



Welcome to the April edition of the BCU Business School Newsletter!

In this month's newsletter, we explore **new ways of working and doing things differently within your business and workforce.**

Working how you usually do may have brought your business to its current place, but it often won't get your business to where it needs to go next. The COVID-19 pandemic has no doubt had a profound effect on business. It is therefore critical for business owners to respond to these changes with their own. New ways of working could be seeking expert advice, taking part in training programmes and upskilling your workforce. All of these can help you think outside the box and grow your business even further.

At Birmingham City University, we have plenty of ways to support you and your business during these unprecedented times.

Promoting Sustainable Performance – Are you using New Ways of Working?



Business Growth Diagnostic

One of the key debates around the current lockdown conditions and working from home, for many, has been around levels of productivity. Some organisations have found that this way of working has led to an **increased ability to meet targets, with more focused work time and a better work-life balance as key drivers**. Equally, technology has allowed for an opportunity to overcome the twin challenges of poor coordination and communication.

In addition, it may have led to being forced to come up with new ways of working, greater collaboration, more focus on employee engagement, forging new partnerships, and the opportunity to reflect on why we do what we do and how we operate as a business leader.

It would seem that a more open-minded, flexible approach is here to stay for most of us, so does this signal the opportunity to review how effectively you are managing your business?

From making decisions on what is urgent versus what is important to having the right strategy in place, managing your time in your business is critical.

By starting with your strategy, you can **identify the direction in which you wish to take your business**, and if the actions you take are in line with this, you can reach your goals faster. With this enhanced clarity, you can be sure to be on track to accelerate your business growth into the future.

Is now an ideal time for you to reflect on your business and make sure it is working for you? We can work with you to **refine your vision, purpose, and values, help you be more creative, explore the options, and empower you to make the right decisions that drive your business forward**.

Through our [diagnostic](#), we can present you with a snapshot of your business, **identify areas for growth, develop techniques to improve your decision-making and help you to create a strategy for more sustainable business performance.**

Promoting Sustainable Performance is the key to unlocking your business growth.

Contact [Vivien](#) today to book your diagnostic review and strategy development with our business advisor.

Small Business Leadership Programme



Birmingham City University is proud to announce the completion of the Small Business Leadership Programme. The Small Business Leadership Programme was a **10-week programme that took place this spring supporting senior leaders in enhancing their business's resilience and recovery from the impact of COVID-19.**

At Birmingham City University, we have helped over sixty businesses **develop their potential for future growth and productivity** and find new ways of working to boost business performance. Hear what businesses had to say about this programme:

*"From the first week of the Small Business Leadership Programme, I was learning how to think **more strategically and employing new techniques which made an immediate difference to our productivity and processes.** By the time the course finished, I had been armed with tools and approaches which have allowed us to put a laser-like focus on why we were in business and why people*



chose to do business with us. Through this, we've been able to examine the value we bring, learn where the gaps are which need to be plugged and plan for our scale-up in a sustainable way.

*The teaching and support from the Birmingham City University Business School were **exceptional and empowering**. If you ask me in a year's time, I've no doubt we will be able to evidence where this programme has directly contributed to our further growth and improved productivity."*

Amy Bould, Managing Director, Be Bold Media



*"During lockdown, we took advantage of the time to rebrand our district and gain new skills. **This course was incredibly useful in discovering what we do right and what we could do better.** The modules gave a really good grounding in all aspects of business and the delivery style was lively and the experts really knew their stuff!*

I have recommended this course to all our 300 members and urge anyone to do this in order to ensure, in these uncertain times, that you have all the skills to ensure business survival and growth for the future."

Julia Robinson, Birmingham Southside BID Manager

Following on from the Small Business Leadership Programme, we have another exciting opportunity launching: **Help To Grow: Management**

Help To Grow: Management



One key difference in your business should be developing your management skills. Enhancing your management capabilities is vital to growing your business.

Join 30,000 senior leaders taking part in a practical management training programme delivered by **Birmingham City University** and other world-class business schools, accredited by the Small Business Charter.

Help to Grow: Management will support senior managers of small and medium-sized businesses to **boost their business's performance, resilience, and long-term growth.**

The **12-week programme is 90% funded by the Government** and has been designed to allow participants to complete it alongside full-time work.

Benefits to your business include:

- Enhance your management and strategic capabilities
- Produce a growth plan for your business
- Build resilience to future shocks
- Learn how to innovate in your business
- Adopt digital technologies to boost productivity and operational agility
- Develop your value proposition and reach into growth markets
- Improve employee engagement and responsible business practices

To join **Help to Grow: Management**, your business must:

- Be a Small or Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) based in the United Kingdom
- From any business sector, employing between 5 and 249 people
- Have been operational for at least one year
- You must be a decision-maker or member of senior management
- Not be a charity

Express Your Interest Here

Are you looking for new ideas to take your business forward?

Business Innovation Workshops

Wednesdays: 14 April 2021 - 26 May 2021

10.00am – 1.00pm



Coming up with new ideas for your business can make a huge difference in your work, and can lead to the realisation of new products, services and processes.

Sometimes it can be hard to implement this on your own, and this is where our **Business Innovation Workshops** can help to introduce you to new ways of thinking, tools and techniques to try, and a great space to generate and share your ideas with like-minded professionals.

Our business support specialists will help SMEs develop new knowledge, experiment with practical exercises, and drive innovation across three specific topics:

- **Envisioning Growth for Innovation**
- **Strategy and Leadership for Innovation**
- **Marketing for Innovation**

You will gain an understanding of the concepts, tools, and techniques needed to create a culture of innovation and develop a framework to implement in your own company to drive business growth.

During our **7-week online programme**, we will help you to identify, understand, and assess your company's strategic and cultural abilities, and create a business environment of innovation and growth:

- Developing a Strategy for your Business
- The BIG 10 Capabilities of Growth
- Marketing in Turbulent Times and Understanding Customers
- Innovation, Leadership and Culture for Innovation
- Entrepreneurial Process, Competitive Positioning, and Business Modelling
- Scanning and Analysing your Environment
- Understanding and Developing your Value Proposition

The programme comprises 7 topics and participants need to cover all sessions across the workshops to gain the full benefit of the content. This is the last chance to join the programme, so register your interest as soon as possible.

Innovation is crucial to the success of any organisation.

[Register Your Interest Here](#)

Revitalise Your Business with a Placement Student



What is a student placement?

Placements are structured programmes where a student spends **up to 12 months working for an organisation as a full-time employee, usually between their second and third year of study, before returning to university to complete their degree.** This provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and employability skills before they graduate.

Taking on placement students

With students currently seeking opportunities, using a placement student will allow you as an employer to draw upon a temporary and flexible source of talent.

Placement students with higher-level skills **bring fresh ideas to the table as an additional business resource, resulting in significant value added to the organisation.**

Do you need team members with aptitude, ability and forward-thinking skills?

Birmingham City University has helped thousands of businesses by providing knowledgeable, talented students who are eager to put their skills from theory to practice during a placement, to help businesses reach their objectives.

Why a placement student?

Placement students are seen as the trendsetters and powerful demographic for business today. They can really determine how successful a business is. With students in a position to help businesses target a younger demographic, naturally, as they are part of the market themselves, a placement student could hold the key for your business future, successfully appealing to a notoriously difficult, yet extremely powerful target market.

How will a placement student benefit me?

Placement opportunities will form an integral part of your business and help you:

- Support your Business ethos.
- Work towards your Corporate social responsibility.
- Increase public engagement.
- Gain fresh insights and impact your organisation from day one.
- Upskill your workforce and provide existing staff with the opportunity to supervise and mentor a student.
- Shape students of the future and increase opportunities for young people locally.
- Reduce the timely process of recruiting, where we will help find the right candidate to fulfil your needs.
- Provide a low-cost recruitment solution for up to 12 months.
- Find a placement that could lead to permanent employment, which benefits both the student and your company long-term.

Overall, taking on a placement student is **a great opportunity to excel in your business, lead to an increase in growth and keep pace within a fast-moving world.**

For further information please contact:

The Business Advice Centre on BAC@bcu.ac.uk or

The Careers+ Central team on ASKCareers@bcu.ac.uk

Higher Level Skills Match - Recruit and Upskill Your Workforce!



Are you looking to gain **new skills, knowledge and talent** within your mid-sized or small business to help you achieve your business goals?

You could be planning to recruit additional employees with the skills needed to realise your business growth potential.

You might be thinking of upskilling your workforce, or yourself, to expand the skill set of your existing team.

Get the highly-skilled workforce your company needs with **Higher Level Skills Match (HLSM)**, Birmingham City University's account managed recruitment and upskilling service.

How Will HLSM Benefit Me?

You will receive an HLSM Account Manager who can help you:

- Confirm your business goals and identify your skills requirements
- Create a personalised skills development plan for your business
- Identify workshops and training opportunities to upskill your workforce
- Develop JDs and job ads and manage your recruitment process
- Review and screen applicants and confirm a shortlist
- Invite selected candidates to interview
- Plan and deliver interviews
- Update candidates with results
- Identify opportunities for you to receive additional business support

How Does HLSM Work?

Your HLSM Account Manager will identify and match the talent requirements of your

business to the **training opportunities and highly skilled graduates** of Birmingham City University and partner universities.

Your business will gain **additional skills and knowledge** through new recruits and retrained employees.

BCU will find graduate-level opportunities for high-calibre graduates ranging from full-time graduate jobs to internships and micro placements.

How Much Will It Cost Me?

There is no fee for using our Higher Level Skills Match service and no candidate placement commission is charged.

How Can I Get Free HSLM Support?

If you are a mid-sized or small business (SME) located within the GBSLEP area and looking to recruit or upskill your workforce then just email bac@bcu.ac.uk for further details.

If you would like any further information on any of the items contained in this newsletter, or on how we may be able to assist you and your business, then please contact us at bcbsbusiness.services@bcu.ac.uk or [visit our website](#).

