



smallbusinessadvice.ie



Helping to keep your business in business



OUTLINE - SMALL BUSINESS ADVICE PROGRAMME

Introduction

The Small Business Advice Programme (smallbusinessadvice.ie) is a voluntary response by the business community to the challenges that recession brings for small business across the country. A panel of Advisers has been assembled, with significant business experiences, who are volunteering their time to give practical advice to small businesses. Small businesses can benefit from tapping into this pool of knowledge by applying for an advice meeting through the Small Business Advice website www.smallbusinessadvice.ie. Applications may also be made by phone, fax, email or by post.

Recession forces businesses to change in order to survive. That change can be difficult and many businesses can't afford professional advice. Our business Advisers will give solid, practical advice on how to prepare for the new market challenges. It may not be possible to totally recession proof your business. However, there are practical measures Small Businesses can take to maximise the potential of your business, to survive and even grow in tough times.

Key Points

➤ ***Structure***

A voluntary not for profit group which has been set up for an initial period of 12 months to provide assistance to small businesses experiencing difficulty in the Cork and Munster area.

A Supervisory Committee of 5 people has been set up to oversee the implementation and operation of the Programme. It is proposed that the Supervisory Committee will meet bi-monthly for a 12 month period (6 meetings).

A motion will be tabled at the 6th meeting to discuss and agree the options for the way forward for the Programme, including possible expansion of the initiative outside the Cork and Munster area, if it has proven to be of assistance to small businesses.

Supervisory Committee members:

- Simon Coveney TD (Chairman)
- Denis Kirby (Secretary)
- John Mullins – Bord Gáis Eireann
- JJ O'Connell – Plato
- Eddie Hobbs

➤ **Participation**

Participation is on a voluntary basis by small Business Owners, Advisers, Sponsors and Supporters.

➤ **Sponsors and Supporters**

The initial Sponsors include Bord Gáis Eireann, Plato and initial Supporters include The Cork Chamber of Commerce and The Cork Business Association.

➤ **Small Business Owners**

Small Businesses Owners will participate on a voluntary basis and accept that all advice is provided by the Adviser under the Terms of Engagement

➤ **Advisers**

Advisers will participate on a voluntary and completely confidential basis in accordance with a Code of Conduct). Advisers will be requested to complete a short profile which will be used to match the small business requirement with the particular expertise of the Adviser.

➤ **Costs**

All parties will bear their own costs, Small Businesses, Advisers, BGE as Project Manager, and various service suppliers.

➤ **Implementation**

- (1) A website has been developed and launched - www.smallbusinessadvice.ie
- (2) A database of Advisers has been compiled
- (3) The Programme was launched on 29th October 2009
- (4) Advisers have received training on participation in the Programme

➤ **Process for assisting Small Businesses**

- Small Business Owners may contact the Small Business Advice Programme via the website www.smallbusinessadvice.ie and as part of this process will confirm acceptance of the Terms of Engagement.
- Applications may also be made by :
 - Phone : 021-4534163
 - Fax: 021-4534341
 - Email: applications@smallbusinessadvice.ie
 - Post: Small Business Advice Programme
PO Box 51
Gasworks Road
Cork
- The Programme Project Manager will contact the small Business Owner, get further information, and request the small Business Owner to complete and submit a short questionnaire. The Project Manager will assist in this process if required.
- The Project Manager will match the requirements of the small Business Owner with one or more of the Advisers.
- The contact between the small Business Owner and the Adviser will consist of 1 to 3 meetings. The number of meetings will be capped at 3 as this should be enough time for the nature of assistance to be delivered and avoiding over-reliance by the small Business Owner on the Adviser input. The typical duration for each meeting will be 2 - 3 hours.
- The Adviser will keep a log or some brief notes of the discussions at the meetings and the nature of the advice given.
- The Project Manager will follow up with the small Business Owner after the Adviser meetings and get feedback on the process.