

ACCELERATOR GROWTH BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN

Training Modules:

- Group mentoring, using Action Learning techniques
- Business Strategy
- Marketing
- Accountancy and Finance
- Employment Law and HR

100% of participants succeeded in growing their business over 6 months.

Feedback from participants:

“Fantastic group dynamics – inspiring, energising, lots of good business advice. Helps enormously to keep the momentum going”

“I’ve found the sessions immensely enjoyable. It’s a great opportunity to have feedback on your ideas and the issues you are facing from people in a similar situation”

“Fantastic course, I’m really glad I did it. Great combination of structured input from facilitators and informal input from other women”

“An excellent balance between self reflection and taught business skills which I think is vital to developing an holistic approach to personal and business development”

“Very relevant, lots of interaction, very tailored to our individual business. Really valuable input from all group members”

“Inova has created an excellent, well researched, useful, realistic and effective course. Our group mentoring has provided all of us with much needed guidance and support. Just fantastic!”

Programme Funded by Business Link South Yorkshire & Yorkshire Forward

Introduction to the programme

Inova Consultancy offered the Accelerator Growth business training programme to 20 women business owners in South Yorkshire from 2007 to 2008. The programme builds on Inova's expertise in delivering training and mentoring programmes to women entrepreneurs, offering a unique mix of soft and hard skills training combined with action learning based mentoring. Participants were placed in learning sets of 5 women business owners with one female facilitator, meeting 6 times over a 6 month period for half day and whole day sessions. The programme was divided into modules, interspersing reflection and action learning sessions with workshops on business strategy, marketing, accountancy & finance and employment law. Women involved in the programme had been running their businesses for between 2 and 5 years but were in need of a boost in skills and confidence in order to take their businesses to the next level. Participants were working in varied sectors including PR / media, IT consultancy, retail and catering. The 2 facilitators who led the groups are both experienced business women trained to Masters level in group facilitation, coaching, mentoring and organisational development.

Hard skills workshops

Workshops on business strategy, marketing, accountancy & finance and employment law were delivered by consultants brought in for their expertise in these subject areas. Feedback was extremely positive, with many participants saying that the training had exceeded their expectations. Workshops were tailored to the needs of the learning sets.

Action learning through mentoring

Mentoring Circles were a crucial part of the Accelerator Growth programme, providing participants with a 'safe' place in which to discuss challenges and issues they were facing in the development of the business. Mentees found this very beneficial in helping them to focus on solutions rather than problems and to think about their issues creatively. Evaluation completed by participants also showed that they were surprised at how far their issues were shared by the other women and how beneficial it was to discuss this openly. Participants used a work pack with exercises and tools designed to help them to identify issues holding them back, plan actions to deal with these issues, and most importantly review progress and re-focus on priorities. This action learning approach is vital to underpin the hard skills training, giving participants the tools to learn and effect change in their business for years to come. Group mentoring also gave participants the time and space to develop supportive relationships with one another.