

Small business skills workshops

Great Barrier Local Board Grant - Accountability and Report

Due date: 30 August 2018

Introduction

The 'Small Business Essentials' project is governed by Aotea Education Trust and subcontracted to Marea and Rendt Gorter for implementation. Orama Christian Fellowship Trust is acting as the umbrella organisation for this project.

The programme was advertised through Barrier Bulletin advertisements, feature articles, posted notices, a dedicated Facebook page, an email list and posts on Barrier Chitchat, as well as monthly mail drops. The Great Barrier Local Board was acknowledged as funder everywhere.

Presenters with relevant experience were invited from on and off island, with travel expenses, boarding and a small fee paid, ranging from \$80 to \$200.

Project objective:

To deliver a series of weekly business-based workshops over a four-month period to support residents to upskill and assist local businesses to build capability, and to provide workshop facilitation opportunities with business-based skills.

Local Board priority:

Our people thrive and life is good. Our economy is sustainable and prosperous.

Progress / key performance indicators:

Eight out of twelve sessions have been completed since July. Of 12 total participants, six showed regular commitment to attend when available, and another 4 have turned up more than twice. Each block had 3 evening sessions followed by another on a Saturday morning.

Block 1 "Getting the basics right"

1. Financial literacy, with Nikki Korte, chartered accountant. 10pp
2. Employing part-time staff, with Rochelle Winger, former bakery owner. 8pp
3. Technology basics, with Rendt Gorter. 6pp
4. Essential business systems in cl. a Xero and Cashbooks demo, with Kit Cunningham and Marea Gorter. 5pp

Block 2 "Marketing fundamentals"

5. Advertising, pricing and sales, with Nic Tonlinson, Barrier Wheels. 6pp
6. Market research, with Marea Gorter. 3pp
7. Marketing strategy, with Melissa Irace, marketing consultant, Auckland. 5pp
8. Marketing action plan, with Marea Gorter. 2pp

Summary of outcomes:

The planned outcome was that Islanders are given the chance to upskill and interact with like-minded people. A more skilled workforce.

The intended learning objectives were achieved, as far as coverage of topics, surveys from representative workshops and informal feedback showed. A full evaluation report will be completed after the programme is completed.

Highlights and challenges:

1. The mix of on and off island presenters has worked well to both create interest and provide knowledgeable inputs from the mainland while giving local and experienced business entrepreneurs also the opportunity to share their learning.
2. The timing of 3 after work weekday sessions followed by one longer Saturday workshop for each monthly block suited some participants but in the last block will be purely evening sessions.
3. Each session begins with an informal exchange over a cup of soup as well as a post session discussion which has proven valuable and useful time for networking and sharing.
4. The prior levels of knowledge vary greatly, making it necessary to work at a pace suiting everyone. For this reason, the course was adapted to spend the September block workshopping previous content to help participants apply it effectively to their own businesses.
5. Participants came from both services and trades, ranging from accommodation providers, and tourism activity providers, to a horticultural producer, a builder and an electrician.
6. There is more extensive need for fundamental skills such as bookkeeping and IT know-how than what can be provided in this broad workshop series.

Looking forward:

The workshop programme continues through September with Block 3, allowing past and new participants, as requested, to work on individual objectives already covered in previous sessions, to complete plans and tools for developing their own businesses.

Appendix: Block 3

Over the four weekday 5-7pm sessions during September, there will be resources and advice available, so that participants can choose to ...

- Define their target market, or
- Develop their marketing strategy, or
- Write down their 'story', their sales pitch, their 30s spiel, or
- Brainstorm their logo, their branding, their buy-line, or
- Write survey questions to find answers, such as pricing, or
- Explore the inner workings of Facebook, or
- Build a one-page website, or
- Upload pictures onto their AirBnB listing, or
- Trial online accounting software, like Xero, MYOB, Cashbook, or
- Test Fergus, a job management software for tradies, or
- Adapt an employment contract template, or
- Set up a mailing list, or
- Complete their business plan, or
- Find out where to get more advice.