

WORK PACKAGE 2 WAVE 2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MICROBUSINESS OWNERS

Recapping Wave 1

Explore if stated in Wave 1, otherwise go straight to 'Outputs and Outcomes' section.

- a. Last time we met you said you would like to achieve **XXX**, could you describe what has happened since that time?
- b. What have been the enablers/barriers to achieving this?
- c. Any attribution to the project?

Outputs and Outcomes

- a. What are your business goals/aspirations for the next 12 months?
- b. What does productivity look like in this business?

Outputs

- **Profitability**: Bearing in mind your business capacity, what is your desired level of annual profit/ how much money would you like to make in a year from now? Is this realistic?
- **Volume of products made /services delivered/sales**: What are the products/services you make/provide/sell? Why is volume important?
- **Speed of products made/services delivered/sales**: Why is speed important?
- **Innovation**: Do you have any examples of innovation (e.g. a time you have created something new or novel/did things differently)?
- **Other**: please specify

Outcomes

- **Customer satisfaction**: To what extent does this concern you? How do you know your customers are satisfied with your product/service? Do you seek reviews/follow-up with customers?
- **Job Satisfaction**: Factors that contribute to job satisfaction might include: recognition, responsibility, backing of others, making a contribution, other. How important are these things to you? Can you give me an example of a time when you felt most satisfied in your job?
- **Family security**: How important is providing employment for family members (this might include extended family and nonrelatives)? Why? [If a family business] are family members motivated to remain together for the sake of the business? Examples of this?

- Helping others: Do you have any examples of positive relationships that you have formed outside the business (E.g. with other businesses / within the community)?
- Other: please specify

Inputs

1. Employee Effort and Skills

- a. Are your employees sufficiently skilled to handle their respective roles?
- b. What skills do they possess (or lack)?
- c. Do you offer training to address this need? (What form does this training take: formal/ informal; statutory/developmental? Who provides it? Is it certified – i.e. do they get a formal qualification? Have workers/ helpers asked for training, and, if so, in what?) Any constraints?

Manager skills

- d. Do you feel you have sufficient skills and training to lead?
- e. How did you acquire those skills?
- f. Are there any skills you would like to develop? Describe.

2. Organisational Support

- a. Are you more of the view that: staff should be made feel supported at work (i.e. that they should be able to approach you for support / seek counsel) or that they should get on with the job they are paid to do? Middle ground? Why do you think this?

3. Resources

- a. What resources do you need to be productive (e.g.: facilities, equipment, materials; finances; information/knowledge; partnerships, staffing, outsourcing; marketing facilities, etc.)?
- b. Do you currently have sufficient access to these resources? Why/Why not?
- c. Are these resources (e.g. equipment) used in the way they were intended (is training/instruction needed)?

4. Customers

- a. Do you deal with customers (either directly or indirectly) in your role?
- b. Who do you sell to?
- c. Do your customers have the money to buy from you? Any concessions?
- d. How do you go about expanding your customer numbers?
- e. Who or what would be your ideal customer mix (characteristics)?

Processes

*We are going to explore the actions or steps that you take in order to achieve **XXX** outcome / be productive:*

5. Objectives

- a. When working towards **XXX** outcome]: Is there a plan/set of procedures that you follow?
 - If yes, please describe? Are your work colleagues aware of the plan? How was information about the plan shared with staff (if no, why not)? How (or) do you monitor progress towards the plan (e.g. through targets/deadlines/supervision)?
 - If no plan, Why? (Perhaps a more informal approach is adopted).

6. Reflexivity

- a. Have you (and/or your employees) ever had to review your working practices (the way you do things) in order to make improvements/learn from mistakes/develop new ways of working?
 - If yes, how often (frequently? proactive or reactive activity)? Are such changes typically incremental (small) or radical (big)? Examples
 - If no, why?

7. Participation

- a. How often do you:
 - Involve your employees in decisions to improve the productivity of the firm? Example(s)? If no, why?
 - To what extent do you encourage feedback from your employees about work matters? Never, Seldom, Sometime, Frequently (Why?) Examples?

8. Task Design

- a. What are the main tasks that you/your employees need to complete (to achieve the productivity goals mentioned previously **[insert]**)?
- b. To what extent are these tasks routine/expected or ad-hoc/reactive?
- c. How do your employees/helpers know what they need to do?
- d. Do you have a role in organising this? How much autonomy (freedom to decide how to do the work) do your employees have?
- e. How do you decide which workers to assign to which tasks?

9. Task Focus

- a. In what way is the quality of your product or service important to you (E.g. reputation/reducing returns)?
- b. How/or do you ensure quality in the products or services that you deliver to customers?

10. Employee cooperation and conflict

- a. What is the level of cooperation like among the employees here (do they work well together)? Examples?
- b. What impact (if any) does this have on the business? Examples?

11. Engagement

- a. What approach do you take to managing the motivation and morale of your workers? Are there any specific things you do in relation to this?

Part 2 – Owner version

We are interested in your views regarding how to encourage workers to experience what is known as ‘engagement’ at work. Engagement has been a term used to describe a heightened motivational state in terms of three key elements:

- i) *Being stimulated intellectually, such that the worker feels attentive and absorbed in what they are doing*
 - ii) *Being emotionally connected, such that they feel an enthusiasm and involvement; i.e. feelings of wanting to be at work*
 - iii) *Physically motivated such that they feel a desire to commit physical and mental energy to their job.*
- a. To what extent does this description of engagement resonate with the way you think about managing and motivating the people that work for you? And by extension, in the way you think about being productive?
 - b. What do you think may be the most valuable and suitable actions you could take to help your workers experience engagement? To what extent do you feel you would need any support or training to help you do this? If extra support/training needed, what would be the most helpful?
 - c. What do you think may be the barriers that could get in the way of you trying to engage your workers? How could this be resolved or reduced?
 - d. Are there any other reflections about ‘engagement’ of workers that you’d like to discuss?

12. AOB

- a. Is there anything else that needs to be discussed that we’ve missed?