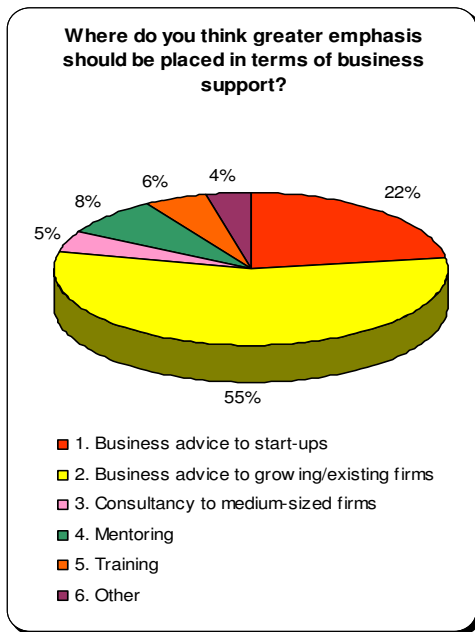


> ANALYSIS FOR APRIL 2006

## KEYNOTES FROM APRIL

### Business Support — where should the emphasis be?

When respondents to the April edition of the UKBAB were asked where they thought greater emphasis on business support should be placed, advice to growing/existing firms (55%) and to business start-ups (22%) gained the top two most frequent responses. Training gained only 6% of responses – fewer responses than mentoring with 8%.



### Which area will see the most growth?

Government support for smaller business growth has changed emphasis frequently, both in terms of financial support and organisational support. Advisers are an aware community directly affected by these changes and they were asked to predict a single area of support that will grow in 2006/2007. The spread of responses show that there is a diversity of opinion with a top response of 42% for business advice to growing/existing firms, and business advice to start-ups coming in second with 24%.

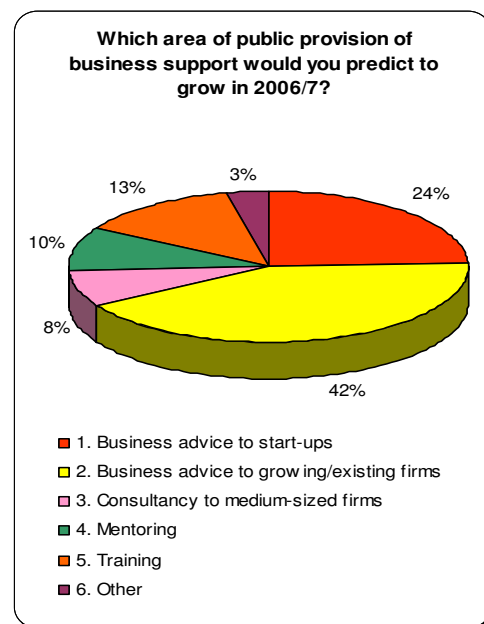
### The Panellists' view:

#### Emphasis is wrong

“In London there is largely the correct vision for business support but the emphasis is wrong, with too much is spent on Information Diagnostics and Brokerage and on providing premises to a select few, while not enough is spent on start ups.”

#### Bad policy

“There is a distinct downturn in government funding for Business Advice to start ups and SMEs. This is a bad policy and will result in a drop in new businesses and lack of support for existing ones ”





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## > THE QUESTIONS APRIL 2006

Topics explored in April included: activities yielding the greatest profit, and formal presentations. Panellists were also invited to comment on the depiction of business in programmes such as 'The Apprentice'

**Q1.** Has the level of charges for your services in the past 6 months:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Remained the same

**Q2.** Which of your activities yield the greatest profits?

**Q3.** Which area of public provision of business support would you predict to grow in 2006/7?

**Q4.** Where do you think greater emphasis should be placed in terms of business support?

**Q5.** Has the number of women seeking your advice:

**Q6.** In more general terms, are environmental sustainability issues becoming an increasing area of concern for your clients?

**Q7.** What proportion of your business arises from tendering or direct marketing as opposed to a response to referrals and direct approaches from customers?

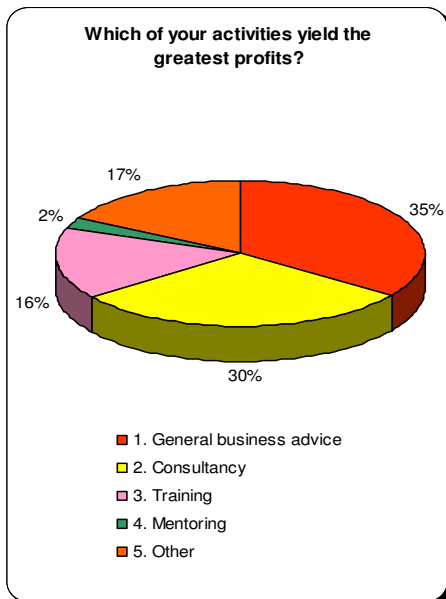
**Q8.** Are you having to be more proactive in your approach to obtaining business than was the case two years ago?

**Q9.** Do you find that you are having to make more formal presentations in order to obtain work?

**Q10.** How would you rate your presentation skills?

**Q11.** The television programmes 'The Apprentice' and 'Dragon's Den' appear to depict the world of business as harsh and brutal. To what extent is this consistent with your experience?

**Q12.** To what extent do you feel that the issues confronted by smaller businesses are given adequate coverage in the media?



### The Panellists' view:

"My work in an Enterprise Agency is for all callers and is free. We are shockingly busy, mainly with start-ups. ....we are paid (when we are paid) under contracts gained by tender (*which*) are harder and harder to get."

"....despite being a well regarded business advisor, I am finding it very hard to attract work and get a reasonable rate of pay."

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> ANALYSIS FOR APRIL 2006

**‘As seen on TV’— Advisers have their say on ‘The Apprentice’**

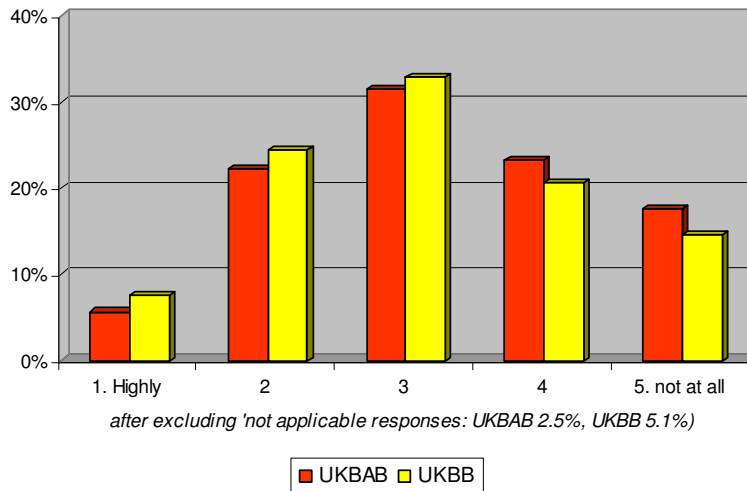
**‘The Apprentice’ depicts the world of business as harsh and brutal. But, is it really that way?**

Putting would-be entrepreneurs and managers into television competitions has proved very popular with the viewing public. However for most young people, watching these programmes may be the only experience of the world of business that they have come into contact with, and there is a potential for either encouragement or discouragement of future generations. Respondents to the April edition of the UKBAB were asked for their view of the accuracy of that world as portrayed in the programmes.

**The Panellists’ view:**

“I think the ‘Dragons Den’ and ‘Apprentice’ shows set a terrible example - great TV but I wouldn’t let a client of mine go on without better preparation”. Amongst other comments: “Playing with people’s lives is not amusing - most of my colleagues and peers refuse to watch them on the basis that ‘reality business rage’ would take over”

The television programmes ‘The Apprentice’ and ‘Dragon’s Den’ appear to depict the world of business as harsh and brutal. To what extent is this consistent with your experience?



The same question was asked of respondents in the parallel UK Business Barometer (UKBB). Results were very close between the two surveys. After adjusting for those responding ‘not applicable’, 28% of UKBAB and 32% of UKBB respondents thought that the programmes’ depictions were highly or reasonably highly consistent with their own experience.

On the other hand, 41% of UKBAB and 35% of UKBB respondents thought the programmes’ depictions were only slightly or not at all consistent with their experience.

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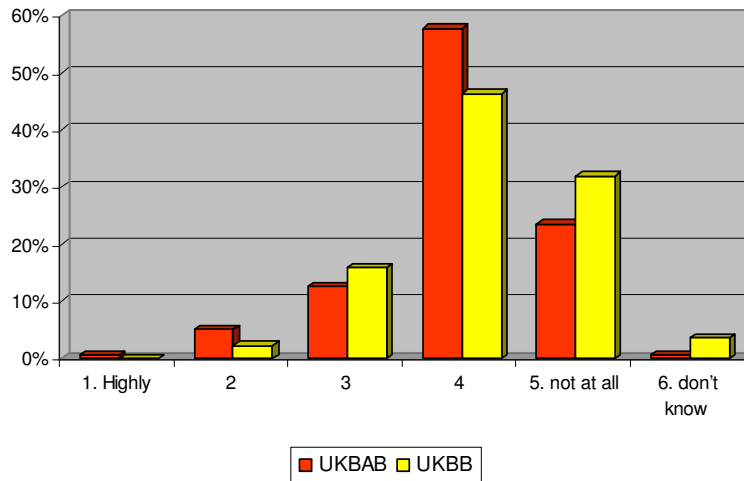
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> ANALYSIS FOR APRIL 2006

Media coverage for smaller businesses

Although a few respondents feel that smaller business issues are covered adequately in the media, 81% of UKBAB respondents and 78% of UKBB respondents feel that the media does not cover smaller business issues barely or at all adequately.

To what extent do you feel that the issues confronted by smaller businesses are given adequate coverage in the media?



Feedback into the April survey - Red tape and financial pressures



Greater transparency of business needs as observed by the adviser community

**The last word this month goes to a panellist who thinks the small business community is being undermined.**

“Small businesses continue to find ever increasing red tape and penalties, which on top of competition, are leading to their downfall. The feeling is that the government is extracting as much as possible from them financially and this is undermining initiative in the small business community.”

For further information, please contact  
**The Barometer Project Team**

**Rick Eagles**

t: 0115 8466860

e: [rick.eagles@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:rick.eagles@nottingham.ac.uk)

**Liz Rose**

t: 0115 8466189

e: [liz.rose@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:liz.rose@nottingham.ac.uk)

w: [www.ukbb.ac](http://www.ukbb.ac) [www.ukbab.ac](http://www.ukbab.ac)

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