

Case Study - Starter for 6, 2007 to 2009 Developing Entrepreneurs in Scotland

Nesta's Starter for 6 programme has supported around 250 up and coming entrepreneurs across Scotland since 2007. The programme provides participants with a tailored business support package which includes four days enterprise training, grants of up to £10,000 and twelve months of follow up support including three months of one to one coaching delivered by Coach in a Box and peer mentoring with the mentors trained and supervised by Coach in a Box.

The aims of the programme:

- To support innovation within creative, scientific and technical businesses in Scotland
- To test out the best ways of supporting innovative businesses in these sectors
- To provide insight and learning from the Starter for 6 programme to inform other agencies about the best ways to support innovative businesses
- To hand over either the programme as a whole or elements of the Starter for 6 model to partner organisations to carry forward beyond the three year programme

How did we help?

1. Starter for 6 participants

Starting a business is an emotional roller coaster ride. It makes big demands on our self-confidence and our ability to keep going. The Coach in a Box programme is designed to help innovative entrepreneurs through this journey with their energy intact. We introduce tools to help you bounce back from setbacks, to be more compelling when you try to convince others of your idea and to be able to meet your milestones whilst keeping a sense of fun and experimentation alive. All of these tools are supported with a series of one to one sessions with a Personal Coach.

The Starter for 6 programme is made up of three steps including three telephone coaching sessions.

Step One: Building Momentum

During this call we focus on your first 100 days and how to make the most of this key period.

Step Two: Bouncing Back

This step focuses on how to respond to the pressures and setbacks of starting a business with renewed rather than dulled momentum. How to get going? How to ensure you don't avoid the activities that are less appealing or more daunting? How to develop and nurture the ability to 'bounce back' from setbacks? The step will both introduce the 'mindtraps' that kick in and drain our energy whilst offering practical ways to overcome them and keep going.

Step Three: Sustaining Momentum

A big component of momentum in a small business comes from your ability to get other people on side and on the act of getting out and talking to people. We help develop network maps and find simple ways to generate interest in your idea. We also help you improve your skills in influencing key individuals.

2. Peer Mentors

A group of the Starter for 6 participants from 2007 were selected to act as peer mentors for the 2008 cohort. Coach in a Box provided them with a one day workshop to build their confidence and capability in their mentoring skills. We then followed this workshop with two coaching calls to support the mentors in their role and offer additional advice as they began to build their mentoring role.

The Results

Starter for 6 has been evaluated independently by SQW Consulting over two years. The results below are based on these independent e-surveys, face to face interviews and written questionnaires.

The commitment to deal with the ups and downs of the business significantly improved after twelve months, with 57% rating their confidence as good or excellent compared with 37% before the Starter to 6 programme.

Starter for 6 provides a strong and supportive framework in which innovative businesses have been able to develop their entrepreneurial confidence and skills. One year after the programme, all participants who received financial assistance and follow up support are still in business. Seven of them have qualified for the Scottish Enterprise High Growth scheme.

Over 50% of the businesses assessed that their potential as an entrepreneur was either good or excellent.

Starter for 6 builds successful, sustainable early stage businesses which add value to the Scottish economy. It gives an estimated return on investment of £2.16 net additional Gross Value Added for every £1 of public sector investment.

The Starter for 6 materials and Coach in a Box are now being adopted by the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurs in its global entrepreneurship programme.

Below are the results that Coach in a Box captured at the end of the 2008 coaching process:

Questionnaire results (Average rating from forms returned):

Expectations met:	Exceeded - 68.6%	Rate the material	8.0 out of 10
	Met - 27.5%	Rate your Coach	8.9 out of 10
	Partially Met - 3.9%	Application	8.5 out of 10
Objectives achieved:	Exceeded - 37.3%	Value	8.5 out of 10
	Met - 58.8%	Accessibility	8.8 out of 10
	Partially Met - 3.9%	Would recommend?	94%

Here are quotes from some of the 2008 entrepreneurs relating to the coaching they received:

"The ability to recognise the cognitive and emotional factors which can either hold me back or advance my business and, where I can identify these, exert a measure of control to best overcome or utilise these mind states to my advantage"

"I've never undertaken any business coaching so didn't know what to expect - the material we covered in the coaching will continue to help me in my future work. Very relevant and helpful material"

"Found the whole experience extremely helpful. Never have I had such a positively structured programme that has enhanced so many parts of my life. Thank you!"

"This has been a truly rewarding and useful experience. My Coach was extremely helpful and pleasant and left me brimming with enthusiasm after each call. I now feel that I have the ability to recognise, understand and overcome problematic situations which will ultimately keep me focused and energised on taking the business forward".

"Coach in a Box has helped me to stay positive and proactive while going through a challenging time in setting up my own business"

"The calls gave me confidence and energy boosts when I was doubting some of my business ideas"

Supporting winners of the 2009 O2 Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

In October 2009, an entrepreneur who had received coaching from Coach in a Box was one of the winners at the O2 Entrepreneur Awards. Sunil Kadri (Optoswim Technologies Ltd) picked up the O2 X Male Entrepreneur of the Year Award.