

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## ♦ *Why is marketing important?*

There is a well-known mnemonic from marketing courses used to summarise the key elements of any campaign or piece of marketing literature: AIDA – attention, interest, desire, action.

Gain the attention of the customers, excite their interest, increase their desire, and turn all this into action, which is to buy.

There is a strong body of evidence that small and medium sized enterprises across UK (this is not a peculiarly Welsh problem) pay little attention to management and leadership development, have no interest in it, even less desire for it, and as a result do little or nothing about it.

We have to address this problem of demand at the very fundamental level of attention, interest and desire, that has more to do with the concept of management and leadership development, and its benefits, than the actual purchase of products and services.

## ♦ *Who are we talking to?*

Managers are not a homogeneous group. Their attitudes, behaviour, roles, responsibilities and development needs will be defined by the business, organisation, and sector in which they operate, and within those categories by the size of organisation, and its current standing in the market place.

SMEs dominate the industrial profile in Wales, and it is SMEs who face the greatest barriers of attitude, and motivation, and as a result invest less in training than larger organisations.

99% of all enterprises in Wales have less than 50 employees, and represent 55% of employment, and 46% of turnover. Only 1% of enterprises in Wales have more than 50 employees, and represent 45% of employment, and 54% of turnover.

We have to attract the attention and interest of SMEs in Wales and use the particular characteristics of that sector to define the marketing approach that will convert interest into desire and action.

## ♦ *How do we overcome the barriers?*

There are significant barriers of resource and attitude that prevent or inhibit managers in small and medium sized enterprises thinking about, exploring, and taking full advantage of the management and leadership development opportunities that are available to them. These barriers include:

time; cover for absence; cost; lack of funding; quality of training; availability of training; lack of information; language; relevance; short term views; lack of support; retention of staff; lack of enthusiasm; motivation; company culture.

Any marketing campaign or initiative needs to be mindful of these, and do whatever it can to turn negative attitudes into positive action.

## ♦ *What do we need to say?*

What is needed are words that get under the skin of the customers, that have undeniable appeal, and obvious benefit. The key message is that management development is:

a route to success; about getting results; a means to help people think differently about themselves and their skills; a way of helping people to act differently, with better results and more job satisfaction; something that is worth doing because being good at what you do is great.

Management development must be truly aspirational, aimed at making a real difference, and a natural part of life, not an optional extra.

### ♦ **What buttons do we need to press?**

The marketing of management and leadership development needs to focus primarily on attitudes and motivation, as a precursor to action. But many managers are “too busy chopping the wood to sharpen the axe.” What are the emotional triggers that might change this:

self-esteem; desire for success; fear of personal failure; a better job; retain staff; not staying still; expecting the unexpected; low skills lead to high stress; reduce risk; customer confidence; raise money; a helping hand; growing people for a growing business; can you afford not to.

### ♦ **What needs to happen?**

A general marketing campaign or individual, provider-led marketing initiatives will achieve little unless there are complementary actions to change a culture of apathy and indifference to one of purposeful engagement. These complementary actions relate to:

relevance of provision; flexibility; catch them young; graduate skills; middle managers; role models; anti-heroes; mentors; industry clusters; case studies; converts; learning; solution based marketing; packaging; co-operation; pressing the buttons; dependency culture; value for money; funding; media.

And who is going to do all this? We are. By choosing to develop ourselves, and by making sure that as customers the help that we need is available where and when we need it, at a price we can afford, with benefits that we specify and that we measure.

### ♦ **Next steps**

We need a fresh approach to the marketing of management and leadership development in Wales, as exemplified in this report. But the buttons that need to be pressed are not confined to managers in general or SME managers in particular, they include:

- Welsh Assembly Government: marketing has to start at the top
- National Council-ELWa and WDA: make resources match rhetoric
- public sector training providers: find imaginative ways to sell benefits not products
- private sector training providers: be driven by the market, not the funders
- marketing consultants: devise and sell imaginative campaigns to all of the above.

We need to market the need for better marketing. This just a start. But it's a long game.