



## Business is GREAT on LinkedIn: inspiring growth through shared ideas

How can a government department inspire small and medium-sized businesses towards growth, when SMB leaders don't like government telling them what to do? The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills found the answer on LinkedIn.

The Business is GREAT campaign launched in November 2013 with the aim of rebuilding confidence and inspiring growth amongst SMBs. By January 2014, business confidence had started to return, but encouraging behaviour such as forward business planning, hiring and exporting remained a challenge. The department for Business, Innovation and Skills had plenty of advice and insight to offer – but it knew that SMB leaders were traditionally resistant to government telling them what to do. And it couldn't afford to spend budget on engaging those will little ambition to grow.

Building a presence on LinkedIn provided the solution, enabling Business is GREAT to grow awareness through recommendation, and facilitate the sharing of ideas amongst SMBs themselves. Within a year, it had built a follower base of more than 30,000 SMB leaders hungry for new ideas and ready to share those ideas amongst their peers.

### The Challenge

- Identify ambitious SMB leaders with an appetite for growth
- Inspire behaviour change to unlock growth potential
- Build a supportive community of like-minded SMB leaders
- Demonstrate efficiency for paid media spend

### The Solution

- Building a relevant presence on LinkedIn through Showcase Page and Discussion Group
- Segmentation combined with LinkedIn data to identify the most relevant SMB leaders
- Targeted Follower Ads to build awareness
- Organic and Sponsored Updates to seed discussions and share ideas

### Why LinkedIn?

- Powerful targeting capabilities direct paid media budget to the most relevant SMB leaders
- Ability to drive awareness and trust through peer-to-peer recommendation
- Natural platform for facilitating idea-sharing rather than sending top-down messages

### The Results

- 30,000 followers for the Business is GREAT Showcase Page
- 10,000 followers added organically
- 25% read Business is GREAT updates at least once a week
- Followers visiting the Showcase Page monthly have a 79% favourable opinion
- 62% only follow Business is GREAT on LinkedIn
- LinkedIn spend outperforms spend on all other digital platforms

## Joining the conversation, not dictating it

"Most SMB owners don't want to hear business advice from the government," says Jo Simmons, Head of Campaigns at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. "They'd far rather hear from other businesses like theirs, and so we knew that peer-to-peer recommendation was going to be our strongest suit in this campaign."

Jo and the team focused updates around SMBs' own stories, with the comments posted by readers providing vital direction as to the themes of most interest. "The great thing about LinkedIn is that we're able to have conversations with SMB owners about subjects that a government department would never put out a press release on," says Jo. "We're able to share relevant studies, stories and insight as a natural part of the conversation – without promoting an official position. That's the unique advantage that social brings to the table for us."

## Bringing segmentation to life – and driving organic growth

At a time of constrained budgets, it was vitally important for the Department to be able to target media spend efficiently – and get a detailed view of the engagement levels resulting from it. LinkedIn worked closely with Business is GREAT and its media agency Mindshare to match the Department's segmentation studies with LinkedIn data – and target follower ads and updates at genuinely ambitious SMB leaders. The engagement generated amongst this group not only delivered insight on the issues SMBs were most interested in; it also drove organic growth in follower numbers. Of the 30,000 followers added in the first year of the Business is GREAT Showcase Page, more than 10,000 were introduced through updates and recommendations shared by other business leaders.

*It's easy as advertisers to just push a message out and then do some tracking, but when you are generating comments and conversations it really sets things into motion. That's when you can respond to what people are thinking and use a targeted approach to talk to them again. It's something we'll be doing more and more – exploring how to take them on a journey with us."*



**Jo Simmons**  
Head of Campaigns,  
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

