



Communications brief

Be the Business is a young business-led organisation created to close the UK's productivity gap. It was established in November 2017 with funding and support from the UK government and some of Britain's leading companies. We work with the entire business community to share what works for today's best businesses with every company that wants to learn and improve. This brief sets out our requirements for retained communications support.

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1. About Be the Business

Having been asked by the Chancellor in 2015 to dig deeper into Britain's productivity problem, Sir Charlie Mayfield brought senior UK corporate executives to approach the problem in a different way. This resulted in the creation of Be the Business at the end of 2017.

Through our campaign we galvanise an army of business leaders by conducting ground-breaking research, raising the national profile of our productivity challenge and creating a shared direction for Government and Industry to tackle the issue.

- **Our campaign is business led.** We believe that governments alone don't drive productivity – firms do. And the only way we're going to end the 10 years of flatlining productivity is for businesses to adopt those practices that are already being used by other British companies to achieve high productivity.
- **It's about changing mindsets.** The UK has some of the highest performing firms in the world, but we also have a large numbers of businesses that could improve their productivity by adopting a new mindset. Raising every firm's performance by just a few inches would deliver £130bn to the economy.
- **We're bottom up,** starting all of our efforts to boost business performance conducting in-depth research with business leaders and understanding the challenges they face
- **But we have big business support.** In November 2019, over 100 Chairmen and CEOs of businesses in the UK made major commitments at our 'Business Leadership for a Better Decade' summit. Business, government and parliament must work together to accelerate productivity progress.
- **We focus on better leadership and technology** – both proven to improve the performance of firms, and both areas where UK firms lag behind international competitors.
- **We have delivered a real impact in the regions beyond London** - We've started by focusing our work in areas regions with lower productivity, but are preparing to become a truly national campaign.



Our programmes

At the heart of Be the Business is a view that businesses can – and should – learn from one another, and that sharing the expertise of highly competitive businesses can catalyse growth in others. This is a key part of our portfolio of programmes.

Productivity through People

A unique SME education programme which blends academic rigour, learning and input from industry leaders, and peer-to-peer support to enhance the leadership and management capability within firms. Programmes currently operate at Lancaster University, Strathclyde University, Aston Business School, and Bath University.

Business Collaboration Networks

Bringing together firms with shared characteristics – from family-run businesses in the North West to hospitality firms in Cornwall. These place-based programmes trial innovative solutions to encourage the adoption of best practice within the communities and deliver masterclasses from industry experts.

Mentoring for Growth

Matching senior executives from our most productive firms with ambitious SME leaders keen to overcome obstacles to growth. The programme currently operates in Greater Manchester, Birmingham and Solihull, the North East and London having successfully piloted in the West Midlands and North West.

Benchmarking

A unique self-assessment tool which enables businesses to understand their current levels of productivity and identify the leadership and management improvements they need to work on. It uses Companies House and ONS data to allow business leaders to see how they compare with other firms in their industry and examples of how others have implemented performance improvements.

Tech adoption

Be the Business is developing a new source of independent, 'on your side' customer advice for SMEs looking to improve their performance through technology. The objective is to make SMEs become better informed customers, equipped with practical guidance and tools to support them through the technology adoption process, able to understand the landscape, take advantage of the opportunities it offers, and account for potential risks.

You can find out more about Be the Business on our website.

2. Our communications work

Our communications activity to date



Since we began work in November 2017 we have built good relationships and had a number of successes. Almost all of our work has been focused on the macroeconomic picture – keeping productivity high up the media and political agenda, and advancing our position that across Britain’s SMEs better management/leadership and higher rates of technology adoption will lead to faster productivity improvements.

Stakeholders: We have built good relationships across Westminster and Whitehall, with a particular focus on HMT, BEIS and No.10. We are also well known to business organisations, lobbying groups, think tanks etc. We regularly collaborate with other organisations or government departments.

Media: We’ve built awareness of our organisation and work across key media, especially national broadcast and broadsheets. Our Chairman and CEO are both regular commentators on our issues.

From 2020 we will be placing equal emphasis on raising awareness and consideration of Be the Business among our customer audience of directors, CEOs, and owners of SME businesses.

3. The brief

We’re looking for a retained agency to provide creative campaigns, communications/public affairs support, including both senior counsel and some day-to-day support.

Over the year we will deliver a series of activities aimed at our SME customer audience as well as at political and corporate audiences.

Our objectives are to (1) maintain the support of the high-level stakeholders invested in our work to date; (2) sustain the message that improving UK productivity is central to the country’s economic success; (3) get SMEs to seek outside help to improve their businesses.

Our work is built on a ‘movement-based’ approach. Like any campaign, we want to mobilise others to reiterate our message, building momentum. Our communications objectives should be underpinned by an approach which uses third party advocates.

Considerations

- Productivity is a key talking point for policymakers, politicians and economic commentators. The issue has salience and there’s a high level of interest in our approach to tackling the issue.
- While the term ‘productivity’ is interesting at a national level, it doesn’t resonate with our customer audience and some media outlets, so we need to be mindful of the language we choose to use. Our description of the issue needs to be concise and accessible. Our tone needs to be punchy, to cut through, whilst also remaining inclusive and encouraging.
- As a new organisation, Be the Business doesn’t yet have brand recognition beyond our core audiences.
- We have built good relationships with key media outlets. We are looking for new ideas to keep the relationships we’re building warm, and to find ways to make this issue relevant to the tabloids. Our first album has been a hit. Our second needs to capitalise on this but add a few new surprising tunes.
- Our USPs are our wide corporate partner network and our depth of insight into the mindset of SMEs.

4. Your proposal and pitch

4.1 Credentials document

Please email a short document which should cover the following areas:

- Your credentials for the project including maximum three case studies
- The proposed account team with bios
- A 2-3 page document analysing overall public discourse on productivity and BtB's contributions to that discourse. We would like you to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as some possible areas to move into. We are especially interested in fallow campaign ground for targeting SMEs.

Credentials documents should be submitted by end of Wednesday 11 March. Please email a pdf to Matt.Bright@bethebusiness.com.

4.2 Shortlisting and Q&A

We will shortlist a small number of agencies to pitch by end of Thursday 12 March. Members of the BtB communications team will be available for Q&A with shortlisted agencies.

4.3 Pitches

The pitch meetings will last 75 minutes and should cover:

- A very brief introduction to the team (no case studies)
- Your proposed communications approach (this can be a single idea, or overviews of a number of potential approaches)
- Proposed campaign measurement metrics, KPIs, outputs
- How you would work with us – including how you will help us meet our objective to maintain the support of high level stakeholders, and how you would deal with sudden changes to planned activity or resources
- Your team ratecard and budget distribution based on a monthly total fee of £16.67k pcm plus VAT, less costs.
- Your response to the creative challenge (see below).

We will ask questions throughout but budget for a presentation time of 50 minutes max.

Please only bring team members who will play an active role on the account, especially at the junior level.

Please bring your presentation on a laptop (AV access is available) and 5 printed copies to leave behind.

Pitches will be held w/c 23 March and w/c 30 March.

4.3.1 Creative challenge

Agencies should be prepared to spend the bulk of their pitch time presenting the response to the creative challenge. We would like you to sketch out an overall campaign platform from which BtB can launch a series of activities over at least one year. All channels are in play. We would also like you to explain how you would deliver *one* of these activities in detail.



SME Campaign platform

We would like to see a proposal for an integrated communications campaign platform targeting SMEs. Our objective is to get SMEs to seek outside help to improve their businesses.

For the pitch, please show the rationale for the recommended platform including audience considerations, platform name/identity, strapline, key messages, and draft distribution/channel strategy.

SME campaign activity

In early May, BtB will launch its tech tool. This is an online initiative to encourage and support SMEs in adopting technology that support business and administrative functions. It focuses on five back office technologies which are relevant for almost all UK businesses and are clearly associated with productivity improvements, yet the penetration of which lags behind that seen in many comparable economies. For example, the rate of CRM use in the UK remains below levels seen in Austria in 2007, despite research by the Enterprise Research Council showing it can drive productivity improvements of 18.4% over three or more years.

The tech tool seeks to address this challenge in a number of ways. It aims to:

- encourage higher rates of technology adoption by establishing a trusted, independent source of 'on your side' information which SMEs can use to learn about the kinds of technologies available, their use cases, and potential benefits, as well as increasing awareness and inspiring firms who have not yet considered these technologies to do so.
- equip firms with the understanding, management practices, and tools required to successfully navigate the complex process of technology adoption: through identifying a clear objective; selecting the right solution; choosing the right product; executing the transaction; conducting the implementation; and extracting the benefits.
- equip firms with resources and case studies so they can better understand the challenge of technology adoption and move forward with greater confidence, aware of the potential risks and how to mitigate them.
- expose firms to examples from peers who have been through this process already, letting them learn from the experiences of firms and leaders with whom they can identify.

We would like a proposal on how to launch the tool to SMEs as well as to our stakeholder audience. It is critical is to generate visits to the tool (this is the core call to action), as well as awareness across government. The range of tactics is up to you but nothing is off the table – all that matters is effectiveness.

Shortlisted agencies will be provided with a link to the beta of the tech tool, as well as the results of some recent and unpublished quant research into SME owners' awareness, adoption, and opinion of commonly used technologies.

5. Post-pitch

We will feedback within 3 working days of the final pitch (expected end March). Having evaluated the pitches Be the Business will select a successful firm to begin work immediately.

We will provide feedback to both successful and unsuccessful firms on their proposals.



Evaluation criteria

Industry/sector expertise:

- Deep understanding of the UK's productivity challenge, and where this issue sits in the current political and economic climate
- Understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Be the Business
- Knowledge of key stakeholders in Government, Whitehall, Parliament and the media

Functional make-up of the team:

- Range and relevance of experience in the team
- Internal team dynamics and chemistry with BtB
- Confidence in ability to deliver

Proposal and pitch:

- Clear, realistic and compelling approach to meet the brief
- Measurements for success
- Adaptability, prioritisation and flexibility
- Strategic vs tactical thinking
- Creativity and ambition

Account management:

- How you will work with the Be the Business team
- How you will report on time spent working on the Be the Business account

Budget

Our budget is £200,000 for an initial 12-month contract, *including* VAT

Other information

- The initial term of this appointment will be for 12 months, including an initial two-month trial period.
- The costed proposal should cover all services you propose to perform for Be the Business based on the information provided to you in this brief.
- Any third-party fees should be passed to Be the Business at cost.