

Women Entrepreneurs Focus Group

11 April 2018



Recruitment & Methodology

Purpose

- to explore experience of online channels
- to discuss Business Support requirements
- to examine the Role of Networks in Business

Location

- Taylor McKenzie, Glasgow (11 April 2018)

Sample

- Number: 6 Female Business Owners
- Country: Scotland
- Type: Focus Group

Customer Profile: ***Scottish companies, non retail, turnover > 500K, Female Business Leaders***

Overall Summary

- Up for transacting all activity on line
- Scalability really important ie as their business grows they want what they can do online to match
- Need the ability to upload multiple docs from electronic devices
- Too many business organisations offering advice – they are unsure who to go to for what
- Want business orgs to be joined up and/or refer to right place (but not having to go round the loop again)
- Experts giving business support must be knowledgeable about their industry (big problem)
- Companies expect conditions to be attached to funding support but needs to be fit for purpose
- Targets attached to funding can be too restrictive
- Networking important to them and they would be up for being approached to share advice
- Need to trust those within the networks
- Very clued up on our pre-pipeline and BG-SE pipeline process!

Online Channels

What we explored:

- **Online channels used**
- **Good/Not so good sites**
- **Types of information looked for**
- **Online transactions undertaken**
- **Expectations from SE**

Online Channels

What we heard

- **HMRC, Gov.uk, SAGEPay, Banks used**
- **Quickbooks “easy to use” (best website for uploading evidence, collating (mentioned in previous research)**
- **Nest Pensions Scheme and Workplace Pensions deemed not so good**
- **Transacting online for expenses, payrolls, buying, accounting, banking**
- **Appetite for everything mobile and online**
- **Wanted to electronically provide evidence**
- **Preference for cloud storage/dropbox**
- **Awareness of GDPR implications affecting elements of business such as payroll functions**
- **Scaleability most important**

“we were looking for something we weren’t going to grow out of”

CARD SORT

We asked users to undertake a card sorting exercise to group activities into themes.

Top Tasks Emerging:

- Funding and grants for businesses
- Help to develop new products and services
- Advice and support for businesses looking to export products and services
- Improve business processes with our support

New Cards Added:

- Legislation
- Employability and apprenticeships
- Webchat
- Search

Business Support

What we explored:

- **Information looked for from Business Support organisations**
- **Where they currently go for such support**
- **Organisations providing good support/what does that look like**
- **Conditions attached to funding and support**
- **Likely transactions online/SE.com**

Business Support

What we heard

- Workforce development & employability information needed
- Council first port of call (local)
- Gov.UK – trusted and credible
- Gov.UK liked for - search bar/results, quick, fast, visibly updated
- Mixed response to amount of info to view – recommend overview with option for further information if needed
- Expectation that conditions will be attached to funding and services but conditions need to be tailored to the value of the support
- Value added to the business cannot be easily correlated to the support provided
- Effort and time to apply for funding and support often outweighs the value received
- Export Information expected from SDI site
- Expect accessible information for all and ability to apply online for support/services (for beta release)



“it’s the government – so would be trusted”

Business Support

What we heard cont

- Need for one Business Information Portal
- Mentoring important *“it would be nice to have online access to business mentors”*
- Everything in one place – more alignment with other organisations
- SE site should have links to all other organisations offering support (mentioned in previous research)
- Contacts - *“It’s about getting to know who you need to know to get about”* (ref SE)
- Accessing business support is challenging– asking a question doesn’t get you the information you need:
- Advisors coming out to support businesses don’t have the industry expertise and experience necessary
- Advisors should be upskilled to keep abreast of changing industry environments (mentioned previously).

“you would like to think the people you approach would have the knowledge”

“a lot of business advisors have never run a business”

*“You need t
solution to a
ques*

SE.COM Screenshots

We then asked users to view the prototype sketches of specific journeys:

- Guides Sections - needs to be higher up page
- Eligibility for services made clear upfront, or signposting to other organisations who could help
- I want the homepage to be tailored to me
- Video – don't want SE promotional video. Needs to be changed very regularly to show the website is keeping up to date, "videos of case studies more impact".
- Sign in – business account with multiple logins preferred
- Language unclear and off putting, too much jargon *"leadership and learning is clumsy"*
- The website needs to link to all other agencies offering businesses support and funding – what can we do? Who else can fill the gaps? A portal to all types of support
- Innovation important – could be upfront on site
- The categories for support look right *"SPOT ON!"*
- Stats – impressive but not relevant to me
- Case studies – would prefer how to help companies achieve growth within the success stories. They need to be relevant to business age, stage of journey and industry
- Interactive – how can I feedback about the guides/drop downs if my industry isn't listed? I want to add my knowledge.

Networks

What we explored:

- **The importance of networks to individuals and their business**
- **How networks contribute towards business success**
- **What networks they use**
- **What constitutes good/not so good network**
- **Willingness to answer questions/give advice to other businesses**
- **SE initiating networking opportunities such as contact/introductions hosting/facilitating**

Networks

What we heard

- Networks were important but need to work – and be fit for purpose
- FSB, Chambers, Scottish Engineering were named
- Scottish Engineering seen as positive go to place for networking, industry information, trustworthy, competitors helping each other and “You don’t have to join to access the industry expertise”.
- FSB mixed reports
- Would be happy to offer advice and information to other like minded companies
- Would not expect SE to run Peer to Peer service

Quotes

"I would like to think if I went to SE they would have business people with knowledge and experience to help me"

"Can we have an 'Are You eligible' Section?"

*"The categories for support look right
"SPOT ON"*

"You don't have to join to access the industry expertise"

"we were looking for something we weren't going to grow out of"

"you need to know the solution to ask the right question"

"it's about getting to know who you need, to know how to get about"

The Focus Group

