

# 5 WAYS TO GET READY FOR POST-PANDEMIC LIFE



As the country starts opening up again, business leaders across the West of England will be working out how best to get their companies firing on all cylinders. **Here are our top five things to think about when planning for life after lockdown.**

1



## CONSIDER SUPPORT SCHEMES YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR

As we come out of lockdown, **there are still a number of support schemes in place to help businesses of all sizes to reopen.** Whether it's claiming the Job Retention Bonus for bringing employees back to work, applying for a Bounce Back Loan or Restart Grant to help your business get back on its feet, or claiming for business rate relief, we have all the information you need to know on our dedicated [Financial and Business Support Hub](#).

- > And as you look to the future, the Government has launched its new [Help to Grow scheme](#) to support small businesses through management and digital training programmes. There will be 30,000 places for business leaders on these courses over the next three years. You can register your interest [here](#).

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## JOIN THE SMALL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

With all the responsibilities of running your business, especially through the pandemic, you probably find that you don't often have time to think about leadership. But **improving your management skills can improve your business' efficiency, performance and resilience.**

- > We have teamed up with the Small Business Charter and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to offer you the opportunity to improve your leadership skills through the 10-week [Small Business Leadership Programme](#). This 10-week course is led by true business experts meaning you have real confidence in what you are being taught. With practical examples at its heart, you can use what you learn on the course to help improve your company every day.



### 3



## DEVELOP A WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Whether you are bringing employees back from furlough or you have continued to operate throughout the pandemic, **there has never been a more important time to consider how you as a business leader can develop your workforce.** Your employees are one of your greatest assets and it's crucial you invest in them to ensure the future success of your business.

- > Our **Workforce for the Future programme** is here to help. This skills analysis and employee development initiative, led by the West of England Combined Authority in partnership with local universities and colleges, Adviza, Business West, and Western Training Provider Network, will help you upskill and retrain employees in areas such as digital, and support you to source and bring in new staff, including apprentices or work placements to drive your business forwards.

### 4



## THINK ABOUT A MENTOR

Asking for advice about how to run your business can be daunting, and as we get back to normal, you probably have more questions and challenges than ever before. However, **you don't have to take on these battles on your own.**

- > Be the Business' **Mentoring for Growth programme** helps small and medium-sized businesses benefit from the expertise of larger firms. Giving you access to senior leaders from the likes of Rolls-Royce, Siemens and GSK, you will have a dedicated sounding board, offering you support and advice through the next 12 months.



Mark Robinson, Founder of Just Strong, a women's sportswear brand designed to empower women, worked with his mentor, Paul Lantsbury from Moonpig, to develop his management skills and improve the company's logistics: **"I'd implore anyone to give it a try. Just talking through the basics gives you a completely different perspective on day-to-day activities."**

### 5



## SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEES AS WE RETURN TO NORMAL

**Supporting your employees return to a normal working environment will be essential to company success.** After months spent working remotely or operating in a way that prioritises social distancing over personal interactions, it is going to require adjustments and understanding on all sides to shift back to a more usual way of working. That's why we've created a programme for business leaders on how to support staff mental health and wellbeing.

- > Developed in partnership with Mind, the leading mental health charity, the **Thrive at Work West of England programme** is free to access for SMEs in the West of England, and provides business leaders, managers and staff alike with practical advice, toolkits and e-learning on mental health and wellbeing.

The West of England Growth Hub is a free and impartial 360-degree business support service for SMEs. **For more information click here** or to **arrange a free call back click here.**