



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND



**New Zealand Business First
Report #2**

***Collaboratively identifying business dilemmas
through engagement with business, for business***

Following a workshop 12 November 2019, facilitated by
Dirk Boehe, James Lockhart, Wayne Macpherson & Jennifer Scott

Massey Business School

and

Steph Gundersen-Reid, ExportNZ

5 December 2019

Executive Summary

This report follows as an output from the second *NZBusinessFirst* workshop in a planned series, hosted by the Massey Business School, to engage local businesses. The initiative seeks to highlight business problems and dilemmas and seek solutions.

Once again, Steph Gundersen-Reid from ExportNZ (a division of BusinessNZ) enabled the attendance of the businesses. The workshop was attended by 14 business owners and/or business managers from the Manawatu, Wanganui and Wairarapa. Four Massey Business School staff were in attendance – Dirk Boehe, James Lockhart, Wayne Macpherson and Jennifer Scott.

To date, key outcomes from this initiative include:

- Recognition of common themes of concern among businesses in attendance:
 - Adhering to increasing, changing compliance and regulatory requirements
 - Margin retention
 - Fulfilling people requirements (employees, training, wages, skills)
- Request for practical problem identification and solving led by Massey Business School, where businesses have tangible outputs to implement post-workshop
- Realisation of the potential for integration of Internship students with businesses

Specifically, following the second workshop, our recommendations for 2020 to continue effective engagement include:

- Engagement of Massey student internship placements with businesses in attendance
- Facilitation of four workshops (quarterly) with a focus on NZ business, where participants will “take away” tangible actions and resources tailored to their business. These include:
 - business model development and refinement
 - letting go – effective delegation for good decision making
 - problem identification for strategic decision making
 - reflections for excellent – review and refine, and plan next steps

1. Businesses in Attendance

The following business were represented by either owners or employees:

Business	Sector	Workshop 1	Workshop 2
Ali Arc Industries	Structural Metal Fabrication	✓	
Avatar Honey	Honey Production	✓	
Betacraft NZ	Workwear	✓	✓
Carousel Confectionary	Confectionery Manufacturing	✓	✓
CEDA	Economic Development		✓
Dowdeswell's Derlphinium	Horticulture	✓	
Gallagher Fuel Systems	Fuel Dispensing Systems	✓	✓
Gillard Honey	Honey Production		✓
Gropak	Agricultural Services	✓	✓
Henergy	Poultry Products	✓	
JR'S Orchards	Fruit Growing	✓	
OBO	Sports Protection		✓
Prepack	Packaging	✓	✓
Quest Industries	Plastic Moulding		✓
Speirs Foods	Food Preparation	✓	
Steelfort	Machinery and Equipment	✓	
Tasman Tanning	Leather Products	✓	✓
Turks Poultry Farm	Poultry		✓

2. Workshop 2

2.1. The Plan

The focus of the second workshop was to reconfirm the common themes identified in the first workshop and work with those in attendance toward a common solution for business dilemmas. The idea was to generate potential solutions in response to the identified themes:

1. **Compliance/regulatory framework** and in particular, increasing and changing compliance requirements, a lack of modelling or understanding by Governmental policy makers.
2. **Margin retention** and the classic cost/price squeeze, where marginal value is eroded from multiple sources.
3. **Staff/people**, especially the importance of getting the right people for the right job. NZ suffers staffing shortages, irrespective of transience, surge labour, seasonal effects, or skilled labour

Considering these themes of compliance and regulation, eroded margins, and quality people – we suggested that businesses may consider trade-off solutions due to resource constraints, which results in other unsolved dilemmas. We proposed seeking a solution to these, and other dilemmas, not by individual solutions but by seeking a potentially single solution to all by way of a Massey Business School-led collaborative approach, to identify, disseminate, and support innovative solutions to business dilemmas.

2.2. The Reality

What became apparent early in the second workshop was a need to realign expectations of the facilitators and the represented businesses. Notably, the approach of “sit back and listen” followed by an academic approach to synthesis from the Massey facilitators did not align with the needs of the business community. That approach meant we were not providing participants with anything more than another “talk-fest.” To progress the initiative and enhance the integration of Massey Business School with location businesses, we then shifted the focus to discussion focused on:

- What are limitations to change, development, innovation, and growth?
- What do businesses need to overcome those limitations?

From this discussion we found that the businesses did indeed have common limitations, not dissimilar to the areas of concern identified in the first Workshop. However, with a recognition that each business is different, there was discussion that in order to overcome the limitations, the planned group facilitation approach was not suitable. Instead, those in attendance requested future engagement with Massey that would enable them to identify business-specific limitations or problems, business-specific potential responses, and tailored actionable outputs for implementation at individual business-level.

2.3. The Outcome

With consideration given to the two questions above, first among smaller groups and then with the full attendees’ participation, there was general agreement that the following concepts would be useful to work through in future sessions, with tangible outputs tailored for each business (and without any academic graphs/charts or US-based case studies):

- Delegation, governance, and decision-making models to allow the right people time to spend time appropriately in or on a business, including self-awareness/reflection
- Understanding current supply or value chain constraints, including products and income stream dependencies and buyer invoked resistance/perception
- Managing organisational change, including resistance to change and effects on management and employees
- Developing, refining, and understanding business models, business plans, and strategies, including planning and risk management
- The need for market research and the ability to test, examine, and validate assumptions
- Understanding internal and external processes and their impact on real, meaningful change

There were also discussion about integrating students in the Massey Business School internship with businesses, whereby students work in situ with business owners and managers on specific projects.

3. Proposed Next Steps

To continue this work and build on the outcomes of the workshops in 2019, we would now like to put the following proposal to the regional business community. We also encourage you to engage with the Internship programme. To do this, please contact Dr James Lockhart in the first instance (J.C.Lockhart@massey.ac.nz).

The major themes of the follow on events are: developing and tailoring business models, letting go for effective delegation and enhanced decision making, problem identification for strategic decision making, and finally, review and reflection of individual business development and achievements to enable further *Business First* initiative planning.

High-level details, including proposed dates (which we will confirm as soon as possible) are provided in the table below. We will send out invitations in the New Year and look forward to your continued engagement with this series.

We would like to thank you for attending the one or both of the workshops to date, in the New Zealand *Business First* series at the Massey Enterprise Centre, and welcome any feedback, comments, ideas or questions you may have. Please note, if there are any issues or amendments required, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on this report. Feel free to contact the group via Dr Wayne Macpherson, W.Macpherson@massey.ac.nz.

Workshop	Overview	Tangible Takeaway	Logistics
Business Models: <i>Developing tailored business models and plans to work for you</i>	<p>Massey-led workshop to develop or refine your business model and strategy, and plans for action.</p> <p>You will work through key aspects of your business, including your purpose, values, key operations, how to articulate your strategy, and then how to turn your strategy into actionable plans.</p>	<p>At the end of the session, you will have clearly articulated the purpose of your business, where you want to take it, and the key actions to do so. You will take your business plan away from the session.</p>	<p>Tues Jan 28th or Tues Feb 4th 1:00 – 5:00pm facilitated workshop 5:00 – 6:00pm networking</p> <p>Afternoon tea provided Nibbles/drinks post-event provided</p>
Letting Go: <i>Effective delegation for enhanced decision making</i>	<p>Massey-led workshop to understand where effective delegation could take place in your business.</p> <p>You will work through areas of your business’s operations where you often end up taking on all of the work because it initially seems easier than trying to find the right person. You will learn how delegating effectively will help reduce the overwhelming stress of allowing others to make key decisions, so you can focus on the ‘right’ areas of the business.</p>	<p>At the end of the session you will have tools and techniques to effectively delegate decision making and an understanding of different governance models.</p>	<p>Wed May 6th, Fri May 8th, or Wed May 20th 1:00 – 5:00pm facilitated workshop 5:00 – 6:00pm networking</p> <p>Afternoon tea provided Nibbles/drinks post-event provided</p>
Recognise and Appreciate Issues: <i>Problem identification for strategic decision making</i>	<p>Massey-led workshop focusing on problem identification.</p> <p>Using your business model, strategy, and plans for action, you will identify potential issues and learn how to plan to overcome them. You learn how to recognise which problems to tackle and how solutions might help you move from focusing on the issues to focusing on excellence.</p>	<p>At the end of the session you will have the ability to recognise potential problems in your business and be able to prioritise which areas to focus on for solutions in order to tackle them strategically.</p>	<p>Tues Aug 4th, Thurs Aug 6th, or Tues Aug 11th 1:00 – 5:00pm facilitated workshop 5:00 – 6:00pm networking</p> <p>Afternoon tea provided Nibbles/drinks post-event provided</p>

Workshop	Overview	Tangible Takeaway	Logistics
<p>Realise Excellence: Reflections, review, and where to from here</p>	<p>Massey-led session to review your business growth and development, achievements, and recognise areas for continued improvement.</p> <p>You will be guided through a review of your business model, strategy, and plans, with support to amend them as necessary to continue to improve your business. You will learn about the process of reviewing your strategic documents and making changes as necessary.</p>	<p>At the end of the session you will have conducted a review of your business, and its performance.</p> <p>As a broader group, there will be opportunity to suggest plans for the following year and review how the facilitated sessions throughout the year impacted your business/operations.</p>	<p>Tues Nov 3rd, Tues Nov 10th, Thurs Nov 12th</p> <p>4:00 – 7:00pm facilitated workshop</p> <p>7:00 – 8:00 pm networking and year end wrap up</p> <p>Working dinner provided</p> <p>Nibbles/drinks for wrap-up provided</p>