Building Digital Capability for NZ Small Businesses Project

We engaged with over 170 people over the course of the project, including business advisers, small to medium business owners and digital experts.

100%
of small business owners we interviewed, totally agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement “I’m strongly interested in digital options and how they can benefit my business”

Small businesses rely on trusted advisers for digital advice

Small businesses rely on face to face conversations with trusted advisers and experts to make business decisions around investments in their technology and skills. These ‘trusted intermediaries’ include their industry association, business adviser, accountant, or regional bodies (such as tourism organisations or economic development agencies).

75%
of small business owners we interviewed, totally agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement “I intend to apply the things I learnt [at the event] to my business”

Underutilisation of social media

There is limited use of social media as a channel to ‘nudge’ digital behaviours in small businesses. It could be better utilised by trusted intermediaries to communicate and share relevant information with their member/clients.

54%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “Finding reliable information about digital or examples how digital is used in examples of the industry that is relevant to our small business clients is very difficult”

Building small business digital capability is not always a priority for industry organisations

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50%
of events included in the evaluation followed up with a feedback survey or email

The impact of events on digital action is not clear

The impact of events on digital action is not clear. The success of events in changing small business behaviours is not generally measured by intermediaries running these events. Actions that small businesses take which result from the content and expertise shared and demonstrated at these events are not generally assessed.

75%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “We need stronger regional networks, so we know who to get relevant digital expert advice from and refer our small business clients to”

Networking is highly valued

Networking and talking to other people is a key enabler for small businesses to make decisions about their business. Small businesses value the opportunities that events present to network with their peers and experts.

42%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “We don’t really utilise social media to communicate and share information with our small business clients”

Reliable and relevant information on digital can be hard to find

Reliable content is more engaging to small businesses on digital can be hard to find. Relevant content is more engaging to small businesses. To help with this, they are looking for international digital trends and how they apply to the NZ context; data & facts to help them benchmark their small businesses. To help with this, they are looking for international digital trends and how they apply to the NZ context; data & facts to help them benchmark their small businesses. To help with this, they are looking for international digital trends and how they apply to the NZ context; data & facts to help them benchmark their small businesses. To help with this, they are looking for international digital trends and how they apply to the NZ context; data & facts to help them benchmark their small businesses.

42%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “I expect to advertise and grow my business”

Demand exists for more sector-specific content and for independent digital advisory organisations.

50%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “I found the event I attended with others”

Some intermediaries don’t see themselves as a ‘digital advocate’ for small businesses. Those that do sometimes lack the time, resource, expertise and confidence to play that role.

75%
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80%
of small business owners we interviewed, totally agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement “I intend to share the things I learnt at the event I attended with others”

There is limited investment by trusted intermediaries in tracking the impact of event content on small business digital behaviour. Getting independent digital speakers is difficult. Trusted intermediaries lack awareness about independent digital advisory organisations.

50%
of the intermediaries and business advisers we interviewed commented that the organisation they work for saw digital development as a priority

Trusted intermediaries lack awareness about independent digital advisory organisations.

42%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “I expect to advertise and grow my business”

Shortage of independent digital experts

There is a need for reliable experts to refer small businesses to, especially those with sector specific expertise.

54%
of intermediaries we surveyed, agreed with the statement “Finding reliable information about digital or examples how digital is used in examples of the industry that is relevant to our small business clients is very difficult”

Some trusted intermediaries struggle to find the right people in New Zealand who can provide good impartial digital advice, speak well at industry events and know enough about a particular sector to provide detailed tech solutions.

Small businesses and trusted intermediaries prefer advice from impartial digital experts. Most technology providers are perceived as biased.

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Industry and regional events are preferred ways for small businesses to advance their digital development, though getting people to attend can be difficult.