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Local Enterprise Office Training & Business Development Programme

Needs Analysis 2021-2023



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Government of Ireland



European Regional
Development Fund



CARLOW
COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAILLE CHOINTAE CHATHAULOGHA

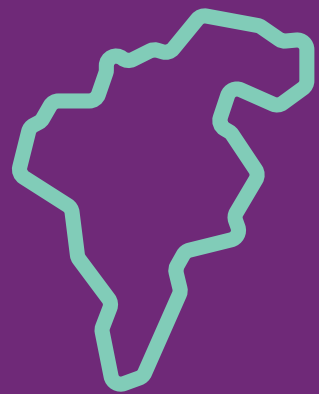
Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office



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Bridgewater



Foreword

The Training & Business Development Programme Needs Analysis for the Carlow County Council Local Enterprise Office 2021-2023 is a research-based needs analysis which has been developed to guide the delivery of training and business development programmes to the Business Community in County Carlow during 2021-2023 by the Local Enterprise Office supported under the Council's Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland. With the challenges associated with the economic recovery from Covid-19 and challenges and opportunities faced with Brexit, as the local First Stop Shop for delivery of supports at County Level in consultation with key stakeholders this framework has been developed to guide the development of new programmes which meet the needs of the business community.

The research process was conducted by Bridgewater and its strategic partner, the Discovery Partnership, who are specialists in business engagement. They engaged with over 200 companies in the development of this report. In tandem with this process key agencies and partners were consulted in respect of potential opportunities as well as internal stakeholders in Carlow County

Council. The analysis outlines some of the challenges and opportunities which the LEO believes currently face the business community within the county and thus the country. The report outlines the desired delivery models by the business community that suit their needs. The output of this report will feed into the overall Economic Strategy for Carlow County Council which is currently under development.

The Local Enterprise Office Carlow acknowledges that while it is the designated primary agency for promoting and supporting entrepreneurship at local level that it cannot fulfil this role without the co-operation and support of the other enterprise agencies, both local and national, and with the integrated support of the other sections within Carlow County Council.

The Local Enterprise Office will work with these organisations to maximise the potential of the small and micro business sector in the county and will over the four year period of the plan seek to increase the number of local businesses seeking to increase their management capability and strengthen their sustainability and enter export markets.



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Introduction

Carlow County Council's – Local Enterprise Office aims to provide relevant, suitable training and business development programmes to enterprises in County Carlow.

In line with this activity, the Carlow County Council – Local Enterprise Office engaged an independent operator Bridgewater (and its strategic partner, The Discovery Partnership) to conduct direct research with the business community and stakeholders in County Carlow via a Training & Business Development Programme Needs Analysis.

Thus, the contents of this report offer an independent Training & Business Development Programme Needs Analysis

of County Carlow with a view to forward planning for investment by Carlow County Council and its Local Enterprise in partnership with Enterprise Ireland.

Areas addressed within the report include

- **Scheduling**
- **Delivery Methodology**
- **Subject Matter Preferences**
- **Growth Ambitions**
- **Ancillary Supports**

Data to inform this research was procured via enterprise community engagement and stakeholder consultation.

Methodology

The following outlines the research rationale and project methodology which was adopted as part of the Training & Business Development Programme Needs Analysis 2021-2023. Prior to project commencement, Bridgewater set about familiarization with the locale's economic, commercial and enterprise education landscape, inclusive of public and private sector activities. This assisted in the construction of instruments for data collection, both qualitative and quantitative.

Engagement

The project adopted a 12-week delivery timetable and benefited from a triangulated methodological approach; whereby the project engaged

- **The County Carlow Enterprise Community**
- **Key Regional & Local Stakeholders**
- **Carlow County Council – Local Enterprise Office / Economic Development & Special Project Development Team**
- **Chief Executive & Director of Services**

Timeline

Activity commenced late September 2020 and was completed in December 2020. Accordingly, the COVID 19 pandemic was a dominant issue throughout.

Project Management

The LEO Project Team was Kieran Comerford, Head of Economic Development & Enterprise, Pauline Hoctor, Assistant Head of Economic Development & Enterprise and Lisa Moore, Administrator who facilitated the activity; whereby, Bridgewater was accountable to these individuals for the duration of the project and benefitted from their support on research strategy, sampling, co-ordination, promotion, and referrals. Bridgewater assigned its CEO, Martina McGrath to author the report.

Quantitative Analysis

It was determined that the optimal vehicle to engage with the County Carlow Enterprise Community would be a survey, the benefits of which included large survey sampling and the opportunity to analyse responses, measured against sample variances. In constructing the survey - Bridgewater also needed to incorporate the depth of service provision at the LEO – prioritizing training, but also acknowledging ancillary supports, specifically in relation to grants, funding and mentorship requirements.

Design

Bridgewater designed a survey to be issued to Carlow SME's / owner managers – the function of which was to ascertain training requirements and key development activities, for the period 2021-2023. In keeping with the collaborative nature of the project, the survey design process was undertaken in conjunction with the assigned project management team.

The survey was broken down into sections reflecting

- Demographics – size, sector etc.
- Training Requirements – required topics, delivery methodology, scheduling.
- Business Status Questions – growth ambitions, challenges, future profile etc.
- Additional Needs

Prize



A prize of €100 was provided to encourage survey completion.

Duration



The survey had a completion time of approximately 10 mins

It was expected that the survey would remain open for 14 days, this was extended to 30 days to allow for an increased survey response.

Sampling

To ensure research validity, it was determined that the survey sample would be unbiased whereby the following targets were set

- 30- 50% completion by those who had not engaged with the LEO previously
- 70- 50% completion by LEO clients
- Diversity in terms of Sector, Age, Trade Profile

- **240 survey responses**

- Representing 8% of the 2,852¹ enterprises in County Carlow.
- The survey was closed out with 205 surveys. Therein, it reached 85% of the original target set-out and reflects approximately 7% of the total business community.
- To support these targets a variety of promotional/engagement channels were leveraged, these included
 - **Social Media**
 - **Email Marketing**
 - **Telephone Collection**

Survey Limitation(s)

The following points reflect the limitations of the survey as a data collection tool and the potential bias that may exist with regard to the results.

- COVID 19 - it is recognised that the survey was issued during a lockdown and consequently, the results are likely to be influenced by the pandemic and its impact on the enterprise landscape.
- Sectoral representation correlates directly to enterprise engagement with the survey.
- Non-response bias is reflected in the sample whereby nascent

entrepreneurs (i.e. those who are still deciding whether to start a business) are not represented. This is a limitation of the instrument as those targeted on the CRO are currently operating a venture, in addition to the sample of LEO training participants. A mitigation action was taken as part of qualitative analysis to offset this result bias.

- In limited instances a business submitted in excess of one individual response.
- The survey evaluates 16 sectors with all other sects being represented in the 'not listed' category.

1. CSO, 2018 Business Demography

Qualitative Analysis

An in-depth qualitative analysis was undertaken with key stakeholders in the region, in addition to Local Enterprise Office staff, to assess variant views on service provision and opportunities for development.

As a mitigation action, a series of interviews were also incorporated into the research methodology to reflect a limitation on the survey sample, whereby nascent entrepreneurs were not adequately represented.

Stakeholder Engagement

The purpose of this engagement was to determine views on existing provision, align existing strategies for economic development and to ideate around opportunities for development to augment LEO services +/- provide for future strategic development.

It was determined that the optimal vehicle for engagement would be an interview format and so the following stakeholders engaged with same, offering numerous insights and valuable feedback.

Carlow Chamber

Colin Duggan / Brian O'Farrell / John Brophy

Carlow Tourism

Eileen O'Rourke / Michael Walsh

Carlow County Development Partnership

Clare O'Shea

Enterprise Ireland

Brian Fives

Institute of Technology Carlow

Declan Doyle

Regional Skills Form

Edmond Connolly

Skillnets

Ashling Ward

Faite Ireland

Caren Carruthers

Interview Methodology

The interviews were undertaken online (via Zoom) and lasted approximately 45-60 mins per stakeholder.

The interviews were largely unstructured – whereby the interviewer (Martina McGrath) ensured that the direction and content of the conversation stemmed from stakeholders; therein allowing 'space' for the participant to elaborate on points which were important to him/her.

Carlow County Council Local Enterprise Office Consultation

The purpose of this engagement was to assess the perceived experiences of service users, determine the strengths and weaknesses of provision, brainstorm opportunities and explore the viability/ impact of same.

The following staff engaged with this consultation process

Chief Executive

Kathleen Holohan

Director of Services

Michael Rainey

Head of Economic Development & Enterprise

Kieran Comerford

Assistant Head of Economic Development & Enterprise**Pauline Hctor****Business Advisor****Gabrielle Carroll****Business Advisor****Jim Woods****Economic Development Officer****Pierce Kavanagh****Economic Development Officer****Maria Couchman****Enterprise Development Executive****Áine Carey****LEO Clerical Officer****Lisa Moore****Grade 4 - Administrator****Tommie Hickson****Business Advisor (External Contractor****Brexit)****Bobby Connolly****Business Advisor****Darren Keating****Business Advisor (External Contractor****Brexit)****Tony McNally****Business Advisor (External Contractor****Brexit)****Sharon Ginnetty**

Interview Methodology

The interviews were undertaken online (via Zoom) and lasted approximately 45-60 mins per stakeholder. The interviewer adopted a semi-structured approach to interviewing council staff. Whereby a set of predetermined questions was assembled and modified (during the interview) based on perception of appropriateness. Whereby, certain questions were added/omitted relevant to the participants activity/role within the LEO.

Research Findings

The following illustrates summary research findings as part of this report.

Quantitative Results complete/empirical survey results are available upon request from the Local Enterprise Office.

Qualitative Results are woven throughout the survey findings and recommendations.

Quantitative Analysis

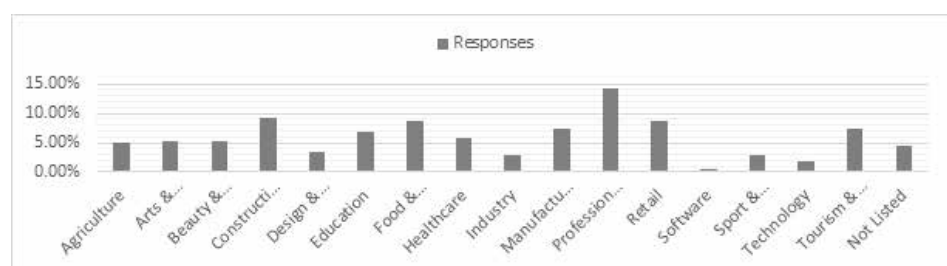
Profile of Respondents

205 Survey Respondents

It has been determined that the survey offers a sufficiently representative sample with regard to sector, trading profile, sale items and business age. Sectoral Representation is weighted against professional services at 14%; however, this was not thought to skew the survey disproportionately.

	Description	%
Sale *	Product (s)	52%
	Service (s)	65%
Trading Profile *	Local	51%
	Regional	44%
	National	55%
	International	28%
	Online	28%
Business Age	0-3 Yrs.	33%
	4-10 Yrs.	24%
	11-20+ Yrs.	43%

* Please note that respondents were allowed to select multiple answers to reflect their operational/trading structure.



Delivery Methodology

There is evidence of a shift amongst the business community towards more progressive forms of training delivery; whereby, it might be inferred that the forced change of the pandemic has led to an openness to go online and a realization as to the benefits that can be derived.



Online Preference

85% of respondents are open to engaging online

Rank	Detail	%
1	Blended Learning - Offline & Online Provision	35%
2	Online Facilitation - via Zoom / MS Teams	29%
3	No Preference	21%
4	Traditional Facilitation - In Person/ Classroom Setting	13%
5	Immersive Training - Via Virtual Reality	2%

Key Findings

- 85% of respondents are open to engaging online.
- Traditional facilitation (which sees 100% classroom-based learning) is now viewed as outmoded.
- Immersive Training has not featured as a preferred vehicle for learning. The distinct lack of response likely points to a lack of understanding, when correlated against the openness to online delivery.
- Sectoral Diversification
- In contrast to the above table, Construction and Manufacturing sectors have prioritized traditional and blended methodologies above online facilitation seeing up to 35% of this cohort state a preference for classroom based/onsite learning (see appendix II for more information)

Scheduling

Days

In order of preference, the following illustrates the days favoured by respondents. Interestingly, little to no sectoral variation occurred, whereby some had an openness to engaging at the weekend, but their preference aligned to the below.

Day	Wed	Tue	Thurs	Mon	Fri	Sat	Sun
%	42%	41%	34%	34%	23%	8%	6%

Duration

In order of preference, the following illustrates the duration of programmes favored by respondents. However, significant variation occurred across industries in relation to same.

Length	½ Day 9am- 1pm	1 Day	Evenings 4 - 6 Weeks	½ Day 6pm - 9pm	Morning 7am - 9am	2 x Day Bootcamp	Programmes up to 6 Mths
%	52%	31%	26%	23%	20%	13%	12%

The following, lists sectoral variances which conflict with the macro data, on preferred programme delivery options

- **Arts & Heritage**
½ Day 6-9pm @ 36% / 2 Day Bootcamp @ 36%
- **Manufacturing / Design & Craft**
Open to longer running programmes of up to 6 months @ 21% and 43% respectively.
- **Retail**
Evening courses of 4-6 weeks were favored @ 60%
Early Morning 7am-9am @ 53%

Subject Matter Preferences

For the purpose of this research, training topics were broken up into 4 categories. The data illustrated reflects the macro trends associated with training preferences; however, a more in-depth sectoral analysis can be found in Appendix II

Management Development

Rank	Detail	%
1	Business Planning	44%
2	Strategic Development	43%
3	Grant Aid & Funding 101	41%
4	Personal Effectiveness & Goal Setting	36%
5	Time Management	26%
6	Human Resource Management	23%
7	New Product Development	22%
8	Leadership	22%
9	Innovation	22%
10	Business Modelling	20%
11	LEAN Project Management	19%
12	Health & Safety Management	19%
13	Performance Management	19%
14	Mindfulness	16%
15	BREXIT - Customs & Excise	15%
16	BREXIT - Preparation & Planning /Capacity Development	12%
17	Succession Planning	11%
18	Legal Considerations	10%
19	Comprehensive - Start Your Own Business Management Training	6%

Finance & Compliance

Rank	Detail	%
1	Pricing for Profit	52%
2	Budgeting & Forecasting	38%
3	Compliance & Regulations	32%
4	Legal Considerations	24%
5	Basic Bookkeeping	23%
6	Finance for the Non-Financial Manager	22%
7	Credit Control	15%

Subject Matter Preferences

Sales & Marketing

Rank	Detail	%
1	Sales & Marketing Strategy	65%
2	Social Media	55%
3	PR & Marketing Tools	40%
4	Web Development	39%
5	Branding	36%
6	Video Production	35%
7	Sales - Lead Generation	29%
8	Product Photography	28%
9	Customer Service	25%
10	Communication Skills	25%
11	Negotiation Skills	20%
12	Export & Internationalization	17%
13	Merchandising	13%

ICT

Rank	Detail	%
1	Digital Marketing (e.g. Search Engine Optimization, Blogs)	56%
2	Website Development (e.g. Wix, WordPress)	39%
3	Facebook	36%
4	Instagram	34%
5	Photography - Online Tools	32%
6	Current & Emerging Online Tools (e.g. Canva, Slack)	31%
7	CRM - Customer Relationship Management Systems	27%
8	Microsoft Excel	20%
9	Adobe Illustrator	20%
10	Adobe InDesign	16%
11	Pinterest	14%
12	Microsoft Project	12%
13	Computerized Accounts	11%
14	ERP Systems (e.g. SAP/ ORACLE)	8%
15	Basic Computer Skills	8%
16	Microsoft Word	8%

Growth Ambitions

Notably, over 96% of respondents anticipated growth over the coming 3-5 years. The prioritization of anticipated growth for County Carlow is illustrated by the following (see appendix II for further analysis).

96% Growth

Within the next 3-5 Years

Rank	Detail	%
1	Expand Sales Nationally	62%
2	Increase Online Sales	54%
3	Hire Staff	46%
4	Expand Sales Regionally	42%
5	Upsell to Existing Customers	41%
6	Expand Sales Internationally	39%
7	Product Development & Innovation	33%
8	Upgrade Premises	27%
9	Grow Sales into Neighboring County	24%
10	Purchase Machinery & Equipment	23%
11	Revenue - Turnover in Excess of 1 Million Euro	16%

Ancillary Supports

When respondents were asked to note their openness to ancillary supports and to prioritize them, it highlighted the importance of LEO's soft supports; whereby tailored guidance was jointly favored with mentorship ranking third. (see appendix II for further analysis).

No 1. Tailored Guidance

Rank	Detail	%
1	Tailored Guidance - on choosing the right type of support for your business	53%
2	Grant Aid	53%
3	Mentorship - multiple one to one Meetings, supporting a business goal	49%
4	Events - Tradeshows / Networking/ Seminars etc.	47%
5	Advisory Clinic - one to one meeting (circa 45 min duration)	28%
6	Consultancy - Outsourced Project Work	24%
7	Referrals - connecting you with other state bodies such as Dept. Social Protection, Revenue, Skillnets etc.	23%
8	Trade Missions	17%
9	Micro Finance Ireland Loan	15%

Qualitative Analysis

Convergence: Stakeholders

External stakeholders engaged across diverse and wide-ranging topics as the interview methodology supported this didactic exchange. Consequently, a broad range of feedback was captured. However, this report summarizes areas of convergence across stakeholders such that an unbiased evaluation emerges.

Positives

- The LEO was deemed highly active “they have an out-reach approach”.
- LEO staff were noted as being open to engagement and dialogue.
- The organisation was recognised for its progressive approach and agility.
- There was agreement as to the pivotal role that the LEO operates within the county.
- All commended the LEO’s actions in response to the COVID crisis.
- COVID 19 activities were exempt from this feedback.
- Recognition that more analysis may need to be undertaken in terms of a deeper dive on subjects required by sectoral cohorts and mapping of inter-organizational instruments to support them.
- There remains a gap in LEO supports for those who do not fit specific criteria.
- Across agencies, there was scope to become more learner centered whereby a business owner may need to upskill across 2-3 agencies.

Opportunities

- Stakeholders recognised an opportunity to work more closely with the LEO with regard to onward programme development and alignment.
- Due to the high volume of supports, there was confusion around the LEO vehicles for engagement, training topics, names etc.
- That Carlow, as a territory requires a holistic and innovative approach to enterprise development – leveraging neighboring territories, partnerships, and marketing.

Feedback: SYOB Profile

Bridgewater undertook qualitative research (to mitigate against survey bias) whereby it interviewed four SYOB profile ventures, with disparate start-up positions.

1. Recently Commenced Trading (x 1)
2. Idea Generation (x 1)
3. Concept Development & Business Modeling (x 2)

The following reflects their feedback preferences

- Topics = Finance / Book-keeping / Market Research / Growth Planning / Digital Marketing
- Duration = a short block or 3 -6 Wk programme with engagement twice per week.
- Times = Evenings were preferable.
- Mentorship = Yes
- Goals = Entrepreneurial Confidence / Growth Planning / Financial Competence

Local Enterprise Office - Insights

Personnel

- LEO representatives were highly engaged in the process
- Each noted area's for development and refinement.
- This feedback is reflected holistically in the recommendations outlined.

2020 Programmes

The following table illustrates activities year to date with Carlow LEO. As a result, the data is impacted by COVID 19 in terms of activity and attendance (where possible, cancellations have been removed from the data). Data was sourced via a 3rd party platform and reflects iterative and longer run activity only – accordingly, individual modules are omitted. Regional activities have also been omitted from the table.

Event Name	Units	Average
Management Development Workshop	2	100%
Coaching	2	100%
SYOB - 0.5 Day	5	92%
Digital Media	6	92%
The Profit Academy	1	89%
Finance & Grant Options - LEO	4	88%
#ShopCarlow	9	81%
Trading Online Voucher	11	72%
Women in Business	4	65%
The New Normal - COVID / BREXIT Training	20	64%
Lean for Micro	2	58%
RESTART Grant	11	56%
The Business Box	7	50%
#Tastelocal	5	48%



Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

SYOB -The Idea Academy

4

47%

Blended / Hybrid Learning

Blended learning combines traditional instructor-led training with online learning with high tech e-learning, drawing on the strengths of both. This approach affords an organisation the ability to engage all types of learners—those who learn better in a structured environment (that includes face-to-face interaction with an instructor), and independent types who learn better with semi-autonomous, computer-based training. However, the exact nature of the optimal blend depends very much on the participant, instructor, programme, and the LEO.

The following offers an overview as to the types of blended learning which can be utilized.

Type	Description
Face to Face	Traditional instructor-led learning sessions supplemented with technology to allow learners to control their own learning pace.
Rotation	Participants move through a schedule of independent online study and face-to-face classroom time.
Flex	Flex learning sees participants control their learning path (using an LMS system) choosing what they learn. The instructor is usually present in a mentoring capacity, to answer questions.
Gamification	One of the most effective ways to motivate learners is by letting them play! By using game play elements such as points or levels, learners feel a little competition and are more motivated to experience the material on their own time.
Online 'Practice' Lab	This blended learning model is entirely digital, with little or no instructor interaction, and takes place either before, during or after training. Its purpose is to engage and solidify learning.
Self Directed	This approach reflects an entirely self-directed approach and takes place in a digital environment. Learners can engage with an instructor through chat, email, or message board.

COVID 19 has seen training migrate into an online environment with associated benefits in terms of cost, accessibility, and time. Preconceptions about online learning have been removed and culturally people are now open to this medium. However, there still exist threats

Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

to a blended learning approach, these include:

- **IT Literacy**
- **↑ Dependence on technical resources/tools**
- **Broadband speed**
- **Lack of peer-to-peer networking**
- **New costs associated with e-learning platforms**

Face-To -Face

Survey responses have demonstrated a significant move towards online learning and blended methodologies. However, it is important to note the current landscape and assess the degree to which this shift has occurred:

- **Scenario A = Traditional Classroom**
(complimented by online tools)

The facilitator delivers a traditional session, in a physical location but utilizes online tools e.g. polls, case studies and learn by doing scenarios, to engage participants. This often requires use of a laptop or mobile phone by the participant.

- **Scenario B = Traditional Classroom**
(delivery using an online tool)

It might be argued that current programmes reflect a traditional style but now utilize Zoom/MS Teams – out of necessity. Consequently, post COVID may see a shift back towards the traditional training mediums.

Benchmarking - Online

The delivery style of a physical /traditional workshop may not translate to an online medium and thus, it is essential that one benchmarks participant engagement to ensure learning outcomes. Accordingly, the LEO may benefit from requesting the trainer detail what (if any) online engagement tools they plan to use. Relying on unstructured

participant engagement can be difficult when facilitating online, for many reasons, some of which include:

- Participants must mute themselves when in large groups to avoid feedback
- Cameras do not always work, thus visual cues are missed by the trainer
- People are at home with associated distractions
- ↓ Attention spans

Therefore, it is proposed that online delivery would benefit from trainer benchmarking specially targeted at participant engagement, querying their use of tools such as breakout rooms, polls, quizzes and so on. This will potentially allow the LEO to quality check online engagement and ensure that those facilitating using these mediums are sufficiently proficient.

Rotation

It is proposed that the rotation methodology is suited to longer run programmes whereby they can oscillate between online and face to face. It is further proposed that the nature of this oscillation may benefit from being determined on a programme-by-programme basis (by the LEO); to reflect the nuances of required learning outcomes and client profile.

Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

Flex /Gamification / Online Labs /Self-Directed Learning

These blended learning options require research and development; and it can be argued that neither the trainers (many of which are sole traders) nor the LEO would have adequate time to create solutions using these mediums for the period 2021.

Accordingly, they are not suited (at this time) to roll-out.

However, it is suggested that the LEO engage on a pilot programme for the period 2023 – where it utilizes such progressive methodologies for one iteration of an existing 6-12-week programme.

Mentoring - Enabling Learning

The below diagram sets out the main tenants of coaching / mentoring.

- In essence, its objective is to improve (entrepreneurial) performance.
- To achieve this, the mentor focuses on client motivation, ability, and ways through which they might achieve a goal.
- As a result, part of the process is often enabling skills through instruction. This instruction tends to often be directive. Conversely, enabling skills is about facilitating a conversation, that allows the client to find solutions, this occurs by posing pertinent questions and limiting direct advice.
- In practice, mentorship tends to operate in a hybrid area, combining

a facilitative /enabling approach with some directive/instructional advice.

The aim however is to operate in a predominantly facilitative and questioning mode

Scenario- Example

- A client requests mentorship without engaging in any advance training.
- The LEO match the mentor to the client.
- Meeting One – It is apparent that the client has limited ability (in the area in question). Thus, in order to provide impactful mentorship, the mentor must engage instructional skills.
- Meeting Two - The mentor can focus on enabling skills and elevate the client to make informed decisions about the right way forward for them.



The Coaching and Mentoring Environment (AH Raymondson & KW Hamilton, 2010)

Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

Challenges

The level of required instruction per client varies extensively and it is only while in a mentorship session that this becomes apparent.

The client won't consider training (as he/she feels sufficiently informed on the subject matter) thus mentorship is the only avenue to support the individual and their business.

The client has unrealistic expectations and assumes the mentor will undertake activity directly with their business.

Despite engagement on training, prior to mentorship – learning outcomes cannot be guaranteed; thus skills/ability cannot be guaranteed.

The high volume of mentorship engagements means that a rigorous needs assessment per client (though helpful) is impractical in terms of administration.

Opportunity

Arguably, due to the individual nature of the engagement and high volume, there is no universal solution. Equally one does not want to 'block' people from engaging with any support vehicle by adding unnecessary gates. However, the following may prove helpful at an operational level:

Develop collateral for the client to self evaluate their readiness for mentorship, such as a checklist. This could be included as part of a mentorship briefing document; whereby the medium is explained, and the individual is tasked with determining if they are ready to be mentored +/- should engage in training prior.

Where appropriate, request that the client engages in a 'general' advice clinic. Which would align to a 45 min engagement, this would allow for a number of outcomes:

- The client's needs are sufficiently served by the advice clinic.
- The mentor suggests that the individual engages with training.
- The mentor recommends to the LEO that the individual gets 1, 2 or 3 sessions (which the LEO can then assess/grant/decline).
- It is important to note however, that the, mentor facilitating the advice clinic should NOT be the onward mentor for that client or a training provider (to ensure objectivity and impartiality).

Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

One to One Training / Private Tuition / Micro Training

The following offers an overview of this delivery methodology, as it could apply to the LEO

Benefits

- ↓ Time
- No need to wait for min quantity numbers
- ↑ Relevance & Quality Control
- Capacity to implement new skills in real time /onsite
- Appropriate for remedial training
- Avoids negative 'classroom' blockers

Challenges

- Differentiation - Mentorship
- Potential VAT implication @ 21% - guidelines would need to be in place to ensure that one does not trigger this liability
- ↑ Cost – as the trainer may charge a rate in excess of their contact time, given that the content will be wholly tailored to the client.
- ↓ Economies of Scale

Commentary

It is proposed that private tuition can yield extensive benefits to the client and enable efficient learning and impactful outcomes; however, the LEO might benefit from taking the following into consideration when adopting this delivery methodology

· **Creating a framework to**

- Determine as to whether the client/ business is sufficiently differentiated to merit one to one tuition
- Confirm that mentorship is not a suitable vehicle for engagement
- Stipulate required learning outcomes, topics to be covered etc. This will likely be co-created with the client.

· **Sharing the cost with the client**

- Limiting the volume of sessions that a client can avail of– currently, individuals are not limited on the volume of training they can engage. However, this methodology would require an upper limit.

Recommendations

Delivery Methodology

Immersive Training

Feedback has shown an appetite for modular, blended learning and placed a priority on networking. Nevertheless, there was a marked lack of interest in immersive training. Thus, it might be inferred that the market is not yet ready to avail of same.

However, this educational delivery approach is gaining significant traction and it is unclear as to whether the funding period of 2021-2023 will see appetites shift more favourably towards this model. Consequently, it is proposed the LEO request a small cohort of trainers (on specific topics) to include an immersive element to their training delivery, to be utilised as a learner support tool (contrary to full workshop facilitation utilising this medium).

In doing so, it will allow the LEO to undertake a true assessment as to the

value of this approach, it will also introduce suppliers to tools, such that if the LEO does migrate to this approach in the future, suppliers will be familiarised with associated technologies / training

Examples of these include

- Simulations – enabling the learner to take control of a character that is expected to perform certain tasks utilising a computer or mobile programme.
- Game Based Learning – reflects gamified digital learning, allowing learners to compete with their peers, thus increasing engagement /networking.
- AR/VR – Engages learners visually, aurally +/- physically.
- 360 Degree Videos

Requirements + Classification Model

The knowledge base held by those working directly with the programmes was extensive and the survey boasted many positive comments on delivery, customer service and learning outcomes. However, stakeholders noted opportunities to further streamline the LEO offering. As a result, it is proposed that the LEO look at a training classification model in addition to its roll out of services. The following represents a potential model, but the LEO is best positioned to conceptualize / refine it further.

Flagship Activities

- Broadly, this category represents the established and long run activities at the LEO. However, pilot initiatives (which will become flagship) have also been allocated to this category.
- Based on booking data, the 'existing' flagship programmes have achieved market fit, whereby attendance figures and multiple iterations reflect a market need that is being met.
- It is therefore proposed that the replacement or the addition of similar programmes would not yield sufficient benefit and may confuse the market.
- A safeguard to this iterative extension model is reflected in the repeated programme evaluation, undertaken by the LEO.
- It is understood that these workshops will accommodate the entrepreneur in the order and volume chosen by him/her. Ultimately, building out a complete business 'tool-box' and fostering a self-directed learning methodology.
- Based on qualitative and quantitative research, an array of training needs/topics were determined. These areas have been addressed either as stand-alone workshops or topics which have been merged together.
- Quantitative data provides evidence that delivery across 0.5 days and 1-day interventions is optimal and thus the proposed schedule reflects this.
- Under this pillar, it is proposed that supports are targeted at the mass enterprise population, whereby the core topics covered are highly transferable across industry sectors.

Modular Training

- The existing business box series has had significant traction with the market to date (evidenced in participation). Accordingly, it is proposed that the LEO build on this brand and tool-box approach.
- Thus, it is proposed that the LEO extend this series offering a range of stand-alone workshops, which complement one another.
- Subsequent to modular interventions, clients can choose to engage on sector specific activities +/- longer run programmes. It is expected that this approach will see the modular training becoming the sales funnel for other activities. However, it is important to note, that subject to entry criteria - entrepreneurs can engage on longer run programmes directly (without any prior modular training).

Classification Overview

Flagship		Modular	
Events		Business Box Series	Specialist / Sector Specific
	Grant Aid & Funding 101	Business Development Pillar	Master Classes
	Develop Your Strategic Partners -Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Guide to Writing a Business Plan 	Partnered Activities External sector specific/ specialist organisations
	Brokerage Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Effectiveness & Goal Setting • Time Management 	Intervention Programming BREXIT / COVID
	Educational Trade Mission (Incl Training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership - In a Changing World • Innovation & New Product Development • Facilitated Brainstorming - Idea Generation Workshop 	
Training		Finance Pillar	
Start-Up Programme(s)	Kickstart Your Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing for Profit • Basic Book-Keeping • An SME Guide to Budgeting & Forecasting • Legal Compliance (Incl Taxation) - The Birdseye View • Finance for the Non-Financial Manager 	
	SYOB Programme		
Scale Up Programme(s)	Management Development Cluster		
	The Sales Academy		
Excellence Programme(s)	The Profit Academy		
	The Productivity Hub		
	Advanced Management & Strategy Devt.		
Pilot Programmes Specialist Training	The DUO Programme	Sales & Marketing Pillar	
	Carlow Creatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Sales & Marketing Strategy • Digital Marketing What, Why & How? • Marketing, PR & Communications • Sales Lead Generation Online & Offline • Brand Build & Implementation • Customer Service Standards & Evolution 	
	Tourism & Hospitality Programme		
	Food & Drink Development Programme		
	Festival & Event Development Programme		
	Manufacturing Development Programme		
	Food & Drink Development Programme	Technology Tools Pillar	
	Retail Sector - Passport Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trading Online Voucher Briefings • Beginners Guide to Social Media • Search Engine Optimisation & Website Development • Photography & Videography for my Business • Enable the Business on a Budget - Emerging IT Tools 	

Proposed Schedule



Activity	Theme	Duration	Title	No.s	2021	2022	2023	Detail
Flagship	Event	1 Day	Grant Aid & Funding 101	100	1	1	1	Relevant 3rd party stakeholders share their funding instruments across one comprehensive event. This will be recorded online also for onward distribution & client support
	Trade Mission		Educational Trade Mission (Incl Training)	Min. 8	1	1	1	2019 Model
	Start-Up Programme(s)	0.5 Day	Kickstart Your Business	15	6	6	6	Tender - Industry Standard
		6/3 Wks	SYOB Programme	15	4	4	4	Tender - Industry Standard
	Scale Up Programme(s)	12 Weeks	Management Development Cluster Programme	Min. 8	1	1	1	Existing Model
		12 Weeks	The Sales Academy	Min. 8	1	1	1	Existing Model
	Excellence Programme(s)	12 Weeks	The Profit Academy	Min. 8	1	1	1	Existing Model
		12 Weeks	The Productivity Hub	Min. 8	1	1	1	Existing Model
		12 Weeks	Advanced Management & Strategy Development	Min. 8	1	1	1	Existing Model
	Pilots	6 Weeks	The DUO Programme	Min. 8	1	0	0	Development required by consultation
	0.5 Day	Develop Your Strategic Partners -Sales Brokerage Event	60-80	1	0	0	Development required by consultation	
	5 Days	Carlow Creatives	10	0	0	0	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Tourism & Hospitality Programme	10	1	TBC	TBC	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Food & Drink Development Programme	10	1	TBC	TBC	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Festival & Event Development Programme	10	1	TBC	TBC	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Manufacturing Development Programme	10	=	1	=	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Food & Drink Development Programme	10	1	TBC	1	Development required by consultation	
	12 Weeks	Retail Sector - Passport Programme	10	1	1	1	Development required by consultation	
Business Development Box Series	1 Day		A Guide to Writing a Business Plan	10	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
Pillar	0.5 Day		Personal Effectiveness & Goal Setting	12	0	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
	0.5 Day		Time Management	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
	1 Day		Leadership - In a Changing World	12	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
	1 Day		Innovation & New Product Development	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
	1 Day		Facilitated Brainstorming - Idea Generation Workshop	12	1	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard

Proposed Schedule

Activity	Theme	Duration	Title	No.s	2021	2022	2023	Detail
Business Box Series	Finance Pillar	0.5 Day	Pricing for Profit	10	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Basic Book-Keeping	10	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	An SME Guide to Budgeting & Forecasting	10	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Legal Compliance (Incl. Taxation) - The Birdseye View	12	0	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Finance for the Non-Financial Manager	10	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	The Sales & Marketing Strategy - Action Plan	10	0	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Digital Marketing - What, Why & How?	12	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
Business Box Series	Sales & Marketing Pillar	1 Day	Marketing, PR & Communications	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		0.5 Day	Sales Lead Generation - Online & Offline	12	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Brand Build & Implementation	12	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Customer Service - Standards & Evolution	12	1	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
		0.5 Day	Trading Online Voucher Briefings	15-20	6	6	6	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Beginners Guide to Social Media	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Facebook for Business	12	1	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
Business Box Series	Technology Pillar	0.5 Day	Instagram for Business	12	1	1	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	The Website Development Toolkit	12	1	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Photography & Videography for my Business	12	1	1	0	Tender - Industry Standard
		1 Day	Video Production - Tools, Techniques & Tactics	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard
		0.5 Day	Enable My Business on a Budget - Emerging IT Tools	12	1	0	1	Tender - Industry Standard

Sector Specific/Specialist Activity

Existing measures and pilot programmes pertaining to tourism, food & drink, manufacturing, design, retail & strategic alliance have been facilitated. Modular Master Classes - external specialist training and events will be facilitated across sectors, these are to be demand and enterprise led, working in conjunction with key partners.

Intervention Training

Modular training pertaining to dynamic issues as they arise, will be accommodated via the training schedule e.g. BREXIT /COVID

Budget

A review of the schedule was presented to Carlow LEO who agreed that the proposed activity could be delivered within the budgets available.

Exclusions

Exclusions apply to the above schedule – these include regional training programmes (e.g. Brightstart /Lighthouse) and mandated programming (e.g. Lean for Micro)

Driving Efficiencies - Programme Edits

During the course of this research, it was determined that a number of existing programmes/ supports would benefit from being augmented. The following details proposed revisions -

Trading Online Voucher

Rationale

The tool has been highly effective – evidenced in the volume of draw-downs and successful applications. However, this success has a direct correlation to the high levels of administrative and ancillary support offered by the Carlow LEO. Accordingly, there may be opportunities to streamline the process further, while retaining the core successful operational structure.

The current support methodology - reflects

- A debrief as a prerequisite to drawdown – with up to 50 pax in attendance.
- Followed by administrative support – inclusive of
 - Mentorship allocation (in some instances)
 - Compliance clarifications – CRO / Tax Clearance Certs/ 3 Quotes
 - Calculation Support – draw down spending ratios
 - Training Provision

Suggestion




It is proposed that the following amendments to the briefing session might decrease some of the administrative burden. Whereby, irrespective of the benefits of training/mentorship, not all patrons will be open to participation. However, in order to engage with the grant, they must attend the briefings and thus, it is an opportune time to upskill +/- pipeline them to onward training and development.

Briefings

- Limit attendee numbers to 15–20 allowing for increased engagement/questions
- Increase the duration of the briefing from 60 mins to 2hrs
- Break the briefing into sections
 - Becoming an Informed Customer
 - An introduction to Trading Online – terms/ processes / systems
 - Planning Tool
 - Furnish attendees with a high-level template to align investment with sales
 - The Process - TOV
 - Form Filling
 - Compliance
 - Ratio's - provide attendees with an excel Sheet – with pre-calculated ratios
 - FAQ Sheet

Driving Efficiencies - Programme Edits

Intervention Programming – E.g. Covid / Brexit

Rationale	<p>The evolving nature of this activity means that it is difficult to forecast and anticipate required activities/ training.</p> <p>Equally the urgency, timing and volume of clients are driven by external factors; this can result in a significant influx of clients at a specific point in time. As a result, the system/resource pool can be challenged to service them robustly.</p>
Suggestion	<p>Traffic Light System</p> <p>It is proposed that a streamlined escalation procedure may benefit this activity pillar, should there be an influx of clients. Informally, this approach is already being adopted; accordingly, this suggestion is an extension of current practices.</p> <p> Advisory Clinic Days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 pax per day/advisor• 45-60 min diagnostic• Results in a checklist of issues/needs• Decision on <p> 1 Mentorship Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on a specific area/ discipline <p> 2+ Mentorship Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on an action e.g. grant application, plan <p>Forms – Streamline Documents</p> <p>At present feedback reports take circa 60 mins to complete with high volumes of demographic data. Optimally, this form filling should take no more than 20 mins; thus, increasing the time spent with the client by 30-40 mins per engagement. Therein, it may be worthwhile to review the form structure.</p>

Driving Efficiencies - Programme Edits

SYOB Programme

Rationale	<p>The following observations were noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The preliminary on-boarding of clients (via a ½ workshop) has been working well• The 10-week programme is perhaps too long• Feedback on the 3-day programme was mixed – whereby the duration seemed to agree with clients, but learning outcomes were challenged.• Mentorship was deemed essential for the programme• It was/is difficult to ascertain how impactful the training has been and whether they have gone on to establish a business.
Suggestion	<p>The following lists a potential flow of activity that the LEO may choose to adopt in light of the feedback received.</p> <p>½ Day Kickstart Session – an introductory training day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports sales pipeline to a 6wk intervention• BTWEA referral system could be established whereby the Kickstart trainer requests participants to complete a SICAD form; thereafter, the local development company can support them in securing funding support. <p>6 Week Programme</p> <p>Content to include but not be limited to - Finance, Entrepreneurial Mindset/ Promotion for Small Business/ Legal Issues/ Compliance / Business Planning/ Grant Aid & Supports overview.</p> <p>It is proposed that a lead trainer is appointed for the programme but that approximately approximately 2 workshops are delivered by additional subject matter experts. Therein, enabling variant facilitation styles and mitigating against learner inertia.</p> <p>Mentorship</p> <p>2 Sessions per individual</p> <p>It is proposed that multiple mentors are made available to individuals as part of this process, each supporting a specialist area such as Finance, Research and Business Case Development +/- Strategy. Therein, the participant can self direct the supports that they wish to draw down on, choosing resources they feel are most appropriate to their venture.</p> <p>Outreach / Check-In</p> <p>Outward bound email to participants to determine onward training needs and business development stage.</p>

Rationale

Pilot Initiatives

The following details an array of pilot opportunities which the LEO may choose to action over the coming three-year period.

Events

Grant Aid & Funding 101

What?	<p>Event: Flagship Annual Event – Online +/- Offline Duration: 1 Day Attendees: 100+ pax</p> <p>Detail A one stop shop event – where a large cohort of agencies (private & public) engage and communicate their respective support instruments. Organisations might include but are not limited to the following – Enterprise Ireland, Revenue / IT Carlow/ Board Failte / Skillnets / Intertrade Ireland / HBAN network / EEN/ Local Development Companies/ Credit Review Office/ Tax Experts... etc.</p>
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing challenge to holistically communicate new / existing enterprise support instruments.• Confusion amongst SME's in terms of their eligibility.• Administrative burden associated with fielding queries/ referrals to other organisations.• Opportunity to capture Ireland's multifaceted enterprise support landscape and associated benefits.• Opportunity to engage various stakeholders in the region on behalf of LEO clients and generate networking opportunities.• Enterprise-Led Research Tool<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Carlow LEO could create a You-tube Channel◦ Opportunity to record each speaker as a standalone topic.◦ Post-Event, LEO clients can go online and view specific funding information relevant to them, facilitated through the LEO.◦ This 'live' video library can be augmented in line with the role out of new developments +/- additional bodies that would like to communicate their supports to Carlow LEO clients.

Develop Your Strategic Partnerships

Sales Brokerage Event

What?

Event: Facilitated Networking event to foster participant co-selling/ strategic partnerships

Duration: 0.5 Days

Attendees: 50+ pax

Detail

The purpose of the event is to create an environment which fosters dialogue amongst businesses, equipping them with the opportunity and tools to scope out potential alliances with respect to co-selling and symbiotic relationships. The event will differ from a meet the buyer event – whereby the connections are not centered round purchasing; conversely, they reflect a focus on strategic alliance for growth.

Why?

Qualitative feedback has yielded insight into an opportunity to bolster partnership relationships within the county, fostering co-selling and ‘packaging’ of products and services – specifically within the following industries.

- Tourism & Hospitality – Holiday Packages
- Food & Drink – Agri Food Tourism / Supply Chain/ Hampers

It is proposed however, that the event is extended out to other industry verticals, as deemed appropriate.

Pilot Initiatives

Programmes: The Duo Programme

What?

Methodology

- Training & Mentorship Support
- Blended Learning (Rotation Model)

Duration: 12-week Programme

Attendees: 10-12 pax / 5 Partnerships

Detail

The DUO programme is a pilot, created in order to support the development of partnerships in County Carlow. Its function is to optimize and de-risk the partnership process, fostering alignment with individuals who enter into a partnership arrangement.

It is expected that the DUO programme will reflect but not be limited to the following partnership combinations

- Marriage/Civil Partnerships (one likely exiting employment to support the venture)
- JV Partnerships

Why?

To foster scaled growth, often an entrepreneur must align with another venture +/- individual. This partnership process can be challenging. Whereby, the founder has activated the business and achieved proof of concept; however, in order to maintain development - the venture requires human capital investment +/- skills acquisition. To support this, an incoming partner can often provide commercial skills, insights, and beneficial techniques to drive the business forward and support scaling pathways.

Tourism & Hospitality Programme

<p>What?</p>	<p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEO + Partner delivering Training to a Business and its employees • Training & Mentorship Support • Blended Learning (Rotation Model) <p>Duration: 12-week Programme</p> <p>Attendees: 2-5 Businesses</p> <p>Detail</p> <p>This will be an inter-organisational programme (LEO + another organisation) which sees a small number of suitable ventures, agree to upskill promoters and employees alike. This training will be facilitated by one central training provider. Workshops will be facilitated at a management level by the LEO and reinforced at an employee level, thus ensuring core values and consistent messaging.</p>
<p>Why?</p>	<p>Currently, businesses have to engage in an independent manner with multiple bodies, in order to draw down on the extensive training supports that are available. In doing so, there can be a discontent between the training received by managers and staff. This in turn yields challenges around the implementation of new skills and return on investment. It is proposed that this programme will aid in streamlining the disconnect that could occur between management training and employee training. Whereby, one training provider is appointed across two organisations (e.g. the LEO & Skillnet) to deliver 'both sides' of the content.</p>

Pilot Initiatives

Carlow Retail Passport

What?

Methodology

- Grant + Training & Mentorship Support
- Self Directed Modular Learning + Specialist Training

Duration: 12-month Programme

Attendees: 10 Businesses

Detail

It is anticipated that the Retail Passport programme will be a unification tool, which merges existing grant aid with modular training and specialist provision. Attendance at a requisite number of modular workshops, will trigger mentorship supports in grant aid completion and availability of sector specific workshops such as merchandising, shop window displays etc.

Why?

- Not all Retailers are drawing down on the instruments that are available to them
- There are approximately 200 retailers in the town and less than 50% of them are currently deemed as active (in terms of engaging with supports). This activation is an ongoing challenge.
- Retailer availability is limited, as many do not have support staff. Evidenced by the fact that 1-day programmes are not favored by this cohort.
- Anecdotally, retailers often respond better to targeted supports/ marketing; thus, a high investment in online & offline promotion would need to have longevity.
- Self-directed learning/activity would likely be suited to this cohort vs. a fixed schedule of engagement.

Carlow Creatives

<p>What?</p>	<p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blended • Online – Learning • Offline – Networking Events • Self Directed Modular Learning + Specialist Training <p>Duration: 6-month Programme</p> <p>Attendees: 10 Businesses</p> <p>Detail</p> <p>It is expected that the programme will support up to ten creative business owners, in the development and enhancement of online sales platforms – supporting business development. It is envisaged that the promoters will go from zero to online sales in 6 months. Peer to peer learning and engagement is to be a focal point of the programme whereby a community-driven learning environment is to be created, such that promoters feel empowered, enabled and supported to sell online. Furthermore, it is envisaged the programme will enable participants to develop a network to support further business development, post program completion.</p>
<p>Why?</p>	<p>Online sales for the creative industry can be challenging whereby the features of the product such as texture, size, colour, material etc. are better understood in person. It is a unique skill to promote the facets of products pertaining to this industry; remotely; thus, extensive support is required to ensure that the creative industry in Carlow remains digitally progressive and adapts to emerging sales tools.</p>

Pilot Initiatives

Food & Drink Development Programme

Why?

Research has determined a distinct need for a food and drinks development intervention; however, this will need to cohesively link in with the existing support landscape and have sufficient differentiation. Accordingly, it is proposed that the LEO undertake this pilot after an appropriate consultation process and bespoke programme development

Manufacture Development Programme

Why?

Research has determined a requirement for manufacturing and engineering support interventions; however, this will need to cohesively link in with the existing support landscape and have sufficient differentiation. Accordingly, it is proposed that the LEO undertake this pilot after an appropriate consultation process and bespoke programme development.

Onward Projects

The following outline a cross section of onward projects that the LEO might invest in moving forward, building on the research outlined within this document

Partner Pathways - Mapping

The LEO may find it fruitful to map out the partner pathways/journeys which its clients can engage upon and illustrate them to allow for cross-fertilization of stakeholder engagement. And enhanced clarity amongst the business community.

Go to Market Communications Plan

The LEO offers a high-quality multifaceted service; accordingly, training is one facet of a much larger obligation to the Carlow business community. Arguably, there is a communication challenge associated with such a breath of services and so, the LEO may benefit from a plan to support this. The LEO may choose to extend the training classification and customer segmentation outlined in this report. However, it is envisaged that the function of the plan would be to link the training, customer segments, channels, and market messaging tactics/strategies.

IT Enablement

Feedback on this report has centered round an openness to training online and this shift in operations is likely to yield challenges in terms of operational compliance. These include:

Compliance

- Proof of attendance – difficult to track in an online environment, at present one must either rely on the trainer +/- validate manually
- Customer feedback surveys – no facility to consistently administer this in an online setting and limited guarantees in terms of client completion.
- Multiple providers – each with different IT skills, tools, and capability.
- Reflective practice – reflective learning is an essential component of course evaluation and currently there is no robust tool to aid in the capture of this information.
- Out- reach – whereby the LEO determines if any additional supports are required by the client +/- clarify their current business development stage. This remains a manual process and as a result is highly impacted by resourcing.
- Potential Solution
- An LMS tool – could be adopted to focus on the above, Moodle /Drupal are open source which would not require an annual license; but would require upfront investment in terms of initial set-up and an ongoing resource to manage the platform. A licensed version may also be established.

Onward Projects

· An auditing tool – which would have the value- add of being able to manage the ‘training’ administrative load but also the processes associated with mentorship and grant applications. One such tool is currently used by an incubation center in the mid-west and has proven highly successful.

Technical Cross-Over /Up-Selling

On longer run programmes, there are technical skills which may not be covered, but which are complimentary e.g. digital marketing may be touched on within an SYOB 6 week programme but the individual might benefit from a deeper dive through a full day session.

As a result, the LEO may benefit from establishing a sales process model, whereby it pinpoints natural crossovers for the instructor and communicates it to them, such that they can pipeline participants.

Mentorship vs Consultancy

It was noted amongst LEO staff and suppliers alike, that aligning expectations with regard to mentorship and consultancy was challenging. Whereby, clients assumed that the mentor would undertake work within the business (vs. guide and support the entrepreneur). Thus, it might be beneficial to either

- Create a briefing document for clients
- Link in with IT Carlow on their upcoming publication.

Appendix I Survey



CARLOW
 COUNTY COUNCIL
 COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHEATHARLOCHA

Difig Fiontair Áitiúil
 Local Enterprise Office



**European Regional
 Development Fund**

Copy of COMPLETE THIS SURVEY / WIN 100 EURO!

Introduction - For Your Tomorrow, Take Action Today!

Every year, Carlow County Council's Local Enterprise Office offer you the opportunity to participate in subsidized training and capacity development programmes (as part of a suite of supports). Aligned to that process, it needs your input. Carlow County Council appreciate, that as a local business you are best positioned to help them design the supports for you - the business community!

Now is your window of opportunity to ask for the type of support you need!

Plus - A Chance to WIN €100

Be in with a chance to win a €100 voucher - to spend at a Carlow shop of your choice. To ENTER - just provide your contact details at the end of the survey!

Privacy - As part of the project, an independent company "Bridgewater" has been contracted to undertake research. Please note that the information provided will remain anonymous and will only be used for the purpose outlined. For further

information - please **email** info@bridgewater.ie or **call** 061 512 120

* **1.** How well do you Understand Ireland's Enterprise Support Landscape



Business Demographic

Please Provide the following information

Business Name	<input type="text"/>
Sole Trader / Limited Company	<input type="text"/>
Staff No.	<input type="text"/>
Website Address (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Business Address	<input type="text"/>

The Business Currently Trades

Please select the option(s) which apply to you

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Products | <input type="checkbox"/> Locally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Regionally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B2C - Business to Consumer | <input type="checkbox"/> Nationally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B2B - Business to Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Internationally |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B2B + B2C | <input type="checkbox"/> Online - via an eCommerce Website |

When was the Business Established?

Business Sector

Please select from the drop down menu

Other

Please specify

Business Demographic

Training Preference

Please select from the following

Who might benefit from training within the business?

Please tick the relevant options

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Owner(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Key Manager(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales Rep(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Operative(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | | |

If you were to engage with training, please advise what duration, times, days are optimal?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monday | <input type="checkbox"/> Half Day: 6pm - 9pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Half Day: 9pm - 1pm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Morning: 7am - 9am |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday | <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive: 1 Day Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday | <input type="checkbox"/> Evening Courses: 4 - 6 Weeks in duration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday | <input type="checkbox"/> Longer Programmes: up to 6 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Day Bootcamp |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Training Topic - Business Management

Please select areas / topics that are of interest to you and the business

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resource Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Effectiveness & Goal Setting | <input type="checkbox"/> New Product Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Safety Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LEAN Project Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Modelling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Considerations | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Aid & Funding 101 | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> BREXIT - Customs & Excise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Succession Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> BREXIT - Preparation & Planning / Capacity Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness | <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive - Start Your Own Business Management Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Training Topic - Sales & Marketing

Please select areas / topics that are of interest to you and the business

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sales & Marketing Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> Product Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PR & Marketing Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Production |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales - Lead Generation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Branding | <input type="checkbox"/> Export & Internationalization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandising | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

Business Demographic

Training Topic - Finance & Legal Considerations

Please select areas / topics that are of interest to you and the business

- Basic Bookkeeping
- Pricing for Profit
- Budgeting & Forecasting
- Credit Control
- Other (please specify)
- Compliance & Regulations
- Finance for the Non Financial Manager
- Legal Considerations

Training Topic - ICT

Please select areas / topics that are of interest to you and the business

- Basic Computer Skills
- Website Development (e.g. Wix, WordPress)
- Digital Marketing (e.g. Search Engine Optimization, Blogs)
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Project
- Computerized Accounts
- Adobe Illustrator
- Other (please specify)
- InDesign
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Photography - Online Tools
- CRM Customer Relationship Management Systems
- ERP Systems (e.g. SAP / Oracle)
- Current & Emerging Online Tools (e.g. Canva, Slack)

Please rank the following training topics in order of importance to your business!

1 = Most Important / 5 Least Important

Business Planning & Strategy

Marketing & Sales

Finance

Export and Internationalization

Management Development Training e.g. Leadership / Performance Management

Business Expansion Goals (within the next 3-5 years)

Please select the options most relevant to you

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upsell to existing customers | <input type="checkbox"/> Hire Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grow Sales into neighbouring County | <input type="checkbox"/> Product Development & Innovation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expand Sales Regionally | <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade Premises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expand Sales Nationally | <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase Machinery & Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expand Sales Internationally | <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue - Turnover in excess of 1 million euro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase online sales | <input type="checkbox"/> No growth expected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other details (please specify) | |

Business Demographic

Additional LEO Supports (excl. Training)

Please advise, what (if any) of the following are of interest to you!

- Tailored Guidance - on choosing the right type of support for your business
- Trade Missions
- Events - Tradeshows / Networking Seminars etc.
- Advisory Clinic - one to one meeting (circa 45min duration)
- Micro Finance Ireland Loan
- Grant Aid
- Mentorship - multiple one to one meetings, supporting a business goal
- Referrals - connecting you with other state bodies such as Dept. Social Protection, Revenue, Skillnets etc.
- Consultancy - Outsourced Project Work

Built Environment

Please advise, what (if any) of the following are of interest to you!

- Co-working Space
- Digital Hub
- Access to a Manufacturing Unit
- Other (please specify)
- Access to a Retail Unit
- Access to an Experimental Kitchen
- Fibre Broadband Access

Please rate the importance of the following

1 = Most Important / 5 Least Important

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Networking | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Peer to Peer Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Female specific enterprise supports | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Private Investment | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Access to Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Membership of a representative body (e.g. SFA / Irish Exporters Association / Failte Ireland) | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |

Any other comments / suggestions!

Prize Draw - Contact Information!

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

