

Technology Strategy Board
Driving Innovation

Accelerating innovation & growth

Pilot SME Growth Programme – Formative Evaluation

19 December 2013

The Technology Strategy Board initiated the Pilot SME Growth Programme, which was delivered by a partnership comprising GrowthAccelerator, Plymouth University and Entrepreneurs & Education Programme.

The Technology Strategy Board is the UK's innovation agency. Our aim is simple – to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. For more information about the Technology Strategy Board please see: www.innovateuk.org or contact: grant.peggie@tsb.gov.uk.

GrowthAccelerator is a unique service led by some of the country's most successful growth specialists and backed by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). GrowthAccelerator provides support to high growth potential businesses including bespoke support from business coaches, a range of master classes, and funding to access leadership and management training. Support typically lasts between six and nine months. For more information about GrowthAccelerator please see: www.growthaccelerator.com/ or contact: enquiries@growthaccelerator.com.

Plymouth University is known as the “Entrepreneurial University” and has a focus on supporting entrepreneurship across all its activities. For more information please see: www.plymouth.ac.uk/businessandpartners or contact: adrian.dawson@plymouth.ac.uk.

Entrepreneurs & Education Programme is a Community Interest Company that focuses on the teaching of entrepreneurship and business skills. For more information please see: www.schoolforstartups.co.uk/eep/ or contact: sarah@entrepreneursandeducation.co.uk.

For this pilot Plymouth University and Entrepreneurs & Education Programme designed, developed and delivered a range of bespoke one and two day workshops, available both as physical events and online presentations, focusing on a wide range of contemporary business issues of relevance to early stage and growing businesses. The subjects covered a range of entrepreneurial skills such as access to finance, marketing, use of social media, strategy, sales and HR, business planning and particular issues facing technology based companies. The workshops were hosted in venues across England and online.

The intention from the outset was that the offer from GrowthAccelerator and Plymouth University and Entrepreneurs & Education Programme should be different in order to target and address the needs of growth businesses of different ages, stages and sizes.

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Executive Summary

A summary of the findings and lessons from the independent evaluation of the Pilot Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Growth Programme

In exploring whether different types of external business advice and support add value to Technology Strategy Board grants to SMEs it is apparent through this pilot that:

- **Complementary support works** – the pilot showed that both GrowthAccelerator and the Entrepreneurial Skills training provided significant benefits in supporting Technology Strategy Board funded SMEs. The support has helped drive changes in their attitude, behaviour and performance.
- **There is a lack of awareness of need** – business leaders tend not to seek support because they often do not recognise – or indeed misdiagnose – the issue; or they are not aware of what support is available. The result of which is that there is often an initial reluctance to engage and a mis-match between technical expertise (which is often strong) and business expertise (which is often weak). Having participated awareness and understanding improved markedly including increased confidence and willingness to seek further support in the future.
- **Successful delivery requires effective communication and appropriate incentives** – through the pilot it was apparent that multiple 'touch points' provided an effective means of engaging and communicating with clients and that incentivising participation did increase take-up. Although, further consideration does need to be given to ensure that take-up translates into participation.

Introduction

In February 2013, GrowthAccelerator and the University of Plymouth alongside the Entrepreneurs & Education Programme (EEP) agreed to work in partnership with the Technology Strategy Board. The partnership was to pilot an approach whereby existing Technology Strategy Board SME clients would be given access to a range of support for business growth alongside the grant funding to support their technological innovation. As part of the pilot, a cohort of existing Technology Strategy Board grant recipients would be given access to GrowthAccelerator and / entrepreneurial skills workshops delivered by the University of Plymouth University and EEP, which would all be free at the point of use.

The pilot had two broad objectives:

- To test a hypothesis that SMEs who receive external advice and guidance (business support) alongside their Technology Strategy Board grant funding are more likely to be successful; and
- To explore different ways of delivering the support to SMEs to help identify a delivery model and learn lessons for future delivery.

From the outset the Technology Strategy Board committed to evaluating this pilot, in order to understand more about what worked, in what ways and why. The independent evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach that included data analysis, surveys of beneficiaries¹, in-depth interviews, case studies and stakeholder consultations. This is a summary of the findings and lessons that have emerged from that evaluation.

Nature of the businesses

Ninety per cent of the participants were micro or small businesses, but their size did differ between the two offers.

GrowthAccelerator

Between February and June 2013, 196 Technology Strategy Board clients committed to join GrowthAccelerator². Over half (54%) of these clients were micro businesses (0-9 employees), a third (36%) were small (10-49 employees) and 10% were medium (50-249 employees).

Three quarters (74%) of the clients were over five years old and only 2% were less than one. The average age of the Technology Strategy Board clients was 13 years (compared to 11 for GrowthAccelerator). The clients were located in all regions across England, although there was a concentration in London and the South East (40%).

Entrepreneurial Skills

Across 20 events and subsequent online presentations 261 unique Technology Strategy Board clients 'attended', with 528 individuals attending either physically or online. Two-thirds (66%) of the clients were micro businesses, a quarter (24%) were small, 7% were medium and 3% were large (250+ employees³).

Those undertaking Entrepreneurial Skills training were noticeably younger than those accessing GrowthAccelerator. Fifteen per cent were less than a year old and 32% were between one and four years old. However, as with GrowthAccelerator, clients came from across England.

The differing demographics of the two cohorts that selected GrowthAccelerator or Entrepreneurial Skills were as anticipated and as planned through the marketing campaign i.e. younger and smaller businesses tended to favour the Entrepreneurial Skills offer.

Benefits of external support

In testing the hypothesis that businesses who receive external advice and guidance alongside their Technology Strategy Board grant are more likely to be successful the pilot has generated a range of evidence to affirm this.

GrowthAccelerator

GrowthAccelerator has clearly made a notable difference to the clients supported with 90% achieving or expecting to achieve their innovation and growth objectives and 96% on track to meeting their key growth milestones.

¹ For GrowthAccelerator the survey provided results with a confidence interval of between +/- 7.5% and +/-12.5% at the 95% confidence level. While for the Entrepreneurial Skills workshops 341 questionnaires were completed.

² By 29 November 2013 165 clients had contracted with GrowthAccelerator

³ Large companies were not eligible for GrowthAccelerator

These positive growth outcomes are also driving positive impacts with 95% of clients saying that GrowthAccelerator support combined with the Technology Strategy Board support is important, to some degree, in creating additional jobs and increasing turnover with:

- An average of 4.6 additional jobs created/expected to be created in the short to medium term; and
- An average increase in turnover of 26% expected over the short to medium term.

Across these positive outcomes and impacts there are high levels of attribution to GrowthAccelerator and the Technology Strategy Board with nearly all (90%+) clients noting that these benefits would not have happened, nor happened as quickly without the combined support. In particular four in five clients felt that GrowthAccelerator was 'important' in helping them to deliver the objectives of the innovation project that the Technology Strategy Board had supported.

It is a benefit and difference that has clearly been noted by the clients, with a further proof point being the fact that 94% of clients saying that they are likely to continue to use external advisors in the future and 56% noting that they could not have got the support provided by GrowthAccelerator through any other source.

Together these findings suggest that by providing additional support to access GrowthAccelerator the Technology Strategy Board has added significant value to the grants it provides. Through this targeted support, the Technology Strategy Board helped to create a combined package of support that appears to be enabling business objectives to be met and outcomes achieved. In addition, early evidence shows that this is boosting and catalysing growth through increased employment and turnover.

Entrepreneurial Skills

The most significant lesson and benefit from the process, from a public policy perspective, was the surprisingly narrow range of competence in key business areas demonstrated by participating companies. High levels of technological skill and awareness were frequently balanced by a lack of knowledge or even awareness of current business practices and techniques.

The workshops were uniformly well received and highly rated with very little difference in scores between them. However, take up rates were significantly higher for the more practical and less conceptual offerings that focused on basic/intermediate level skills such as marketing and search engine optimisation. Although this is in line with experience of other audiences, there had been a presumption by the course designers – from the outset – that Technology Strategy Board companies would have higher levels of commercial skills and awareness than is the norm. This presumption was incorrect.

Both survey and interview data shows that the workshops had a substantial impact on the following areas of business activity/performance:

- Improved technical knowledge
- Improvement in digital marketing
- Explored new funding options
- More digitally aware
- More entrepreneurial.

Which in turn were seen to positively impact on the following areas of business activity/performance:

- Increased productivity
- Increase in markets/market share
- Increased turnover
- Enhanced contacts/networks
- Maturity/expansion of business.

Given the nature of the offering – brief workshops on particular subjects – the impact, in the first instance, tends to be in the specific subject area, taking time to impact on operational procedures and behaviors within participating companies. As a result, direct impact on top level performance indicators such as profitability and cost of production were not reported as short term impacts.

In broader terms, the Entrepreneurial Skills workshops had a number of marked effects. The events increased levels of understanding about contemporary business issues/techniques amongst participating companies. It is notable, as previously stated, the extent to which companies reported that their focus on the technology/science sometimes obscured the importance of best practice business techniques. Closely related to this, the workshops had a significant effect in changing the attitudes of participants towards implementation of new business techniques and the benefits that derived from such implementation. Finally, and most importantly, participants were likely to take further action as a result of attending an event – actions which ranged from attending further entrepreneurial training to changing the operation of their business, causing the performance improvements outlined above. There is anecdotal evidence that the ‘confidence raising’ aspects of the workshops were particularly significant.

As well as the tangible benefits listed above, it is clear from the survey and interview data that the participants overwhelmingly enjoyed both the process and the opportunities for networking with similar businesses. Feedback was very positive with comments such as; *‘very relevant’*, *‘the best workshops ever attended’* and *‘high impact’*.

Connecting the landscape

In addition to the benefits of the different activities, the pilot was also a clear and practical demonstration of how different modes of support for business growth can be aligned and delivered in conjunction as a means of optimising the benefits to individual businesses. Through the evaluation it is apparent that the alignment between the Technology Strategy Board, GrowthAccelerator and the University of Plymouth/EEP delivered five tangible benefits:

- It pioneered cross programme data sharing in an attempt to genuinely align support between programmes, something that has now been replicated across other programmes.
- During the process it became clear that there were significant gaps in knowledge and understanding of some basic business concepts by a surprising number of participating companies, many of whom were often unaware of these deficiencies in their knowledge. Through the pilot this became commonly referred to as the “unknown unknowns”. Having highlighted this as an issue the pilot has enabled some progress on remediation to take place.

- It helped raise the awareness of GrowthAccelerator – two-thirds of the Technology Strategy Board clients were made aware of GrowthAccelerator as a direct result of the pilot either through communication from the Technology Strategy Board or direct contact from GrowthAccelerator in relation to the Technology Strategy Board pilot.
- It improved the take up of GrowthAccelerator – at the outset, and prior to sign up, over three-quarters (77%) of the clients would not have joined GrowthAccelerator if they had had to pay the standard client contribution⁴. However, having actually benefitted from the support and with the benefit of hindsight 89% of respondents would be willing to pay 'some' (65%) or the 'full amount' (24%) of the client contribution towards the support. A finding that underlines the value of GrowthAccelerator to Technology Strategy Board clients but also highlights the important role played by the Technology Strategy Board in enabling clients to realise this value.
- It enabled value to be added to the Technology Strategy Board support – 69% felt that GrowthAccelerator complemented and added value to the work already done with the Technology Strategy Board, with 91% noting that the GrowthAccelerator support met or exceeded their expectations.

All of which points to the important role played by the external support in both adding value to the Technology Strategy Board grant and in shifting the mindset of the businesses leaders as to the value and benefit of external advice.

The different offers

Through the pilot the Technology Strategy Board has been able to – intentionally – explore and test two different offerings and to begin to understand the ways in which these different offerings impact and support the Technology Strategy Board client base.

The difference made as a result of these two offerings does vary, but in many ways that was expected and part of the design of the pilot. However, despite the variance between the two offers, both resulted in high levels of client satisfaction and a real sense of value whether that be at different points on the GrowthAccelerator customer journey or with the broad range of different topics and subjects covered by the Entrepreneurial Skills workshops. The differing demographics of the cohorts has provided a wealth of comparative data to illuminate further work.

Building on the offer, work is currently on-going between the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator to develop an alumni community offering around 'money can't buy experiences' and 'peer boards' which will further facilitate sharing of knowledge of innovation and growth. This is in addition to clients having access to the wider GrowthAccelerator community offer.

⁴ £600 for 1-4 employees, £1,500 for 5-49 employees and £3,000 for 50-249 employees)

Lessons learnt

Through the pilot a number of important lessons have been identified. These are as follows:

- **Complementary support works** – Both approaches to supporting Technology Strategy Board companies have been shown to provide significant benefit to participants. In some cases to a far greater degree than was considered likely when the pilot was commissioned. The initial experimental design to offer different resources to different demographics appears to have been a well-founded decision. Through the evaluation it is apparent that the pilot has generated significant attitudinal, behavioural and performance changes amongst participating companies. There is significant evidence that exposure to the activity of learning has increased confidence and willingness to seek further help and guidance in the future.
- **Awareness of need** – A key challenge in engaging businesses is that the business leaders generally do not understand the need to or the benefits of participation, an issue often referred to as: "unknown unknowns" or "unconscious incompetence". Put another way business leaders do not know what support they need, because they misdiagnose the issue or fail to understand what is available by way of support. The result of which is often an initial reluctance to engage, despite the additional support offered. This challenge is often exacerbated by the fact that there is invariably a mis-match between technical expertise (which is often very strong) and business expertise (which is often weak). Through the pilot it was apparent that after attendance/participation awareness and understanding had improved markedly leading to behavioural change and performance enhancement.
- **Successful delivery** – The pilot was viewed by those involved in its delivery to have been a success. It was delivered in a short time frame, it enabled lessons to be learnt and it has supported and added value to Technology Strategy Board clients. Working relationships between the partners involved were highly effective and demonstrated an ability to work together and deal with complex issues rapidly and efficiently.
- **Effective communication** – Communicating the offer to, and subsequent engagement of, clients requires significant effort. Having multiple touch points (direct mail, website and phone) was considered to have been particularly effective. Improved clarity on branding and the role of the Technology Strategy Board in the process would have also helped to reduce participant uncertainty. The quality of the Technology Strategy Board's data – which typically focuses on project participants rather than the business leader – made connecting with business decision makers more challenging in some instances.
- **Recruiting clients and the value of incentivising take-up** – The recruitment of clients was perceived to be good. For the entrepreneurial skills events it was apparent that the timing, notice and location of events are all significant factors affecting recruitment. The fact that the support was free at the point of use was felt to have provided the requisite incentive and encouraged take up, although there were high levels of drop out for the EEP events. There is clearly benefit of clients having some "skin in the game" as without it, it is harder to encourage businesses to move at pace through the customer journey (in the case of GrowthAccelerator) or to actually attend the event they signed up for.
- **Future development** – The pilot has provided a solid evidence base on which the Technology Strategy Board can begin to build in terms of the future direction of its support.

Introduction

In February 2013, GrowthAccelerator and the University of Plymouth alongside the Entrepreneurs & Education Programme (EEP) agreed to work in partnership with the Technology Strategy Board. The partnership was to pilot an approach whereby existing Technology Strategy Board Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) clients would be given access to a range of support for business growth alongside their grant funding. The pilot had two broad objectives:

- To test a hypothesis that businesses who receive external advice and guidance (business support) alongside their Technology Strategy Board grant funding are more likely to be successful; and
- To explore different ways of delivering the support to help identify a model and learn lessons for future delivery.

The pilot was designed to make the following support free at the point of use to a number of SMEs: (i) access to GrowthAccelerator for Technology Strategy Board clients, and (ii) access to a series of workshops and training events focused on improving core entrepreneurial skills delivered by the University of Plymouth and EEP.

This report is a formative evaluation of this investment and the activity that resulted. In particular the focus of this evaluation is on the effectiveness of the pilot; the difference it has made to the businesses supported; and the lessons that can be learnt.

- Part A looks at the GrowthAccelerator strand covering in turn:
 - the nature of the Technology Strategy Board client cohort that signed up to GrowthAccelerator including their profile, growth potential, barriers to growth and the nature of support they received, and how this compared to the GrowthAccelerator client population as a whole;
 - the results of a client survey with a sample of businesses who had been accessing GrowthAccelerator for at least three months. This survey captures client views on both the effectiveness of GrowthAccelerator and the difference it has made to the business; and
 - three client case studies that look in detail at the difference made by GrowthAccelerator;
- Part B looks at the Entrepreneurial Skills strand covering in turn:
 - an analysis of the 20 workshops and training events held including the nature of the Technology Strategy Board clients attending, the satisfaction with the events and the difference they made (e.g. intention to act, understanding and awareness);
 - In-depth consultation with six workshop participants;
 - Client case studies and testimonials; and
 - in depth interviews with seven of the eight speakers involved with delivering the 12 workshops.
- Part C draws together the two strands as it provides a summative view on the effectiveness and lessons learnt from the pilot based on the views of the key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the pilot before providing an overarching set of conclusions and recommendations.

Part A: GrowthAccelerator

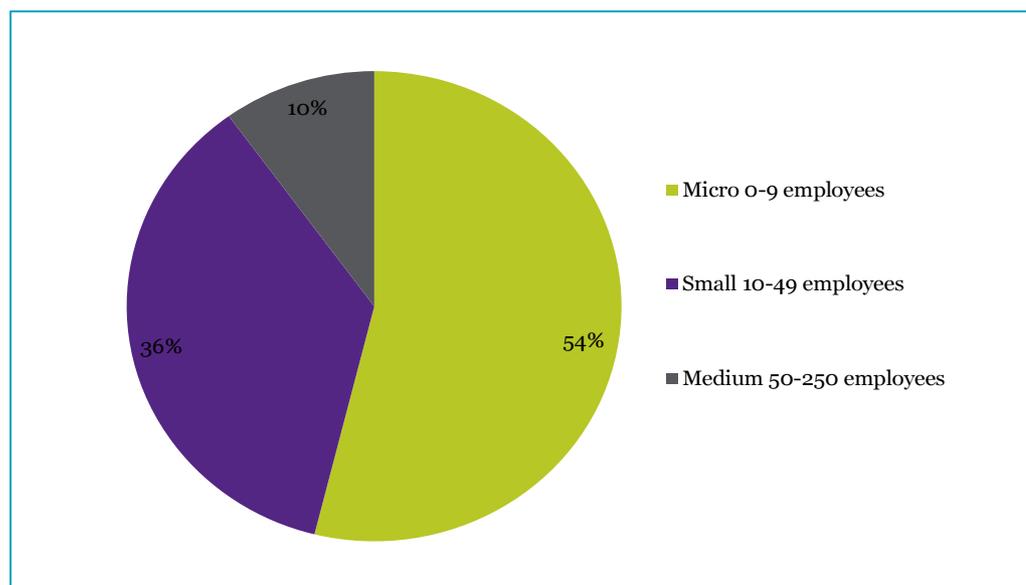
Technology Strategy Board – GrowthAccelerator pilot cohort

This chapter looks in detail at the characteristics and nature of the cohort of Technology Strategy Board businesses that have contracted with GrowthAccelerator in terms of their profile, growth potential, barriers to growth and the nature of support they have required. This Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort is also compared to the GrowthAccelerator client population as a whole.

Nature of pilot cohort

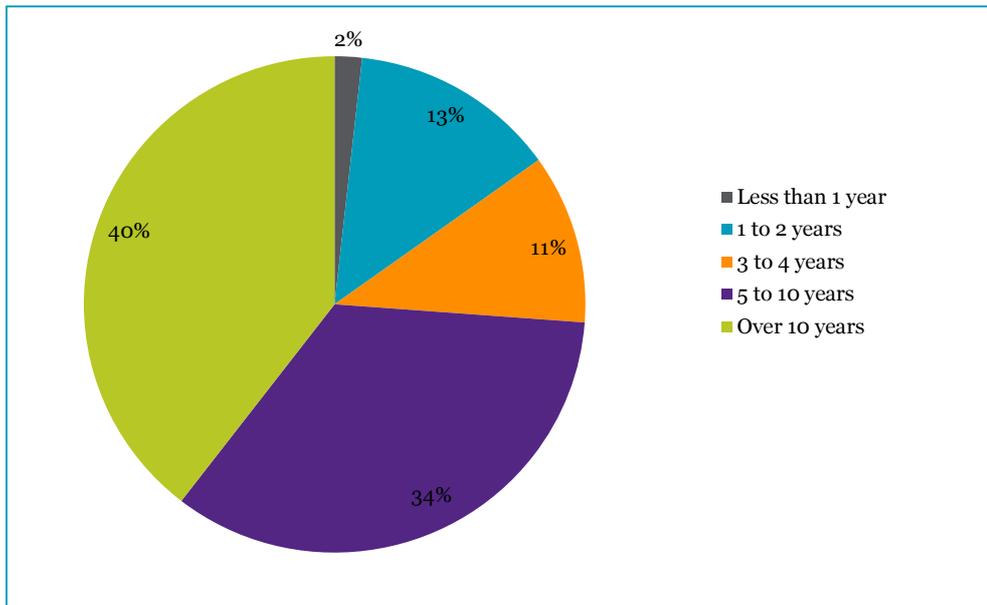
Just over half (54%) of businesses signed up as part of the pilot employ nine or fewer employees. A third (36%) employ between 10 and 49 employees and 10% employ between 50-250 employees (see Figure 1). The average number of employees across the pilot cohort is 20 and the average turnover is £1.8 million.

Figure 1: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Size



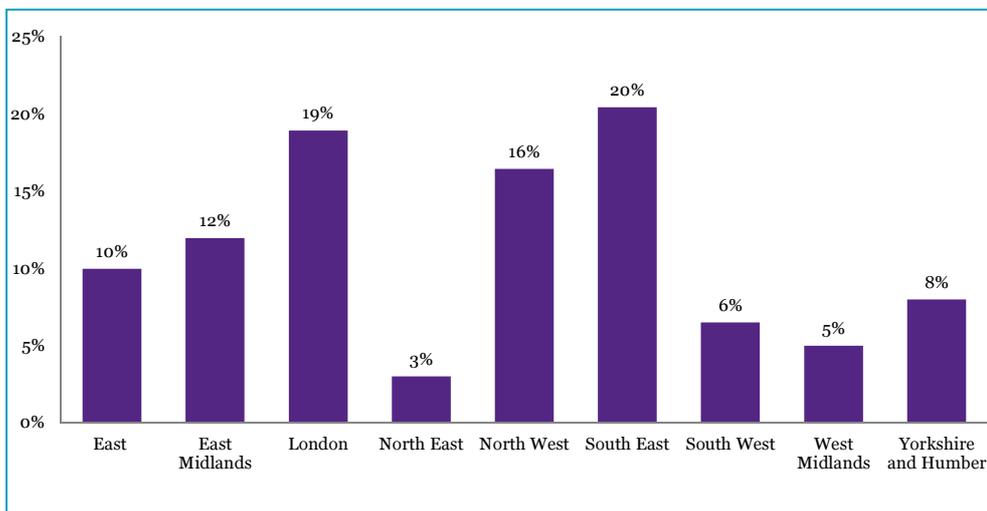
In terms of the age of the companies three-quarters (74%) are over five years old, of which 40% are over 10 years old. In fact, the average age of companies in the pilot cohort is 13 years old.. Only 2% are less than one year old (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Age



The pilot has engaged companies from across England with the largest proportion of companies located in the South East (20%), London (19%) and the North West (16%). The North East (3%) and the West Midlands (5%) have the smallest proportion (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Geography



Due to the high growth focus of GrowthAccelerator it has developed its own sector categorisation as it was felt that traditional SIC codes didn't adequately represent many of today's fastest growing sectors. Using this categorisation Figure 4 shows the top 10 sectors of the Technology Strategy Board pilot. Manufacturing is the largest sector, making up 13% of the pilot cohort, with technology (11%) and engineering (6%) completing the top 3.

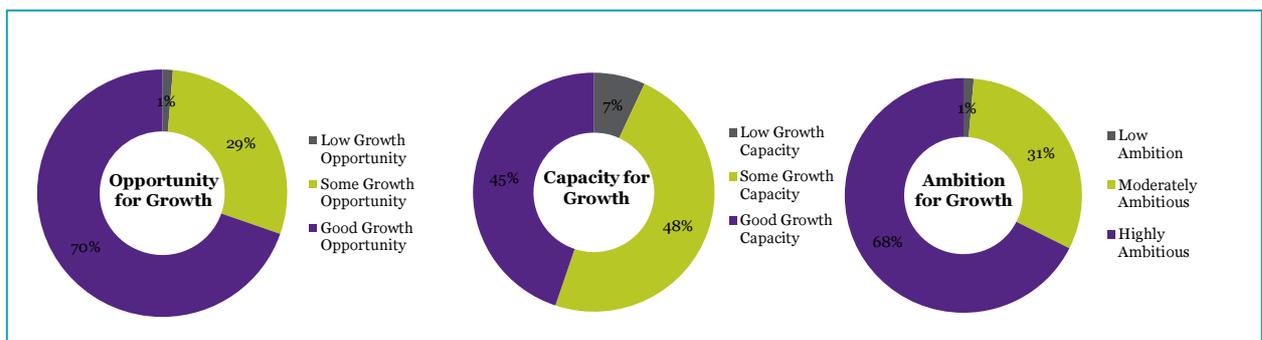
Figure 4: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Sector

GrowthAccelerator Sectors	Proportion
Manufacturing	13%
Technology	11%
Engineering	6%
IT	6%
Software	5%
Biotechnology	4%
Consulting	3%
Industrial	3%
Automotive	2%
Architecture	2%

Growth potential

As part of the assessment process in determining the eligibility of clients GrowthAccelerator Growth Managers score each company on their opportunity for growth, their capacity for growth and their ambition for growth. Figure 5 shows that the majority of firm had 'good growth opportunity' (70%) and were 'highly ambitious' (68%), but just under half (45%) had 'good growth capacity'. This limited capacity is perhaps one of the main reasons why these firms have engaged with GrowthAccelerator.

Figure 5: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Opportunity, Capacity and Ambition for Growth



Barriers to growth

During the diagnostic conversation with the Growth Manager companies are asked what their biggest barrier to growth is. The notes of this conversation are entered into the GrowthAccelerator CRM, using key word analysis it is possible to identify the most common barriers to growth for the pilot cohort (see Figure 6). Half of the pilot cohort (51%) identified skills or staff, 42% identified marketing and a third identified finance and strategy (34% respectively).

By way of illustration, the types of barriers around skills or staff which companies have commented upon include:

"Getting the right staff. They train up staff for 2 or 3 years who then tend to leave and go to larger companies"

"Tends to be a lack of engineers in the UK ...will have to look at China or Eastern Europe to manufacture the new product"

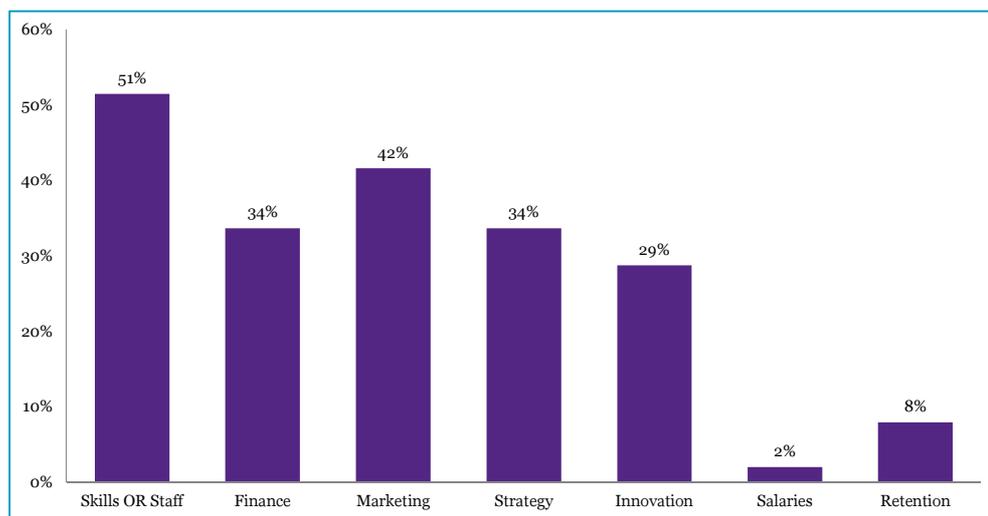
"Hard to match terms & conditions offered by bigger competitors to the best talent";

"Need help recruiting and funding...driven sales people"

"Marketing, sales and weak pitching techniques as not had to pitch much for business before"

"Only recently it has become more competitive so need to hone those skills"

Figure 6: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Barriers to Growth



Big idea for growth

Also part of the diagnostic conversation businesses were asked what their big idea for growth is. Again using key word analysis the most common big idea for growth across the pilot cohort was 'innovation'⁵ with over half (56%) of the companies referring to it. This included the development of new software solutions, apps and biotechnology products. A third (36%) – the next most common – identified diversification and a quarter (24%) identified expansion (see Figure 7).

⁵ This included new prototypes, products, technologies and designs.

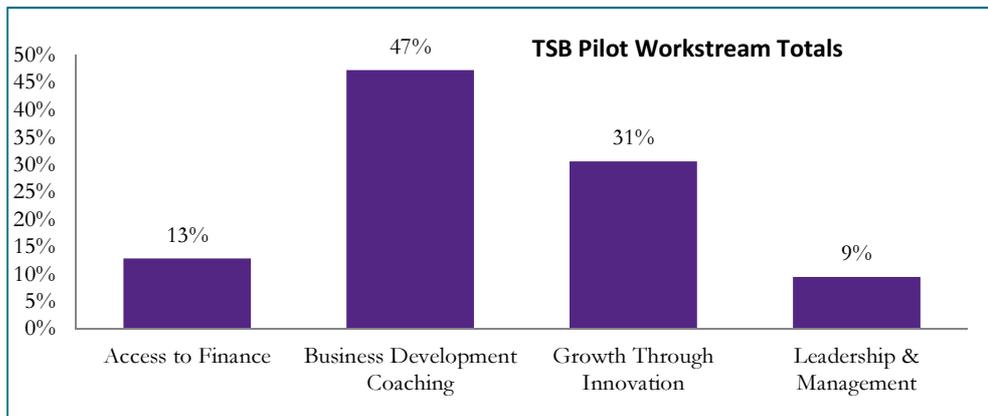
Figure 7: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company Big Idea for Growth



GrowthAccelerator work stream

Half (47%) of the pilot cohort have accessed the business development coaching and 31% accessed the growth through innovation work stream. Only 12% have accessed the Access to Finance work stream. Given the barriers noted above around skills or staff and marketing it is perhaps unsurprising to find that business development coaching is the most common work stream.

Figure 8: Technology Strategy Board Pilot Company GrowthAccelerator Work stream Accessed



Comparing the pilot cohort with GrowthAccelerator

Comparing the nature of the companies

It is instantly apparent from Figure 9 and Figure 10 that the companies recruited as part of the Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort are generally larger than the average company recruited by GrowthAccelerator. There are fewer micros in the Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort (54% compared to 67%), and more small (36% compared to 29%) and more medium sized (10% compared to 5%) companies. The average turnover is also £0.3 million

higher and the Technology Strategy Board pilot companies, on average, employ six more people per company.

This could be influenced by the fact that the larger companies find the offer to access the services for free more attractive : those with 1-4 employees pay £600, compared to £1500 for those with 5-49 employees and £3000 for those with 50-249 employees.

Figure 9: Company Size Comparison

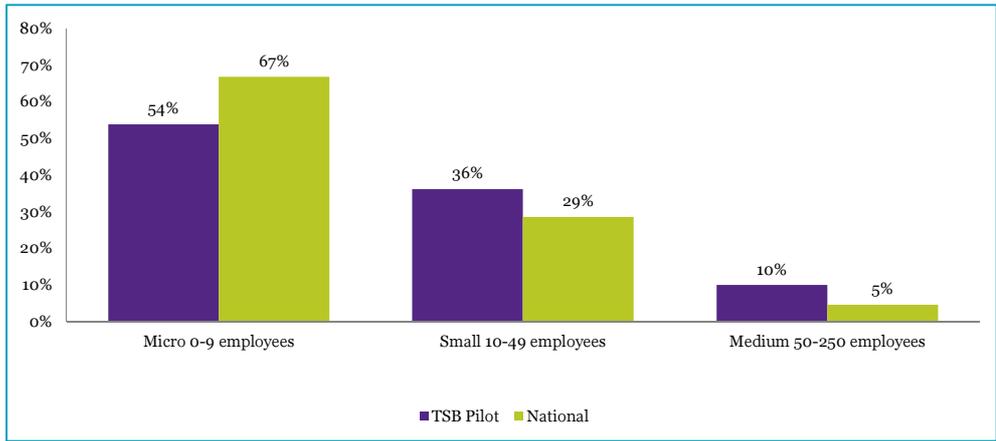
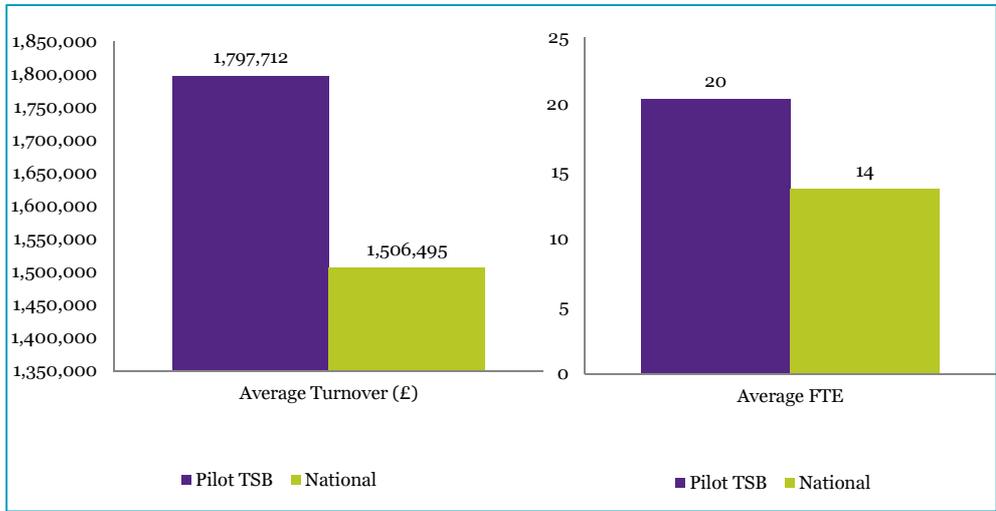
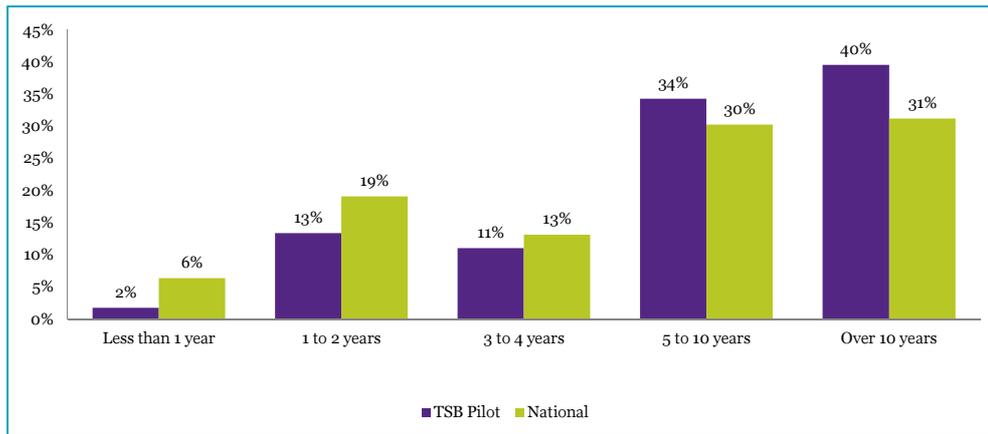


Figure 10: Average Size Comparison



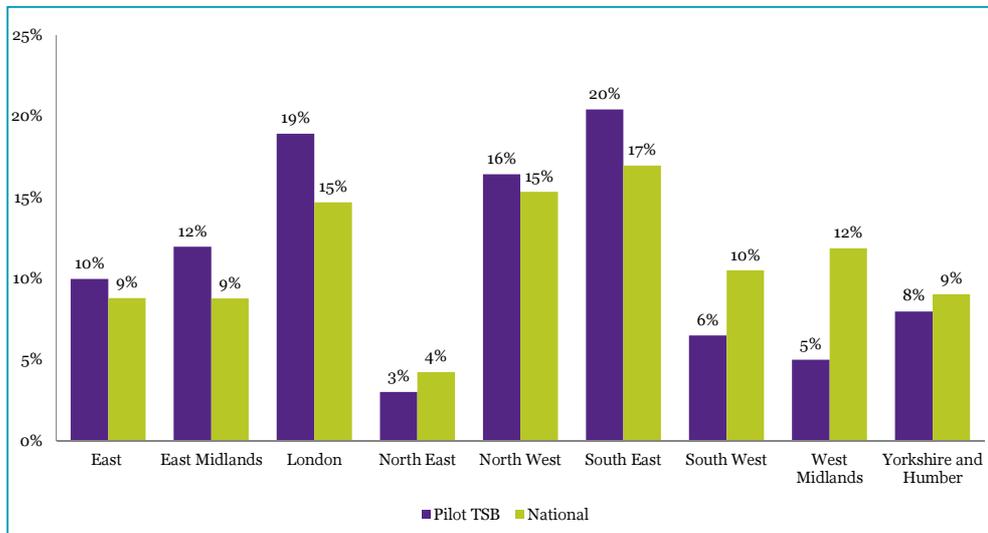
The Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort are also older: 40% are over 10 years old compared to 31% across GrowthAccelerator nationally. Whilst at the other end of the scale only 2% are less than a year old compared to 6% of the GrowthAccelerator population (see Figure 11). On average GrowthAccelerator companies have been trading for 11 years, compared to 13 for the Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort.

Figure 11: Company Age Comparison



In terms of geography, the higher proportion of the Technology Strategy Board cohort in the South East, London and the North West as well as the lower proportion of companies in the North East is broadly reflected across the GrowthAccelerator national population. The most notable difference is in the West Midlands with the proportion of the Technology Strategy Board cohort seven percentage points lower than the proportion of all GrowthAccelerator clients (5% compared to 12%) (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Company Geography Comparison



Perhaps unsurprisingly the top ten sectors for all GrowthAccelerator companies is quite different to the Technology Strategy Board cohort (with five sectors being different). Business services is the largest GrowthAccelerator sector and the top 10 includes food and drink, retail, healthcare and construction all of which do not appear in the top 10 sectors for the Technology Strategy Board. Whereas, as would be expected, the Technology Strategy Board sectors include technology, biotechnology, industrial, automotive and architecture (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Company Sector Comparison

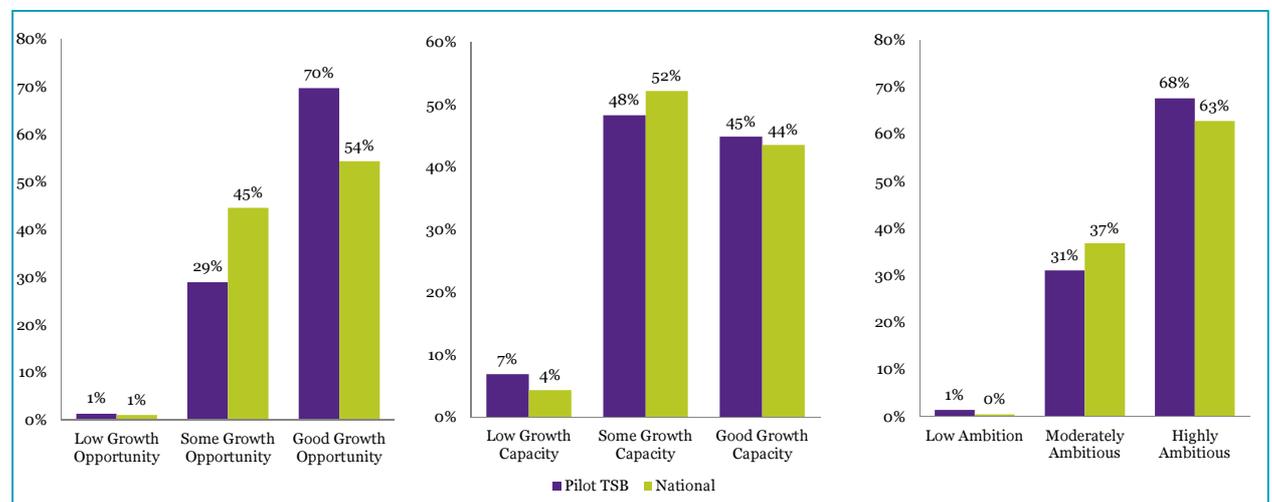
Technology Strategy	Proportion	GrowthAccelerator	Proportion
Manufacturing	13%	Business services	12%
Technology	11%	Manufacturing	8%
Engineering	6%	IT	5%
IT	6%	Engineering	4%
Software	5%	Construction	4%
Biotechnology	4%	Software	4%
Consulting	3%	Food and drink	4%
Industrial	3%	Retail	3%
Automotive	2%	Healthcare	3%
Architecture	2%	Consulting	2%

Comparing growth potential

During the recruitment process, Growth Managers assess opportunity, capacity and ambition to grow – key determinants in overall growth potential. These are scored on a subjective basis based on information the Growth Manager captures during telephone interviews and face to face meetings. Whilst subjective, the score provide a benchmark for comparing one cohort with another.

When the scores for opportunity, capacity and ambition are compared it is apparent that where the Technology Strategy Board cohort differs most is in their opportunity for growth with 70% of the Technology Strategy Board cohort scoring 'good growth opportunity' compared to only 54% of all GrowthAccelerator companies. This is probably to be expected given the more innovative nature of the Technology Strategy Board companies. In terms of capacity and ambition the scores are broadly similar (see Figure 14).

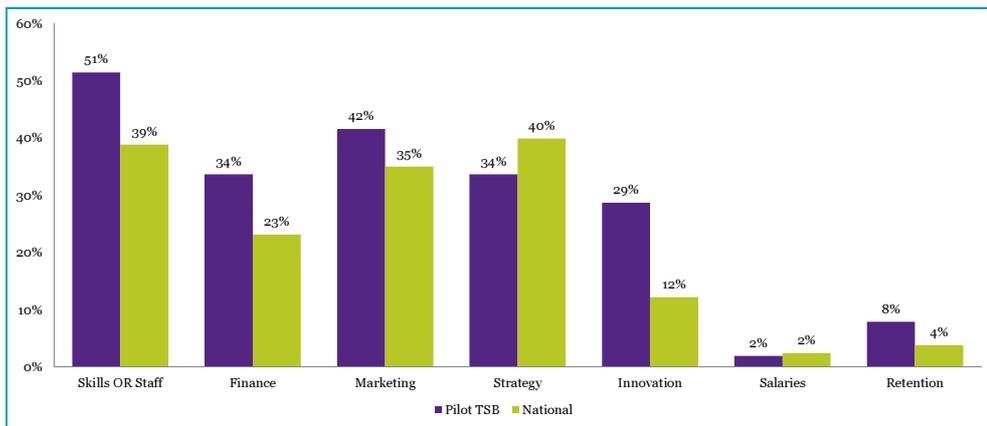
Figure 14: Company Opportunity, Capacity and Ambition for Growth Comparison



Comparing barriers to growth

Given that a greater proportion of the Technology Strategy Board cohort identify with five of the seven barriers shown in Figure 15 it would seem that the Technology Strategy Board cohort either face more barriers to growth or, more likely, they are more aware of their barriers to growth. This may make the companies more open to support than other companies as they have a greater awareness of their own challenges. It may also be that this awareness was in part driven by the existing support that they received from the Technology Strategy Board.

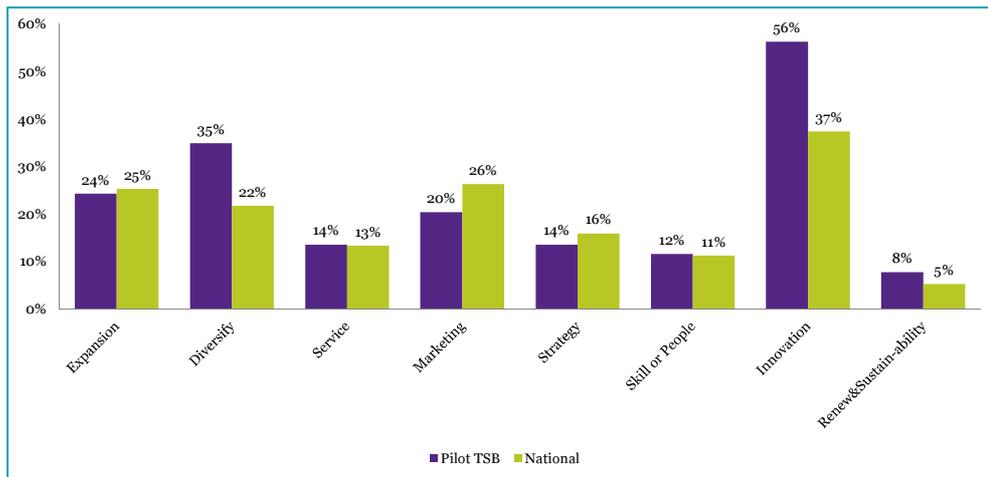
Figure 15: Company Barriers to Growth Comparison



Comparing big idea for growth

Comparing the big idea for growth between the Technology Strategy Board cohort and the GrowthAccelerator population instantly shows that the Technology Strategy Board cohort are relying much more on their ability to innovate (56% compared to 37%) and diversify (35% compared to 22%). This is again unsurprising given the focus of the Technology Strategy Board. GrowthAccelerator companies appear to be relying more on sales and marketing to drive their growth (26% compared to 20%) (see Figure 16).

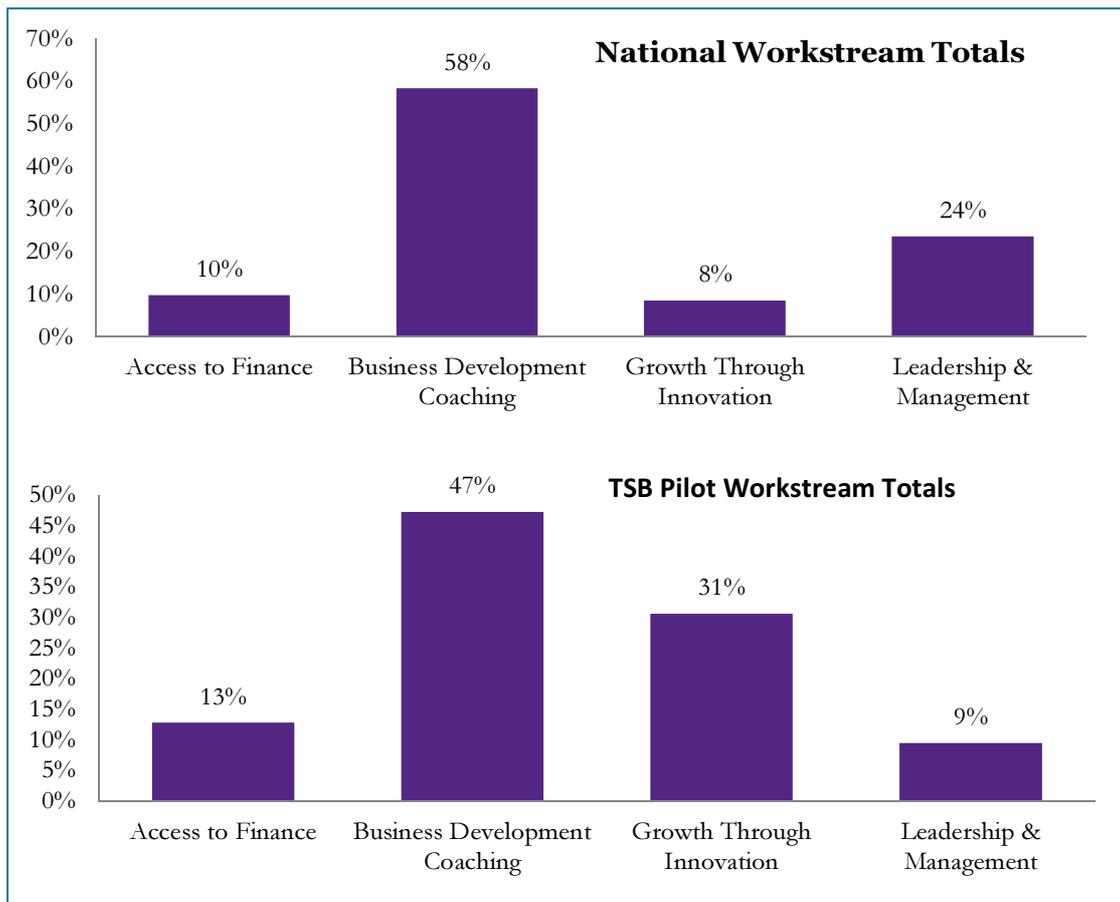
Figure 16: Company Big Idea for Growth Comparison



Comparing work stream accessed

Comparing the work streams accessed the most notable difference is the proportion of the Technology Strategy Board pilot cohort that has accessed the growth through innovation. Although given that innovation was part of their big idea for growth for over half of the pilot cohort this is to be expected (see Figure 17). Again, it will be interesting to explore through the survey how GrowthAccelerator work streams have added value to the work of the Technology Strategy Board, particularly in the growth through innovation work stream.

Figure 17: Company GrowthAccelerator Work stream Accessed comparison



Technology Strategy Board – GrowthAccelerator Client Survey

This chapter of the report presents the findings of the client survey. This survey was undertaken in August and September 2013 and spoke with 34 companies of a possible 75 who had had their 'scope of support' signed off for at least three months⁶ (a response rate of 45%). The survey was undertaken by the independent market research agency RMG Clarity using a mixture of open and closed questions.

Based on the eligible population size and response rate achieved the results reported in this chapter have a confidence interval of between +/- 7.5 and +/-12.5 at the 95% confidence level.

The survey results are discussed under the following seven headings:

- Respondent characteristics
- Awareness of GrowthAccelerator
- Effectiveness of service delivery
- Outcomes: progress against growth plans
- Outcomes: business performance
- Reported impact on employment and growth
- Concluding views.

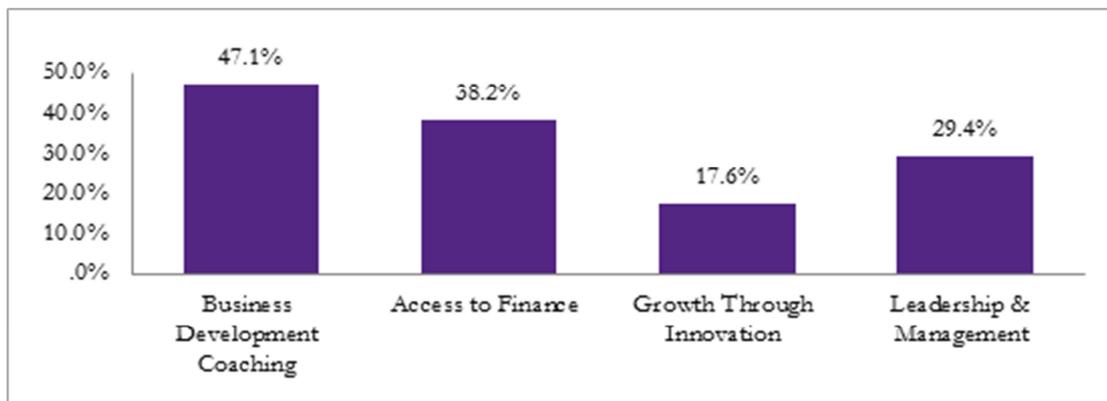
Respondent characteristics

Nearly half (47%) of respondents had accessed the Business Development Coaching work stream, with 38% - the next highest – accessing Access to Finance and 18% Growth Through Innovation. Nearly a third of respondents had also access the Leadership & Management support. (see Figure 1)

In terms of the work streams accessed by the overall Technology Strategy Board Pilot cohort, 'Growth Through Innovation' is under represented while 'Access to Finance' and 'Leadership & Management' are over represented.

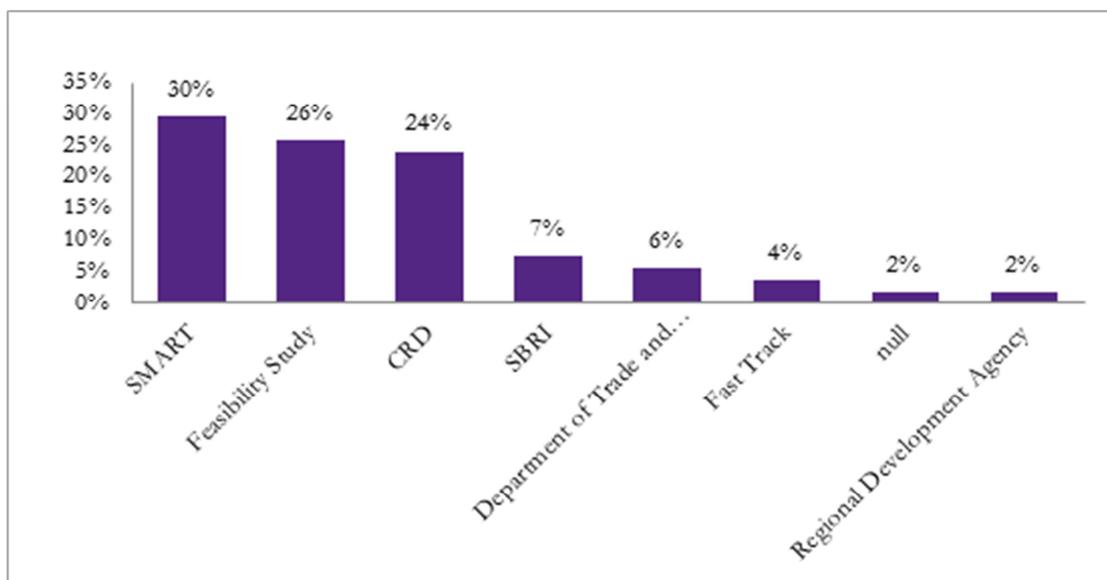
⁶ A signed 'Scope of Support' is a suitable proxy to indicate the date at which service delivery commenced.

Figure 1: Workstreams of the surveyed clients.



In terms of the Technology Strategy Board product provided, 30% of survey respondents had benefited from the 'SMART', 26% from a 'Feasibility Study', and 24% from CRD support (see Figure 2).

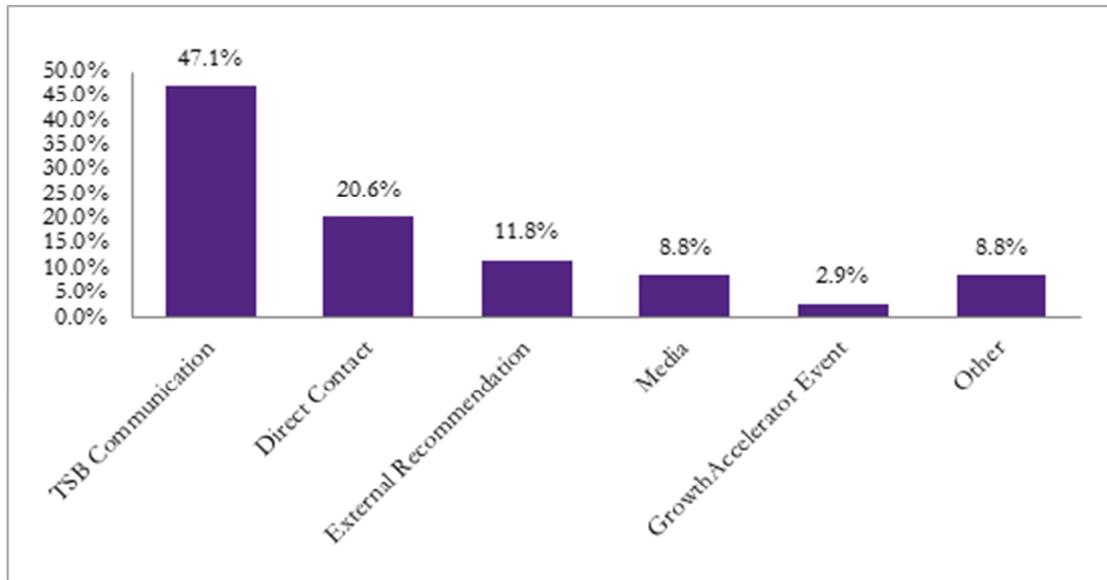
Figure 2: Technology Strategy Board products provided to the surveyed clients



Awareness of GrowthAccelerator

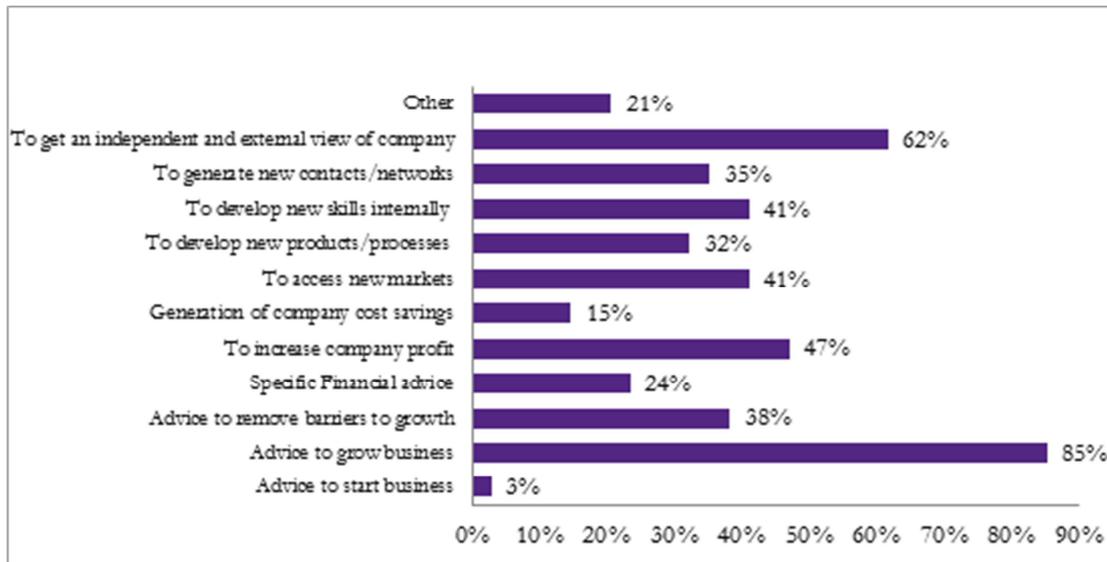
Half (47%) of the survey respondents first found about GrowthAccelerator through direct communication from the Technology Strategy Board. A further fifth (21%) of respondents heard about GrowthAccelerator as a result of direct contact from a member of the GrowthAccelerator team. Together these findings highlight the important role played by the pilot in raising awareness of GrowthAccelerator. The remaining 30% of respondents heard about GrowthAccelerator through a range of other means including external recommendations and the media (see Figure 3)

Figure 3: First exposure to GrowthAccelerator.



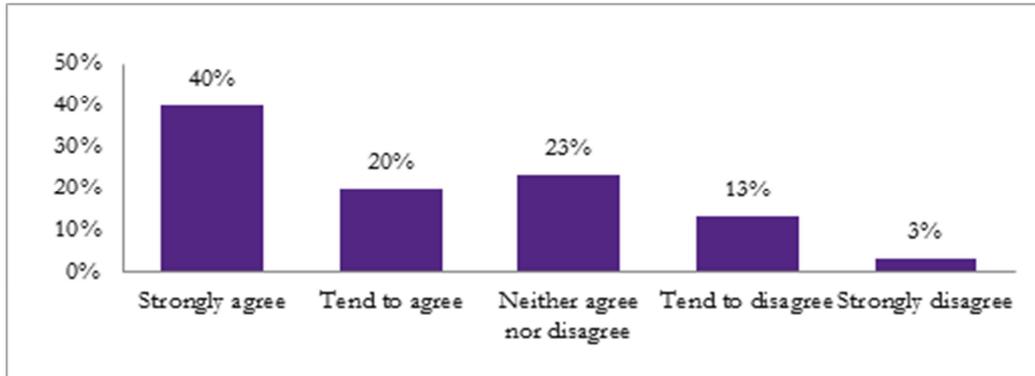
When asked why they engaged with GrowthAccelerator companies provided a range of reasons (see Figure 4), although the three most common reasons were to get 'advice to grow business (85%); to get 'an independent and external view of the company' (62%) and to 'increase the company profile' (47%).

Figure 4: Reasons for engaging with GrowthAccelerator



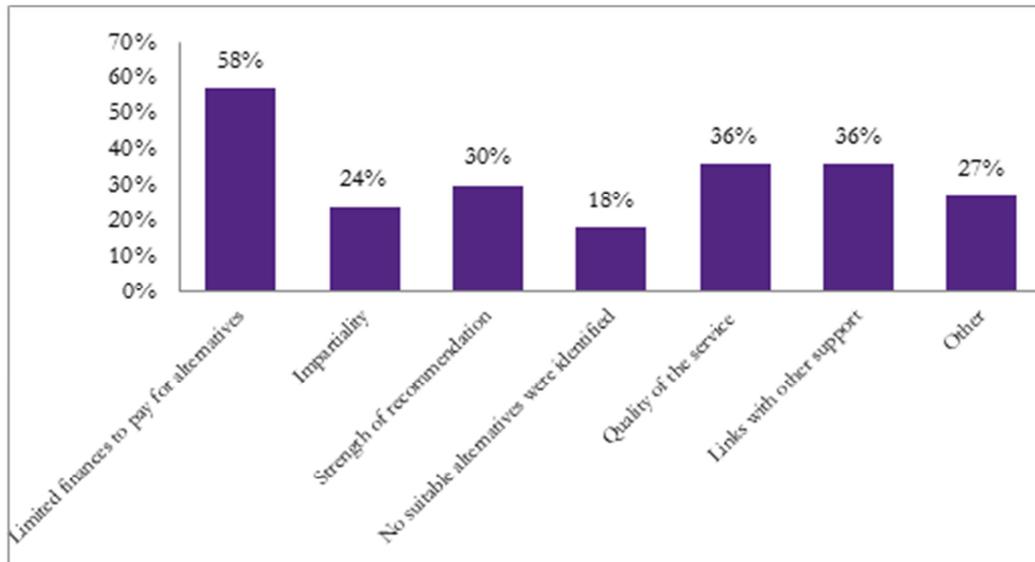
When asked to what extent they agreed with the statement "GrowthAccelerator has provided, or will provide, a support package that I could not have got from any other source", 60% of respondents agreed, the majority (40%) of whom felt this strongly. Only 16% of respondents disagreed (see Figure 5). Nearly half (41%) of the respondents investigated alternative sources of support.

Figure 5: A unique service



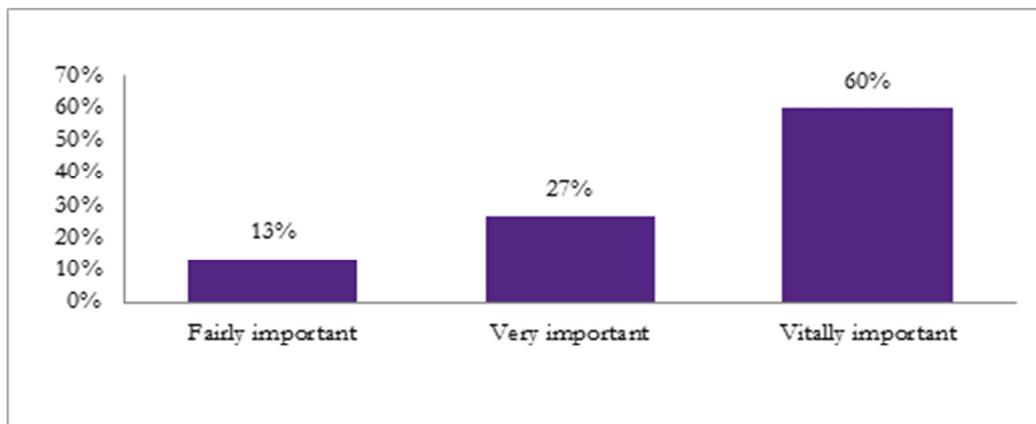
When asked why they chose GrowthAccelerator respondents again gave a range of reasons (see Figure 6) although, the top three most common were: 'Limited finance to pay for alternatives' (58%), the 'links with other support' (36%) and the 'quality of the service' (36%). The fact that over half of the respondents identified limited finances to pay for alternatives would suggest that the incentive offered by the Technology Strategy Board played an important role in them taking up the service.

Figure 6: Reasons for choosing GrowthAccelerator



This suggestion is confirmed by the fact that all of the respondents said the Technology Strategy Board incentive was important, to some degree, in terms of them choosing GrowthAccelerator, with 87% noting that it was 'very' or 'vitaly' important (see Figure 7). Over three-quarters (77%) of respondents said that they would not have joined GrowthAccelerator if they had had to pay the standard client contribution.

Figure 7: Influence of the Technology Strategy Board incentive

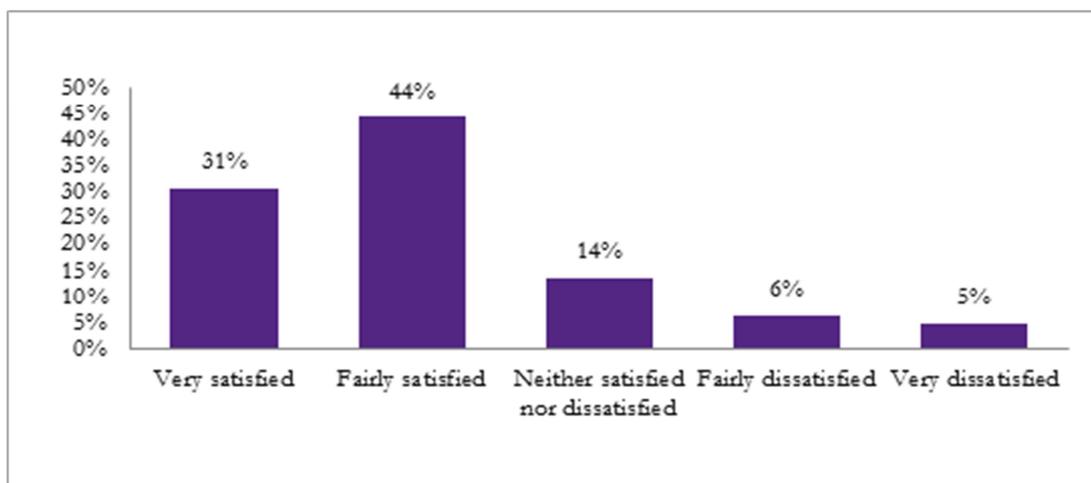


Effectiveness of service delivery

The companies were asked about the effectiveness of service delivery in terms of their satisfaction with the assessment process, their Growth Manager and their coach.

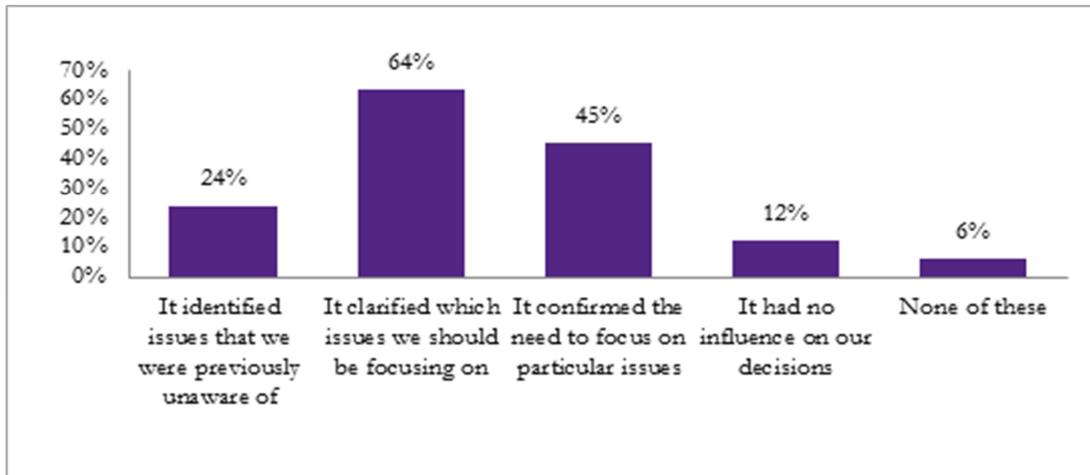
On average, three-quarters (75%) of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of the assessment process. This covered GrowthMapper (which 61% of respondents were satisfied with); the telephone interview (83% satisfied); and the face to face meeting and action plan (83% satisfied)

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the assessment process



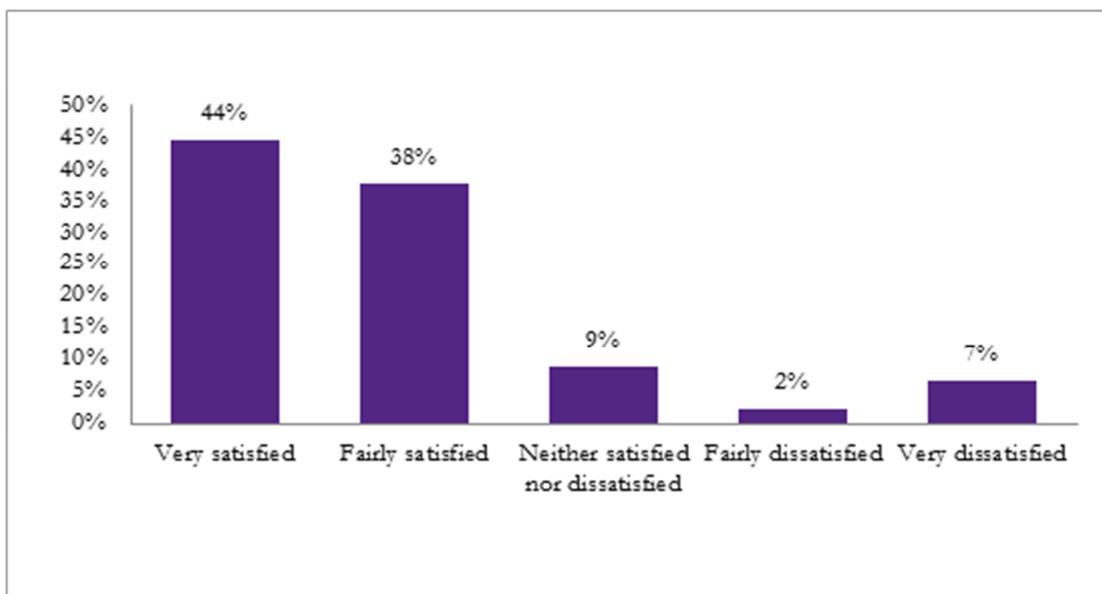
From the outset respondents were realising the benefits of the support. In particular, the assessment process was felt to have brought a clarity and focus (see Figure 9): 64% felt that it clarified which issues should be focused on and 45% felt that it confirmed the need to focus on particular issues.

Figure 9: Benefits of the assessment process



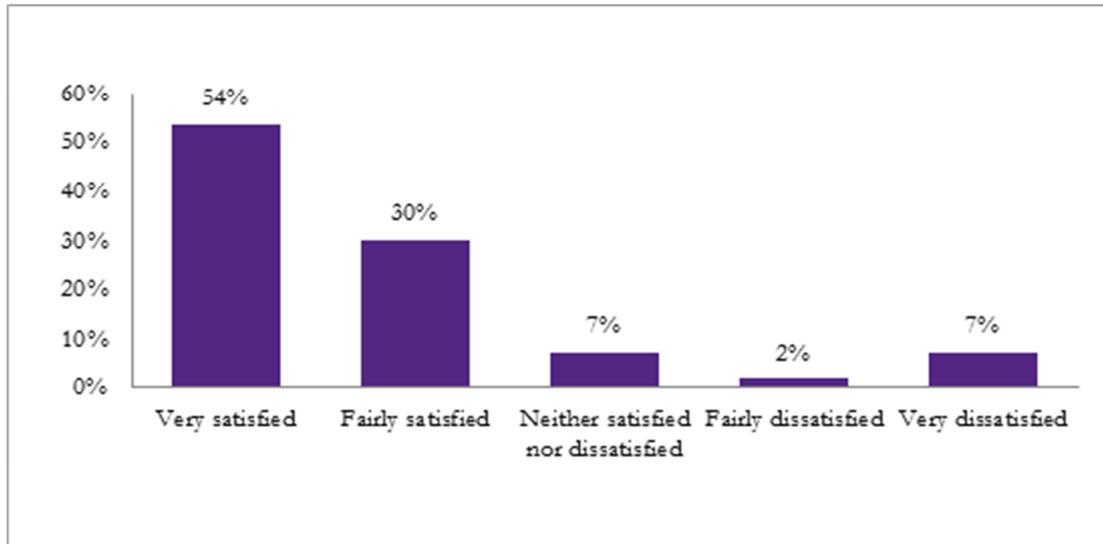
In terms of satisfaction with their Growth Manager, on average, 82% were satisfied (Figure 10): 87% were satisfied with their insight on business, 77% were satisfied with their scope of support, and 83% were satisfied with their knowledge of services.

Figure 10: Satisfaction with their Growth Manager



On average, 84% of respondents were satisfied with their coach (Figure 11). This included: 83% who were satisfied with their coach's understanding of their business; 86% who were satisfied with their coach's business experience; 76% who were satisfied with their coach's technical skills; and 89% who were satisfied with their coach's credibility.

Figure 11: Satisfaction with their Coach

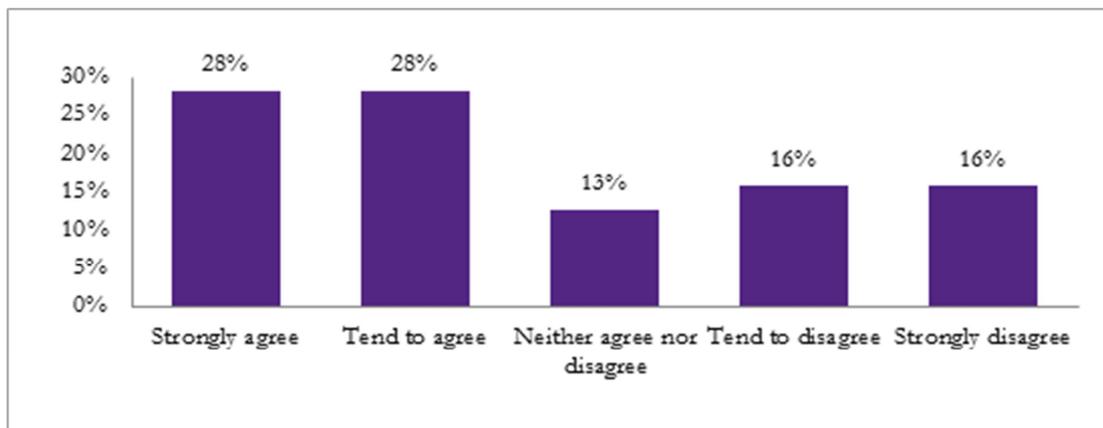


At the time of the survey a fifth (21%) of respondents had been referred on by GrowthAccelerator to other business support services, of which 83% were satisfied with this referral.

Outcomes: progress against Growth Plans

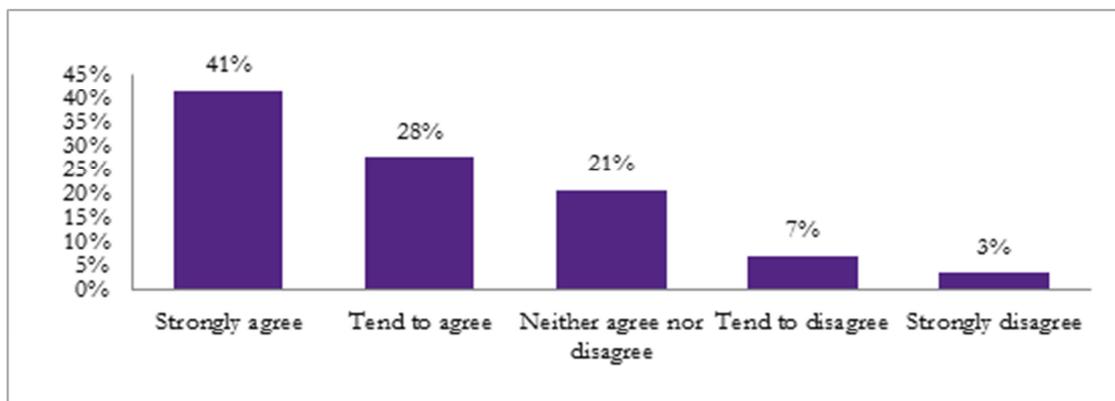
Having received the support over half (56%) of the respondents agreed that the GrowthAccelerator support "has provided me with something, or will provide me with something I could not have got from any other source" (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Unique support



When asked what element of support had added the most value, the overwhelming majority (74%) of respondents identified the 1:1 coaching. Positively, 68% of companies also 'agreed' that 'the support from GrowthAccelerator complemented and added value to the work already done with Technology Strategy Board' (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Complimentary support



When asked about the ways in which GrowthAccelerator complemented the Technology Strategy Board support responses included the following:

"Being able to put together an investment pitch to take the project to the next level"

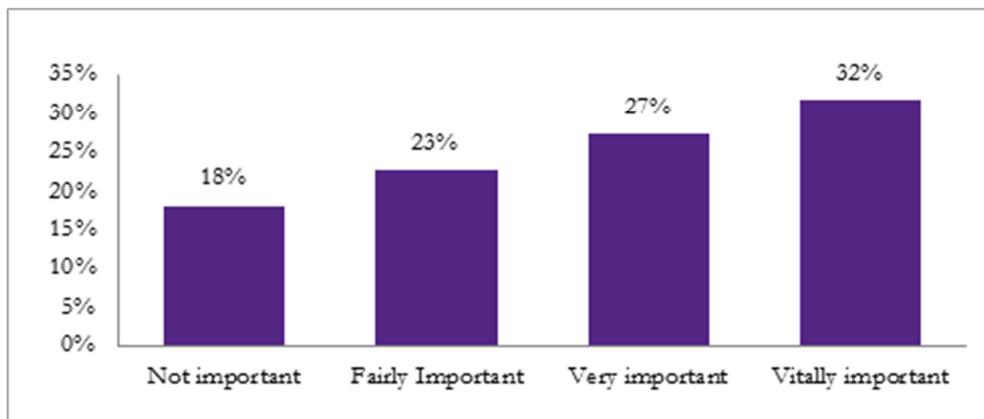
"Enlarged network"

"GrowthAccelerator has provided a commercial aspect to go with the technical element that the Technology Strategy Board has provided"

"Enabled us to clarify what grants were available and how to out-line our aims"

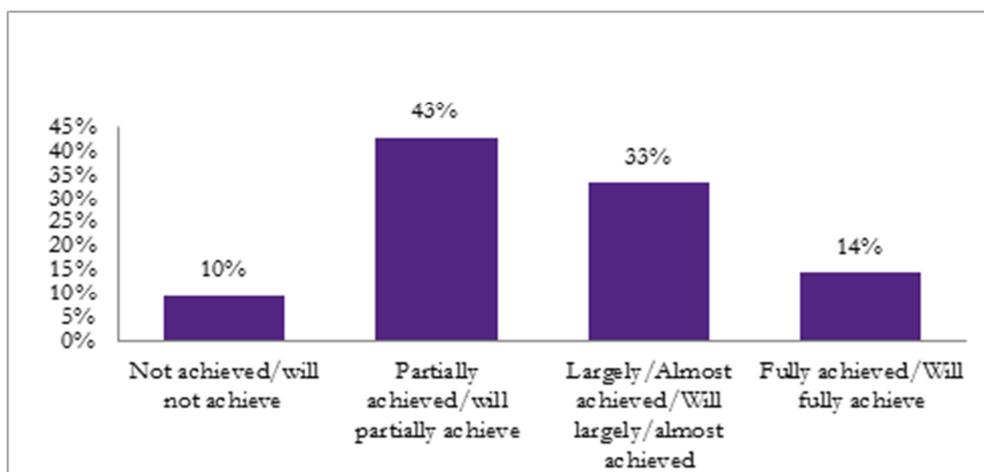
In addition, over 80% of respondents found that GrowthAccelerator was important in helping to deliver the innovation objectives of the project that had been supported by the Technology Strategy Board (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Delivery of the Technology Strategy Board project objectives



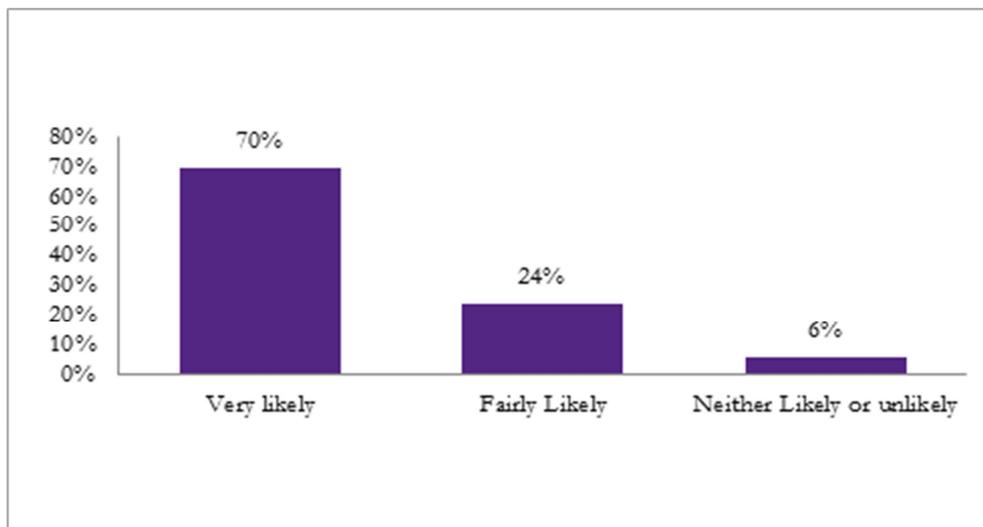
More generally, 90% of respondents have achieved or will achieve – to some degree – the objectives set out in their scope of support (Figure 15). All of whom attribute the achievement of these objectives, either fully or in part, to GrowthAccelerator. Ninety six per cent of respondents are also on track to meet the milestones set out in their action plans, 90% of whom say that GrowthAccelerator was important to some degree in achieving this.

Figure 15: Achievement of Objectives



As a result of GrowthAccelerator, 94% of respondents are likely to continue to use external advisers in the future (Figure 16). This finding underline the importance of the pilot in shifting the mindset of the companies involved.

Figure 16: Use of external advisers



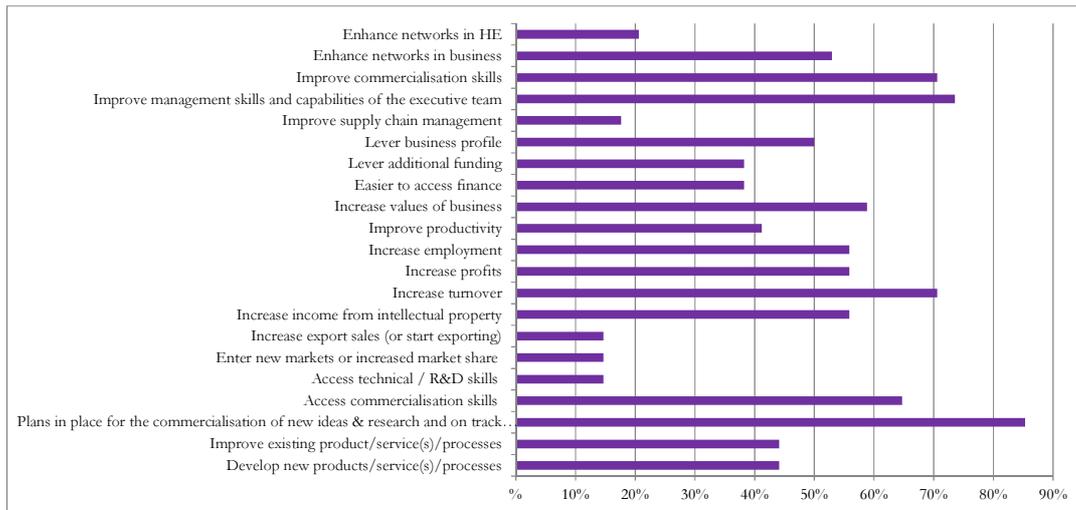
Outcomes: business performance

Businesses were asked to comment on the extent to which they engaged with GrowthAccelerator to achieve one or more of 21 different that reflect the benefits of business support and have been used to assess the impact of other Technology Strategy Board programmes. This includes the development of new products / service(s)/ processes; plans in place for the commercialisation of new ideas & research; and accessing technical/ R&D skills.

Each respondent was asked both whether or not they had engaged with GrowthAccelerator to achieve each particular outcome and if so the extent to which that outcome had materialised.

In terms of whether they engaged with GrowthAccelerator to achieve a particular outcome, Figure 17 shows that the four most commonly desired outcomes were: putting plans in place for the commercialisation of new ideas and research (85%); improving the management skills and capabilities of the executive team (74%); improving commercialisation skills (71%); and increasing turnover (71%).

Figure 17: Desired outcomes



Across all 21 outcomes, over 95% of the desired outcomes have either materialised already or are expected to materialise in the future (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Materialised outcomes



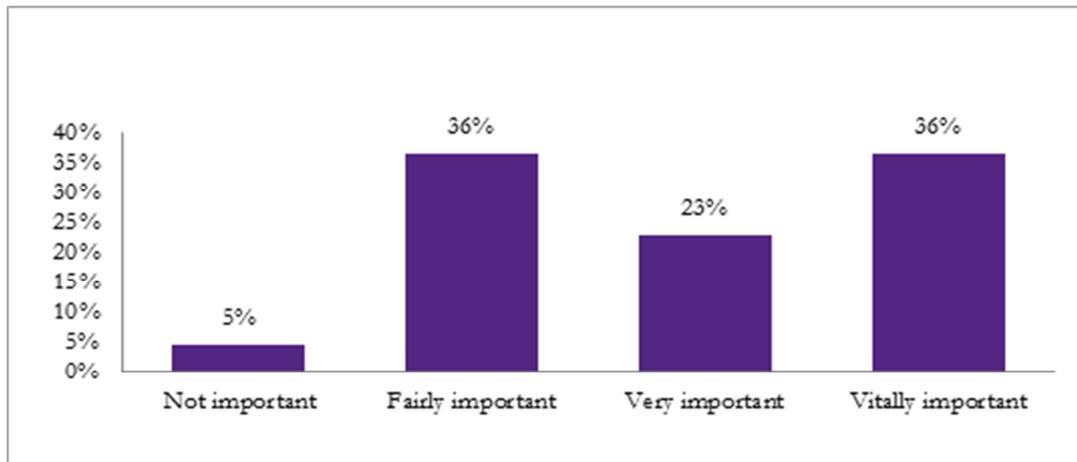
Reported impacts – employment and growth

In addition to the progress towards outcomes noted above, respondents were also asked about the extent to which support has helped to create / safeguard employment and increase turnover.

Positively, over 90% of respondents said that the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator support is important, to some degree, in creating additional jobs, with over a third saying that it has been vitally important (Figure 19). Of those who say that the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator is important, 95% of expect to, or have already, increased or safeguarded employment as a direct result of the Technology Strategy

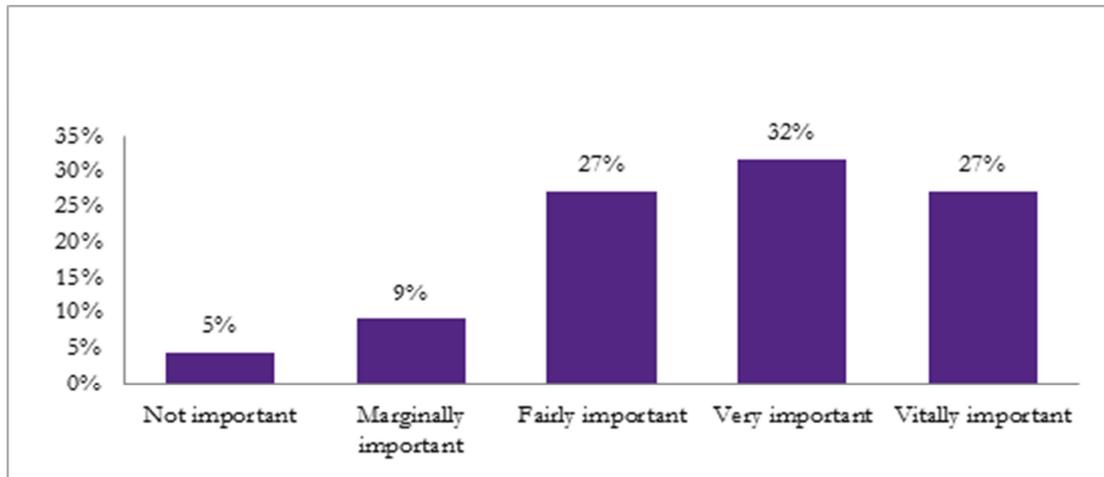
Board and GrowthAccelerator support. In fact based on respondent estimates the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator support has on average already created an additional 1.1 jobs per company with a 3.5 jobs expected in the future. It should be noted that while these results are positive they are based on a relatively small sample of firms. All (100%) of the respondents who attribute growth to the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator say that this growth would not have happened as quickly had the company not received support from both the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator.

Figure 19: Importance in creating jobs



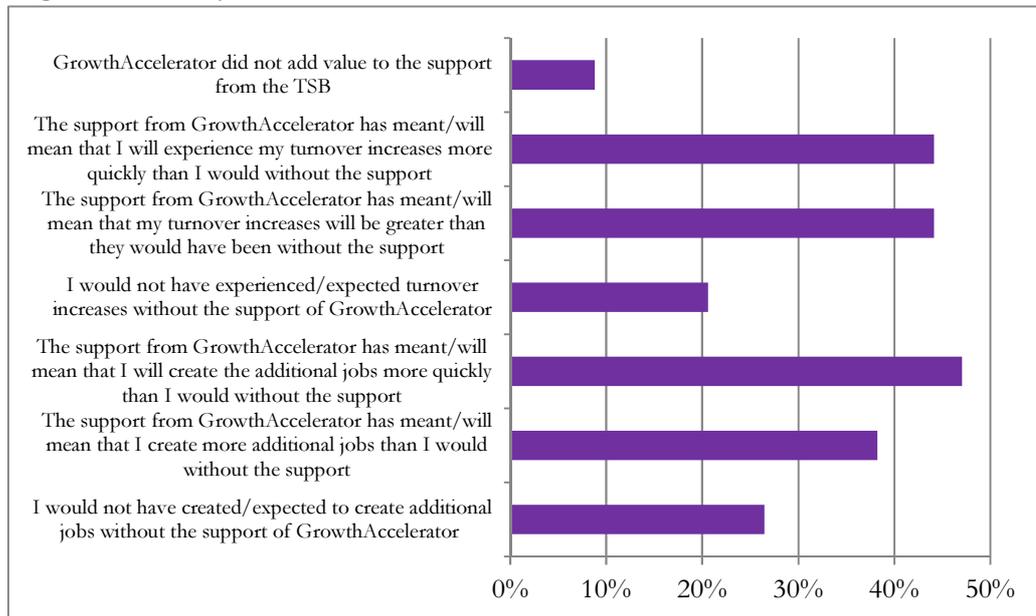
In addition over 80% of respondents said that the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator support is important, to some degree, in increasing the turnover of their business, 59% of whom said it was 'very' or 'vitally' important (Figure 20). Of those who say that the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator is important, 90% expect to, or have already, seen an increase in turnover as a direct result of the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator support, with an average increase of 26% expected. It should be noted that this average is likely to be a conservative estimate as where a range was given the lower point was taken. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents say that this growth would not have happened as quickly had the company not received support from both the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator.

Figure 20: Importance in increasing turnover



When asked to comment on the ways in which GrowthAccelerator added value to the Technology Strategy Board support: 47% said that the "support from GrowthAccelerator has meant/will mean that I will create the additional jobs more quickly than I would without the support"; 44% said that the "support from GrowthAccelerator has meant/will mean that I will experience my turnover increases more quickly than I would without the support"; and 44% said that the "support from GrowthAccelerator has meant/will mean that my turnover increases will be greater than they would have been without the support" (Figure 21).

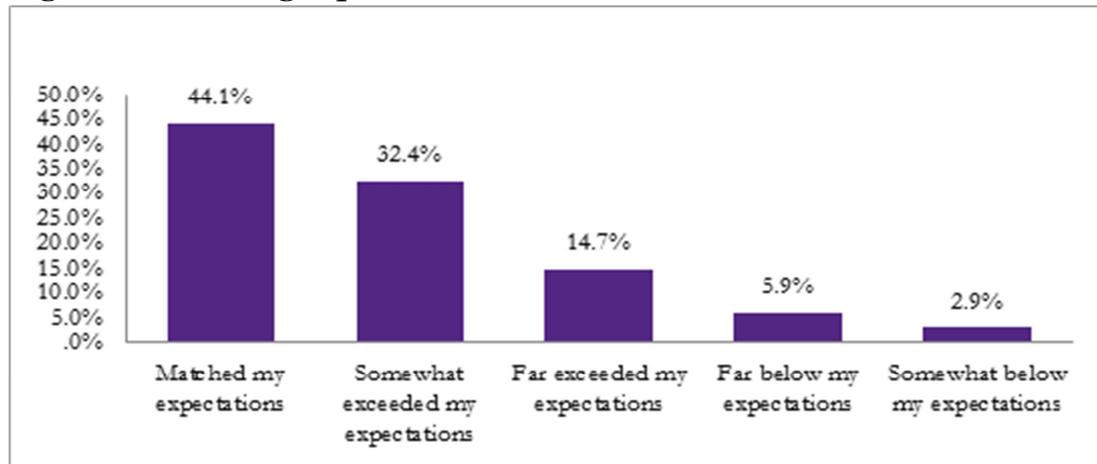
Figure 21: Ways in which GrowthAccelerator added value



Concluding views

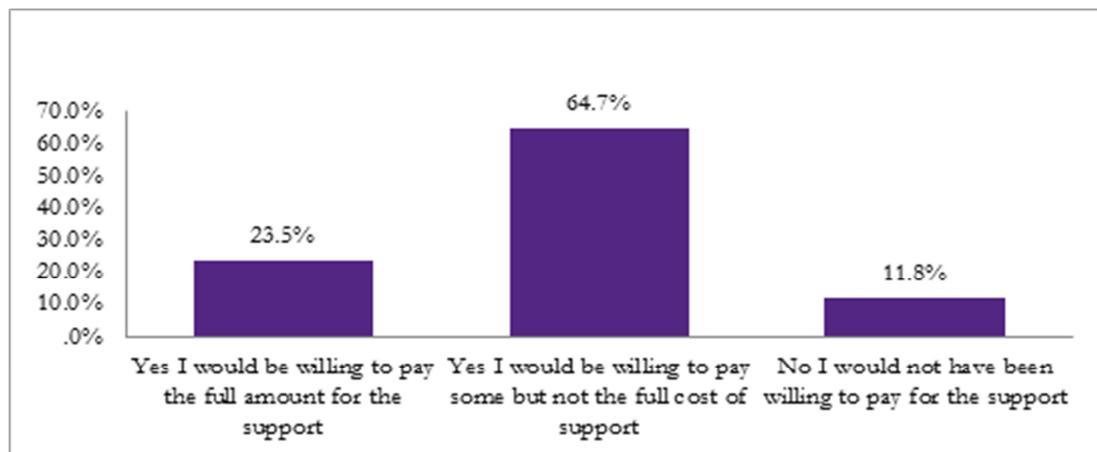
For 91% of respondents GrowthAccelerator has either matched or exceeded their expectations (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Meeting expectations



While with the benefit of hindsight, and having experienced GrowthAccelerator, 88% of respondents would be willing to pay some or the full amount for the support. This further builds on the earlier finding that the Technology Strategy Board pilot has contributed to changing the mindset of those businesses involved (Figure 22).

Figure 23: Paying for GrowthAccelerator



Technology Strategy Board – GrowthAccelerator Client Case Studies

This chapter presents the findings of three client case studies looking at both the challenges facing the business and how GrowthAccelerator has helped.

Client Case Study 1: Bind-a-Tex

Key facts

Sector: Manufacturing

Employees: Two

Turnover: 60k for 2012/13

Location: Bolton

Growth Manager: Sue Denver

Service used: Business Development, Leadership & Management training

Snapshot – impact of GrowthAccelerator

On track to turnover in excess of £200k in 2013/14 compared with £60k last year
Development of a marketing and sales strategy to help convert sales leads
Development of visionary long term and goal-orientated short term business plans
Recruitment of a new staff member

About

Bind-a-Tex was established in 2004 by founder Chris Lever to supply the printing and publishing trades with pre-cut materials for use in binding books. With the rapid decline of traditional printed books he quickly realised that the market faced an uncertain future if it focused solely on this shrinking market. He therefore started to explore new markets in which the company's specialist capabilities would apply. As a result, in 2007 the business diversified to offer a precision sheeting, panelling and shape cutting service for many materials including composite prepreg, temperature resistant textile, paper, film, foil and any flexible material. The business operates in many niche sectors, the most successful of which has been the aerospace supply chain.

The business challenge

In 2012 the company was awarded a Technology Strategy Board grant to conduct a Proof of Market study to establish the demand for slitting high tolerance narrow tapes used in automated assembly of critical aerospace components. This and other activities have generated great market awareness and growth potential. However, the business was only converting a small percentage of this in to sales and therefore required support to achieve both rapid sales growth and expansion of delivery capacity.

How GrowthAccelerator has helped

GrowthAccelerator has helped the business reach the next level and increase turnover significantly. From a turnover of £60k last year they are on target to achieve £200k this financial year.

Bind-a-Text worked with their coach, Tim Iles, to develop a breakthrough strategy for the business, creating a three-year plan for where they want to be and a more detailed 12 month plan outlining a 'vital few' objectives and how they would be achieved. The GrowthAccelerator coach also worked with them on the creation of a marketing and sales plan to bring structure to marketing activities and increase the focus on conversion of sales. In addition the business developed an operations plan which helped them to improve customer service and also increase their manufacturing capability through the recruitment of new staff and the acquisition of new equipment.

Chris Lever, Bind-a-Text founder, said; "Tim worked with me to use GrowthAccelerator tools to map out and challenge my thinking. It helped to take me out of the day-to-day production and think more strategically about how I was going to continue moving the business forward. One of the main benefits for me has been the addition of a new team member. Before GrowthAccelerator I was on my own, so having someone else has helped me to concentrate on the things that will help future growth, like product trials and securing new orders. These are the things that are directly benefiting the businesses turnover and profit. Thanks to GrowthAccelerator I now have a clearer picture of where I want the business to go."

Bind-a-Text is currently exploring Leadership and Management Funding to help ensure the correct systems and processes are in place to achieve ISO accreditation.

Client Case Study 2: Substrakt

Key facts

Sector: Creative and digital design
Employees: 5
Turnover: £300k for last financial year
Location: London
Growth Manager: Dan Licari
Service used: Business Development

Snapshot – impact of GrowthAccelerator

Secured £100,000 Technology Strategy Board Smart Grant for a 14 month product development project
Using grant to cultivate partnerships with high profile cultural organisations

About

Substrakt is a creative and digital design agency founded seven years ago. It offers services including website and mobile app development, branding and graphic design, digital advertising and digital consultancy. Though the company works with clients from a range of different backgrounds it has developed a strong portfolio in the cultural heritage and architecture market for example working with the Royal College of Arts, the Yorkshire Film Archive and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The business challenge

With the company's strong background in the culture and arts market, founder Andy Hartwell identified an opportunity for growth through the development of a market specific product that helps cultural organisations use digital platforms to commercialise archived content. In order to develop this product Substrakt needed funding to develop the necessary digital tools and build a relevant portfolio of work.

How GrowthAccelerator has helped

Working with their Growth Manager, Dan Licari, Substrakt developed a Technology Strategy Board Smart Grant Submission, securing a £100,000 grant for a 14 month project. Using this funding Substrakt has been able to offer partnerships to high profile GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archive & Museum) organisations providing the opportunity for them to simultaneously develop the product and build a strong portfolio.

Andy Hartwell said: "GrowthAccelerator helped to steer us in the right direction of this vital funding. Thanks to the Technology Strategy Board grant we're able to work on developing our offering in a cost-efficient way, partnering with high profile organisations to help them commercialise their content."

Over the next few months Substrakt will be working with a GrowthAccelerator coach to develop a timeline and plan for investment readiness and angel and venture capital fundraising.

Case Study 3: Versarien

Key facts

Sector: Manufacturing

Employees: 55

Established: 2010

Location: Cinderford, Gloucestershire

Growth Manager: Martin Douglas

Growth Coach: Steve Crooks

Service used: Business Development Coaching

Snapshot – impact of GrowthAccelerator

Floated on AIM in mid-2013

Expanded production capabilities through the acquisition of Total Carbide, the leading manufacturer of tungsten carbide products

Grown from 3 – 55 employees

Moved to a 2,000 sq. ft. industrial unit

About

Founded in 2010, Versarien utilises proprietary technology to create innovative new engineering solutions that are capable of having a significant impact on a wide range of industrial sectors.

The company, based in Cinderford, Gloucestershire has secured contracts with several blue chip multinational organisations and has a rapidly growing workforce. Already it has gained notable industry recognition and received a number of high profile awards, including the London 2012 UKTI Start-up Games Overall Winner, 2013 Racecar Engineering Magazine's Most Innovative Product Award, 2012 MWP Advanced Manufacturing Award for Research & Development and 2012 HP Smart Business Award for Manufacturing Innovation.

In mid-2013, Versarien floated on the AIM submarket of the London Stock Exchange. Following this, the company acquired leading manufacturer of tungsten carbide products Total Carbide, thereby expanding its production capabilities to meet growing customer demand.

The business challenge

Versarien was founded by Neill Ricketts and Will Battrick, both of whom are experienced and skilled business developers and entrepreneurs. It was established to scale up low-cost manufacturing technology for creating metallic foams which would have applications across a range of industry sectors.

The business had a very rapid growth plan in place with a clearly defined three year business plan and marketing plan to support it. A number of enquiries from very large potential clients were coming in but Versarien did not have a big enough team in place to manage and evaluate these opportunities quickly.

Neill Ricketts says, "Our small team had more to do than resources allowed. We knew Steve Crooks, our GrowthAccelerator Growth Coach, from previous work and he advised us to look in to GrowthAccelerator. The real value for us was an external opinion – which helped us to focus on the things that we knew really needed doing but simply weren't getting round to."

Steve Crooks says, "Neill is a hugely successful serial entrepreneur and businessman, and Will is one of the leading technologists in industry. Working with them and the senior team was a great experience. The engagement was both challenging and fulfilling as the business was, and still is, moving at such a rapid pace, there was a need to get some of the key building blocks in place quickly."

Neill adds: "In addition to help with resource planning, to build the required manufacturing capability in time to make the most of our patented discoveries, we also needed significant funding and introductions to academics and potential customers who could help with research and development and, ultimately, capitalise on our findings."

How GrowthAccelerator and the Technology Strategy Board have helped

Within months of setting up Versarien, Will and Neill successfully applied to the Technology Strategy Board's Smart programme for research and development funding. The £74k they received allowed them to develop a prototype microchip cooler and demonstrate the remarkable heat transfer properties of Versarien Cu, a copper-based product. A second project co-funded through the Technology Strategy Board Smart programme is currently looking at metallic foams for kilowatt-scale power electronics applications such as heavy power conditioning equipment, renewable energy generation and all-electric vessels.

In total, Versarien has undertaken nine projects with the Technology Strategy Board. Neill says: "It's fair to say we would not have made the progress we've made without the support of the Technology Strategy Board. It's not all about the money, it provides us with much more than that. Some of the networking events have allowed given us the opportunity to get our products to market, affording us, a small business, a chance to meet much larger companies – it's very, very important."

To manage the many opportunities generated with new customers Neill and Will worked with their GrowthAccelerator Growth Coach, Steve Crooks, initially to review the businesses strategic plan and the three year marketing and sales plan. The second objective was to work with the senior management team and clearly define roles and responsibilities, coaching them individually and collectively in new business development and commercially led culture.

Says Neill: "Working with our Growth Coach allowed us to concentrate on processes that got results – our sales and our route to market. As part of the coaching we looked at creating a culture of new business from the top down, allowing us to help the team understand the Board's vision creating responsibility and flexibility in achieving our goals. We now share tasks between expert and novice team members to encourage collaborative working and develop a broader understanding of the business for more junior team members.

"Our work with both GrowthAccelerator and the Technology Strategy Board has been invaluable in terms of generating rapid growth. Technology Strategy Board Smart funding

has allowed us to develop new products and meet important potential customers, whilst GrowthAccelerator coaching has enabled us to focus on the things that are vital for our future growth and drive them forward. In the last year, we've taken on a new Head of Sales, grown our team significantly, floated on AIM, moved to larger premises and acquired a new business. It's been a busy time but we're on track for our ambitious growth targets thanks largely to the support that we've received."

Part B: Entrepreneurial Skills

Technology Strategy Board – Entrepreneurial Skills workshop and training event analysis

This chapter of the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the Entrepreneurial Skills workshops and training events, looking in turn at the sample of respondents and the satisfaction with/views about the workshops in general, before looking at the effectiveness of each individual workshop and event.

Sample of respondents

Numbers

The Technology Strategy Board Entrepreneurial Skills for Growth Workshops and Training Events covered 10 topics and were delivered over a three-month period March-May 2013.

The topics covered by the workshops, together with the number of times each workshop was held, the number of respondents (i.e. the number attendees for whom questionnaires were available), the total attendance, the Technology Strategy Board attendance and the response rate (i.e. percentage of total attendees completing evaluation questionnaires) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Workshop topics, number of events held, number of respondents, total attendance, Technology Strategy Board attendance and response rate per workshop topic

Topic	No. events	No. respondents [i.e. attendees for whom questionnaires]	Total attendance	TSB Attendance	Response rate [% total attendees completing questionnaires]
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	4	54	77	51	70.1
Web-fuelled Business	2	22	29	13	75.9
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	1	15	16	12	93.8
Recruitment and Team Management	1	7	9	9	77.8
Digital Marketing and Strategy	2	81	89	46	91.0
Search Engine Optimisation	3	45	48	34	93.8
Finance for Growth	1	19	22	16	86.4
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	4	88	103	57	85.4
Transition	1	8	13	9	61.5
Ecommerce	1	2	6	2	33.3
Total	20	341	412	249	82.8

The total number of respondents (i.e. attendees for whom questionnaires were available) was 341. This represents an overall response rate of 82.8%. The highest response rate (93.8%) was for the Sales and Search Engine Optimisation workshops. The lowest response

rates were for the Ecommerce workshop (33.3% - 2/6) and the Transition workshop (61.5% - 8/13).

Note: For ease of comparison, in most cases the data are presented as percentages. However, some of the sample sizes are extremely small e.g. 2, 7 and 8. Percentages based on small numbers should be treated with considerable caution.

Role of respondents

The percentage of respondents who were owners/directors, managers or employees is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Role of respondents (%)

Role	Owner/ Director % (n)	Manager % (n)	Employee % (n)	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	60 (31)	27 (14)	13 (7)	52
Web-fuelled Business	55 (12)	9 (2)	36 (8)	22
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	47 (7)	20 (3)	33 (5)	15
Recruitment and Team Management	43 (3)	29 (2)	29 (2)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	50 (39)	18 (14)	32 (25)	78
Search Engine Optimisation	41 (18)	30 (13)	30 (13)	44
Finance for Growth	83 (15)	17 (3)	0 (0)	18
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	31 (27)	24 (21)	44 (38)	86
Transition	71 (5)	14 (1)	14 (1)	7
Ecommerce	100 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2
% of total n (total n)	48 (159)	22 (73)	30 (99)	331

In nine out of 10 cases, the largest group of respondents comprised owners/directors. The exception was the workshop devoted to Social Media and Social Media Monitoring, where employees constituted the largest group. Overall, nearly half (48%) of the respondents were owners/directors, 30% were employees and 22% were managers.

Size of business

The sizes of the businesses associated with the workshop respondents are shown in Table 3.

The dominant group of respondents was from micro businesses i.e. 1-9 employees (7 out of 10 workshops). In two cases, the percentage of respondents from businesses with no employees or micro businesses was identical. In one case (n=2), both the respondents were from businesses with no employees.

Of the 322 respondents, 50% were associated with micro businesses, 24% were from small businesses i.e. 10-49 employees and 16% were from businesses with no employees. A small minority were from medium businesses i.e. 50-250 employees (7%) or large businesses i.e. 250+ employees (3%).

Table 3: Sizes of attendees' businesses

Topic	Zero employees % (n)	1-9 employees (micro) % (n)	10-49 employees (small) % (n)	50-250 employees (medium) % (n)	250+ employees (large) % (n)	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	17 (9)	46 (24)	27 (14)	8 (4)	2 (1)	52
Web-fuelled Business	32 (7)	41 (9)	18 (4)	9 (2)	0 (0)	22
Using Sales/Influence to grow your business	7 (1)	57 (8)	14 (2)	7 (1)	14 (2)	14
Recruitment and Team Management	43 (3)	43 (3)	0 (0)	14 (1)	0 (0)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	12 (9)	60 (47)	19 (15)	9 (7)	0 (0)	78
Search Engine Optimisation	12 (5)	56 (24)	28 (12)	5 (2)	0 (0)	43
Finance for Growth	6 (1)	69 (11)	25 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	16
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	11 (9)	44 (36)	35 (28)	6 (5)	4 (3)	81
Transition	43 (3)	43 (3)	0 (0)	14 (1)	0 (0)	7
Ecommerce	100 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2
% of total n (total n)	16 (51)	50 (160)	24 (77)	7 (21)	3 (6)	322

How long business established

The length of time the businesses have been established is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Length of time business established

Topic	< 1 year % (n)	1-3 years % (n)	4-6 years % (n)	7-9 years % (n)	10 or more years % (n)	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	12 (6)	38 (19)	4 (2)	18 (9)	28 (14)	50
Web-fuelled Business	36 (8)	23 (5)	9 (2)	9 (2)	23 (5)	22
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	7 (1)	36 (5)	7 (1)	0 (0)	50 (7)	14
Recruitment and Team Management	0 (0)	43 (3)	29 (2)	0 (0)	29 (2)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	14 (11)	35 (27)	9 (7)	13 (10)	29 (23)	78
Search Engine Optimisation	16 (7)	30 (13)	5 (2)	16 (7)	30 (13)	43
Finance for Growth	6 (1)	38 (6)	38 (6)	19 (3)	0 (0)	16
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	14 (11)	26 (21)	17 (14)	6 (5)	37 (30)	81
Transition	43 (3)	28 (2)	14 (1)	0 (0)	14 (1)	7
Ecommerce	0 (0)	100 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2
% of total n (n)	15 (48)	32 (103)	12 (37)	11 (36)	30 (95)	320

The length of time businesses had been established varied from less than one year to 10 or more years. Of the 320 respondents, 32% were associated with businesses established for between one and three years and 30% were associated with businesses which had been established for 10 or more years.

Annual turnover

The reported annual turnover of the businesses is shown in Table 5. The individual workshop data are presented as numbers rather than as percentages, as the cell entries are small. Percentages are presented for the total sample.

Table 5 Turnover of respondents' businesses

Topic	<£67,000 n	£67,000- £99,999 n	£100,000- £249,999 n	£250,000- £499,999 n	£500,000- £999,999 n	£1m- £1.499m n	£1.5m- £2.8m n	£2.81m- £4.99m n	£5m- £9.99m n	£10m- £14.99m n	£15m- £24.99m n	£25mor more n	N info/ Total n	N D/K Refuse N/A
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Qs	14	2	6	8	4	2	1	2	1	0	1	3	44/48	4
Web-fuelled Business	9	2	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	17/22	5
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	5	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	12/14	2
Recruitment and Team Management	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4/6	2
Digital Marketing and Strategy	19	3	11	10	6	6	5	2	1	2	0	0	65/76	11
SEO	14	3	4	1	2	3	2	3	1	0	0	0	33/43	10
Finance for Growth	7	2	3	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	17/18	1
Social Media	17	2	5	3	8	2	8	6	1	0	0	2	54/83	29
Transition	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6/8	2
Ecommerce n	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2/2	0
% Total n	94	14	30	25	26	13	18	18	4	3	1	8	254/ 320	66
	29	4	9	8	8	4	6	6	1	1	0	3	79/ 100	21

Overall, 79% of respondents were willing or able to provide information about turnover. Conversely, 21% were unwilling or unable to provide such information. The workshop with the greatest amount of missing data was Social Media where 35% of respondents failed to provide information about turnover. This is understandable in that 44% of respondents at this workshop were employees and so were unlikely to have access to turnover information.

The dominant group of respondents who knew or were willing to divulge information about turnover comprised those associated with businesses having a turnover of less than £67,000 per annum (29% of total respondents). However, the reported turnover ranged up to the maximum category of £25m or more (3% of total respondents).

Respondents from companies with an annual turnover of £25m or more attended the Recruitment and Team Management, Sales, 10 Questions and Social Media Workshops.

Satisfaction with/views about workshops

Ratings of overall satisfaction and the extent to which the event met expectations

Mean ratings of overall satisfaction and the extent to which the event met expectations are shown in Table 6. [Scales 1-5.]

Table 6: Mean ratings of (i) satisfaction with the workshop and (ii) extent to which the event met expectations

Topic	Overall satisfaction rating	Rating of extent to which event met expectations	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	4.9	4.2	54
Web-fuelled Business	4.4	4.3	22
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	4.5	3.6	15
Recruitment and Team Management	4.9	3.9	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	4.6	4.2	80
Search Engine Optimisation	4.8	4.1	45
Finance for Growth	5.0	4.5	18
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	4.7	4.0	87
Transition	4.8	4.5	8
Ecommerce	5.0	4.0	2
Total n			338

Respondents were generally very satisfied with the workshops with mean satisfaction ratings ranging from the maximum value of 5.0 to 4.4. Satisfaction was highest for Finance for Growth (5.0) and Ecommerce (5.0), 10 Essential Questions (4.9) and Recruitment/Team Management (4.9). Satisfaction ratings were lowest for Web-fuelled Business (4.4) and Sales (4.5). However, there was a statistically significant variation in satisfaction across the workshops ($p < 0.5$).

In general, respondents felt that the workshops had exceeded their expectations, with mean ratings ranging from 4.5 to 3.6. The workshops receiving the highest ratings were Finance for Growth (4.5) and Transition (4.5). The workshop receiving the lowest rating was Sales (3.6). However, there was no statistically significant variation.

Usefulness of workshop sections and satisfaction with aspects of the workshops

The usefulness items cannot be compared directly as their content necessarily reflects the content of the different workshops and so differs across the ten events. Similarly, the satisfaction ratings cannot be compared directly as their content reflects the focus of the different workshops and so differs across the ten workshops.

Ratings of the usefulness of the constituent sections and of satisfaction with the various aspects of the workshops are therefore compared using mean ratings across the disparate scale items. The range of responses is also presented for each workshop.

The mean usefulness ratings for the different workshop sections [scale 1-4] and the mean satisfaction ratings with different aspects of the workshop [scale 1-5] are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 (i) the mean usefulness ratings for the different workshop sections and (ii) the mean satisfaction ratings for the different aspects of the workshop

Topic	(i) Usefulness Mean (range)	(ii) Satisfaction Mean (range)	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	3.62 (3.8-3.6)	4.44 (4.6-4.1)	52/54
Web-fuelled Business	3.62 (3.9-3.3)	4.56 (4.8-4.2)	21
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	3.40 (3.6-3.1)	4.22 (4.3-4.1)	15
Recruitment and Team Management	3.55 (3.8-3.5)	4.54 (4.7-4.3)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	3.42 (3.7-3.4)	4.39 (4.5-4.1)	77/79
Search Engine Optimisation	3.68 (3.9-3.6)	4.48 (4.7-4.3)	45
Finance for Growth	3.58 (3.9-3.4)	4.48 (4.8-4.2)	18
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	3.43 (3.6-3.4)	4.38 (4.6-4.1)	85/86
Transition	3.69 (3.9-3.5)	4.36 (4.5-4.0)	8
Ecommerce	3.33 (4.0-2.5)	4.40 (5.0-4.0)	2
			330/335

All of the ten workshops were seen as useful, with the mean ratings of the constituent sections ranging from 3.69 to 3.33. However, there was a statistical difference in the mean usefulness ratings across the ten workshops ($p < .05$). The workshops which were rated as most useful were Transition (3.69) and Search Engine Optimisation (3.68). The workshops receiving the lowest usefulness ratings were Ecommerce (3.33; $n=2$), Sales (3.40), Digital Marketing (3.42) and Social Media (3.43).

Respondents were satisfied with all of the ten workshops, with mean satisfaction ratings of the various aspects of the workshops ranging from 4.56 to 4.22. The workshops which received the highest mean satisfaction ratings were Web-fuelled Business (4.56) and Recruitment and Team Management (4.54). The Sales workshop received the lowest mean satisfaction rating (4.22). However, there were no statistically significant differences in the mean satisfaction ratings across the workshops.

Speakers

Mean ratings of the workshop speakers are shown in Table 8. [Scale 1-4.]

Table 8: Mean ratings of speakers

Topic			N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	Doug Richard 4.0	Paul Sturrock 4.0	54
Web-fuelled Business	Daniel Rowles 3.9	Andrew Davis 3.7	21
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	Ben Fletcher 4.0	N/A	15
Recruitment and Team Management	David Roberts 4.0	N/A	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	Doug Richard 3.8	N/A	78
Search Engine Optimisation	Doug Richard 3.9	N/A	45
Finance for Growth	Doug Richard 4.0	N/A	18
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	Andrew Davis 3.9	N/A	86
Transition	Roberto Fraquelli 3.8	N/A	8
Ecommerce	James Dening 4.0	N/A	2
Total n			334

All of the speakers received high ratings ranging from 4.0 to 3.7 [scale 1-4].

Workshop delivery, content, format and length

Mean ratings of the workshop delivery, content, format and length are shown in Table 9. [Scale 1-4.]

Table 9: Mean ratings of the workshop delivery, content, format and length

Topic	Delivery	Content	Format	Length	Mean composite rating	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.78	54
Web-fuelled Business	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.76	21
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.33	15
Recruitment and Team Management	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.71	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.64	78
Search Engine Optimisation	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.75	45
Finance for Growth	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.92	18
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.69	86
Transition	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.66	8
Ecommerce	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.50	2
Total n						334

The ratings of workshop delivery ranged from 4.0 for 10 Questions and Finance for Growth to 3.5 for Ecommerce (n=2) and 3.6 for Sales. The ratings of workshop content ranged from 3.9 for Finance for Growth to 3.3 for Sales. The ratings of workshop format ranged from 3.8 for Web-fuelled Business and Finance for Growth to 3.1 for Sales. The ratings of workshop length ranged from 3.9 for Finance for Growth to 3.3 for Sales.

Comparison of the mean composite ratings revealed statistically significant differences across the workshops ($p < .05$). In particular, the Finance for Growth workshop, which received the highest mean rating (3.92) was rated significantly higher than the Sales workshop (3.33), than the Digital Marketing workshop (3.64) and the Social Media workshop (3.50).

Recurrent themes in the responses to the open-ended questions

Analysis of the responses revealed some recurrent themes. Respondents liked and/or wanted more hands-on exercises/practical examples and more opportunity for interaction. They also suggested tailoring the workshops for different levels of knowledge/expertise and

providing handouts in advance and/or at the workshops. Examples of these themes are provided in Table 10.

Table 10: Examples of recurrent themes in responses to open-ended questions

Hands-on exercises/ practical examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like the combination of presentation, case study and discussion • Great to hear about other start-ups, common challenges etc. • Great opportunity to hear real life experiences from the presenter • More live examples - connecting online and actually sharing examples • More concrete examples of each process walking through the actions • The opportunity to work a plan - to put theory into practice • More case studies and real examples • Greater emphasis on implementation
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoyed the focus on specific business problems of the participants • The one-to-one example conversations were excellent • I enjoyed the focus on specific business problems of the participants • Best workshop I've ever attended, very informative and lively discussion • More interactive small group work. I would have liked to have heard more from the people on my table • More interaction, more examples • More focused teamwork with structured output • More interaction and one-to-one tasks • Possibly introduce "workshop" sessions where groups are asked to discuss with one another their company "best asset" ie. Increase dynamic participation and self analysis = less tutorial
Tailor material for different levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it could be split into 2 classes - 'the basics' are covered well so that took a lot of time. I would have appreciated a bit more of an 'advanced class' analysing what brands do well/badly, more case studies etc. • Can go into a bit more detail on some topics - not all introductory level • Request that detailed questions are covered at the end • More time spent on step by step instructions on how to use analytics
Provision of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like slides in advance • Provide handout of slides so can make notes during presentation

Changes in understanding and attitudes

Again, the items cannot be compared directly as their content necessarily reflects the focus of the different workshops and so differs across the ten events. The changes in understanding and attitudes [scales 1-5] are therefore compared using mean ratings of changes in understanding and attitudes. The range of responses is also presented for each workshop (Table 11).

Table 11: Mean ratings of changes in (i) understanding and (ii) attitudes

Topic	(i) understanding mean (range)	N	(ii) attitudes	N
Technology and Growth: The 10 Essential Questions	4.49 (4.7-4.4)	53	4.47 (4.7-4.0)	52
Web-fuelled Business	4.52 (5.0-4.2)	22	4.54 (5.0-4.0)	21
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	4.21 (4.6-3.8)	15	4.12 (4.6-3.6)	15
Recruitment and Team Management	4.63 (4.9-4.3)	7	4.59 (4.9-4.0)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	4.40 (4.6-4.2)	78	4.33 (4.7-3.9)	75
Search Engine Optimisation	4.45 (4.8-3.8)	45	4.50 (4.7-4.2)	32
Finance for Growth	4.53 (4.8-4.0)	17	4.40 (4.9-3.8)	17
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	4.29 (4.5-4.0)	82	4.32 (4.6-4.0)	81
Transition	4.44 (5.0-4.5)	8	4.76 (5.0-4.5)	8
Ecommerce	4.25 (4.5-4.0)	2	4.00 (5.0-3.5)	2
Total		329		310

Levels of understanding increased for all of the ten workshops. The workshops which generated the greatest increase in understanding were Recruitment and Team Management (4.63), Finance for Growth (4.53) and Web-fuelled Business (4.52). The workshops yielding

the smallest change in understanding were Sales (4.21), Social Media (4.29) and Ecommerce (4.25 – n=2). However, there were no statistically significant differences in the mean ratings of change in understanding across the ten workshops.

Attitudes changed in a positive direction for all of the ten workshops. The greatest changes were associated with the Transition (4.76), Recruitment and Team Management (4.59) and Web-fuelled Business (4.54) workshops. The smallest improvements were associated with the Sales (4.12) and Ecommerce (4.00 – n=2) workshops. There were statistically significant differences in the degree to which attitudes changed across the workshops (p<.05). In particular, the changes in attitude associated with both the Transition (4.76) and Web-fuelled business(4.54) workshops were significantly greater than the change associated with the Sales workshop (4.12). The change generated by the Transition workshop was also significantly greater than the changes associated with the Digital Marketing (4.33), Social Media (4.32) and 10 Questions (4.47) workshops.

Intentions to act

Again, the items cannot be compared directly as their content necessarily reflects the focus of the different Impact Days and so differs across the ten events. The likelihood ratings [scale 1-4] of respondents taking action as a result of attending the workshop are therefore compared in terms of the mean ratings (Table 12). The range of responses is also presented for each workshop.

Table 12: Mean likelihood ratings of taking action

Topic	Likelihood Mean (range)	N
Technology and Growth:		
The 10 Essential Questions	3.36 (3.7-2.7)	52
Web-fuelled Business	3.39 (4.0-2.0)	21
Using Sales and Influence to grow your business	3.30 (3.8-2.6)	14
Recruitment and Team Management	3.58 (4.0-3.0)	7
Digital Marketing and Strategy	3.39 (3.7-3.0)	76
Search Engine Optimisation	3.47 (3.8-3.1)	32
Finance for Growth	3.20 (3.8-2.9)	17
Social Media and Social Media Monitoring	3.34 (3.7-2.9)	82
Transition	3.55 (4.0-3.2)	8
Ecommerce	3.59 (5.0-3.0)	2
Total		311

Those respondents who were most likely to take action as a result of attending a workshop were those who had attended the Ecommerce (3.59 – n=2), Recruitment and Team Management (3.58) and Transition (3.55) workshops. Those who were least likely to take action had attended the Finance for Growth (3.20). However, there were no statistically significant differences in the mean likelihood of taking action across the workshops.

Certain questions were common across some of the workshops. These were drawn from the Technology Strategy Board Common Measures for Evaluation across Programmes and included:

- Attend a further entrepreneurial skills event
- Enter new markets or increase market share
- Increase export sales (or start exporting)
- Increase turnover
- Increase profits

- Increase productivity
- Reduce costs of production/running the business
- Improve delivery times
- Improve commercialisation skills
- Improve technical knowledge/understanding
- Enhance networks to support efforts to grow my business.

Individual workshops

Usefulness of workshop sections: highs and lows

The workshops differed in both the number of constituent sections and their content.

Table 13 shows those sections which received the highest and lowest usefulness ratings for each workshop. This table provides a snapshot of the highs and lows in the perceived usefulness of the workshop sections.

Table 13: Workshop sections with highest and lowest ratings

Workshop	Highest rating	Lowest ratings	No. of sections
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	Customer & Market Segment The Proposition Email marketing	The Asset The Competency Online advertising	10
Web-fuelled Business	Search engine marketing Communication and key messages Understanding psychology of persuasion and influence	Mobile marketing	8
Sales		Sales processes Sales strategy UK employment Law	4
Recruitment/Team Management	The 7 steps to successful recruitment Creating/being a successful team	Experiential learning (team exercise)	12
Digital Marketing and Strategy	Objectives and online metrics Setting objectives	The buying process B2B vs. B2C	12
Search Engine Optimisation	Link building Search engine marketing New perspectives on raising/investing money	PPC Digital in perspective Cashflow	6
Finance for Growth	Equity: Crowdfunding Monitoring relevant conversations on line	Startup loans Best practice for networking online	6
Social Media/Monitoring	Using digital conversations to build a social media strategy	Ways to increase your conversion rate Insights: What is going on out there?	8
Transition	Evangelise: How do we tell our story? Expression: How do we harvest the right ideas?	Strategy: Who do we want to be?	4
Ecommerce	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	6

Satisfaction with aspects of the workshops: highs and lows

Again, the workshops differed in both the number of aspects and their content – the only common aspect was the item: General information provision.

Table 14 shows those aspects of the workshops which received the highest and lowest ratings. This table provides a snapshot of the highs and lows in the satisfaction ratings of the various aspects of the workshops.

General information provision was among the two items receiving the highest satisfaction ratings for two workshops: Digital Marketing and Strategy and Social Media and Monitoring. It was among the two items receiving the lowest satisfaction rating for one workshop: Sales.

Table 14: Workshop aspects with the highest and lowest satisfaction ratings

Workshop	Highest rating	Lowest ratings	No. of aspects
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	Info' about how to communicate your business proposition General Information provision	Info' on how to identify trends impacting on your industry Info' on how to identify/assess your competition	14
Web-fuelled Business	Keyword research in SEO Fundamental of web analytics	Creative options for online advertising Technology options in mobile marketing	20
Sales	Creating effective sales messages What factors influence buying decisions	General information provision Relation between sales and marketing	6
Recruitment/Team Management	How to manage workplace stress and well-being Team working exercise	How to conduct staff appraisals How to create/develop teams	9
Digital Marketing and Strategy	Information about what makes a digital strategy General information provision	Information about different frameworks for planning Information about how people buy in different markets	11
Search Engine Optimisation	Keyword research Link building	Creating ad copy Testing	14
Finance for Growth	The Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) Information about new funding options for my business	How to prepare my business for Angel investment What Angel investors look for in an investment opportunity	9
Social Media/Monitoring	General information provision Information about using Youtube	Information about using LinkedIn Information about using other social media platforms	9
Transition	How to use scenarios to evaluate ideas with development potential How to map our ideas with development potential	Information about skills/techniques to help identify opportunities for innovation Information about human-centered design	10
Ecommerce	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	15

Changes in understanding: highs and lows

The workshops differed in both the number of items relating to changes in understanding and their content.

Table 15 shows those items which received the highest and lowest ratings of change in understanding for each workshop. This table provides a snapshot of the highs and lows in the changes in understanding associated with each workshop.

How to recognize/mitigate knowledge gaps was one of the two items receiving the highest rating for change in understanding for the Digital Marketing and Strategy workshop. It was also one of the two items receiving the lowest change rating for two workshops: Web-fuelled Business and Social Media/Monitoring.

How to recognize/respond to relevant business risks was one of the two items receiving the lowest change rating for four workshops: Sales, Digital Marketing and Strategy, Finance for Growth and Social/Media/Monitoring.

Table 15: Highest and lowest ratings of change in understanding

Workshop	Highest rating	Lowest ratings	No. of items
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	Importance of assessing a product/service against what competitors offer How to define a product/service that sells itself by delivering what customers value	How to develop effective solutions to problems I might encounter in starting/building a business How to build a successful 21 st century business	10
Web-fuelled Business	Key elements of email marketing Importance of the user journey in planning/implementing an effective digital marketing campaign	How to recognize/mitigate gaps in my knowledge of digital marketing principles/processes Key elements of online advertising	14
Sales	How to negotiate/close a sale Importance of having a compelling sales message	<i>How to recognise/respond to business risks arising from problems with sales</i> How to ensure sales and marketing strategies complement each other	13
Recruitment/Team Management	Importance of my having good communication skills How to set/use goals in staff development	Legal issues relating to recruitment/employment How to retain staff	13
Digital Marketing and Strategy	Principles underlying a digital marketing strategy How to recognize/mitigate gaps in my knowledge of digital marketing principles/processes	<i>How to recognise/respond to business risks arising from problems with digital marketing</i> How to implement an effective digital marketing strategy for my business	8
Search Engine Optimisation	How to use SEO to promote my business The potential value of SEO	How to manage marketing budgets How to manage search agencies/suppliers	17
Finance for Growth	Why entrepreneurs should use SEIS eligibility as a strong negotiation tool when dealing with investors Alternatives to borrowing from the bank	How to avoid failure when using new sources of funding for my business <i>How to recognise/respond to business risks arising from funding problems</i>	15
Social Media/Monitoring	How to use social media to my advantage The importance of monitoring online conversations/digital chatter	<i>How to recognise/respond to business risks arising from problems with using social media</i> How to recognize/mitigate gaps in my knowledge of social media principles/processes	13
Transition	Value of scenarios in assessing future product/service offerings How to develop a stronger brand equity for my business	The importance of considering consumer trends in product innovation How rapid prototyping can contribute to evaluating product/service offerings	9
Ecommerce	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	10

Changes in attitudes: highs and lows

The workshops differed in both the number of items relating to changes in attitude and their content.

Table 16 shows those items which received the highest and lowest ratings of change in attitude for each workshop. This table provides a snapshot of the highs and lows in the changes in attitude associated with each workshop.

The attitude statements with the highest ratings indicate that the workshops have increased respondents' appreciation of the relevance of the workshop material. Also, the statement, I know where to find relevant online tools/other resources was one of the two items with the highest change ratings for two workshops: Web-fuelled Business and Search Engine Optimisation.

There was considerable commonality in the items which received the lowest ratings. The statement: I have developed supportive networks was one of the two lowest rated items for eight workshops. The statement: I am confident I would be able to deal with problems was one of the two lowest rated items for six workshops

Table 16: Highest and lowest ratings of change in attitude

Workshop	Highest rating	Lowest ratings	No. of items
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	I understand how The 10 Essential Questions provide the analytic framework necessary to build a successful business I appreciate some of the potential risks/barriers to building a successful business	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to start/grow a business <i>I am confident I would be able to deal with the problems I might encounter in starting/growing a business</i>	6
Web-fuelled Business	<i>I know where to find online tools/other resources to help me plan/implement a digital marketing strategy</i> I appreciate why my business needs a digital marketing strategy	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to use a digital marketing strategy to grow my business <i>I am confident I would be able to deal with the problems I might encounter in planning/implementing an effective digital marketing strategy</i>	10
Sales	I recognize a compelling message is crucial to an effective sales strategy I appreciate the relevance of sales/influence principles when talking to clients	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to use sales/influence principles to grow my business I appreciate the relevance of sales /influence principles when recruiting staff	12
Recruitment/Team Management	I appreciate the importance of staff well-being to growing my business I understand the importance of developing/supporting team working in building my business	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to improve recruitment/team management in my business I now have a working knowledge of the recruitment process	8
Digital Marketing and Strategy	I appreciate why my business needs a digital marketing strategy <u>I understand how a digital marketing strategy can help me to build a 21st Century business</u>	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to use a digital marketing strategy to grow my business <i>I am confident I would be able to deal with problems I might encounter in planning/implementing an effective digital marketing strategy</i>	9
Search Engine Optimisation	<i>I know where to find online tools/other resources to help me develop a search marketing plan</i> I am confident I can develop an effective search marketing plan	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to use a search marketing plan to grow my business <i>I am confident I would be able to deal with problems I might encounter in developing an effective search marketing plan</i>	9
Finance for Growth	I am aware of more/new funding options for my business I appreciate the importance of SEIS	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to secure new sources of funding for my business I am confident I can articulate my financial needs to potential investors	12
Social Media/Monitoring	I appreciate why my business needs to have a social media strategy <u>I understand how a social media strategy can help me to build a 21st Century business</u>	I have developed networks that would support my efforts to use social media to grow my business <i>I am confident I would be able to deal with problems I might encounter in planning/implementing an effective social media strategy</i>	10
Transition	I appreciate the importance of understanding consumer behaviour in product innovation I appreciate how scenarios can help me to explore ideas	<i>I am confident I would be able to deal with problems I might encounter in developing innovative ideas</i> I am confident I have the skills/ techniques needed to develop commercial ideas for my business	7
Ecommerce	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	

Intention to act: highs and lows

The workshops differed in both the number of items relating to the likelihood of taking action as a result of attending the workshop and their content.

Table 17 shows those items which received the highest and lowest likelihood ratings for each workshop. This table provides a snapshot of the highs and lows in the likelihood of taking action associated with each workshop.

Table 17: Highest and lowest ratings of the likelihood of taking action

Workshop	Highest rating	Lowest ratings	No. of items
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	Strengthen collaborative activity with other businesses Attend a further entrepreneurial skills event	Improve delivery times <i>Increase export sales (or start exporting)</i>	18
Web-fuelled Business	Use email in my digital marketing strategy Use PPC in my digital marketing strategy	Use online advertising in my digital marketing strategy <i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i>	21
Sales	Improve the way I pitch for a sale Improve the way I close a sale	<i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i> <u>Improve delivery times</u>	19
Recruitment/Team Management	Increase the amount of team working in my business Improve the way in which I interview job applicants	<i>Increase export sales (or start exporting)</i> <i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i>	20
Digital Marketing and Strategy	Ensure the digital marketing strategy has measurable objectives Attend a further entrepreneurial skills event	<i>Increase export sales (or start exporting)</i> <i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i>	18
Search Engine Optimisation	Improve how my business manages its search marketing activity Improve my business' existing search marketing plan	<u>Improve delivery times</u> <i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i>	21
Finance for Growth	Explore new funding options for my business Attend a further entrepreneurial skills event	Increase productivity Improve technical knowledge/ understanding	12
Social Media/Monitoring	Improve my business' existing social media strategy Introduce a social media strategy in my business	<u>Improve delivery times</u> <i>Reduce cost of production/ running the business</i>	18
Transition	Evaluate innovative ideas using scenarios Become more entrepreneurial in the way I approach my business	<u>Improve delivery times</u> <i>Increase export sales (or start exporting)</i>	12
Ecommerce	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	<i>Not appropriate to calculate – n=2</i>	

The actions with the highest likelihood ratings indicate that the workshops have increased respondents' intentions of taking action in core areas of the workshops they attended. Also, Attending a further entrepreneurial skills event was one of the two items with the highest likelihood ratings for three workshops: 10 Essential Questions, Digital Marketing Strategy and Finance for Growth.

There was some commonality in the items which received the lowest likelihood ratings. The action: Reduce cost of production/running the business was one of the two items receiving the lowest likelihood rating for six workshops. The actions: Increase exporting sales (or start exporting) and Improve delivery times were each one of the two items receiving the lowest likelihood rating for four workshops. This is likely to be because the workshops did not focus on these issues; these actions were drawn from the Technology Strategy Board common framework for evaluation.

Respondents' comments on individual workshops

Table 18 provides examples of respondents' suggested changes and their positive and negative comments.

Table 18: Suggested changes and positive and negative comments

Workshop	Suggested changes	Positive comments	Negative comments
Technology & Growth: 10 Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More case studies/real examples • More interaction • Slide pack in advance so can make notes during presentations • Include something on funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyed focus on specific business problems of participants • Good balance of presentation, discussion and opportunity for networking • One of best workshops attended so far through the TSB 	N/A
Web-fuelled Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further event in 4 weeks so chance to apply knowledge and learn from results • More detail/more advanced material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So much content, would have happily had a third day • Well-run, focused event • Genuinely the best workshop I ever attended 	N/A
Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better slides/copy to write on during presentations • Reduce text/information on spreadsheet – messages lost • More time on practical examples • Content could be extended and include group discussions accompanied by exercises specific to topic • Location with better access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter knowledgeable and personable • Lunch/refreshments good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some topics glossed over • Acoustics not good • Location poor
Recruitment/Team Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on disputes/tribunals • More detail on recruitment – separate recruitment and team building/ management into two sessions • More detail/depth • Slightly shorter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent presenter- refreshing delivery • Liked interspersing of video material • Really good – very interactive and enjoyable 	N/A
Digital Marketing and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interactive small group work. • More interaction/examples. • Include one hour practical exercise • Include opportunity to work on a plan – out theory into practice • Have 'tabled' seating rather than theatre style • Offer multiple dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery excellent, very engaging speaker with fantastic practical examples on how to implement strategy and action results • Great opportunity to hear real life experiences from presenter • Very good, held interest, helped to inspire • Best workshop I've ever attended – very informative, lively discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original agenda did not match workshop content. If I had not booked my travel, probably would not have attended as it partly replicated SEO workshop attended previously.
Search Engine Optimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More hands on exercises – more live examples • Provide video to consult after workshop • Focus more on PPC tactics • Include in depth look at Google analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenter very open, engaging and clear in his delivery • Time went very quickly, kept interest levels high, lot of useful information to digest • Very informative/entertaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acoustics bad • Acoustics awful at Emmanuel centre • Speaker arrived late and left early – I made the effort to be here, why not him?
Finance for Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide handout of slides on which to write notes • More advice on pitching to Angel investors • More focus on specific topics e.g. VC and preparation for Angel investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very useful information on equity crowd sourcing • Content great, direct style refreshing and overall very good • Superb 	N/A

Social Media/Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split into two classes – basics and more advanced • Include possibility of logging into own sites to obtain one-to-one support/ advice • More interaction • More guidance/practical suggestions • Make it more engaging/ entertaining • More detail on crafting campaigns – how to build complete company image • Include session on what to look out for - social media in the future • Provide intermediate class • Include Google analytics • Provide slides in advance • Shorter survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot of useful information – impressive • Speaker fantastic – engaging, enthusiastic and very knowledgeable • Incredibly impressed – confident/ easy to listen to delivery, relevant/interesting content • Good content – lot of information 	N/A
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity for each team to work on single case as a group • More guidance on specific tasks – extra facilitator? • Provide supporting information to take away/ follow up from the workshop# 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great concept – really valuable and complements technical support provided by TSB • Some really useful tools explained – really enjoyed hands on approach, even though it was challenging • Encouraged me to seek design consultant before developing a product 	N/A
Ecommerce	Shorter survey	N/A	N/A

The comments in Table 18 reinforce the themes identified above but they also highlight issues with particular workshops e.g. the poor acoustics for both the Sales and Search Engine Optimisation workshops.

Summary

Sample

- The overall response rate of 83% was respectable. However, the sample sizes for the ten workshops ranged from 88 to two and were less than 20 in five cases. This means that some of the findings need to be treated with considerable caution.
- The sample was dominated by owners/directors associated with micro businesses with a turnover of less than £67,000 per annum.

Satisfaction/views about the workshops

- Respondents were generally very satisfied with the workshops and felt they had exceeded their expectations.
- All of the workshops were seen as useful but there was a statistical difference in the mean usefulness ratings with Transition and Search Engine Optimisation being seen as most useful and Ecommerce (n=2), Sales, Digital Marketing and Social Media being seen as least useful.
- Respondents were satisfied with all of the workshops and there was no statistical difference across the ten workshops.
- All of the speakers received high ratings.
- All of the workshops received high ratings for delivery, content, format and length. However, comparison of a composite rating revealed significant differences across the

workshops, with Finance for Growth being rated significantly higher than the Sales, Digital Marketing and Social Media workshops.

- Respondents indicated that they liked and/or wanted more hands-on exercises/practical examples and more opportunity for interaction. They also suggested tailoring the workshops for different levels of knowledge/expertise and providing material in advance/at the workshop.
- Levels of understanding increased for all ten workshops and there were no statistically significant differences across the workshops.
- Attitudes changed in a positive direction for all ten workshops but there were statistically significant differences across the workshops. In particular, the changes in attitude associated with both the Transition and Web-fuelled Business workshops were significantly greater than the change associated with the Sales workshop. Also, the change generated by the Transition workshop was significantly greater than the changes associated with the Digital Marketing, Social Media and 10 Questions workshops.
- The respondents at all the workshops reported that they were likely to take action as a result of their workshop attendance and there were no statistically significant differences across the workshops.

Individual workshops

- Those sections seen as most/least useful were workshop specific.
- Those aspects which received the highest/lowest satisfaction ratings were workshop specific.
- There was some commonality in those items which received the lowest ratings of changes in understanding. How to recognise/respond to business risks was among the two lowest rated items for four workshops. How to recognise/mitigate knowledge gaps was among the two items receiving the lowest rating from two workshops. However, How to recognise/mitigate knowledge gaps was also one of the highest rated items for one workshop.
- The attitude statements with the highest ratings indicate that the workshops have increased respondents' appreciation of the relevance of the workshop material. Also, the statement, I know where to find relevant online tools/other resources was one of the two items with the highest change ratings for two workshops: Web-fuelled Business and Search Engine Optimisation.
- There was considerable commonality in the items which received the lowest ratings of change in attitude. The statement: I have developed supportive networks was one of the two lowest rated items for eight workshops. The statement: I am confident I would be able to deal with problems was one of the two lowest rated items for six workshops.
- The actions associated with the highest likelihood ratings indicate that the workshops have increased respondents' intentions of taking action in core areas of the workshops they attended. Also, Attending a further entrepreneurial skills event was one of the two items with the highest likelihood ratings for three workshops: 10 Essential Questions, Digital Marketing Strategy and Finance for Growth.
- There was some commonality in the items which received the lowest likelihood ratings. The action: Reduce cost of production/running the business was one of the two items receiving the lowest likelihood rating for six workshops. The actions: Increase exporting sales (or start exporting) and Improve delivery times were each one of the two items receiving the lowest likelihood rating for four workshops. This is likely to be because the workshops did not focus on these issues; these actions were drawn from the Technology Strategy Board common framework for evaluation.
- Comments on individual workshops reinforce the themes identified across all the workshops but they also highlight issues with particular workshops e.g. the poor acoustics for both the Sales and Search Engine Optimisation workshops.

Lessons for the future

This analysis highlights some key lessons for the future:

- Although the workshops are generally very well-received, there is scope for some amendments to the content/format. In particular, there is a need for workshops to provide both more practical, hands-on experience and more opportunity for interaction and one-to-one guidance.
- Also, respondents' comments suggest that consideration should be given to developing workshops aimed at audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise.
- Differences in respondents' views suggest that some workshops may need more changes than others.
- The changes in respondents' understanding, attitudes and intention to act are very encouraging, suggesting that the workshops had an impact not only on how attendees view the workshop topics but also on how they will act in the future. Obviously, this needs to be followed-up in a future post-workshop survey.
- Although the response rate in the evaluation was satisfactory, future surveys should be somewhat shorter to increase the response rate further.

Technology Strategy Board – Entrepreneurial Skills in-depth client interviews

This chapter of the report presents the summary finding of a small number of in-depth interviews with individuals who had attended the Technology Strategy Board workshops to explore how the workshops had been received and to identify what impact, if any, they had had on the attendees' business performance and the ways they ran their businesses. Clearly, the anticipated outcomes from one off workshops are of a different type and order from the outcomes arising from long term participation in the GrowthAccelerator process.

Six interviews were conducted between 28 October and 8 November. Each interview took between 30 and 45 minutes to complete. Questions and areas for enquiry were chosen not just to reflect the outcome of the entrepreneurial skills workshops, but also addressed the broader range of measures that Technology Strategy Board uses to assess the impact of grant funding measures. This approach was taken to provide some baseline feedback and establish whether evidentially robust comparisons could be made across different schemes and interventions. The sample size, whilst small was chosen to reflect the broad range of companies engaging with the Technology Strategy Board.

Attendance at further entrepreneurial events

Only one of our interviewees (I6) had attended another workshop since the Technology Strategy Board workshops - an event on IP organised by Growth Accelerator – and said they had found it expensive and not useful.

Our other five interviewees hadn't attended any further entrepreneurial events, simply for the reason that they hadn't heard of any other relevant events happening.

Increase in markets/market share

One interviewee (I5) said that their small company still needed to raise funding and so could not yet expect a change in markets or market share.

Two interviewees (I2 and I3) said that their company had entered new markets since the workshops. One of them (I2) had created a company which had started manufacturing in China, and was receiving the first orders for their product; I2 added that, having employed Paul Sturrock, who had led the '10 Questions' workshop, as a consultant, the company had changed their market focus from insurance to construction.

I3 described a hugely improved market share for their company thanks to webpage building and online marketing, and said that the teaching provided by the workshops had saved the company a lot of time.

The remaining three interviewees told us that a change in markets was not applicable to them: I1's business is a research company based at a university, while I6's company was not yet selling their product.

Increase in export sales

One interviewee (I5) credited the workshops with helping to increase their export sales, and singled out '10 Questions' for particular praise in helping them to understand targeting more market segments and how to get more out of their export markets.

The five other interviewees (I1, I2, I3, I4, I6) said that increasing or starting exporting did not apply to their companies. Again, I1 gave the reason that their company was a university-based research company, and again I6 answered that they were not yet selling their business's product.

Increase in turnover

I2 and I6 reported no increase in turnover because they were still starting up or were not yet selling their product. However, I2 anticipated that the material from the workshops would have an impact on their business's growth (again singling out Paul Sturrock for particular praise).

I3 credited improved online marketing for an increased turnover in their company.

I5 reported that turnover had increased thanks to a rise in exports, and added that they would expect further increases as the company grew more gained more opportunities to implement further material learned from the workshops.

I4 reported an increase in turnover but did not think it was a result of attended the workshops.

I1 did not consider increase in turnover relevant to their university-based research company.

Increase in profit

None of the interviewees credited the workshops with having increased their profits.

I2, I5 and I6 said that they had seen no increases in profit because of they were in start-up mode, were not selling products, or were not currently making any profit, though I2 anticipated that the workshops would show their impact in the future.

I4 did not credit increased profits to the workshop; I3 attributed increased profits to internal management efforts rather than the workshops.

I1 again did not see increase in profit as relevant to their research-based company.

Improvement in productivity

I5 and I6 both said that their productivity had increased as a result of the workshops. I5, who ran a single person company, said that the workshops had helped them to better understand what they should be doing and how to do it more efficiently. I6 singled out three specific workshops which had aided their productivity: 'Recruitment and Team Management' had made them realise the importance of hiring new staff to both work on the existing product and develop new ones; 'Transition' had made them consider product-customer interface; and 'Finance to Growth' had taught them about crowd-funding.

Four interviewees (I1, I2, I3 and I4) reported no change in productivity. However, I2 credited Paul Sturrock's teaching on the skill set as invaluable in helping them to deliver their business plan. I3 said that their company's productivity had not increased because staff 'cannot do more than they already do, they can only do it smarter', something with which the workshop may have helped.

Reduction in cost of production

I3 said that the costs of production/running the business had reduced but did not think this change could be attributed to their workshop attendance.

I2 reported that, although there had not been any change in cost of production so far, the lessons from Paul Sturrock's workshop on pricing and shipping costs were proving valuable to their business.

I1, I4, I5, I6 said that cost of production did not apply to them. I6 reported that there had been no change in costs of production as they were not yet in production. I1 did not consider reduction in production/running costs to be relevant to their research-based business set in a university.

Improvement in delivery times

I6 said that delivery times had improved as a result of hiring new staff.

I1, I2, I3, I4, I5 said that delivery times did not apply to their businesses. I1 added that this was because the business is a research company based in a university.

Improvement in technical knowledge/understanding

I2, I3, I4, I5 and I6 reported that they had improved their understanding and knowledge of technology. I2 credited Paul Sturrock's concept of the 'Business Canvas' from the '10 Questions' workshop with this improvement. I3 also credited workshop attendance for their website becoming more sophisticated. I4 said that the workshops had confirmed their knowledge and boosted their confidence that they are doing the right thing. I5 singled out the E-commerce workshop in enabling them to learn a lot about selling and marketing online, such as Google analytics. I6 reported that, as a consequence of attending the workshops, they knew more about design and funding and also reported boosted confidence in what they were doing.

I1 did not consider this relevant to their business, a research company based in a university.

Enhancement of contacts/networks

I1 and I2 considered that their contacts and support networks had been enhanced as a result of attending the Technology Strategy Board workshops. I1 reported that the workshops had enabled them to ask better questions when meeting a new company, allowing them to better understand businesses. I2 reported that the events themselves had been useful for networking and had enabled them to meet people with common interests who could be potential business partners.

I4, I5 and I6 said that their contacts and networks had not improved. I4 said that, although they had met new people, there had been no further contact as they were not relevant to their company. I5 said that although the workshops had been a useful forum to meet other people who have businesses, none of the people they had met had proved valuable or relevant to their business.

One interviewee (I3) said that contacts and networks did not apply as their work is confidential; they work with clients such as the Ministry of Defence.

Improvements in digital marketing strategy

I1, I3, I4 and I5 credited the workshops with improving their digital marketing strategy. I1 said that the workshops had made them more aware of the importance of digital marketing and that, as a result, they were putting more effort into developing a digital marketing strategy. I3 reported that the workshops had helped to improve their website and allowed them to reach the right people. I4 said that they were doing well before the workshop but that the workshop had reinforced their efforts. I5 reported that, although the company is not really selling products yet, the 'E-commerce' workshop has allowed them to formulate a plan for reaching their target market.

I2 and I6 reported that the workshops had not yet resulted in any improvement in their digital marketing strategy. I6 said that this was because their strategy worked well already.

Improvement in sales techniques/activity

I2 reported that the 'Sales' workshop had helped their company to improve their sales techniques and activity, and had helped them to put their first quote together.

The rest of the interviewees did not think that sales techniques and activity applied to their businesses. I1's business was a research company based in a university; I3's business was focussed on increasing the credibility of their website in order to get the attention of large organisations. I4, I5 and I6 thought the workshops' timing inappropriate but said that the material will be more relevant in the future.

Improvement in social media strategy

I5 reported that their company had improved their social media strategy and attributed some 50% of the improvement to what they had learnt at the workshops. Their company is using Twitter at the moment to gather pre-sales information, which will be even more relevant at a later stage.

The other five interviewees did not consider this outcome to apply to their businesses. I1 said that such a strategy was not relevant because the business is a research company based in a university. I6 said they did not have a strategy yet as they were not yet selling.

Exploration of new funding options

I2, I5 and I6 said that the workshops had helped them to explore new funding options. I2 said the workshops had encouraged them to properly exploit their opportunities: their business having already received the 'Smart Grant' from Technology Strategy Board, the workshop helped to clarify what they should do next, and actually enabled them to get a second grant which allowed them to prototype their product. I5 said that the workshop had been a good opportunity to discuss different ways of accessing funds and investing and had led them to pursue crowd-funding methods. I6 said their business is now using crowd-funding methods, with good results, and is looking for kick-starter funding.

I1, I3 and I4 had not explored new funding options as a result of attending the workshops. I1 said this was because they already knew about sources of funding; I3 said their company did not currently need to do so but that they might in the future.

Becoming more entrepreneurial

I1 and I6 considered themselves more entrepreneurial in the way they approached their businesses as a result of attending the Technology Strategy Board workshops. I1 said that the workshops had helped them to both gain more knowledge, and to organise their knowledge in a methodical way, and credited the workshops with ‘sharpening’ their entrepreneurial skills. I6 said that the workshops had made them realise another market for their very complex, niche product, and that they had changed their strategy as a result.

I2 said that the workshops had encouraged and supported them in their efforts and next steps but had not made them any more entrepreneurial.

I5 said their business was already sufficiently entrepreneurial.

I3 and I4 did not consider this outcome applicable to their businesses. I3 added that they had not attended the workshops in order to become more entrepreneurial.

Any other changes

(i) Online marketing: I1, I3 and I5 said that the Technology Strategy Board workshops had made them more digitally aware and helped them to recognise the importance of the digital side of things/digital marketing. I1 said that the workshops had made them appreciate the importance of online marketing and increasing the company’s visibility. The workshops had also suggested how to make the company visible, and they have since put a lot of effort into this. I3 said that the workshop had made them more digitally focused, and more sensitive to an opportunity and knowing how to maximise it. I5 said that what they had learnt on digital marketing would become even more relevant as the company grows.

(ii) Development of the business: I2 and I6 reported that the Technology Strategy Board workshop had made a major contribution to the maturity/expansion/development of their business. I2 said they had created a new company and progressed from their initial prototype to selling the product. I6 said the workshops had led to them hiring new people and expanding their business.

(iii) Problem-solving and marketing: I1 reported that the workshops made them realise the importance and value of (a) clarifying what the problem they are trying to solve really is about and (b) identifying a customer group.

Best workshop/most impact

Two workshops were identified as the best workshop with the most impact by three interviewees:

Technology and Growth: 10 Questions

- I1 described this workshop as very informative and useful, and said that it addressed a range of issues, clarified ambiguity and challenged assumptions.
- I2 found the workshop very relevant, the right length and speed, realistic and factual, and good for networking, and particularly useful and relevant for the current stage of their business.
- I5 found the workshop very good at providing information about strategy and a clear understanding of the best way to deliver a product to the market. A founder of their company, I5 said that the workshop had helped them to clarify their thinking about how to market the business better.

The speakers themselves were described as:

- I1: knowledgeable, engaging, and as making things interesting.
- I2: expert, experienced as an entrepreneur, challenging, interactive in a constructive manner.
- I5: really knowing/understanding the business and engaging.
Paul Sturrock's concept of 'The Business Canvas' was singled out for praise as innovative, useful, and efficient in covering the methodologies and structures needed to put together a business plan in a new way. I2 said that it challenged them to see the bigger picture, adding that the workshop's real life examples were very useful.
I1 said that the usefulness of the 10 Questions session they had attended led to them deciding to attend the rest.

Search Engine Optimisation

- I1 said that the workshop helped them to learn a lot of new things.
- I3 found the workshop the most relevant at that time to the needs of their company. They said that the workshop provided a lot of information in one place, and was relevant to their business and their need to find ways of improving their website and its credibility, such as getting good links and reaching the right people.
- I4 thought that the workshop had the edge on other the workshops because the presenter was more relevant in their industry, and was thus able to draw example from real life.

Three other workshops were each identified as the best or having the most impact by one interviewee:

E-commerce

- I5 said that they had learnt new things about selling and marketing online which they planned to use in their company in the future.

Finance to Growth

- I6 said that the workshop helped them to realise that they could keep their product and make it successful, and also credited it with introducing them to methods of funding – this was very relevant to what company doing at the time.

Recruitment and Team Management

- I6 said that this workshop helped them to realise that they needed to increase their capacity by hiring more people.

Least preferred workshop/least impact

Three interviewees (I4, I5 and I6) said that all the workshops they attended were good or enjoyable. The other three interviewees identified one workshop as the least preferred or as having the least impact. These were:

10 Questions

I3 found this workshop too basic for an established company.

I3 had attended hoping for more detailed information about fine-tuning their company's existing strategy but they found the workshop was quite basic and more suited to those planning to launch a new venture. I3 said they would have liked more information in advance to make a judgment about the appropriateness of the workshop's level. I3 also said a one-day rather than two-day course would have better suited their one-man business.

Sales

I2 did not find this workshop relevant to their current stage of business.

I2 found that although the workshop was useful in providing some tricks on sales and pricing, it was very 'textbook' and not grounded in real life situations. I2 said that it would have been useful to have had a more detailed description of the workshop's agenda in advance, as their company product did not yet exist at the time.

Transition

I1 found themselves already familiar with the workshop's content.

Although I1 thought that the workshop was good, she felt she had learned less from it in comparison with the others attended, as she felt that it had not added to her existing knowledge or challenged her in any way.

Overall view of workshops and their impact

The overall view of the workshops and their impact was positive

I1 said that the workshops - the delivery, content and format – were great and provided much to learn from, and found all of them relevant. They added that the workshops had provided them with new perspective to see things in a more entrepreneurial and constructive manner.

I3 said that they had received a very positive impression overall.

I4, I5 and I6 found all the workshops very useful.

I4 praised the workshops' balance of different elements, praising the speaker's real life examples and interaction with the audience and the concision of the slide show presentations.

I5 found the presentations valuable and said that the workshops had provided opportunities to talk about the business.

I4 found both of the workshops they attended useful in confirming that they are doing the right thing in business, rather than teaching them anything new.

I6 said that the workshops were the best they had ever attended and that they had had a high impact upon their work.

Interviewees would like more workshops

Five interviewees (I1, I2, I4, I5 and I6) said that they would love to attend further courses and expressed hope that there will be more.

Three interviewees (I1, I5, I6) have recommended or plan to recommend the workshops to others.

I4 said that they would be interested in more advanced workshops on copyright, offline PR and offline as well as online marketing.

Other comments

I2 and I6 said that it was useful that all the workshops were free (although I6 added that this can lower people's expectations).

I2 found having the workshops filmed useful, as they could go back and retrace the information covered.

I2 and I6 said that the timing of the events could have been better, as some were on the same day, at the same time or were at least very close to each other. I6 had found it difficult to attend workshops scheduled next to each other; I2 thought that the events needed to be spread over a longer period of time, and that the events' organisers needed to avoid double booking.

I3 said that more people could benefit if the material were delivered online, rather than people having to waste time travelling to workshops. They found the online videos helpful and said that they could be further improved to facilitate online learning, such as improving the audio quality so that the audience's questions could be better heard. However, I3 added that they did think it was important to retain the workshops' interactivity element and suggested Google hangouts.

I3 said that the videos being divided into sections allowed them to see the length of each topic, and so helped them to manage their time effectively.

I4 and I6 said that the workshops would have benefited from earlier and more efficient advertising; I4 said that they had only found out about the workshops from a colleague.

I4 and I6 also said that the advertising for the workshops needed to provide more advance information needed. I4 said that more information about the workshops' level would help attendees to judge whether the workshop was suited to them. Similarly, I6 said that better

pre-workshop publicity which emphasised the value and usefulness of workshops would encourage audience attendance, and said that they had only decided to go to more workshops have been to one and found it useful.

Overview of interview findings and their implications

Although small, this sample of interviews confirms the earlier finding that these workshops are very positively received. The interviews also indicate that the workshops had an impact on 15 of 17 domains of business activity and performance:

5 domains: n = 3-5

- Improvement in technical knowledge
- Improvement in digital marketing
- Exploring new funding options
- Increasing digital awareness
- Increasing entrepreneurship.

5 domains: n = 2

- Increased productivity
- Increase in markets/market share
- Increased turnover
- Enhanced contacts/networks
- Maturity/expansion of business.

5 domains: n =1

- Improved social media strategy
- Improved sales techniques/activity
- Exports
- Delivery times
- Further events attendance.

The workshops' impact was impeded by:

- The workshops being wrongly timed or too advanced for companies either in start-up mode or not yet in production.
- The workshops not being not applicable to the individual's company aims – interviewees' companies included a research company based in a university, while another relied on working confidentially with high profile clients.
- The workshops focusing on skills or knowledge which the attendees were already familiar with.

Overall, the workshops were described as 'very relevant', 'the best workshops ever attended' and 'high impact'.

With these results, it is clear that SMEs value the support / training provided and like the workshop format (subject to the improvements in workshop format noted already). Therefore we would like to suggest that further entrepreneurial skills training would significantly benefit participating companies.

Technology Strategy Board – Entrepreneurial Skills client case studies and testimonials

This chapter of the report provides a client case study as well as a number of client testimonials.

Leon Marsh – Inova Design Solutions Ltd

Workshops Attended:

Using Sales & Influence Principles to grow your business faster(March 25, Oxford); Recruitment & Team Management (March 27, Reading); Ecommerce (April 10, London); Technology & Growth: 10 Questions (April 29, London); Digital Marketing & Strategy (May 2, London); Transitions Workshop (May 9, London) and Search Engine Optimisation (May 30, London).

What did you think of the Technology Strategy Board Programme?

I thought it was great for me personally, being a one-man band and sort of having to do everything in the business as an early start up, it was really useful to get a look at each of the different areas or disciplines and improve my knowledge of all the different areas, so it was very helpful for me.

How did you find the content of the events?

Very useful, yeah it was, it covered a wide range of topics within those areas, certainly met my expectations on that level.

How much did the workshops build on your existing knowledge? How much of the content did you know before?

Well it was explained in a very easy format, but I had some background knowledge in a few of the areas, but... more than say 20% content was new.

Which workshop did you find most useful?

That's a good question, I don't think I can really say, 'cause they're so varied. I sort of attended anything from SEO to Team Management, Technology and Growth, which was very helpful to me as well, they were all very helpful and key to a successful business.

Is there a topic that you felt was left out of the Technology Strategy Board Programme this year?

No, not really, I felt it was really comprehensive... anything can be expanded on a certain level, but it's a good sort of introductory level, I think.

Have you implemented any of the things that you learnt?

Yeah, I'd say so... I took loads of notes, so I kind of look through those and make notes on my business plan and what I'm doing, definitely helps.

Certainly, when I look at my website later in the year I will be pulling out the SEO material and social media stuff as well. That will definitely be used.

Do you think your business has improved as a result of attending these events? How?/Why?

A little early to say, but I would imagine in the long run yes, definitely.

What do you think about the idea of delivering a training programme to accompany the Technology Strategy Board Grants?

Excellent, yeah I think it's well known that many startups fail in the first couple of years, so anything that can be done to improve the knowledge of the people running those business is surely going to help make them succeed in the long run.

Would you recommend these events to friends or colleagues?

Yeah, definitely.

Videos

Finance to Growth May 14th, London – <https://vimeo.com/66652095>

Transitions Workshops May 8th, London – <https://vimeo.com/66382838/>

Search Engine Optimisation May 7th, Manchester – <https://vimeo.com/66310889/>

Written Comments

“This was genuinely the best workshop I have ever attended” – Elena Heister, Electrospinning company, Web Fuelled Business, Oxford

“David was an excellent presenter, the delivery was refreshing compared to some employment seminars I have attended” – Plaxica, Recruitment and Team Management, Reading

“Excellent balance of delegates from tech and creative sectors, excellent networking opportunities. Paul was a great speaker who made excellent use of delegates own experience, challenges to exemplify the points. Interesting, useful and entertaining” – Jonathan Halls, Solar Press UK Limited, Technology & Growth London

The seminar was very informative, interactive and so much food for thought. So please keep going and some continuation would be great” – Y. Abe, Biopharm Services, Digital Marketing Strategy & Planning, London

“Great concept – really valuable & compliments tech support already provided by Technology Strategy Board” – Charlie Rea, C-Tech Innovation Ltd, Transition Workshop London

Technology Strategy Board – Entrepreneurial Skills interviews with speakers

This chapter provides a summary of the interviews undertaken with the speakers at the various events and workshops. The interviews were conducted during the period 11 July to 7 August with 7 of the 8 speakers involved with the 12 workshops:

- Andrew Davies (AD)
- Paul Sturrock (PS)
- James Deining (JD)
- David Roberts (DR)
- Roberto Fraquelli (RF)
- Ben Fletcher (BF)
- Doug Richard (Doug).

One speaker, Daniel Rowles, was unavailable for interview.

Two of those interviewed were involved with delivering workshops on more than one topic: Doug Richard (4 topics) and Andrew Davies (two topics).

The key themes are presented in the following sections:

- Preparation for the workshop
- Concerns before the workshop
- Best things about the workshop
- Worst things about the workshop
- Size/mix of groups, accommodation, difference across locations (where applicable)
- Suggested changes to content/format/length
- Being sole/joint speaker
- How speaker felt about provision of hands-on exercises/practical examples. Reaction to request for more
- How speaker felt about opportunity for interaction in workshop. Reaction to request for more
- How speaker felt about level of material in relation to audience. Reaction to request to split material into two sections/classes
- How speaker felt about resources provided to workshop participants. Reaction to request for slides in advance/at the workshop
- Workshop specific issues
- One thing would change in the future
- Overview.

Preparation for the workshop

The majority of speakers were solely responsible for devising the content, format, delivery of their workshops (or workshop sections), though the workshop/section length was normally predetermined. The exceptions were (i) Paul Sturrock (10 Essential Questions) who was not involved in programme development and was merely invited to deliver the workshop and (ii) Doug Richard (Digital Marketing) where the workshop material was prepared by Daniel Rowles.

Concerns before the workshop

The speakers reported five major concerns prior to the workshops:

- Not knowing enough about the participants/their ideas/businesses and learning needs/expectations prior to the workshop (RF, PS, DR)
- Heterogeneity of participants in terms of knowledge/experience and goals/objectives (AD)
- Lack of involvement in how the workshops are framed/promoted (DR)
- Low turnout resulting from limited time between workshop announcement and delivery (BF)
- Time constraints (Doug).

Best things about the workshop

The best things emphasised the importance of dealing with real examples, interaction, discussion and feedback.

- Case studies, including videos (AD)/real world experiences/live examples (JD)
- Very interactive/able to discuss own issues/problems (JD, PS))
- Round table discussions (BF)/participants sharing experiences (DR)/ learning from each other (PS, RF)
- Exercises and quiz (AD)
- Step-by-step frameworks – participants take away to guide future action (AD)
- Initial session on rationality (BF)
- Gaining knowledge about where to go/who to ask for help (DR)
- Knowledge of UK Law and regulation (DR)
- Having a small group – more time to talk/gain feedback (JD)
- Business model canvas – suggesting experimentation rather than a rigid business plan liberating for participants (PS)
- Map showing process as iterative, not linear – provided tools to explore, evaluate, test business concept quickly and efficiently (RF).
- Provided a logical methodology to identify problem business should address (Doug – 10 Qs).

Worst things about the workshop

The worst things about the workshop were more varied involving insufficient time, the disadvantages of having a small group and workshop specific issues. (However, small groups also allowed for more in-depth conversation and tailored advice).

- Not enough time on topic - social media, especially platform-specific social media (AD); how to go about selling (BF)
- Role playing – some people find it uncomfortable/unhelpful (DR)
- Small group – more people – wider range of case studies/examples (JD)
- Small group – exhausting (JD)
- When speakers were not involved in the workshop development, they felt uncomfortable with some of the content eg. Slide You need to be competitive to be successful – speaker uncomfortable as does not endorse this philosophy (PS)
- Scenario development (way of telling a story about product) – did not work well as requires participants to draw and facilitator to help them focus/develop their thinking (RF)
- Some participants' scepticism/reluctance to try something new (RF)
- Material difficult to apply as does not have actionable consequences (Doug – Digital Marketing)
- Some content was not relevant for the audience due to lack of prior knowledge about the audience's needs, background etc (AD) or lack of involvement in the development of the content (PS).

Size/mix of groups, accommodation, difference across locations (where applicable)

There was some concern about the small group sizes and the fact that in some locations the accommodation was too large for the size of the group. In general, there was limited diversity in the audience i.e. participants were mostly white and male.

- Venue seen as important for establishing a friendly atmosphere - some accommodation too large/formal for size of group – Oxford (AD), London (RF)
- Ideal size 20 (JD) or 30-40 (BF, PS)
- Different size groups – tailor workshop content to group size (AD)
- Participants mainly B2B rather than B2C (PS, AD)
- Diversity in some workshops greater in London - mixed ages and to a lesser extent gender and ethnicity (AD, RF)
- Mostly male and white (BF, DR, PS)
- Accommodation/facilities generally good (DR)
- Easy access to the venue i.e. proximity to the station important (DR)
- Skill level medium (AD, JD)
- Mixed level of experience (RF)
- Some participants had business experience but no entrepreneurial experience (BF)
- Participants ambitious/exciting (DR)
- Some participants very rigid/resistant to new ideas (RF)
- Seated lunch gave participants the opportunity to talk to each other during the break (BF)
- Small groups allowed for more one to one interaction and in-depth discussion about their needs (RF, DR).

Suggested changes to format, content, length

Suggested changes were varied but there was some agreement that participants should be screened. There was also some agreement that thought needs to be given to extending the workshops so they run over a longer period and offer progression, as needs and objectives change, and provide the foundation for lifelong learning.

- Important to match venue to size of group (RF)
- Need to know about background of participants to tailor workshop to needs (RF, AD, DR)
- Screen participants so material is at appropriate level (Doug)
- Provide portfolio of courses offering progression (Doug)
- Set comprehensive pre-workshop homework to assess participants' knowledge/test robustness of their business ideas (RF)
- Make clear what workshop is about, what participants will gain from attending and who is it for - manage participants expectations (RF, BF)
- More content e.g. problems with customers, differentiation, dealing with competition, negotiation, critical success factors, critiquing others' businesses (PS); merits of hiring contractors vs. employees (DR)
- Less coverage e.g. the industry (PS)
- If unlimited resources and time, run workshops as half-day interventions, discussing/solving problems, at two-weekly intervals over three-month period or longer (PS)
- Need one/two year programme with specific learning objectives – need to emphasise lifelong learning (DR)
- Make workshops more intensive/longer – assuming budget available (Doug)
- Provide participants with workbooks to take away from workshop (Doug)
- Offer follow up sessions (RF)
- Would frame workshop as about communication/influence rather than sales – aimed at non-sales people (BF)
- Would have separate workshops on sales, tailored to participants/ companies/sectors attending (BF).

Being sole/joint speaker

Many of those who were sole speakers felt very comfortable and enjoyed running the workshop on their own, but some admitted that it can be difficult and/or demanding.

- Fine working on own but disadvantage is that cannot watch the audience or facilitate small group tasks (RF)
- Asked for someone to assist – S4S said no budget (RF)
- Fine being sole speaker, though exhausting dealing with a very small group (JD)
- Fine working on own but participants would benefit from specialist on UK employment law (DR)
- Fine, spoke for four hours but participants engaged/atmosphere energetic (BF)
- If designing sales workshops, would have different speakers on different topics (BF).

How speaker felt about provision of hands-on exercises/practical examples. Reaction to request for more.

Exercises/practical examples are generally seen as very valuable but they take time and so the number included is constrained by the time available. Knowing more about the participants' needs and background prior to the workshop would help choose the more appropriate and relevant examples.

- Sufficient exercised in half-day session – if allocated more time, would be happy to include more (AD)
- Would welcome more time so could include more practical exercises/ individual feedback- takes a long time for people to express the core benefit of their business and articulate their vision (BF)
- Sufficient included (DR, JD, RF)
- Not enough – should include more case studies (PS)
- Would have liked map/worksheet to be enlarged/on wall so participants could discuss and provide/gain feedback (RF)
- Need to tailor number of exercises etc. to time available (Doug)
- Valuable to provide take home exercises (Doug).

How speaker felt about opportunity for interaction in workshop. Reaction to request for more.

The majority view was that there was sufficient time for interaction but, in retrospect, some would have liked to have spent more time discussing individual issues/cases. Two speakers highlighted the fact that some participants were reluctant to respond/interact.

- Time for interaction before session, in breaks and during exercises but can help to have designated networking session at end of workshop (AD)
- Participants welcomed opportunity to share thoughts/comments (BF); good/very good interaction (DR, JD, PS)
- But, in retrospect, could have included more time for interaction (BF)
- If more time, would have provided more opportunity for small group work (PS)
- Opportunity for one-to-one conversations at end of workshop (RF)
- Some tables interacted better than others – some participants not motivated/resistant – facilitator could have helped (RF)
- Very difficult to get participants to respond – may reflect small size of group (Doug).

How speaker felt about level of material in relation to audience. Reaction to request to split material into two sections/classes.

Speakers were divided about whether or not the material should be split according to expertise/knowledge level. Although some saw having different sessions for different levels as helpful, others highlighted the difficulty of ensuring participants are screened appropriately.

- Most of the material between basic and intermediate – aim to include majority of participants (AD)
- Would be happy to divide material into two sessions (basic/intermediate vs. advanced) provided there is a filter to ensure participants attend the right event (AD)
- Workshop pitched at right level for non-sales participants but sales section requires one-to-one advice (BF)
- If were running sales workshops, would tailor to individual/company with participants divided according to the product being sold (BF)
- Pitched at right level, though could fine tune if knew more about participants needs/expectations (DR, RF)
- Pitched at the right level (JD, PS)
- Splitting material into basic vs. advanced works when have very different levels of experience but valuable for participants to be exposed to different perspectives (DR)
- Splitting into basic vs. advanced not really feasible because difficult to define different levels (JD, RF) - issue not one of experience but of prioritising what material is relevant to the participants' needs and objectives (JD) and using dialogue and interaction to build on people's existing knowledge/experience (PS)
- Only helpful to split by level if people understand course content (RF)
- If had freedom, would structure workshop less around content and more on questions and actual case-studies to get people to think (PS)
- Very fast-paced – lot to do in one day; many participants sceptical and rigid/resistant to change as the material was new to them (RF)
- If sufficient budget, would be happy to split workshops into two levels (introductory and masterclasses) but NOT for 10 Essential Questions (Doug).

How speaker felt about resources provided to workshop participants. Reaction to request for slides in advance/at the workshop.

Most speakers would be against providing slides in advance or at the beginning of the presentation. However, several saw it as important to provide a clear idea of workshop content and objectives in advance. Some speakers also suggested providing a workbook/homework in advance.

- Does not like providing slides in advance – images alone often do not make sense without commentary (AD); do not want to reveal all in advance (JD)
- Would not wish to provide presentation in advance (Doug)
- Happy to provide text/workbook in advance (Doug)
- Prefer to provided presentation containing all relevant links at end of session (AD)
- Provides set of slides with all the text from the workshop and comprehensive reading list (BF); provides slides at end of session (DR, AD)

- Ideally, would provide two sets of slides (i) during the workshop – more images than text – to accompany presentation and (ii) after the workshop, containing more detailed information (BF)
- Suspects people would not look at and/or understand slides provided in advance (BF); without context/understanding, may lead to decision not to attend (DR, PS)
- If provide slides in advance, participants do not fully engage with workshop – focus on reading slides rather than on following discussion (DR, JD, PS)
- Would have liked white board, rather than flipcharts, and sticky notes and A3 sheets to enable people to share their thoughts (PS)
- Would provide homework in advance to expose participants' assumptions about their business ideas, their robustness and complexity (RF)
- Worksheet should be printed in bigger size (RF)
- Would take a different approach (craft materials) if running an advanced workshop (RF)
- Would provide edited slides (images with text) in advance to provide idea of workshop content (RF).

Workshop specific issues

- Developing supportive networks would be helped by:
 - having a dedicated networking session at end of day – 30 minutes (AD)
 - participants sharing contact details (DR)
 - having a follow-up session (via 'phone) to create a networking group and sustain relationships (DR)
 - not having a classroom format (PS)
 - having longer breaks in which to network (PS)
 - having more time so can introduce networking exercises/games – more to networking than just distributing cards and speaking only to people with whom they have something in common (PS).
- Developing confidence to deal with problems would be helped by:
 - having a more intensive integrative session at end of workshop (AD)
 - having one-to-one sessions to address specific issues (AD, RF, BF)
 - spending more time on getting participants to see entrepreneurial activity and business as requiring social skills and reflexivity rather than cognitive skills (PS)
 - having a diagnostic test/questionnaire to get people to start thinking about their problems etc. (PS)
 - having a follow-up session (RF)
 - basing workshop on action learning - go with the participants to try out/test their ideas (RF)
 - having a longer-term program to help participants apply knowledge as they come across different issues in their businesses – something not seen as relevant now may be important in the future (DR),

One thing to change in the future

Speakers suggested a range of key changes. Some speakers emphasised the need to know more about participants in advance of the workshop and to ensure the workshop met participants' expectations. Others, focused on having smaller, specialised workshops.

- More participants (JD)
- More knowledge of participants' business ideas/needs/expectations in advance (RF, PS, DR)
- Match venue to size of group (RF)
- Mix B2C and B2B content (PS)
- More time and interaction with participants (PS)
- Manage people's expectations and ensure the workshop is framed such that it delivers what it promises to do (BF)
- Know more about how the workshop is framed/promoted – need to know aims/purpose in order to see which content is most relevant to maximise benefits to participants (PS, BF)
- Have smaller, specialised workshops – B2B, B2C and different levels of knowledge and expertise (AD); smaller, more intensive workshops with screening of participants to ensure appropriate level (Doug)
- Everyone to do 10 Essential Questions and then select other workshops depending in expertise/interests (Doug),

Other comments

- Fact that workshop is free means people not as committed as they would be if they had paid for it (RF)
- Need to enhance engagement by/with Technology Strategy Board (Doug)
- Need better data on Technology Strategy Board companies (Doug)
- Increase attendance at workshops (Doug)
- There was not enough time between the time the workshop was announced and when it was going to be delivered (RF)
- Need an on-going programme - learning is a lifelong process. The workshops are more like periodic shots of adrenaline. What is missing is a continuous learning and development program that helps people understand their needs, where they want/need to get to and how to achieve this. (DR),

Part C: Conclusions and lessons learnt

Stakeholder Consultations

This chapter of the report provides a summary of the views of the key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the pilot. Key members of the Technology Strategy Board team, the GrowthAccelerator consortium and EEP were consulted. These semi-structured interviews covered four main topics:

- the rationale and objectives of the pilot;
- the effectiveness of the pilot;
- its critical success factors and barriers; and
- lessons learnt.

The remainder of this chapter will look in turn at each of these topics drawing out the key findings from the consultations looking at both those points that were common across multiple stakeholders as well as those points that diverged from the general consensus.

Rationale and objectives

In headline terms the rationale of the Technology Strategy Board pilot was clear to the stakeholders. The Technology Strategy Board wanted to maximise the impact of their investment in the businesses they support. It was a rationale that was grounded in both the theory – that companies that receive multiple forms of support are more likely to succeed – as well as practice; with the Technology Strategy Board support focused on projects it was seen as limited in how it can support its clients more holistically – particularly in terms of commercial viability or specialist business support (in terms of how to run and grow a business). The objective therefore was to offer these clients a range of support that would benefit them while at the same time recognising that the SMEs the Technology Strategy Board supports have different requirements and need different interventions at different times.

Stakeholders also noted that the Technology Strategy Board wanted to understand more about what is available in terms of supporting commercial acumen/entrepreneurial skills and to shape and develop a pilot that enabled them to understand better what works and what doesn't.

Given these objectives, stakeholders were also of the opinion that these aligned closely with the objectives of both GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills. Although, it was noted by one consultee that GrowthAccelerator's focus on high growth didn't always 'work' for Technology Strategy Board companies as – due to their innovative nature – growth was often 4-5 years away and over a longer timeframe than the shorter timeframe of a 'typical' GrowthAccelerator client.

Stakeholder views did however differ around how 'unique' the pilot was. Some felt that it was, largely due to the fact it was fully funded but also the provision of alumni activities both of which were thought to "*distinguish it from the norm*". However, others thought that there is both a number of organisations offering similar support, much of which is

available for free or heavily subsidised (for example ERDF programmes and activities). Consultees did agree that this was unique in the sense that it is not something the Technology Strategy Board have done before.

In terms of the needs of innovative SMEs, the primary difference identified by all of the stakeholders was the fact that they tend to have more technical capability as opposed to commercial capability, with the result that they often achieve growth over a longer timeline. It was noted by a number that often this focus on innovation or R&D can come at the expense of growth as they are "*obsessed with technology*" and often unaware of their limitations in terms of taking the product to market or running their business. Consultees noted an "*unconscious incompetence*" and the characterisation that they "*don't know what they don't know*". Both of which were seen as presenting challenges for the pilot as it was often a case of "*trying to sell them something they don't think they need*".

Effectiveness of the pilot

Overall, consultees were positive about the effectiveness of the pilot. It had been delivered in a short time frame; it was felt to have provided value in terms of what has been learnt; and operationally it was seen to have achieved what it set out to do. Although the caveat was noted by all respondents, that it is too early to know what difference it has made to the businesses supported.

Communication to clients

More specifically, in terms of the communication to clients stakeholders noted that there were multiple touch points in terms of direct mail, web and phone and that significant effort was put into recruiting clients. This was seen as a real positive, particularly in light of the limited data quality (see below). However, while consultees were generally positive about the communication to clients a number of other learning points were noted by individual consultees. These included:

- Some issues around the direct marketing undertaken by Entrepreneurial Skills which was felt to have been "quite aggressive" at times
- How clients were told that they were 'not suitable' for GrowthAccelerator, particularly given that they had already been deemed 'suitable' for the Technology Strategy Board
- An imbalance between GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills in terms of how the offer is communicated and the gateway in – consultees felt that because GrowthAccelerator was an existing brand and a "ready-made package" it was easier to communicate and more appealing to clients
- The limitation of events as a recruitment method for GrowthAccelerator, with phone contact far more effective
- The confusion created by the initial contact by the Technology Strategy Board (and the need to overcome the data protection limitations by offering clients the opportunity to opt-out)
- The need for the Technology Strategy Board to have briefed more explicitly and wider within the organisation so that there was greater awareness across the organisation of the pilot.

The quality of data

The pilot was seen to have highlighted a number of issues with data quality within the Technology Strategy Board. These ranged from the fact that data collection had historically revolved around projects and not companies which meant that often the details held were for the individuals involved in managing the project and not the business lead. Through to incomplete and inaccurate data. The result of this was that a significant amount of time and effort had to be put into cleaning, filtering and back filling the data.

Whilst this was a challenge noted by all consultees, many were positive about how GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills had responded to the challenge and the flexibility they employed to overcome and work around it. A number also noted the positive effect it had had on enabling the Technology Strategy Board to learn lessons about the information they collect. A number of the consultees pointed out that as a direct result of the pilot action has been taken within the Technology Strategy Board to address the issues, with many – although not all – already solved.

The recruitment of clients

The recruitment of clients was felt to have been effective. Stakeholders were pleased with the number of clients recruited, particularly given the tight delivery timescales. The proactive marketing of the offer was seen as particularly effective, although as noted above there is a need to protect against it becoming too aggressive.

Interestingly, a number of the stakeholders highlighted the challenge that results from a one-off, time-limited offer. Positively, the limited nature of the offer encouraged sign up. Negatively, it encouraged some companies to sign up without thinking fully about participation. So for Entrepreneurial Skills this meant that the actual attendance at events was lower than the initial take up (see below). While for GrowthAccelerator it meant that clients have not progressed along the customer journey as quickly as expected (see below).

The challenge of a 'free at point of use' offer

The free at point of use offer was felt to have provided a "great incentive effect" and encouraged take-up. However, despite that consultees were generally surprised at how unreceptive the target audience was to being offered something for free. This also linked to concerns around the value that clients place on free provision and the behaviours it encourages. A number of consultees noted the importance of clients having some "*skin in the game*" because without it they lack the motivation to take things forward: "*it was too easy to sign up and do nothing*".

A free offer was also seen to present other challenges including frustration amongst clients who were deemed not suitable for GrowthAccelerator; and frustration amongst Technology Strategy Board clients who missed out of the opportunity for incentivised provision. However, that said the overriding opinion was that the support did encourage people to take up support who wouldn't have otherwise done so and that it was "*small price, worth paying, (compared to the overall grant value)*" given the potential benefits that could result.

Relevance of content (Entrepreneurial Skills)

The content of the events put on by Entrepreneurial Skills was felt to have been *"very relevant"* and tackled issues that were relevant to Technology Strategy Board companies, although *"some presenters were not as good as others"*. Given the quality of the content it was felt to be a real shame that take up was not higher (for example the Doug Richard event at Google Campus) and that thought needed to be given to how this could be boosted going forward, for example: the company pays upfront and is then refunded the costs if they attend (see lessons learnt below).

Progress of clients through the customer journey (GrowthAccelerator)

Consultees recognised the lag in progress and saw this as symptomatic of the time-limited sign up as companies sign up to take advantage of the support but then revert back to what they were doing previously. It was a symptom that was also felt to be exacerbated – to some degree – by the characteristics of the organisations signed up: small, technology rather than process focused and with limited capacity. In light of this it was noted by some consultees that consideration should have also been given to when people finish and potentially the need to add certain milestones as a condition of the support, for example: sign up by X, scope of support completed by Y, coaching started by Z (see lessons learnt below).

Delivery of quality service provision

Consultees felt that the quality of provision was good. There had been *"no complaints"*, although all of them did note that the real indicator of quality was the difference it made to clients, and on that basis it was too early to judge.

Meeting objectives

Consultees felt that the pilot had broadly met its objectives. It has enabled the Technology Strategy Board to *"try new things"*, to *"test different mechanisms and learn"* and – perhaps most importantly – it has provided substance and evidence around which they *"can have a discussion on what to base a programme"*. A number of consultees also noted that it was great to be able to run the pilot in such a short period of time.

Working relationships

Across all the stakeholders there was broad agreement that the Technology Strategy Board had worked effectively with GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills, and that the pilot had provided a further *"demonstration that the organisations can work together"*. More specifically, it was noted that the delivery of the pilot was felt to have been a *"real team effort"*, with all three organisations adopting a *"pragmatic"* and *"flexible"* approach enabling things to be *"dealt with at speed"*. This was seen as essential given the *"rapidly evolving"* nature of the pilot.

The Technology Strategy Board consultees were also positive about the fact that despite being delivered by a consortium the GrowthAccelerator offer *"appears seamless"*. However it was noted that it was *"less seamless"* in terms of the relationship between GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills largely because they are *"very different products and organisations"*.

Critical success factors and barriers

Across the consultations it was possible to identify six critical success factors that enabled and supported effectively delivery and four barriers. Invariably there was some cross over with some consultees identifying barriers that were the direct opposite of the success factors identified by others (for example the lack of a quality data set was a barrier to the pilot, but it could also be seen as critical to success if a similar exercise was to be undertaken again). Therefore, in reporting these an attempt has been made to identify 11 separate points rather than to repeat points under both headings.

Critical success factors

The following six critical success factors were identified:

- The need for a robust and complete data set so that clients can be identified quickly and followed up effectively (see below)
- The importance of active marketing of the offer particularly as companies do not always see the need for support (see below). This should be an intelligent brokered conversation
- The significance of a clear value proposition – clients have to see the benefit of engagement, getting something for free is not enough
- The value of good governance and management. Effective delivery requires the right people to be involved so that issues and problems can be identified and action taken quickly. This is in part facilitated by regular team meetings
- The selection of the right delivery partners is essential. These partners need to have the scale to deliver, they need to be flexible and pragmatic and ideally they should have existing brand awareness (as was felt to be the case with GrowthAccelerator)
- For a pilot, the need to have a process in place to evaluate from the start of the process so that lessons can be learnt.

Barriers

The following five barriers were identified:

- Despite existing relationships with the clients, they were still treated like any other lead. There was no value for clients of having been through the Technology Strategy Board process. This was in part a result of the poor data – not least the fact that the contact was generally the project manager and not the business lead – but it was also the result of a lack of linkages back into the Technology Strategy Board. Had this existed then it would have facilitated a more informed conversation and it would have enabled the offer to be more appropriately pitched (which in turn would have increased take-up)
- As an organisation the Technology Strategy Board is focused on projects rather than individual businesses, if it wishes to offer more holistic support then a change in culture is required in terms of how it relates to businesses and the data it collects and hold on them
- The business leaders generally do not understand the need to or the benefits of participation: "unconscious incompetence", "don't know what they don't know". The result of which is often a reluctance to engage, despite the incentivised offer
- If an incentive is to be offered, this requires a source of funding. This is less a barrier for the pilot but potentially a significant barrier if the approach is to be mainstreamed; and
- Specifically for the pilot, the short timescales in which it had to be delivered. A longer lead time would have enabled better planning and a more coordinated approach.

Lessons learnt

A number of lessons learnt fall directly out of both the critical success factors and barriers, but in addition to this consultees also identified a number of other lessons in relation to what worked well and not so well; what could be done differently if the activity was to be 'mainstreamed'; and what can be learnt more generally about how to maximise the benefits of joint working between Government services focused on supporting innovative SMEs.

What worked well

In terms of what worked well consultees identified three things in particular that could be cited as good practice:

- The ability and agility of the pilot to respond quickly and to learn lessons in real time. Consultees cited both the change from using events to direct marketing as the key mechanism of sign up for GrowthAccelerator, and changing the location of the Entrepreneurial Skills events to (predominantly) London locations once it became apparent that these were more popular as examples of this.
- The effective joint working between the Technology Strategy Board, GrowthAccelerator and Entrepreneurial Skills that enabled an effective pilot to be delivered in a tight timescale.
- The concerted effort to engage clients with the direct marketing seen as particularly effective (albeit noting the need for it to be measured rather than too 'hard a sell').

Thinking about what could be improved, consultees identified:

- The ability to share data between organisations in particular there was a desire to create a process that facilitated the two-way sharing and flow of data between organisations. It was felt that this would not only enable better delivery of the pilot, but it would also benefit the Technology Strategy Board as they would be better informed about the nature, needs and issues facing their clients.
- The need for a different GrowthAccelerator model for Technology Strategy Board companies. Given that many Technology Strategy Board companies are focused on growth over a four-five year timeframe there was a question amongst some consultees as to whether there needed to be a change in the GrowthAccelerator model (with its focus on growth over a two-three year timeframe) as this would enable more companies to benefit.
- The fact that there is limited knowledge around the obstacles facing businesses and the impact that this had on the ability to appropriately target the offer. It was a factor that was felt to have been exacerbated by the fact that often the Technology Strategy Board relationship was with someone other than the business lead.

Changes required if 'mainstreamed'

Building on the points around what could be improved, a number of points were raised around what changes should be made if the pilot was to be mainstreamed. These included:

- The provision of a broader menu of support so that it covers a both those issues that were identified as most pertinent/popular as part of the pilot as well as a broader range of issues and needs, for example support around investment readiness. It was therefore seen as something that may require the engagement of a broader range of delivery partners.

- The need to engage the Technology Strategy Board staff base more widely and more effectively. This engagement would ensure that there was better 'local' insight which in turn would improve the targeting of the offer and refine the 'sales process'. But it would also provide the opportunity for learning and development (for example through staff also attending the events).
- The need to fully address the data protection constraint. This was seen as "an artificial hurdle" that would need to be permanently addressed.
- The creation of a more integrated offer so that coaching/the attendance at particular events is a condition of the Technology Strategy Board grant that is built into the contract rather than an optional 'add-on'.

Maximising the benefits of joint working between Government services

Finally, and more generally, the consultations also identified a number of lessons that can be learned about how the benefits of joint working between Government services can be maximised. These included:

- Focusing specifically on the needs of business so that a holistic package of strategic support (covering technical, commercial and operational) can be provided. It was noted that this would be significantly enhanced by a diagnostic that brokers to other forms of support, but that there was not necessarily a clear pathway to growth (for instance a company does not necessarily access support A, then B then C, it may be A then C then B).
- The need to make it easier for business to find the support they need both through clearer sign-posting but also by providing a clearer and more coherent story around how the different elements of Government support fit together.
- But at the same time, moving away from a process whereby the company simply self-selects the support they think they require. Some consultees felt that there needs to be clearer guidance on what support would most benefit companies, particularly as they are often unaware of the issues they face: "don't know what they don't know".
- Better and deeper relationships with the businesses so that needs are fully understood and linkages and referrals to other organisations can be better facilitated and more effective.

Conclusions and lessons learnt

This chapter sets out the conclusions and lessons that can be learnt from the pilot.

Conclusions

When the Technology Strategy Board launched this pilot it had two broad objectives:

- To test a hypothesis that businesses who receive external advice and guidance (business support) alongside their Technology Strategy Board grant funding are more likely to be successful; and
- To explore different ways of delivering the support to help identify a model and learn lessons for future delivery.

Having now completed the pilot it is possible to conclude that both of these objectives have been met.

Benefits of external support

It is apparent through the evidence collected that **GrowthAccelerator** has clearly made a notable difference to the clients supported. This difference is apparent in both the way in which the support has helped clients to achieve their innovation and growth objectives and milestones; but also through the outcomes and impacts that have resulted with the combined support already helping to create additional jobs and increasing turnover.

Across the positive outcomes and impacts there are high levels of attribution to GrowthAccelerator and the Technology Strategy Board with nearly all clients noting that these benefits would not have happened, nor happened as quickly without the combined support. In particular four in five clients felt that GrowthAccelerator was 'important' in helping them to deliver their Technology Strategy Board objectives.

It is a benefit and difference that has clearly been noted by the clients, with a further proof point being the fact that the vast majority of said that they are likely to continue to use external advisors in the future.

As such it is possible to conclude that by providing additional support to access GrowthAccelerator the Technology Strategy Board has added significant value to the grants it provides. Through this targeted support, the Technology Strategy Board helped to create a combined package of support that appears to be enabling business objectives to be met and outcomes achieved.

But it is not just GrowthAccelerator that has delivered benefits with the **Entrepreneurial Skills** workshops also making a notable difference. The workshops were uniformly well received and highly rated with very little difference in scores between them. Although, take up rates were significantly higher for the more practical and less conceptual offerings that focused on basic/intermediate level skills. In terms of the difference made the evidence suggests that the workshops had a substantial impact on the following areas of business

activity/performance;

- Improved technical knowledge;
- Improvement in digital marketing;
- Explored new funding options;
- More digitally aware; and
- More entrepreneurial.

Which in turn were seen to positively impact on the following areas of business activity/performance;

- Increased productivity;
- Increase in markets/market share;
- Increased turnover;
- Enhanced contacts/networks; and
- Maturity/expansion of business.

In broader terms, the Entrepreneurial Skills workshops also had a number of marked effects including: increasing the levels of understanding about contemporary business issues/techniques amongst participating companies; changing the attitudes of participants towards implementation of new business techniques and the benefits that derived from such implementation; and encouraging participant to take further actions which ranged from attending further entrepreneurial training to changing the operation of their business, causing the performance improvements outlined above.

However, the most significant lesson and benefit from the process, from a public policy perspective, was perhaps the surprisingly narrow range of competence in key business areas demonstrated by participating companies. The result of which was that high levels of technological skill and awareness were frequently balanced by a lack of knowledge or even awareness of current business practices and techniques.

In addition, the different activities of the pilot were also a clear and practical demonstration of how **joining up the business growth support landscape** can maximise the benefits to individual businesses. In particular it is apparent that the alignment between the Technology Strategy Board, GrowthAccelerator and the University of Plymouth/EEP delivered five tangible benefits:

- It pioneered cross programme data sharing;
- It underlined the significant gaps in knowledge and understanding around some basic business concepts amongst the Technology Strategy Board client base;
- It helped raise the awareness of GrowthAccelerator;
- It improved take up of GrowthAccelerator; and
- It enabled value to be added to the Technology Strategy Board support.

All of which points to the important role played by the pilot in both adding value to the Technology Strategy Board grant and in shifting the mindset of the businesses leaders as to the value and benefit of external advice.

The exploration of different offerings

The pilot also enabled the Technology Strategy Board to explore and test two very different offerings and to begin to understand the ways in which these different offerings impact and support the Technology Strategy Board client base.

The difference made as a result of these two offerings does vary, but in many ways that was expected and part of the design of the pilot. However, despite the variance between the two offers, both resulted in high levels of client satisfaction and a real sense of value both in terms of what was learnt but also the difference made to the businesses.

In addition to these two offerings joint work is currently on-going between the Technology Strategy Board and GrowthAccelerator to develop an alumni community offering around 'money can't buy experiences' and 'peer boards' which will further facilitate sharing of knowledge of innovation and growth. This is in addition to clients having access to the wider GrowthAccelerator community offer.

Lessons learnt

Through the pilot a number of important lessons have been identified. These are as follows:

- **Complementary support works** – Both approaches to supporting Technology Strategy Board companies have been shown to provide significant benefit to participants. In some cases to a far greater degree than was considered likely when the pilot was commissioned. The initial experimental design to offer different resources to different demographics appears to have been a well-founded decision. Through the evaluation it is apparent that the pilot has generated significant attitudinal, behavioural and performance changes amongst participating companies. There is significant evidence that exposure to the activity of learning has increased confidence and willingness to seek further help and guidance in the future.
- **Awareness of need** – A key challenge in engaging businesses is that the business leaders generally do not understand the need to or the benefits of participation, an issue often referred to as: "unknown unknowns" or "unconscious incompetence". Put another way business leaders do not know what support they need, because they misdiagnose the issue or fail to understand what is available by way of support. The result of which is often an initial reluctance to engage, despite the additional support offered. This challenge is often exacerbated by the fact that there is invariably a mis-match between technical expertise (which is often very strong) and business expertise (which is often weak). Through the pilot it was apparent that after attendance/participation awareness and understanding had improved markedly leading to behavioural change and performance enhancement.
- **Successful delivery** – The pilot was viewed by those involved in its delivery to have been a success. It was delivered in a short time frame, it enabled lessons to be learnt and it has supported and added value to Technology Strategy Board clients. Working relationships between the partners involved were highly effective and demonstrated an ability to work together and deal with complex issues rapidly and efficiently.
- **Effective communication** – Communicating the offer to, and subsequent engagement of, clients requires significant effort. Having multiple touch points (direct mail, website and phone) was considered to have been particularly effective. Improved clarity on

branding and the role of the Technology Strategy Board in the process would have also helped to reduce participant uncertainty. The quality of the Technology Strategy Board's data – which typically focuses on project participants rather than the business leader – made connecting with business decision makers more challenging in some instances.

- **Recruiting clients and the value of incentivising take-up** – The recruitment of clients was perceived to be good. For the entrepreneurial skills events it was apparent that the timing, notice and location of events are all significant factors affecting recruitment. The fact that the support was free at the point of use was felt to have provided the requisite incentive and encouraged take up, although there were high levels of drop out for the EEP events. There is clearly benefit of clients having some "skin in the game" as without it, it is harder to encourage businesses to move at pace through the customer journey (in the case of GrowthAccelerator) or to actually attend the event they signed up for.
- **Future development** – The pilot has provided a solid evidence base on which the Technology Strategy Board can begin to build in terms of the future direction of its support.

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