

ADVERTORIAL: How an advisory board can help business owners overcome loneliness and take on their biggest challenges

Running your own business is no mean feat, and small business owners can find themselves faced with all kinds of challenges that they may not be prepared for.

From knowing which marketing will be most effective, to struggling with the loneliness that comes with being the leader, there are plenty of hurdles to tackle when running your business.

Getting advice from experienced professionals can help you navigate the many challenges and opportunities that come your way, as well as help you feel like you have the support and network to thrive both personally and professionally.

Be the Business provides [advisory boards at zero cost](#) to SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) to help them benefit from an outside perspective.

During a Live LinkedIn event, the host, Business Live editor Alistair Houghton, spoke to business owners Sanjay Aggarwal of Spice Kitchen and Helen Tanner of Data³, alongside Be the Business Chief Executive Anthony Impey.

The event heard from the two business owners about the struggles they'd encountered whilst running their own business, as well as covering how Be the Business' Boards programme had helped them scale and shape their business. You can watch the video in full [here](#) to hear more about how their

own experiences with Boards has positively impacted their business.

What is Be the Business' Boards programme?

The Boards programme enables business leaders and owners to access their own personal panel of board members to help them make informed decisions and provide guidance and ideas for the various challenges in their way.

The programme currently has space for just under 100 businesses to participate – at zero cost. Over a 12-month period you will have access to a non-executive director-style group of four or five board members who bring skills such as finance, operations, HR and marketing.

Every three months you'll attend a 90-minute meeting online meeting to discuss what challenges you need their guidance or support with. These meetings will allow you to talk through problems or opportunities you've been presented with, and get insight and direction from your board members.

How can Boards help my small business?



The Boards meeting will take place online with a team of business experts

During the live event, attendees heard from Anthony Impey, Be the Business' Chief Executive, about the ways Boards can help in all areas of your small business.

He advised that before participating, it's key to set your expectations about what you want from it and decide which areas of your business you want to work on and bring those to each quarterly meeting. You can delve into anything from marketing and communications, to your psyche and personality and how that affects your business and leadership, something Sanjay Aggarwal, Founder and CEO of Spice Kitchen, said that he had particularly benefited from.

Sanjay had found it beneficial to have support from the Boards team all year round, not just during their quarterly meetings. He discussed how he had been able to communicate throughout the year with his team and tackle issues that are time sensitive or need immediate feedback, before revisiting them

during his board meetings.

Boards can help you save time and money in different areas, and guide you on the best solutions to your business problems. Sanjay participated in Boards last year. He said: “As a leader, you should be working on senior-level strategy and solving big problems, but you often don’t give yourself the time.

“The good thing about the Boards programme is that you’re being forced to spend time on the things you should be doing as a leader by speaking to these experts and spending that time on these strategies, rather than being bogged down in the day-to-day.

“By going through what challenge you’re going to bring and then taking the observations of the Board members and actioning them, they’re holding you accountable before the next one and you’re doing what you should be doing as a leader.”

Handling emotional challenges alongside technical ones

The breadth of issues that can arise throughout any business is broad, but for SMEs, it’s not possible to hire experts to join your team in every field. That’s why Boards is a great way of providing access to those experts in one place with regular meetings.

Helen Tanner, Founder of data company Data³, also took her business to Boards two years ago to get help with problems she was facing. During the event, Helen said: “After 20 years in the corporate world where everything is shared and reviewed and critiqued, you feel like can’t do anything on your own.

“At the beginning [of running my business] I felt I needed someone to review my work. By the time I got to the three-year

mark I had become so used to making my own decisions that I'd gone the other way, but especially during Covid I realised how tough it is was to be doing everything on your own."

Loneliness is one thing many leaders really struggle with. One in four SME leaders admit they feel isolated and lonely when it comes to running their business. Chief Executive of Be the Business, Anthony Impey, said: "It's so easy for business leaders to experience burnout. When you're running your business and responsible for everyone's salaries and their food shopping and their mortgages and rent, you feel like you have to work all the time, and it's hard to have the discipline to step away and look after yourself."

Boards is a reasonably low-risk investment. It only takes up a small amount of time in your year – each quarterly meeting is only 90 minutes to two hours, but the gains can be massive.

Anthony added: "The return on investment actually overlooks the emotional support it offers. Having an outside group of experts is almost priceless in its value. It's clear it helps with the business aspects, but sharing the mental load pays off in huge dividends"

To register your interest for Boards sign up via the website. You can also watch the full event for yourself [here](#).