



DEVELOPING AN EVIDENCE-LED SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUB AT A SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS SCHOOL

Prof. Dr. Peet Venter
SBL, UNISA, South Africa



SBL Business Hub team

- Peet Venter
- Colene Hind
- Ireze van Wyk
- Renier Steyn



Purpose of the presentation

- Presenting research findings regarding small business support needs
- Presenting plans for a SBL Business Hub to support small businesses in the Midrand area, but also more broadly in Gauteng, South Africa, and Africa



Why the focus on SME?

- In 2050, Africa will be the most populous continent, more than 25% of the global population (UN estimates)
- Africa faces many problems, among them youth unemployment
- To address this growth and these problems, it needs responsible leadership, effective institutions, and successful entrepreneurs and small businesses
- There is a lot of focus on providing support to new start-ups in the form of business incubators and accelerators, there appears to be less support for existing small businesses, which is the focus of this initiative
- As a business school, we are focused on impact in society – SMEs present an opportunity for such an impact through our lecturers, students, and alumni

Theoretical positioning

- Small business is seen as an important role player in developing and developed economies and a driver of economic growth (Kaigama, 2023; Rashid, Nuruzzaman, Rahman, & Chowdhury, 2022)
- WTO estimates that in low-income countries, small business contributes the bulk of total employment
- However, many small businesses fail, due to lack of access to information, markets, technical knowledge, resources and an unfavourable regulatory environment (Adaeze & Mashinini, 2022)
- Little knowledge about what SMEs need in terms of knowledge and support



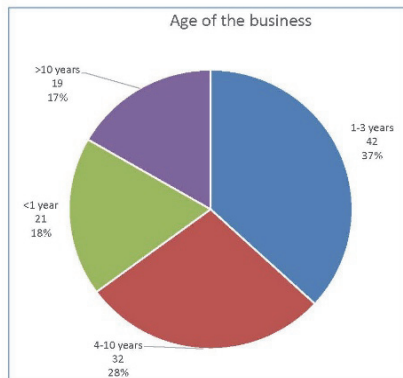
Respondent profiles

- Median age of 40
- Mainly female (71%)
- Over 90% has tertiary education
- 85% owners of co-owners

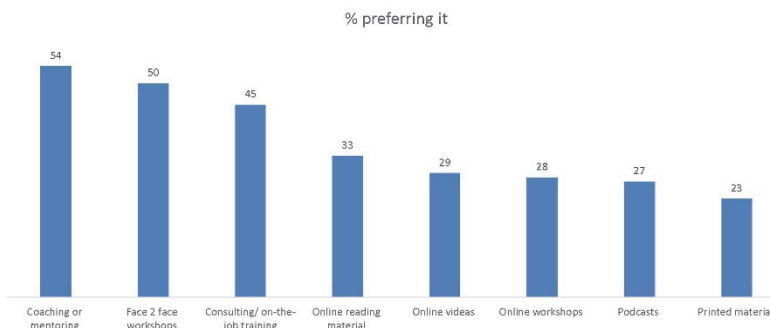


Who responded (businesses)?

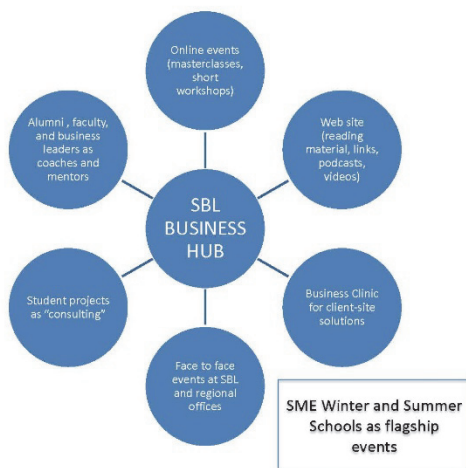
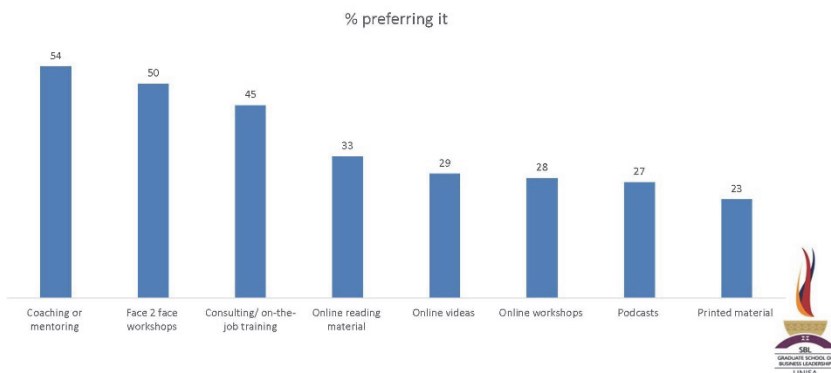
- Businesses with less than 150 employees
- Mainly based in Gauteng (86%)
- Mainly personal services (33%) and financial and business services (33%)
- Mainly businesses younger than 10 years
- Over 60% registered for VAT, or planning to



Key knowledge delivery needs



Key knowledge delivery needs



Key success factors

- Growing and maintaining the SBL Business Hub database with every event
- It is not a business venture, it is community engagement – events are free or offered at nominal fees
- Keep it bite-sized – SMEs do not have the time or inclination to engage with long interventions
- Keep it practical – no interest in theories or academic research