Unlocked further funding for Be the Business, allowing it to test, trial and scale its work with SMEs.

Marketing highlights

3

Influential Be the Business/Lloyds Banking Group webinars plus **High-profile interviews** with Sir Charlie Mayfield, Tera Allas and Nigel Whitehead.

112,000

Sir Charlie's interview achieved **the highest engagement rate of any Lloyds Banking Group post** in 2019, with a reach of 112,000.

15+

Covid-response and business support articles over an 18-month period.

1.29 million

Twitter impressions achieved by influential Lloyds Banking Group and Be the Business 2020 **Transformation with Tech Report.**



On the ground impact



“A close insight into the workings and challenges of a small business makes us more empathetic and effective in supporting our SME clients.”

Andrew Connors – Midlands Regional Head of Large Corporates and Head of Higher Education and Charities, Lloyds Commercial Banking.

Mentor on the Be the Business Mentoring programme



“We’ve grown, kept our staff and won new clients, including a large global contract, even during the pandemic.”

Stephanie Chamberlain – Lloyds Banking Group customer and CEO of Magic Milestones

Participant on the Productivity through People programme, sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group



“The Productivity through People course has been a truly important aspect of my journey.”

Emma Heathcote-James – Lloyds Banking Group customer and owner of Little Soap Company

Participant on the Productivity through People programme, sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group



Anthony Impey MBE
CEO, Be the Business



Sir Charlie Mayfield
Chair, Be the Business

The contribution of Lloyds Banking Group over the first two years of its three-year partnership with Be the Business has been invaluable: its total financial commitment of £3m, along with in-kind support of c. 1.5m, is having a major and quantifiable impact on the UK SME community.

For example, Lloyds Banking Group's sponsorship of small-business leaders through our Productivity through People leadership training programme has already delivered a productivity increase of £14m, with an additional £28m expected by year three. In addition, its contribution to our flagship Be the Business Mentoring programme has delivered a further £4m productivity uplift. This equates to an ROI of 10:1.

When the focus of small-business owners switched last year from productivity and performance gains to sheer survival, Be the Business and Lloyds Banking Group adapted their support accordingly. Our 'Rebuild' programme is aligned with and supports Lloyds Banking Group's 'Helping Britain Recover' plan, along with its ambition to be the preferred banking partner of UK SMEs. 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. We are helping Lloyds Banking Group achieve this goal.

As a member of the Productivity Leadership Group, Lloyds Banking Group engaged with us and helped shape our strategic direction from the outset, as well as being our first strategic partner. The relationship between our two organisations is one of mutual support and enlightened self-interest: the hard-hit SME sector is the ultimate beneficiary, but a healthy business sector

is part of a healthy eco-system that benefits banks and society as a whole. In the current challenging economic climate, it is more important than ever to work in partnership to find more ways to help small businesses weather the crisis and emerge stronger on the other side.

There is now a renewed urgency and impetus to make progress on the productivity challenge in the short term. The pandemic has caused the UK to suffer the largest fall in GDP in 300 years, and the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts a 4% long-term reduction in productivity associated with leaving the EU. This comes at a time when public debt levels have spiralled due to the need to fund support over the course of pandemic. Servicing this debt and rebuilding the economy will require a significant improvement in UK productivity in the short term.

Given our shared objective to support the recovery of the UK economy, we look forward to continuing our extremely productive partnership beyond the current three-year term.

At the beginning of our partnership, **Lord Blackwell**, then Chairman of Lloyds Banking Group, summed up our common purpose:

“Productivity is critical to the UK's economic performance, so it is important we support the mission of Be the Business, using our combined strengths and resources to help drive productivity improvements.”



Who are Be the Business?

Be the Business was launched in 2017, led by Sir Charlie Mayfield, former Chairman of John Lewis Partnership, and Chief Executive Tony Danker, with funding and support from the UK government and some of Britain's leading companies, including GSK, Siemens, Amazon, BAE Systems, McKinsey & Co and Accenture.

It is an independent charity¹ designed to bring together large and small companies, with the aim of increasing productivity and performance throughout the UK SME community.

Following Tony Danker's departure to take up the role of Director-General of the CBI in November 2020, Be the Business welcomed Anthony Impey MBE as its CEO. Anthony and Sir Charlie continue to be supported by the Productivity Leadership Group, an advisory group, which comprises some of the UK's most senior business leaders.

Over the past year, together with Lloyds Banking Group, Be the Business has tailored its support to meet the most pressing needs of the SME community – with the objective of 'Helping Britain Recover'. In addition to improving productivity, Be the Business has delivered programmes to help SMEs build resilience and respond to the acute challenges of the crisis. Most notable of these are the 12-week format of the Be the Business Mentoring programme and the addition of a new financial literacy module (co-developed with Lloyds Banking Group) to its Productivity through People programme.

“ From a Lloyds Bank 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.”

Ed Thurman, Director, Group Payments Partnerships, and formerly the Lloyds Banking Group/Be the Business partnership sponsor at Lloyds Banking Group

The Partnership

We are delighted that Lloyds Banking Group are involved in a high-profile movement focused initially on productivity and now on recovery and rebuilding. The partnership works to Help Britain Recover and support Lloyds Banking Group's objective to be the 'Best Bank for Business'. Our joint initiatives specifically work to:

1) Help SMEs directly through our programmes

- Enabling Lloyds Banking Group's customers to access Be the Business Mentoring, Productivity through People and a range of digital support.

2) Support Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers

- Training to help Relationship Managers deepen relationships with clients through provision of Be the Business value adding services, and generating additional client touchpoints.
- Enabling colleagues to deepen their leadership skills and SME insight through mentoring relationships with business leaders.

3) Share partnership successes and insights

- Joint marketing campaigns, including *Yes Business Can*, and data-driven thought leadership, such as the *2020 Transformation with Tech* report, supports Lloyds Banking Group in its objectives to be positioned as Britain's leading business bank

In order to enable activity across each of these three key areas, Lloyds Banking Group makes a significant financial contribution of £3m as well as in kind support of c.£1.5m. Our relationship with Government means that Lloyds Banking Group can match private sector contributions (both financial and in-kind) up to a certain value. Lloyds Banking Group's contribution, therefore, will unlock a further £4.5m of funding for Be the Business over the course of the partnership, and has already helped us to test, trial and scale our work with SMEs.



Impact of Lloyds Banking Group

Lloyds Banking Group has given the activities of Be the Business significant impetus and scale since the two organisations launched their three-year partnership in 2019.

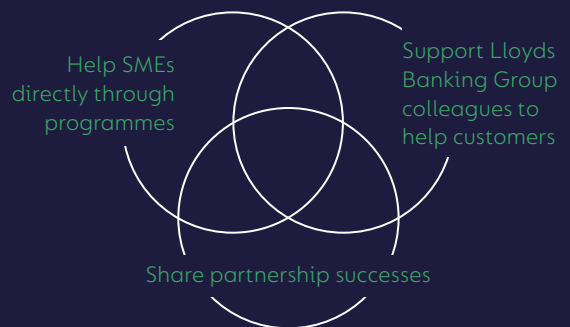
Equally, the partnership has helped Lloyds Banking Group towards its ambition of supporting its customers and its colleagues and positioning itself as Britain's leading business bank.

In the next section, we summarise Lloyds Banking Group's contribution and impact across the three areas of activity, helping SMEs directly through our programmes, supporting Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers and sharing partnership successes and insights.

Partnership activity breakdown

The partnership between Lloyds Banking Group and Be the Business is driven by helping Britain to recover and rebuild and supporting Lloyds Banking Group in its ambitions to become the best bank for business.

Each of the programmes outlined below supports at least one of the bank's objectives – namely, helping SMEs (including customers) recover and rebuild, supporting Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to have more SME touchpoints and gain deeper SME insight, and collaborating with Be the Business to position Lloyds Banking Group as the leading bank for business.





1. Be the Business Mentoring

Help SMEs directly through our programmes

Support Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers

Programme summary

Be the Business' Mentoring programme matches senior executives from leading firms with SME leaders to help accelerate their recovery, growth and competitiveness. Over the course of 12 weeks or 12 months, mentoring pairs build relationships, and mentors share their expertise and advice while further developing their own leadership capability.

Lloyds Banking Group contribution

To date, Lloyds Banking Group has provided over 40 mentors to the Mentoring programme. Senior leaders within Lloyds Banking Group sponsored the programme internally. It has committed to provide a total of 100 mentors and plans to make Be the Business Mentoring the official executive mentoring programme across the Lloyds Banking Group. It has also launched a mentee recruitment campaign among its SME clients.



Lloyds Banking Group impact

Be the Business estimates that Lloyds Banking Group's 40 mentors have increased the productivity of firms supported by around £4m.

Be the Business has further, early-stage indicative evidence of the success of the mentoring programmes to which Lloyds Banking Group has contributed. The interim findings below, from December 2020, come from ongoing Be the Business research, which is due to be completed in July this year.

- 67% of mentees report that Be the Business Mentoring has helped to increase their awareness of management and leadership practices. 80% say their knowledge and skills have improved, and three quarters (75%) feel more confident in implementing leadership and management practices.
- 54% of mentees have adopted new practices as a result of Be the Business Mentoring, and that 60% of these have adopted multiple new practices.
- 51% of mentees report that Be the Business Mentoring has improved their productivity, and 67% expect productivity will improve, or improve further, over the next two years.
- 30% have employed more staff, and 30% have seen their turnover increase. 20% have seen an impact on costs and 16% have seen an impact on their overheads.
- Just 6% of mentees believe that all the benefits they have gained would have occurred without Be the Business Mentoring.
- Although the aim of the programme was not specifically Covid-19 related, over a third report that the handling of the crisis would have been harder without it.
- 30% indicated their customers have also indirectly benefitted as a result of their involvement in the programme, demonstrating the multiplier effect of business support programmes.



Case study



Rupert Cross
CEO, Agency 5874



Andrew Connors
Midlands Regional Head of Large Corporates and Head of Higher Education and Charities, Lloyds Banking Group

When Andrew Connors started mentoring Rupert Cross at the end of 2019, neither of them knew just what a challenging time lay ahead.

Andrew has over 30 years' experience in commercial banking, helping SMEs, mid-sized and large corporates to grow. Now Midlands Regional Head of Large Corporates and Head of Higher Education and Charities at Lloyds Banking Group, he's passionate about supporting the West Midlands business economy and expanding his own perspectives and experience.

His mentee, Rupert Cross, along with his brother, founded a small digital marketing agency, 5874, which by now had 20 staff and an ambitious global growth strategy.

“ Being matched with Andrew, with all his experience at Lloyds, started a process that surpassed my expectations.”

Rupert Cross, CEO, Agency 5874

Mentoring through a pandemic

“When coronavirus struck, it was a really worrying time,” Rupert recalls. “We had to quickly make tough decisions, including reducing our team and scaling the business right down to protect ourselves. Our frank and detailed discussions became focused on ‘what happens next?’ and ‘how do we develop the business in the few years post-coronavirus?’”

Learning from each other

Both Andrew and Rupert feel they have benefited hugely from their mentoring relationship and continue to do so.

Rupert likens Andrew's impact to that of a top-level coach working with a top-level sportsman. It's not been about teaching the sport, but rather sharing the benefit of wider experience, bringing out potential and adding the “finishing touches and finesse,” he says.

Meanwhile, Andrew has found mentoring educational too. “I've certainly learnt as much from the experience as my mentee,” he says. “Also, a close insight into the workings and challenges of a small business makes us more empathetic and effective in supporting our SME clients. At Lloyds, we can make a positive impact on the productivity of UK business and this is an opportunity we should take.”

[> Read more](#)



2. Productivity through People

Help SMEs directly through our programmes

Support Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers

Programme summary

Productivity through People is an executive education programme designed to boost the leadership and management capability of SME leaders. During the ten-month, part-time programme, participants experience practical classroom-based learning, are exposed to the successful strategies of world-leading firms such as Lloyds Banking Group, Rolls Royce and BAE Systems, and gain access to a network of like-minded individuals - something that is crucial to sustainable improvement. As noted above, 235 businesses have been on our Productivity through People programmes. These programmes have boosted the productivity of participating firms by an estimated £165m.

Lloyds Banking Group contribution

Lloyds Banking Group, in partnership with Aston University, has committed to sponsor three cohorts of 20 businesses to participate in the Productivity through People programme. It has already sponsored one cohort, and will sponsor two more in 2021. Working with the Be the Business team and Aston University, it also created a bolt-on financial literacy module designed specifically to support businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic. The module has been successfully piloted with the Aston cohort and will be delivered across all Productivity through People delivery partners (including the University of Bath, Lancaster University and the University of Strathclyde) in 2021.

Lloyds Banking Group impact

Each 20-person cohort is expected to increase the productivity of firms supported by £14m.

Early evidence of the success of the programme includes the following.

- Participants clearly value Productivity through People: three-quarters of respondents say it is a unique support package that is not available elsewhere.
- The majority of participants surveyed say they have changed their approach to business leadership as a result of taking part in the programme.
 - Over 90% say employee engagement has risen over the past financial year.
 - Some 56% feel the programme has strongly influenced their approach to improving the skills of their workforce and to identifying and developing future leaders.
- Respondents say they have experienced positive business outcomes since participating in the programme.
 - Some 70% say their business has increased turnover over the past 12 months.
 - Around 78% have created additional jobs.



Case study



Stephanie Chamberlain

Owner and CEO,
Magic Milestones

“I can honestly say that the Productivity through People course has changed my life.”

Even before the pandemic hit, Stephanie Chamberlain, founder and CEO of tech consultancy Magic Milestones, felt, she says, “a bit like an engine that had run out of steam.”

She set up the business 13 years ago and enjoyed a decade of innovation and success. But she had become unclear about the company’s message and direction, and when Covid-19 arrived she questioned her ability to meet the challenge.

Eureka moments

When Stephanie, a Lloyds Banking Group customer, enrolled on the Productivity through People course at Aston Business School, everything changed. “Very quickly, the penny dropped around our proposition, and, since then, it’s been eureka moment after eureka moment,” she says.

The inspirational teaching and in-depth high-quality content on the programme, which was sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group, gave her a new perspective on her business. Two of the biggest insights she gained were the need to invest in people management, and the value of peer-to-peer working with like-minded business leaders. “I had stopped investing in my own learning,” she admits.

The thinking space the programme afforded made her realise that her business is about ‘performance’, which, in turn, allowed her to define and target the right customers, and create a new strapline – ‘Changing the world, one team at a time’. It also gave her the confidence that her business can hold its own against bigger consultancies.

Having to switch to online learning mid-way through the course didn’t diminish the benefits, and the new financial literacy module was, she says, invaluable: “The ongoing presence of mentors is also a huge advantage.”

Results speak for themselves

“The course lit a fire under me, and I haven’t looked back since,” says Stephanie. “We’ve grown, kept our staff and won new clients, including a large global contract, even during the pandemic. We’ve seen our gross business profits increase by an incredible 48%.”

> [Read more](#)

Case study



Emma Heathcote-James

Owner, Little Soap Company

“The Productivity through People course has been a truly important aspect of my journey.”

The past 13 years have been a big success story for Cotswolds-based business owner and Lloyds Banking Group customer Emma Heathcote-James who, in 2008, identified a gap in the market for high-quality, UK-produced organic soap.

The company grew organically, and she decided to invest in her own skills so she could take her thriving kitchen-table business up a level – to supermarket shelves. This meant moving from owner to leader of a team, and she did the Productivity through People programme at Aston Business School (sponsored by Lloyds Banking Group) to learn how to do it.

When the pandemic struck in 2020, demand for Little Soap Company products soared, and Emma worked fast to adapt the business to the demands of life under lockdown.

Lessons pay off

The lessons she'd learned during the Productivity through People course stood her in good stead. For example, because she'd moved so many business processes into the Cloud, she was able to shift her office-based team to remote working without disruption to meetings, sales or delivery. She even grew the team during the pandemic, enabling her to meet fluctuating demand and help the company's supermarket customers by reacting fast to shortages caused by panic-buying. In common with many business founders, Emma had become an “accidental business leader.”

The Productivity through People programme taught her a new approach to people management, which has helped her business go from strength to strength. She realised that rather than expecting her team to help her, she had “to help and support them – so they can do the best job.”

The network of like-minded people she met on the course has provided long-lasting support: “There has been a sense of camaraderie throughout the pandemic,” she says.

Little Soap Company gets bigger

Pre-coronavirus, Little Soap Company forecast 63% growth in the 2020-2021 financial year – but it will actually be closer to 110%. Sales have been boosted by the demand for organic soap during the pandemic, but the business has also become “slicker, more ambitious, more confident and determined,” says Emma. “The Productivity through People course has been a truly important aspect of my journey,” she concludes.

> [Read more](#)



3. Relationship Manager engagement

Help SMEs directly through our programmes

Support Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers

Programme summary

SMEs turn to a limited number of trusted advisers for business support. Over the past year, demand for support has risen dramatically: Be the Business research shows that 56% of SMEs sought external information or advice in 2020, compared to 24% in 2019.

Be the Business understands the opportunity advisers have to deepen relationships with their customers and provide added value by providing support that goes beyond their core focus – which, in the case of relationship managers, is finance.

The partnership is developing a project to help relationship managers provide this support to their customers by means of a Be the Business toolkit aimed at helping them to better understand and meet their customers’ broad business needs.

Currently being piloted in the East of England, this project aims to fill a gap in the relationship manager’s armoury – where previously they would have had no products to offer clients interested in conversations beyond finance, the Be the Business toolkit enables them to initiate these strategic conversations with confidence, and have a clear set of tried and tested support available for clients.



Research from Accenture has found that around **60% of SMEs are interested in talking to their bank** about issues beyond finance.

Initial training feedback showed that all Relationship Managers’ respondents were **very likely to speak with clients about Be the Business.**



4. Digital adoption

Support Lloyds Banking Group colleagues to help their customers

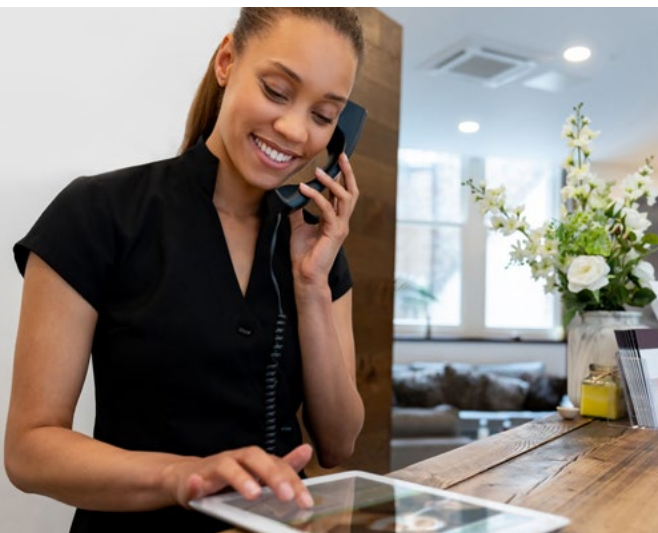
Programme summary

The Digital Adoption programme, sponsored by the government's Business Basics fund, is a partnership between Lloyds Banking Group, the Behavioural Insights Team and Be the Business. It was set up to evaluate the success of Be the Business Digital (a free and independent website designed to help SMEs choose the right software for their business) through a randomised control trial among Lloyds Banking Group customers.

Increased digital adoption is critical to helping SMEs improve their productivity, and the trial will assess the role that intermediaries such as Lloyds Banking Group can play in supporting SMEs to adopt key technologies.

Lloyds Banking Group contribution

Lloyds Banking Group customers will be involved across each element of the trial, and the bank's Relationship Managers will be involved in one work stream. A pilot trial has already been rolled out through SME relationship managers to a small number of SME clients. The full trial will cover around 400 SME clients.



Lloyds Banking Group impact

Be the Business Digital was originally designed for 'self-service' use by SMEs. To help evaluate the early-stage product, Be the Business worked with a small group of Lloyds Banking Group relationship managers and clients to gather feedback on how SMEs could get more out of the programme by working with the bank.

The feedback from this pilot is encouraging. One relationship manager said: "I like the fact that it is thought-provoking, and not product or sales led." A client said: "I like the idea of having something I can refer to which can point me in the right direction."

This feedback has led to new 'action plans' - step-by-step guides for SMEs to follow. They can complete these on their own, be signposted to one by a relationship manager, or work together on one with their relationship manager. In all cases the relationship manager can see their client's progress.

"I'll be interested to see the findings of the trial as it will be important for the bank going forward to demonstrate breadth of "value add" to the client relationship which could be a real differentiator for us. It's been good to see how the product has been adapted in light of feedback from Relationship Managers, and the positive upfront feedback we've had from clients in a discovery meeting we held with them to test appetite and value."

Dave Atkinson, Regional Director,
Lloyds Banking Group



5. Marketing and thought leadership

Share partnership successes and insights

Marketing teams from Be the Business and Lloyds Banking Group have worked closely together and built on Lloyds Banking Group's rich seam of insight and support to produce reports, campaigns, interviews, case studies, webinars, competitions and articles. The Lloyds Banking Group team describes it as 'a joint sharing of content'. This content has raised awareness of the help available to SMEs, helping SMEs and raising the profile of both partnership organisations as being at the forefront of efforts to ensure the sector recovers and grows.

Thought leadership

Lloyds Banking Group and Be the Business collaborated on one of 2020's most important pieces of research on small business and technology – the Lloyds Bank 2020 Transformation with Tech Report. Created in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the UK micro-business landscape, the research built on over 200,000 quantitative and qualitative business data-points to provide exclusive insights into how the UK's smallest businesses are using technology to adapt and survive, and to assess the support they will continue to need.

Launched by Nick Williams, Deputy Group Transformation Director at Lloyds Banking Group, and Be the Business CEO Anthony Impey, at a high-profile event attended by Paul Scully MP, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets, the report made a big impact on the UK tech eco-system and beyond. Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister of State for Digital and Culture, stated that "alongside government initiatives, research like the Transformation with Tech Report is hugely important in showing businesses how technology can help them adapt to their new working conditions. Be the Business and Lloyds Bank have provided invaluable insights into how technology can equip small and micro-businesses with the tools that they need to transform and to grow."

Leadership interviews

Lloyds Banking Group has produced written and video interviews with members of Be the Business' Productivity Leadership Group, which comprises senior leaders such as Sir Ian Davis, Chairman of Rolls-Royce, Dame Fiona Kendrick, former Chairman and CEO of Nestlé, Steve Hatch, VP Facebook, Northern Europe, and António Horta-Osório, Group CEO Lloyds Banking Group. Examples of interviews include the following.

In 2019 Sir Charlie Mayfield, the Chair of Be the Business, and Tera Allas, now Director of Research and Economics at McKinsey Center for Government, talked about productivity, the need to measure it if you are to grow it, and how Be the Business' benchmarking tool can help SMEs. This interview achieved the highest engagement rate of any Lloyds Banking Group post in 2019, with a reach of 112,000.

> [Read more](#)

In September 2020 Nigel Whitehead, Director of External Affairs at BAE Systems, was interviewed about the benefits strong leadership can bring to an organisation, large or small.

> [Read more](#)





Webinars

As part of Lloyds Banking Group's Covid-19 Webcast Series, Danny McKeever, Operations Director at Site Supply Co (and a Be the Business mentee), and Rory Campbell, a Be the Business consultant and mentoring ambassador, talked about how to pivot your business in challenging times. The webinar was run in collaboration with Be the Business. The idea was to talk to a business that has pivoted, in order to understand their challenges and share their advice for other businesses looking to do the same thing.

> [Read more](#)

Lloyds Banking Group and Be the Business collaborated on a Lloyds Bank Live Broadcast in August 2020, entitled 'Business as Unusual': Practical Guidance for Businesses. Tony Danker, then CEO of Be the Business (and now Director-General of the CBI) participated, along with Jeavon Lolay, Head of Economics and Strategy at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking. Tony provided insights on the impact on business of Covid-19, how businesses were reacting and adapting, and what he saw as the future for UK business. Over 250 business leaders attended the event.

> [Read more](#)

Mark Hart, Professor of Small Business and Entrepreneurship at Aston Centre for Growth, represented Be the Business (he is the Productivity through People programme director at Aston Business School) at a Lloyds Big Conversation event in the Midlands. The Big Conversations were a series of UK-wide discussions organised by Lloyds Banking Group that brought together a panel of business leaders and experts to share their recent experiences and explore the opportunities that would help the Midlands recover from the current crisis and rebuild.

> [Read more](#)

Articles and case studies

Be the Business has produced a range of case studies focusing on SME owners who have benefited from support from Be the Business and Lloyds Banking Group. Lloyds Banking Group regularly repurposes articles (to

date, over 15 in 18 months) written by Be the Business to help SMEs respond to the Covid-19 crisis, to share with its own customers. Subject matter ranges from learning to make big decisions, to researching new markets, to making technology and innovation change less daunting, to monitoring and empowering teams.

> [Read more](#)

Competitions

Be the Business and Lloyds worked together on The Times and Lloyds Small Business of 2020 competition. Be the Business CEO Anthony Impey was a judge, and was impressed by the inspirational energy and resilience demonstrated by the 800 shortlisted small and local businesses up and down the country in meeting the extraordinary challenges of 2020. The judges chose 24 winners, whose prize was a virtual group mentoring session with one of four experienced business leaders (Sharmadean Reid, Joe Wicks, Levi Roots and Lord Bilimoria). The sessions were designed to help businesses navigate continuing challenges in 2021. Four SME 'super winners' received £10,000 in advertising credits.

High-level access

In addition to facilitating these specific joint marketing initiatives, Be the Business has also afforded Lloyds Banking Group access to government ministers. For example, in February 2020 CEO António Horta-Osório hosted a Productivity Leadership Group meeting at Lloyds Banking Group's Gresham Street offices in London, where members of the Productivity Leadership Group engaged directly with Andrea Leadsom, then Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Be the Business has also presented joint Be the Business/Lloyds Banking Group research at various MP roundtables.

Additionally, Be the Business co-sponsored, and contributed chapters to Lloyds Banking Group's *Yes Business Can* book, which offers information and inspiration to help British businesses 'start up, scale up and go global'.

> [Read more](#)



Conclusion

The partnership between Lloyds Banking Group and Be the Business has delivered enormous benefits to the economy and the SME sector, particularly in providing vital support during an economic crisis.

The partnership has also supported Lloyds Banking Group's strategy of enabling its colleagues to support their customers and really 'Helping Britain Recover', positioning Lloyds as the UK's leading bank for SMEs.

The partnership has delivered real impact, but there is much more we can achieve together. We want to continue to build on our partnership over the coming years to ensure we can help SMEs to recover, rebuild and thrive, and get them driving the UK economy forward once again.

¹ Be the Business

Charitable objectives (charity number: 1173660):
The promotion of industry and commerce in the UK for the public benefit by promoting the productivity of business in order that the UK economy as a whole will benefit through improved business sustainability, employment security, job satisfaction and standards of living.

Source: The Charity Commission