



Peer Support and Mentoring for Business

A sustainable approach to rural enterprise support

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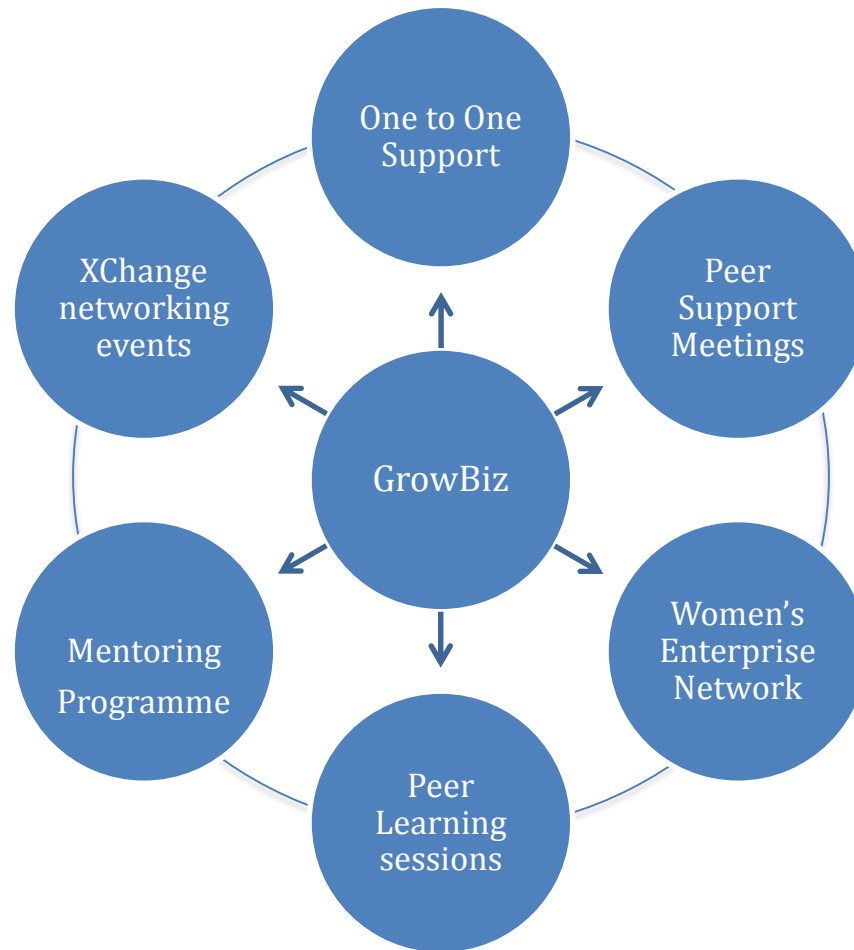
The Growbiz Story



- Established in 2007
- Inspired by the work of Ernesto Sirolli
- Developed over the past 10 years to provide community based enterprise support to businesses in rural Perthshire, Scotland
- From October 2016 – wider Enterprising Rural Perthshire programme in partnership with Business Gateway, PKAVS and Chamber of Commerce
- Developing rural enterprise support model for replication in other LEADER areas



The Growbiz model of Enterprise Support



Enterprise Facilitation: 1-1 Support



- One-to-one support for anyone thinking about self-employment, starting or growing a business
- Meetings take place where and when suits the client
- Focus on what the client needs at that particular time and connects them with other support available within the GrowBiz network or elsewhere as appropriate
- Support is provided for as long and as frequently as required
- Clients can return for support at any time in their business journey – range of enterprise expertise available



Peer Support and Learning



Peer Support and Learning Model



- Peer support ethos is based on mutual exchange of knowledge and experience
- Businesses from GrowBiz network sharing their expertise in range of subjects (eg selling; pricing; book-keeping; social media etc)
- Format: short presentation on a specific topic followed by facilitated questions and supportive discussion.



Impact of Peer Support and Learning



- ‘I always learn new tips and ways of doing things’
- ‘I liked the group’s willingness to interact question and contribute’
- ‘There was lots of great content and an informal friendly style’
- Evidence of increased survivability – 90% + after three years



Event Attendance since October 2016



- 9 Peer Learning Sessions - 79 attendances
- 4 peer Support Meetings for Entrepreneurs with Health Issues - 25 people
- 5 Women's Enterprise Network Meetings - 106 women-owned businesses
- 2 XChange meetings attended by 65 businesses



The Care and Wellbeing Co-operative



The Care and Wellbeing Co-operative



- A peer support group for micro-enterprises in the social care & wellbeing sector which GrowBiz supported to become a collaborative Co-operative
- Ongoing development of the model – health/social care integration agenda
- Original membership of 9 has grown to 23
- Model is potential solution to provision of elderly & special needs care in rural areas – while providing economic development opportunities for individuals & small companies
- Replicable model



Women's Enterprise Network



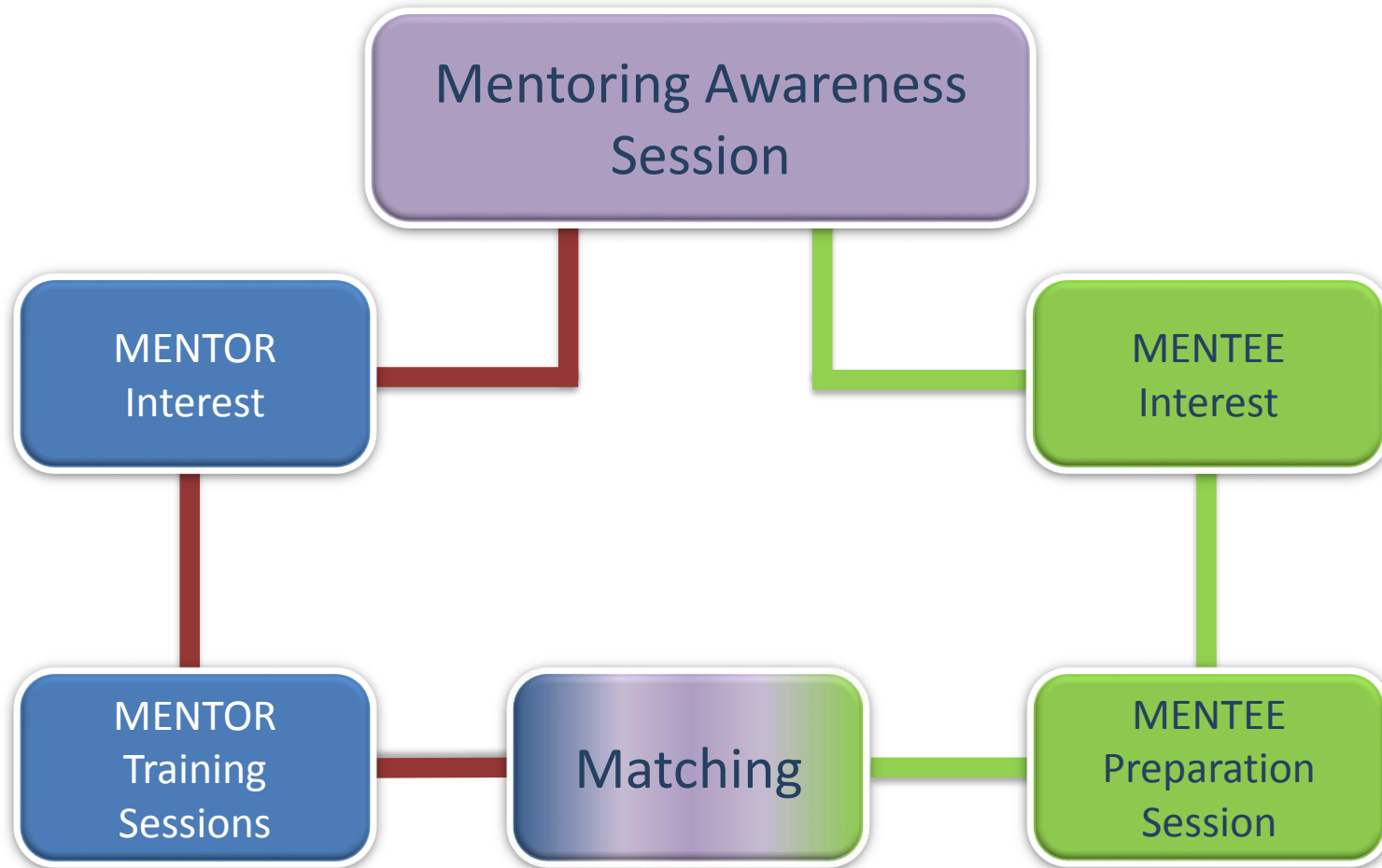
Growbiz XChange



Growbiz Enterprise Mentoring



Enterprise Mentoring



Scottish Rural Development Programme



Mentoring Involvement



- 26 trained mentors.
- 27 businesses have been matched with a mentor or are in the matching process.
- Since October '16, 42 businesses have attended mentoring related information and awareness events.



Comments on the Impact of Mentoring



- *‘Growbiz has been a Godsend for me. I am learning new skills, being supported by my peers and being offered other business help through them. Thank you.’*
- *‘Looking back at my mentoring journey I have achieved so much and having a patient, supportive mentor who believed in me was a significant contribution to my progress.’*



Conclusion and Future Developments



- Cost-effective, holistic model of support
- Emphasis on ‘relational’ support – less transactional
- Ethos of sharing, collaboration and mutual support core to approach – mentoring approach across all activities
- ‘It Works’!

- Future developments?
 - Replication of model in other areas of Scotland and further afield
 - Addition of micro-grant scheme
 - Establishment of rural enterprise hubs with digital enabling & up-skilling





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