



## Triggering Change

Trigger events and their role in encouraging business leaders to seek business support.

## Foreword

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Over the last few years, business leaders have faced enormous disruption to their organisations. Some of these events have been seismic in themselves. Others have triggered a domino effect of smaller, yet no less challenging, occurrences that have tested business leaders up and down the country and around the world.

Perhaps most impactful, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced changes to the way in which we all live and significantly affected how companies conduct their business, bringing unforeseen levels of upheaval and uncertainty. With repeated cycles of lockdowns and restrictions, strategic business planning has taken a back seat on the coronavirus

rollercoaster and leaders have been forced to embrace myriad changes to stay afloat. Many changes were temporary, yet some leaders have permanently adopted new ways of working, while others have changed their business model all together.

Meanwhile, following protracted negotiations and several years of preparation, the UK finally left the European Union – an event, which in many ways, feels like a distant memory. While Brexit could be planned for, it nonetheless represented an enormous event that all business leaders needed to respond and adapt to or, at the very least, consider. And now, the cost-of-living crisis, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, is the latest source of uncertainty for business leaders to deal with.

However, despite the enormity of these events, they are by no means the only prompts – or triggers – for leaders to make changes to their business or seek external advice. A complex set of business-as-usual pressures, coupled with individual approaches to leadership dictate if and when this occurs. These trigger events are what we explore in this report.

This is borne out in research we at Be the Business conducted in December 2021, which showed that during the course of that year, four in five (79%) business leaders reported a change in the way their business operates. The pandemic served as the driving force for nearly half (46%) of those changes, but changing consumer preferences (25%) and winning a new contract or client (24%) were also significant triggers. Looking to more recent market changes, more than half (54%) of respondents said their business had implemented changes as a result of rising inflation, while one in five (21%) said their business reviewed processes to make them more efficient as a result of supply chain disruption<sup>1</sup>.

Developing a greater understanding of triggers is important, because there has been a decade long decline in the number of business leaders seeking support. Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion of SME employers seeking external information or advice in the previous 12 months roughly halved to 24 per cent<sup>2</sup>. Cost is seen as the main barrier to the take up of advice by SMEs, while a lack of tailored support, implementation challenges and difficulty knowing who to trust for advice also rank highly<sup>3</sup>.

However, it seems that the Covid-19 pandemic and, to a lesser extent, Brexit have reignited an openness to seek outside help. A Be the Business survey of company directors conducted at the height of the first Covid-19 wave in 2020, found more than half (56%) were seeking external information or advice<sup>4</sup>. This suggests that while certain events are occurring, business leaders may be significantly more open to support than they would usually be.

However, one question that is raised, is how government and business support organisations can maximise this opportunity to keep businesses engaged and help them to recognise the productivity potential of change and adaptation? A second valuable question asks, what other events in a business' existence can act as a trigger for leaders to seek business support?

This paper looks beyond the current set of highly unusual circumstances and sets out the likely moments in time when business leaders are most in need of, and therefore most receptive to, help. While these triggers are broadly accepted and have, in a limited way, been previously documented as an opportunity for engagement with business leaders, little work has been done to map and codify the most common events. Moreover, there are interesting learnings based on how these events trigger certain behaviours, which can then be used by the business support sector to more effectively target relevant and impactful interventions according to SME requirements and circumstance.

2 BEIS Small Business Survey (2019)

3 Be the Business, Business Support Survey (2020)

4 Be the Business, Business Support Survey (2020)

# Executive Summary

**There are countless moments in the lifecycle of a small- or medium-sized business when leaders may be more receptive to seeking advice and support. Though referenced sparingly in a few pieces of past research, this report is the first time that these ‘trigger events’ have been explored and thought about in detail.**

This paper sets out the types of trigger events that businesses are most likely to encounter and suggests four broad categories based on when leaders are likely to experience them:

- 1 Ambition** – triggers created by the internal growth ambition of the business leader or a growth mindset
- 2 Competition** – triggers caused by competitive pressures around the business
- 3 Lifecycle** – triggers naturally occurring as part of the day-to-day process of running a business
- 4 External** – unforeseen and unexpected triggers caused by external events

Trigger events across these categories can result in changes to the business operations of small- and medium-sized businesses. Moreover, in recent years, seismic external events like Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in a domino effect of smaller triggers impacting businesses in a variety of ways.

In addition to exploring the types of trigger events experienced by businesses, we look at the type of behaviours and business changes that are likely to be initiated as a result. Changes are likely to take place in the areas of:

- Training, development and HR
- Capital investment
- Technology adoption
- Sales and marketing
- Leadership and management

This paper brings together the existing literature on triggers with new research from small- and medium-sized businesses on the most significant events and changes that ensue.

By recognising the types of events that act as a catalyst for change, business support organisations can unlock opportunities to engage businesses as they respond to trigger events, offering help when they need it most. Furthermore, understanding how business leaders wish to receive that support and acknowledging learning preferences can improve the quality of support available.

# Why trigger events matter

In the Business Productivity Review<sup>5</sup> published in 2019, the UK Government set out the four stages of the Business Change Cycle:

1. Realisation that a change is needed
2. Assessment of the costs of change and associated outcomes, quality and value of change, and of the business support available to help identify solutions
3. Navigation of the business support environment to find advice, or new services and products, to deliver the desired change
4. Embedding the change in the business to realise the benefits, which may require strong leadership and staff training

Crucially, a key element in improving the productivity of UK SMEs is realising the potential of business support available and ensuring that businesses can navigate the environment, finding the right advice at the right time. As part of this, the review found that businesses often prefer to take advice from trusted sources within their own networks, and that this usually happens at trigger points when they are faced with particular challenges requiring change.

In this spirit, in the March 2021 Budget, the UK government announced the creation of the Help to Grow scheme for SMEs – covering management and digital – with the aim of giving them the support needed to drive a post-Covid recovery. In fact, Be the Business's Business Support Survey 2021, during the pandemic, found that business leaders sought information from the government website (.gov.co.uk) more than any other source (44%)<sup>6</sup>.

By identifying trigger events and combining this with an understanding of where business leaders are most likely to turn to for help, we can work to bring the support direct to businesses via their preferred networks at the time and place when they most need it.

## Previous examination of trigger events

There has been limited examination of the different milestones or trigger events that businesses might face during their existence. While the Business Productivity Review<sup>7</sup> and the Behavioural Insights Team's Boosting Business report<sup>8</sup> acknowledged the role of trigger events in encouraging businesses to seek support, neither explored in detail what those moments might be. Beyond the UK, the New Zealand Government<sup>9</sup> produced a valuable resource setting out the milestones business owners are likely to face over the lifetime of their business.

5 UK Government, Business Productivity Review (2019)

6 Be the Business, Business Support Survey (2021)

7 UK Government, Business Productivity Review (2019)

8 The Behavioural Insights Team, Boosting business: applying behavioural insights to business policy (2019)

9 New Zealand Government, [Common Business Milestones](#)

# Types of trigger events

There are an infinite variety of potential events that could affect businesses during their lifecycles, and different business leaders will experience them differently. However, it may be helpful to focus at a high level on the most common moments, segmenting the triggers according to similarities in context.

Drawing from a wide range of sources, including those mentioned above, the most frequently experienced business triggers fit into four categories that broadly relate to different periods in a business' existence. These categories are:

- 1 **Ambition**    2 **Competition**    3 **Lifecycle**    4 **External**

Each category shares different characteristics, making it easier to consider varied business support approaches to leaders struggling with decisions in these areas.

## 1 **Ambition**



This group of triggers relates to those events largely driven internally by the growth ambitions of the business leader or businesses embarking on a growth pathway. While we know that growth is not the only ambition for business leaders<sup>10</sup>, it is the top driver for leaders seeking strategic business advice<sup>11</sup>. These milestones tend to be positive, stemming from the business spotting or capitalising on an opportunity that requires a change in business approach to facilitate it.

### **These events could include:**

- Winning a major new contract or client
- Diversifying into new product areas or offerings
- Expanding across sectors, regions or countries to reach new markets
- Capital investment into the business
- Mergers and acquisitions of complementary businesses
- Securing external investment to facilitate growth
- Investing in new technology or assets

## 2 **Competition**



In some respects, this group of triggers naturally mirrors the Ambition group. These events tend to be precipitated by competitive pressures from outside the business and are often more negative in nature. Intra-sector comparison and rivalry is often the cause, pushing businesses to adapt their ways of working in response.

### **These events could include:**

- Losing a major contract or client
- A new market entrant threatening the status quo
- Major growth or an acquisition by a key competitor
- Benchmarking analysis showing weaknesses versus others in the sector
- Changing consumer preferences
- New business models overturning existing ways of doing business

### 3 Lifecycle



There are also a number of events that are likely to occur at several points within any business' natural lifecycle that may trigger the need for external support. Many of these processes come about as businesses go through various stages of normal growth and development, or as a result of events set out in the other trigger groups.

#### For example:

- Registering a company with Companies House
- Sourcing new premises
- Rebranding or creating a new website
- Registering new intellectual property
- Restructuring or entering a redundancy process
- Leadership change or transition – either internally or under new ownership
- Personal events in a business leader's life
- Cashflow issues or the need for a loan

### 4 External



If many of the trigger events outlined in this report can be planned for and anticipated, this group represents the 'black box' of unknowns. These are the external events that act as a curveball for business leaders and can be challenging to overcome given their dramatic impact and potentially devastating consequences. There's little doubt that this group of triggers has been working overtime in the last few years and having an outsized impact on the operations of SMEs.

#### Examples of these events include:

- Regulatory or legislative change (e.g. Brexit)
- Public health crisis (e.g. the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Financial fluctuations
- Geopolitical tensions
- Governmental incentives
- Cyber breaches
- Theft
- Fire or other structural damage
- Supply chain disruption
- Reputational crisis due to external pressure from the media, the public or employees

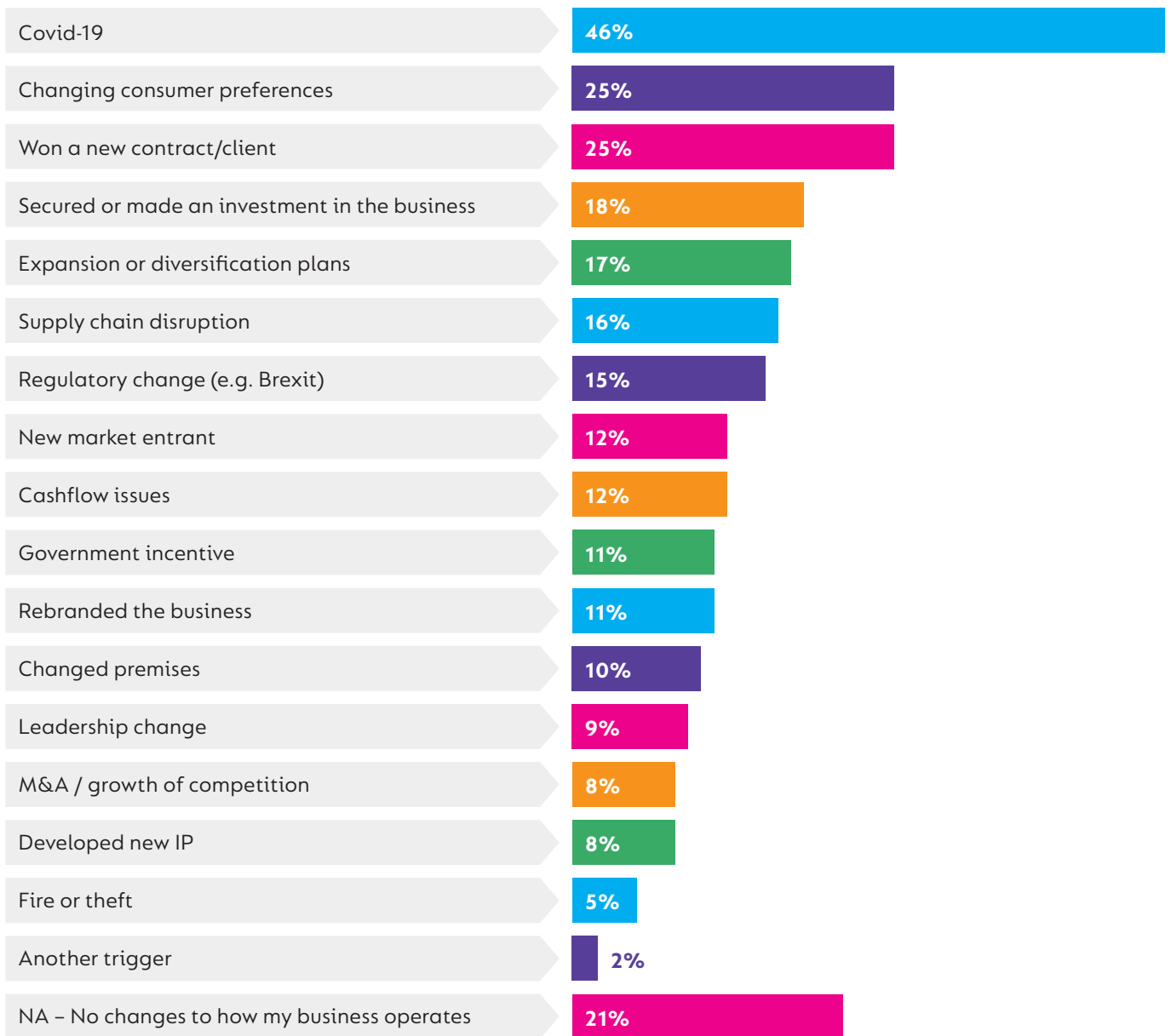
## What businesses have been telling us about trigger events

In December 2021, Be the Business conducted a survey of 1,055 business leaders (director level and above) to understand which events had prompted them to change how they operate over the previous 12 months<sup>12</sup>. It found that more almost four fifths (79%) changed how they operated in some way over that period, with the Covid-19 pandemic being the most prominent driver of action. Outside of the pandemic, triggers were spread across growth, competition, lifecycle changes and external events.

## CHART 1

**In the last 12 months, have any of the following prompted your business to make changes to how it operates?**

**General business leader population**  
(1,055 business leaders from firms with 2-249 employees)



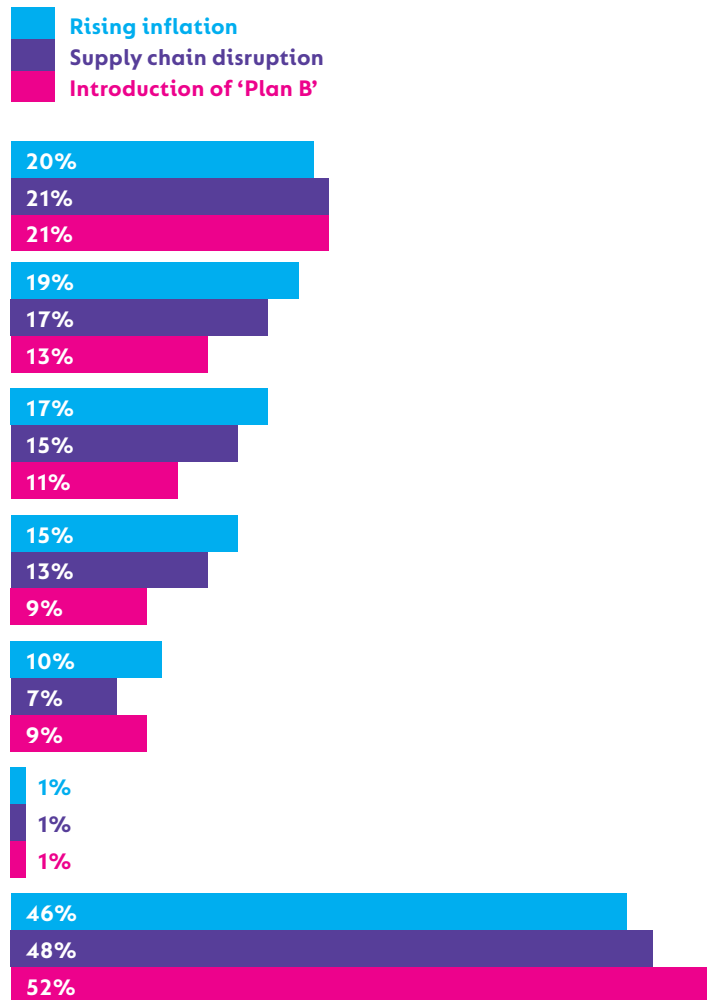
### What form action might take

In addition to accounting for events which triggered leaders to act, Be the Business wanted to understand what form action might take. We took a closer look at how businesses responded to pressing external events at the end of 2021<sup>13</sup>, in particular, rising inflation, supply chain disruption, and the government introducing 'Plan B' in response to the Omicron variant of Covid-19<sup>14</sup>.



## CHART 2

Which of the following changes has your business implemented in the past quarter in response to...



We found that inflation was a more significant driver of changes to business practices than either supply chain disruption or the introduction of Plan B, with it more likely to prompt the introduction of new technology, new working practices or changes in the mix of services offered to customers.

## The domino effect

It's clear that neither the Covid-19 pandemic nor Brexit are everyday occurrences. In fact, they are more likely to be once-in-a-generation events that trigger a multitude of smaller changes by businesses. Despite years of complex debate and negotiation around the terms of Brexit, the pandemic seems to have eclipsed it in terms of the impact on SMEs. Our Productive Business Index for Q1 2021 found that over 42% of business leaders feel that Brexit has made no difference in the short term. In contrast, some 60% believed that the pandemic was more of a concern than Brexit, and 56% believed the pandemic will be more costly to their business than Brexit<sup>15</sup>.

For some, there are opportunities as new avenues of revenue and diversification open up, or plans are accelerated in response to the economic and policy conditions. Be the Business research showed that in the early days of the pandemic, three years of innovation were created in just three months<sup>16</sup>. However, for others, an inability to adapt and evolve signals the end of the business lifecycle or a period of significant challenge.

<sup>15</sup> Be the Business, Productive Business Index, Edition 2 Q1 2021 (March 2021)

<sup>16</sup> Be the Business, Opinium (June 2020)

## Triggering behaviours

All events that impact a business are likely to trigger certain courses of action or types of behaviour. Some business leaders will feel confident about what they need to do in response to them, while others may feel out of their depth and in need of guidance and advice. Leadership styles vary, and undoubtedly have a significant impact on the action a leader takes in the wake of a trigger event. Separate research from Be the Business conducted in 2021 identified six distinct leadership typologies, each with different approaches to decision-making, engaging with employees and attitudes to external support.

Many business leaders have a preferred advisor or source of information who is always their first port of call regardless of the trigger. We have often found this is an accountant or financial advisor, but may also include members of trusted networks, such as trade associations, networking groups or business membership organisations.

Nonetheless, these moments of change are an opportunity to capitalise on greater openness to external business support that may not be evident at other times. Certainly, at times of acute stress or change, it's understandable that business leaders are more likely to seek out support.

While there are countless potential actions that could stem from the events outlined above, broadly they fit into several business areas.

### 1. Training, development and HR

This is the broadest category of behaviours, covering a wide array of potential activity stemming from significant trigger events.

As businesses grow, they are likely to be faced with the need to hire and onboard new employees, formalise HR processes and ensure adequate management structures are in place to deal with the expansion in staff numbers. Conversely, competitive pressures or external events resulting in financial challenges may lead to restructuring, recruitment, redundancies or performance management processes.

Upskilling and training teams may also become a priority in response to a changing external environment or because of a change in business approach. On top of this, with any form of trigger event, keeping the workforce aligned with the business strategy and the leadership vision is crucial. Effectively communicating with employees and bringing them along on the decision-making journey is central to a strong culture that can be built on going forward.

Similarly, any significant investment in technology or assets requires staff who are engaged and open to the potential benefits of adaptation and evolution. We know from previous Be the Business research that, of those businesses with over 11 employees that do adopt technology, over half (53%) fail, mainly due to the inability of leaders to effectively engage employees<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the importance of employee engagement to the success of a business, internal communications is often overlooked as a key tenet of leadership skills or is seen as something that leaders are born with. While natural charisma is valuable, effective leadership and management skills can be taught and it's proven that they play a crucial role in the productivity of small businesses.

When faced with these sorts of people-related challenges, it's likely that business leaders will seek support from qualified external professionals such as HR, recruitment or communication consultants, employment lawyers, and training providers. Many leaders also turn to peer networks and trusted advisors, such as accountants and financial consultants, who may advise directly or signpost to more specialist support.

### 2. Capital investment

It's likely that many of the trigger events set out in this paper may result in business leaders considering how to respond by improving their capabilities and making capital investments in their business. This could include direct investment by company executives so that the company can run more efficiently or grow faster by taking on new physical assets in the form of real estate, equipment or machinery. Alternatively, it may relate to securing equity or debt investment from financial backers or a bank.

Capital investment is often the next step in response to rapid growth or a diversification strategy requiring additional or varied capacity. By investing in new assets that help with automating processes and speeding up practices, increased outputs and efficiency can be achieved. This can be a key inflection point for business leaders to seek external business support as they grapple with these crucial decisions.

Recognising the influence of financial advisors at this point is key and an important avenue via which it is possible to offer broader business support. In addition, legal advisors, business networks and the supply chain are likely to play a role in decision-making when it comes to investment and the purchase of high-value assets.

### 3. Technology adoption

For businesses faced with the need to improve efficiency or internal management processes, we know that the successful adoption of technology has a significant and positive impact on overall productivity. For example, the introduction of technology, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) or Customer Relationship Management (CRM), has been shown to create a productivity uplift of around 25 per cent compared to businesses that did not adopt those technologies<sup>18</sup>.

Turning to new technology may be the key for many business leaders, but the choice and complexity of the process can be overwhelming. In fact, we have found that leaders who were successful in their adoption of digital technology actually found the process more challenging than those who failed, suggesting that business leaders can often underestimate the complexities involved<sup>19</sup>.

However, if anything has taught us the importance of technology to the small business community, it is the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to connect in virtual ways. In fact, the pandemic caused more than half (54%) of the SME population to accelerate their implementation of technology, and of the business leaders who adopted or increased its use, 85 per cent planned to continue using it over the long-term<sup>20</sup>.

This signals a significant window of opportunity to engage with business leaders at a time when they may be more confident in adopting technology and receptive to support. Our recent report, in partnership with The Open University, showed that businesses seek external support when undertaking the process of technology adoption and are most likely to turn to technology providers, external consultants, or trusted advisors like accountants<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, the UK Government's Help to Grow Digital scheme is opening up new avenues of engagement with business leaders centred around the process of technology adoption.

### 4. Sales and marketing

A number of trigger events, particularly those in the Ambition and Competition categories, are likely to result in an uptick in sales and marketing activity. For example, expansion into new markets or product diversification will require updates to websites and sales collateral, as well as a potential increase in marketing sophistication to effectively reach and engage new customers. Conversely, pressures from within the sector may lead businesses to step up their business development approach to attract more clients and compete more effectively.

While this may involve recruiting new staff and teams to scale-up marketing activity, business leaders may question whether this is the best step for their business, particularly if this is a new area of expertise for them. Weighing up different support options can be challenging, particularly when in unfamiliar territory or when seeking to move beyond the current capabilities of the business.

Business leaders may turn to external marketing and communications consultants and suppliers to support them with the change in approach. Business leaders may also look towards informal networks and trusted advisors for recommendations on third party partners.

### 5. Leadership and management

Each decision made by a business leader will have significant implications for their organisation. Our Productive Business Index from Q1 2021 showed that SME confidence about management's commercial awareness, professional skillset, and technology and digital skills remains high. We also know that management and leadership is the number one area responsible for driving performance improvement and productivity among SMEs.

18 ONS, Information and communication technology intensity and productivity (2018)

19 Be the Business, The UK's Technology Moment (2020)

20 Be the Business and The Open University, Skills for Success (2021)

21 Be the Business, Skills for Success (2021)

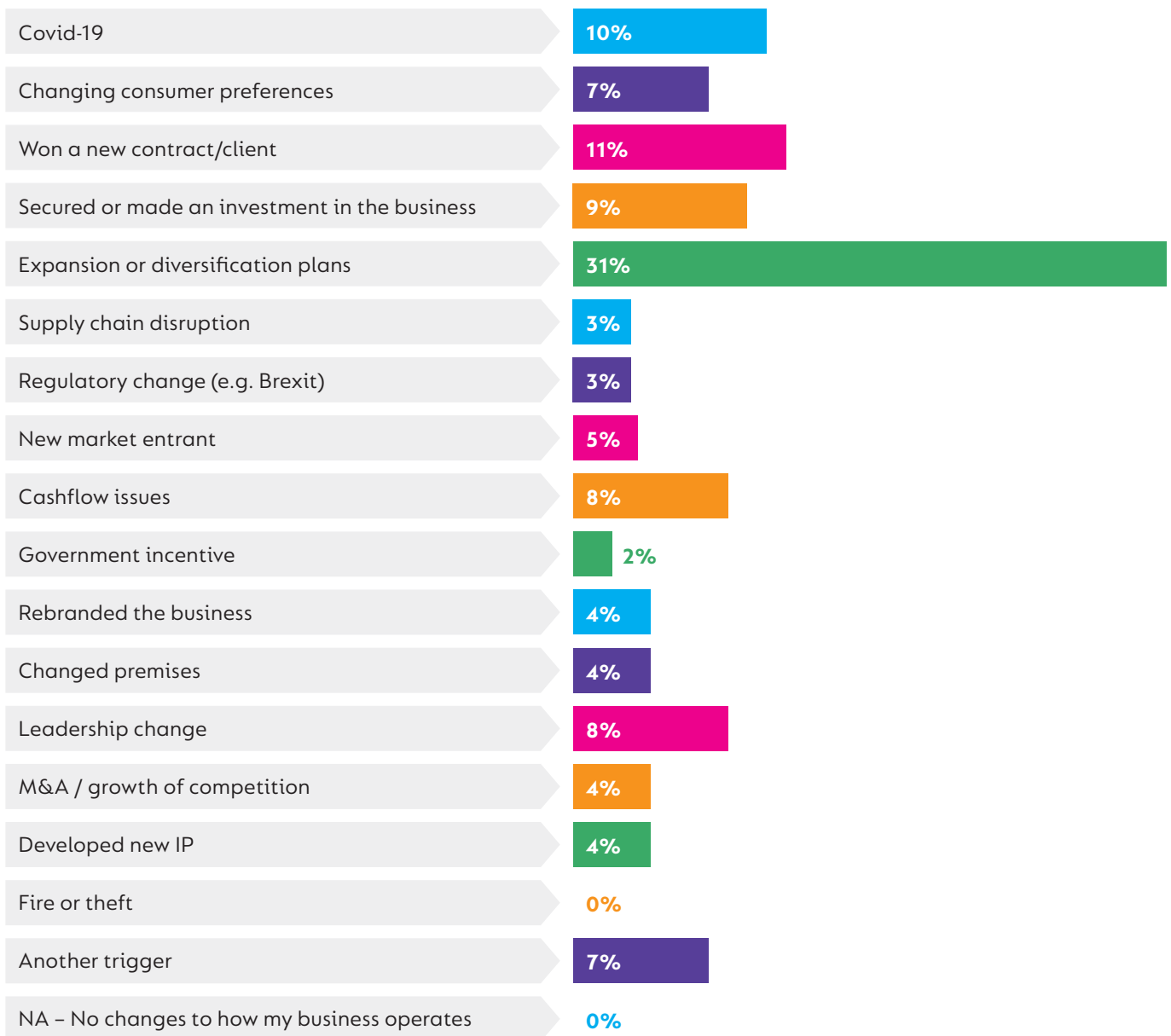
## Mentoring for Ambition

Be the Business asked participants in its mentoring programme what prompted them to seek out mentoring support<sup>22</sup>. Here, respondents had a much narrower focus than when we asked the wider business population what prompted them to make changes to how they operate. Mentees were significantly more likely than the general population to cite Ambition triggers as a reason for joining the programme. This suggests a different profile of leaders gravitate towards mentoring compared to the general population, or that leaders associate mentoring with helping meet their growth ambitions rather than responding to other kinds of trigger events. Moreover, the mentoring programme was previously called 'Mentoring for Growth' and therefore may have attracted leaders with a higher likelihood of having a growth mindset. Exploring the drivers of business leaders who take up this kind of support, and those who do not, would benefit from additional research.

### CHART 3

Which of these events triggered your decision to seek out a mentor?

Be the Business Mentoring participants  
(410 business leaders from firms with 2-249 employees)



Every trigger event will require the best from the business in terms of management skills – specifically, the ability to plan strategically over longer periods of time, to make decisions and assessments of risk, and to effectively financially forecast. And yet, we also know that there are still areas of concern when it comes to adequate leadership and management skills. For example, only one third (33%) of business leaders believe they have all the leadership and management skills needed to successfully adopt technology<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, from a financial perspective, cash is the lifeblood of any business and this is a key preoccupation for business leaders. Our latest Business Support Survey showed that ‘seeking finance’ was the second most popular reason for business leaders seeking advice and support, accounting for 29% of advice requests<sup>24</sup>. Carefully considering investment options – whether related to buying technology or assets, taking on new hires, a diversified approach to product risk or moving to new premises – is central to the success of any SME. Once again, these activities present an opening for the provision of business support.

While often these decisions are concentrated among the senior team, trusted financial advisors and accountants have a key role to play in supporting them and offering effective support to help the business. As almost any business decision can be traced back to leadership and management functions, this avenue of engagement is crucial when identifying key moments of change and opportunities to offer guidance to business leaders.

## Creating a business support ecosystem for all

If we accept that business leaders are more likely to seek help when faced with particular trigger events or moments of stress within their business, then it is worth considering how well the business support ecosystem is current working for business leaders. For example, are leaders confident in their ability to find effective support when it is most needed?

Thinking beyond trigger events to broader capacity building within businesses, it’s also worth considering whether the learning and development opportunities on offer are right for leaders. Is the format, intensity and provision meeting the needs of a diverse spectrum of business leaders who all have different learning styles and preferences?

Be the Business recently published a report with The Open University, *Skills for Success*, which explored learning preferences in more detail<sup>25</sup>. It found that:

- Seven in ten (70%) business leaders express interest in some form of learning and development in the next 12 months
- Business leaders have a preference for short courses or modules (34%), industry certifications (24%) and vocational qualifications
- Training formats seen as most beneficial for leaders are online dip-in dip-out (29%), online regular learning (24%) and a mix of in-person and online (21%)
- The formats leaders see as most valuable for their employees reflect their own preference, but also include a desire for on-the-job training (21%)
- One quarter (25%) of business leaders spend no money on training and learning
- Key barriers to finding training include the search being too time-consuming (28%), training being too expensive (22%) and learning opportunities lacking relevance to the business or sector (18%)

By digging into the preferences of leaders in greater detail, it is possible to build on the understanding of trigger moments and behaviours and deliver the most effective support at the right time. This is an opportunity for further research and development.

<sup>23</sup> Be the Business and The Open University, *Skills for Success* (2021)

<sup>24</sup> Be the Business, *Business Support Survey* (2021)

<sup>25</sup> Be the Business and The Open University, *Skills for Success* (2021)

# Recommendations

Events that trigger a business leader to seek advice or support are inevitable. So what can SMEs do when faced with such obstacles or opportunities? And how can the business support ecosystem, as well as wider corporate and political stakeholders, step up to the challenge and best support SMEs when they need it most?

Here we set out a number of recommendations for these various groups.

## Business leaders

### 1. Develop capabilities that add to resilience

The last few years have clearly demonstrated the importance of resilience for businesses across the UK. Preparing for the unexpected with plans and contingencies enables businesses to withstand the economic tremors we continue to see – whether fluctuating oil prices and escalating energy prices, or the cost of living crisis. In fact, our Productivity Business Index found that SME preparedness for unforeseen events was the capability that had the highest correlation with business performance features, such as revenues and volume of new business.

### 2. Make the most of, or expand, your network

If you recognise that some of these business challenges may apply to you, then you can be sure there are others who have been through similar situations. Talk to your network about their experiences and learnings – if they don't have first-hand understanding, it's likely they know someone who does.

### 3. Seek external support

Seek out external support or an independent advisor to help you think differently about your business – working *on it*, rather than *in it*. Try business mentoring, which can provide a great sounding board and source of support. Be the Business has paired over 1,500 business leaders through our mentoring programme and has a range of mentors who can help you think differently about challenges and opportunities in your business. We also have a range of tools, support and ideas on how to tackle common business problems available on our website.

## Policymakers and the business support ecosystem

### 4. Recognise the signals associated with trigger events to ensure support is targeted at SMEs when they need it most

This paper has mapped the events that are likely to trigger action in business leaders. This provides a clear direction for policymakers and the business support ecosystem to provide relevant business support to the right leaders at the right time. By capitalising on data, for example, search trends and feedback from frontline business organisations, the opportunities for engagement can be maximised.

### 5. Create a one stop shop for business leaders to find the right support for their situation

The business support ecosystem is complex and disparate, but there is a lot of support available to business leaders. Supply is not the problem. A quick, effective and impartial signposting service for relevant support is needed. This should include an understanding that different business leaders digest information in different ways, taking into account these learning preferences when signposting. Moreover, different business leaders will have different needs, so understanding these variations and providing tailored support is key.

### 6. Encourage the take-up of leadership and management training

Leadership and management skills are a key driver of improved productivity, while also providing the backbone to the broader skills needed by business leaders if their businesses are to thrive. Promoting the value of these skills throughout should be a priority for everyone interested in helping the business community succeed in efforts to adopt new practices.

## Larger businesses with SME supply chains or customers

### 7. Leverage touch points linked to trigger events when reaching out to customers and supply chains

Forward thinking large businesses are increasingly invested in the success of their supply chains and customers. By thinking about likely trigger events and associated relevant touchpoints, companies can most effectively offer help to SMEs – whether directly through their own CSR or supply chain programmes, or indirectly with signposting – at the moments when it's most needed. Moreover, larger businesses who invest in SMEs are clearly demonstrating their commitment to the long-term health of their customer base and supply chain and thereby their future business. For example, Be the Business has worked with Lloyds Banking Group to develop toolkits for their relationship managers to more effectively support SMEs through the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Conclusion

This paper identifies that business leaders are often prompted to take action following the occurrence of specific events – some of which can be planned for and others not. For other leaders, advice and support may not be on the radar regardless of the triggers experienced, either because they don't know it's available, or they may be unwilling to ask for help or acknowledge there is a problem they need help with.

By identifying and collating the most common trigger events and mapping them against the potential behaviours that might follow, it is possible to start tailoring business support according to the challenges businesses will face at particular moments in time. While the support and resources available to business leaders at these junctions already exists from a broad range of providers including the government, LEPs and Growth Hubs, as well as non-profits like Be the Business, there is more scope to take the information direct to businesses when they need it, in a form that interests them.

This is undoubtedly a more sophisticated approach, which seeks to anticipate the needs of business leaders and pre-empt their enquiries. There is also a significant challenge that regardless of the trigger event, many leaders will always turn to their trusted advisors, while others steadfastly see no need to seek support at all. This opens up a further avenue of analysis for the future, looking at the structure and delivery of business support at trigger moments in conjunction with the very different leadership styles of business leaders and their openness to learning.

As the cost of doing business crisis hits businesses across the UK, it's never been more important for the right support to be available to business leaders at the right time. Crucially, there is a role for all stakeholders to play in helping to build resilience that support businesses through the latest and next trigger events.



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