

Giraffe Consulting Limited
Catchpell House
Carpet Lane
Leith
EDINBURGH
EH6 6SP

Tel: 0131-468-8520
E-mail: julian@giraffeconsulting.biz

EVALUATION OF THE MARKETING ADVANCE PROGRAMME

Section 1: Report

July 2005

g
ir
a
ff
e



EVALUATION OF THE MARKETING ADVANCE PROGRAMME

BY GIRAFFE CONSULTING

JULY 2005

SECTION 1: REPORT TO SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE EDINBURGH & LoTHIAN

	<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.	INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT	4
2.	SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS	6
3.	SURVEY OF FACILITATORS, ACCOUNT MANAGERS, AND LEC MAP MANAGERS	11
4.	CONCLUSIONS	16
5.	RECOMMENDATIONS	22

Appendices

- I. Survey of Participants – Interviews Conducted
- II. Survey of Facilitators, Account Managers, LEC and RDA Execs

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND RESEARCH FOR THIS EVALUATION

1. KEY FINDINGS
2. SUMMARY OF COMPANY INTERVIEWS
3. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS WITH SEEL ACCOUNT MANAGERS
4. INTERVIEWS WITH BRILLIANT RED AND LEC & RDA EXECUTIVES

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- Giraffe Consulting was commissioned by Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian (SEEL) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme (MAP), that was delivered to companies in Edinburgh and the Lothians from 1999 to 2005
- MAP was originally developed by Keith McDermott in 1998 and since then more than 180 businesses have participated in the programme, delivered by Brilliant Red, which is designed to help each company prepare a robust action plan to help their business grow
- The objective of this evaluation was to examine whether there is still market failure in strategic marketing in SMEs, to assess the success of MAP in addressing this, to make recommendations regarding the future of MAP and suggestions to improve the programme
- In undertaking this evaluation, Giraffe Consulting spoke to two representatives from Brilliant Red, conducted 15 in-depth telephone interviews with companies that had participated, and interviewed six SEEL account managers, as well as executives from other LECs and three of the Regional Development Agencies

Survey of Participants

- All 15 of the participants interviewed had a positive experience of the course, including the one person who had pulled out due to pressure of work
- All of the companies rated the quality of the workshops highly or very highly
- 13 out of the 15 respondents said that the programme had a positive impact on their company, while the other two felt they could not say the MAP had an impact on their business – one because the staff who attended left shortly after completing the course; the other due to his previous knowledge of marketing before coming on the programme
- Five companies were able to attribute a specific business advantage directly to MAP and benefits included an increase in prices and wages, promotion of the individual who attended within the Group, hiring of dedicated marketing staff and new customers
- Overall, eight companies claimed to have increased sales and employment, though four of them said this could not be attributed to MAP. Four companies reported growth which they felt could be attributed to MAP.
- Delegates from the companies felt the length of the programme is just about right
- Six of the 15 participants suggested there should be follow-up after the programme
- All but one company said they would willingly recommend the course

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Survey of Facilitators, Account Managers and LEC MAP Managers

- All of those interviewed feel that a weak knowledge and understanding of marketing continues to be a major issue for companies
- All of the SEEL account managers and LEC managers who had experience of MAP praised the course and were very positive about Keith McDermott, the main presenter
- These business support managers felt that the number of workshops and depth of coverage was "just about right"
- Some of those interviewed felt the materials and handouts could be improved and updated
- Keith McDermott and the account managers believe the level of support and commitment from account managers is vital to the success of companies on the programme
- Account managers estimated that they spend on average three or four days with each company
- Several commented that follow-up after the course is of critical importance
- Overall, the view is that MAP is a good Network Product
- Some concerns were raised regarding Brilliant Red's capacity to deliver MAP across the whole SE Network and possible implications for the quality of the programme

Conclusions

- Overall, we conclude that there is a critical gap in marketing skills among many SMEs
- From our discussions both with participants and account managers, it is clear that MAP is a high quality and effective programme
- Of the 15 businesses interviewed, we conclude that eight companies have benefited tangibly from participating in MAP
- The limited quantitative data provided and the extent to which any increases in sales and employment can be attributed to MAP means it would be misleading to derive figures for the economic impact of the MAP programme for 1999 to 2005
- In conducting this study, we came across only one comparable, high quality marketing programme delivered in Scotland, "Strategic and Tactical Marketing", presented by Iain Fraser
- "Strategic and Tactical Marketing", the Chartered Institute of Marketing's "Foundations of Strategic Marketing" and the Welsh Development Agency's "Winning Business" programme all appear to cover similar topics
- We found that the cost of MAP at just over £3,000 per company is very similar to the CIM and WDA programmes and we therefore conclude that MAP provides value for money in comparison to these programmes. However, the programme developed by Iain Fraser is much less costly, at only £600 per company

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Key Recommendations

- We recommend that the Marketing Advance Programme should definitely continue and, in our view, should be listed under both the marketing development and strategic development intervention frameworks
- We recommend that there should be no fundamental change to structure of the course
- We recommend that the quality of the MAP materials and slides should be improved
- We recommend that Keith McDermott should take greater responsibility for critiquing marketing plans produced by the companies and to ensure they are of a high quality
- We recommend that there should be systematic and on-going support from SEEL account managers, or alternatively a consultant or non-executive director, after the programme
- We recommend that the follow up networking sessions for participants should be re-introduced
- We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should consider setting up an online forum for all MAP graduates and current participants
- We recommend that, where possible, Scottish Enterprise should plan courses over a longer time period and consider tendering MAP over a three year period
- We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should bear in mind the critical role of Keith McDermott in the success of the MAP programme and specify that Keith McDermott should deliver the Marketing Advance Programme. Commissioners should also ensure that Keith McDermott has the capacity / time to deliver the programme.
- We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should not seek to license MAP from Brilliant Red.
- We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should examine and consider Iain Fraser's "Strategic and Tactical Marketing" programme as a possible substitute to MAP.
- We recommend that benchmarking data on sales and employment should be collected at to enable pre- and post- MAP performance comparisons to be made. We recommend that "attitudinal / behavioural change" should also be examined as a key performance indicator.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

1. INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT

Background to this Report

At the end of May 2005, Giraffe Consulting was commissioned by Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian (SE Edinburgh and Lothian) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme (MAP), that was delivered to companies in Edinburgh and the Lothians from April 1999 to March 2005.

Purpose and Objectives of MAP

MAP was originally developed by Keith McDermott in 1998 and since then more than 180 businesses have participated in the programme, delivered by Brilliant Red, which is designed to provide companies with an action focused, practical approach to business growth.

The programme is designed to help companies:

- Develop well researched, workable marketing plans for the future
- Develop an ability to continue to plan for themselves by enhancing the strategic marketing skills of key staff
- Improve their ability to manage and deliver marketing activity
- Enhance their understanding of new and existing markets and customers
- Develop a network of contacts with other Lothian companies

Previous evaluations of MAP conducted by SE Edinburgh and Lothian in 1999 and SE Grampian in 2005 have been very positive, as has been the feedback from companies collated during the programme by Brilliant Red. In addition, the programme won a National Training Award and special award for outstanding achievement in 2000.

It is, however, five years since the last evaluation of MAP in Edinburgh and Lothian was conducted and SE Edinburgh and Lothian wanted to assess the outcomes, outputs and results from the MAP programme, as well as its effectiveness, efficiency and value for money.

We were also asked to examine whether there is still a market failure in strategic marketing in SMEs and to evaluate the programme's success in addressing this market failure.

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Evaluation Objectives

The key objectives for the evaluation were:

1. To determine whether there is still market failure in that SMEs lack skills in strategic marketing and require support to address this;
2. To assess the success of MAP in addressing this market failure, and whether the programme improves the management capability of participating companies and encourages them to adopt a strategic marketing focus and approach;
3. To assess the benefits for companies and identify the impact of the programme in terms of increased sales and increased employment;
4. To review the ongoing strategic fit of the programme with *A Smart, Successful Scotland*;
5. To make an independent and objective judgement as to whether or not the Marketing Advance Programme should continue;

And if so:

6. To make recommendations regarding the future of the MAP and enhancements that could be made to improve the programme and/or changes that could be made to obtain similar outputs with a lower input.

Methodology

The evaluation involved:

- Desk research, which included a review of the previous independent evaluation reports and "internal evaluation" reports prepared by Brilliant Red
- Telephone interviews with Keith McDermott and Avril Linden from Brilliant Red
- Interviews with six SEEL account and client managers involved in MAP
- A contact programme with 50 individuals from 40 companies that had participated in waves 10, 11, 12 and 13 of MAP, resulting in 15 successful in-depth telephone interviews (four involving companies outwith Edinburgh and Lothian)
- Telephone interviews with other LECs using MAP
- An examination of other strategic marketing programmes, through Internet research and networking via contacts
- Telephone interviews with representatives from ONE North East, the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and emda (East Midlands Development Agency)
- Analysis and reporting, including the preparation of this report.

The research for this evaluation was conducted during June 2005. A list of all those interviewed in connection with this study can be found in the two appendices to this report.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

2. SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

Chapter two of this report summarises the feedback from participants in the Marketing Advance Programme.

During this evaluation, we contacted all 40 companies that had participated in waves 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the programme and conducted telephone interviews with 15 participants. Telephone interviews were conducted with these people from Friday 3 June to Monday 13 June inclusive.

The response rate was considerably lower than we normally expect in a telephone interview contact programme. We found that 12 individuals / programme participants had moved on and were therefore unavailable for interview, one company was no longer at the location given, and three telephone numbers were inactive.

A list of all the companies interviewed can be found in Appendix I of this report. A more detailed summary of the interviews can also be found in Section 2 of the report.

Quality of the Programme Overall

All 15 of the participants interviewed had a positive experience of the course, even the one person who had pulled out due to pressure of work.

- Eight companies rated the course as “excellent” or “absolutely first class”.
- Four companies rated the course “very good” or “extremely good”.
- Two companies rated it “good”.
- One company was less enthusiastic, but still gave the course a rating of 70%.

“It was exactly what we needed”

“Straightforward, demystified the whole thing”

“Very practical and useful”

“Well run”

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Objectives

11 out of the 15 participants interviewed said their principal objective for attending was to help the company take a more structured or professional approach to marketing. Of this 11, two interviewees stated that their objectives also included the training of their staff, who also attended.

Of the remainder one company was seeking new markets, another a direction for growth, and a further two wanted to expand their management expertise.

Everyone felt that their objectives had been achieved, with additional comments of "Absolutely" and "Definitely" from four respondents.

Value of Workshops

All of the companies rated the quality of the workshops highly or very highly and all but one of the participants found the case studies and examples to be relevant and pertinent. Just one described them as "Mixed."

13 of the companies felt that all of the sessions were relevant, though two felt the session on "Exporting" was less relevant to them. One of these two companies has since started exporting and this topic soon became very relevant.

Value of One-to-One Sessions

Overall, the participants found the initial diagnostic interview with Keith McDermott the most interesting and challenging one-to-one session. Although one of those interviewed felt the other sessions were "very helpful", it was clear that several participants could not remember much about the sessions during the course.

12 out of the 15 companies had input from their account managers, and all but one of the responses were positive. Clients mentioned Ute Beck, Kim Payne, Kate Bateman, Christina Noonan, Julie Franchetti and Kathy Black as providing valuable input.

Impacts and Outcomes

When asked about the greatest impact on their company, the response was extremely positive, albeit varied.

"Helped us focus" (Three companies)

"Made us more commercial"

"Made us think differently"

"Subliminal changes to our approach"

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

"Completely changed our direction"

"New methodologies"

"Segmenting markets and information"

"Greater understanding of the impact of our actions on the rest of the company"

"Follow up on why we weren't winning business"

"Made us take action"

While still positive overall, two respondents felt that they could not say the MAP had an impact on their business:

- One because both staff who attended had left shortly after completing the course
- The other recognised that although he had not learned much on the course due to his previous knowledge of the topic, his Sales Manager was much more enthusiastic and felt that MAP had enhanced his knowledge and skills.

Most people were reluctant to attribute a specific business advantage directly to MAP. The exceptions were five companies who mentioned the following:

- Increase in wages – this has had a real knock-on effect in terms of staff retention in a very competitive market place. The wage increase emerged as a result of a price hike, which was instigated after market research showed that the company was undervaluing their product.
- Promotion – one attendee had been promoted to a more senior role within the Group as a direct result of his increased expertise through attending MAP.
- Market Research – this company said that they had found the market information to be of significant value, and now followed up on this every year.
- Dedicated Marketing Person – one company said that the course had been instrumental in persuading their SMT/Board that there was a need for a dedicated marketing person.
- New Customers – one company said that they were now doing business with three other attendees.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Of the 15 respondents interviewed, eight businesses really appear to have benefited from MAP:

- Of the eight, four companies were clear that the results could be attributed to attendance at MAP
- Two reported that they had developed new products or services or enhanced their product range
- Three reported that they had entered new markets
- Four claimed to have increased sales since the programme
- Three of these companies also reported increases in employment
- At least four companies indicated that their strategic marketing skills had been improved as a result of being on the programme.

14 out of the 15 participating companies interviewed said they had completed a marketing plan during MAP.

- 12 companies professed to follow their plan, to a greater or lesser extent
- Six companies said had they updated their plan since being on the programme
- Four companies said they had not yet updated their plan, though they planned to do so soon.

Suggestions for Improving MAP

Overall, companies felt that the length of the Marketing Advance Programme was just about right. Three of the participants indicated that they felt the course was perhaps a bit long, but two of these three recognised that this was necessary in order to provide a complete picture.

There were few suggestions regarding improvements that could be made to the programme itself. One company suggested that there could be more detail on branding, while another suggested that the course should include information on how to approach the public sector for business.

Six of the participants interviewed suggested that the key improvement would be to re-introduce follow-up sessions after the programme. Several companies suggested that networking sessions should be held, where past participants could meet and give presentations on what was happening in their businesses and two of the companies suggested that follow-up one-to-one sessions with Keith McDermott would be useful and help maintain momentum.

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Whether Participants Would Recommend MAP

All but one company would willingly recommend the course, and three companies said that they already had. Seven companies used expressions such as "Unequivocally" and "Definitely" or "Most definitely", and "Very much so".

Four companies qualified their response by saying that they would recommend the course for companies who did not have a dedicated marketing person, or marketing expertise.

Another participant said he would only recommend MAP if it was being delivered by Brilliant Red.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

4. SURVEY OF FACILITATORS, ACCOUNT MANAGERS AND LEC MAP MANAGERS

Introduction

Chapter four of this report summarises the feedback from Brilliant Red, account managers and executives from other LECs involved in managing the Marketing Advance Programme.

A list of all those interviewed can be found in Appendix II of this report. Copies of the interview notes can also be found in the background research in Section 2.

Addressing Skills Issues

All of those interviewed feel that a weak knowledge and understanding of marketing continues to be a major issue for companies. As a couple of the account managers put it:

"There is a black hole that holds a mass of SMEs lacking marketing skills"

"They lack the basic skills. They lack any real knowledge of themselves."

Overall, it does not appear to be difficult to recruit companies onto the MAP programme and account managers suggested that any reluctance to participate is probably due to the attitude of the companies themselves and their failure to recognise their need, coupled with a concern that the programme requires significant time commitment and would not have an immediate impact on sales or profitability.

"They must be shown that the course actually involves working directly on their business."

Most felt that the key issue was the attitude of individual companies, rather than the sectors they were from that determined whether they would be receptive to participating in the programme. However, one of the LEC MAP programme managers had found that the engineering and craft sectors in his area seemed more reluctant to participate, whereas the technology driven companies in the IT and services sectors were often more amenable to the approach.

Quality of the Marketing Advance Programme

All of the SEEL account managers and the LEC managers who had experience of MAP praised the course and were very positive about Keith McDermott, the main presenter.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

"MAP is a brilliant course"

"I can't speak highly enough about it"

"KMD is an excellent deliverer"

"He is completely motivational; he inspires companies"

"It opens up other big issues, for example strategy. It goes beyond 'P' marketing"

Likewise, other LEC managers who are or have been responsible for managing the programme in their area were very supportive of the programme.

"MAP is a superior intervention tool and a bringer of results"

"All those who completed the programme underwent cultural change. In other words, they became easier to work with. They became aware of business concepts beyond marketing, such as management development, human resource development and thinking about new markets and the type of advertising. MAP was a catalyst for change."

Comments on the Workshops

All six SEEL account managers felt that the number of workshops and depth of coverage was "just about right". Three of the account managers qualified this by adding:

"...for those with little knowledge"

"It is not the complete answer, but providing a framework and time commitment is necessary"

"KMD's skills as a facilitator ensure that the course goes beyond the materials"

LEC managers also felt that the number of workshop sessions and level of detail was appropriate.

[There are] "absolutely the right number of workshops. They provide a time frame for the activities, so that each delegate gets through the work on schedule"

"They also tend to manage expectations well. They give a new perspective on why SMEs should act."

Scottish Enterprise managers felt overall that the content of the Marketing Advance Programme is very relevant, although two of the SEEL account managers and one of the other account managers suggested that the materials and handouts could be improved.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

"The handouts could be more user-friendly"

"The materials could be updated"

"They might need some updating"

One of the project managers of the MAP programme was pretty scathing about the quality of the materials.

"The hard copies were appalling". SQW were informed of this, however I am unsure whether this criticism got through to Brilliant Red. The documents and slides are considered to be Brilliant Red's Achilles heel. The materials and the slides could be improved... and they could improve the self-assessment questionnaires for future occasions when Keith McDermott and Ann Fazakerley are not there to guide them."

Comments on One-to-One Sessions

Keith McDermott and the account managers believe the level of support and commitment from account managers is vital to the success of companies on the programme. In addition, Keith McDermott feels it is beneficial for the account managers to attend some of the workshop sessions as this "helps increase the quality of experience for customers."

As one of the LEC managers put it:

"Account manager buy-in is an essential ingredient for success"

Account managers estimated that they spend on average three to four additional days with each company that is undertaking MAP, but all of those interviewed feel this is effective use of their time.

"MAP is very demanding on account manager time. The account managers do a lot of the actual thinking. We prompt and chivvy them. Satisfied customers are the real judgement of whether it is time well spent or not."

One account manager mentioned that the programme had helped build a strong, working relationship between the account manager and the client, enabling the client to have greater confidence in the account manager and improving the account manager's understanding of the company.

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Suggestions for Improving MAP

The overall view of Scottish Enterprise managers is that MAP is tried and tested and it would probably be hard to improve the programme significantly.

In addition to comments regarding the need to improve and update the materials and handouts, mentioned previously, one of the LEC MAP programme managers said that additional sessions on contracts and public bodies and a module on proposal presentations would be useful.

The business support managers also highlighted the critical importance of follow up:

"The main gap is post course follow-up.... Continuity is the key"

"There should be more post-course handholding. Visits after twelve months would be useful. This would cover the sustainability issue."

Two of the SEEL account managers said they thought there might be benefit in a shorter course and another two account managers felt there might be scope for a more advanced programme. Keith McDermott believes there is a need for pre- and post-MAP courses and he indicated that Brilliant Red has a suite of courses under development.

MAP as a Network Product

One of the account managers summarised the view of many that:

"MAP is a good Network Product."

And one of the LEC MAP programme managers commented:

"MAP fits the bill at the moment. Nothing else that we have discovered comes near to hitting the mark."

Resource Issues

However, some concerns were also raised by one of the LEC MAP programme managers about Brilliant Red's resources.

"Another crucial issue... centres on quality control. What happens if Keith or Ann are taken ill or have to leave the course during its scheduled time? Who replaces them if a switch out happens? Will the quality of delivery be as good or as convincing? What would be the rescheduling implications for the SMEs? It may not be smart to have all our eggs in one basket, with time and resource sensitive companies."

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

It is clear that the Marketing Advance Programme is currently operating successfully, but there is a danger that Brilliant Red would be stretched and find it impossible to maintain a high quality and effective programme if MAP was to operate across the whole of the SE Network.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

4. CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter of the report contains our key conclusions, derived from our interviews with participants in the programme and business support managers, and our analysis of other marketing programmes.

Market Failure

All of those interviewed from the business support side – the SEEL account and client managers, other LEC managers and the representatives from the three RDAs – feel that there is a critical gap in marketing skills among many SMEs and that marketing is one of their key weaknesses.

The business support managers also feel that a large number of companies lack skills in closely related areas, such as strategic development, business development and that the general management capabilities of SMEs in these areas are also often weak. Several account managers and business support managers pointed out that companies are not often as proactive as they should be, and there is a need to encourage them to raise the profile of their organisations and seek business more actively.

According to those interviewed, one of the main problems is that large numbers of companies do not recognise what is meant by marketing, the benefits that can come from adopting a strategic marketing approach and the benefits of a programme such as MAP.

Interviewees felt other companies may have a reasonable understanding of strategy, marketing and business development, but “are not playing with the full pack”. Strategic marketing programmes such as MAP can arm such businesses with the complete range of skills and help managers understand what they must do in order to implement a successful strategy.

Interestingly, 14 out of the 15 companies interviewed said that they had a marketing plan prior to attending the MAP programme. It would therefore appear that most, if not all, of the businesses had some appreciation of marketing before going on the programme and few, if any, were starting from complete lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Research by one of the LEC managers interviewed by us in this evaluation had found that 65% of SMEs had no marketing function whatsoever. This quantifies, to some extent, the scale of the problem and that there is, as one interviewee put it “a mass of SMEs lacking marketing skills.”

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

The business support managers believe that the attitude of Directors and Senior Managers to marketing is critical to the adoption of the tools and techniques and the implementation of effective marketing strategies. The business support managers said they found some sectors more receptive than others, with older, traditional engineering industries less likely to be receptive, and newer, technology driven companies likely to be more receptive to the concept of marketing. One of the interviewees said there are also quite a number of "recidivist" companies, who were fearful of these techniques.

All but one of the business support managers felt that a strategic marketing programme such as MAP is fundamental to the strategic development of small and medium-sized businesses. The other interviewee, from ONE NorthEast, indicated that they have adopted a different approach, using the "brokerage model", providing a modular approach to workshops and working with companies on a one-to-one basis, as they have found this has given ONE better results.

Effectiveness of MAP

From our discussions both with participants and account managers, it is clear that MAP is a high quality and effective programme.

The account managers and LEC managers who have been involved with the programme are strongly supportive and value MAP. Certainly those involved are very keen that the programme should continue and one account manager was especially emphatic that MAP should not be dropped from the list of Network Products. Several account managers felt that MAP provided a good foundation for further work with the companies and was a good way for the account managers to build relationships with their clients.

From the interviews with the businesses, it is apparent that companies are affected by attending MAP to varying degrees. For 13 out of the 15 companies surveyed the experience had been very positive and MAP had helped these businesses adopt a strategic and marketing focus, become more commercial and think differently. The other two respondents were also positive about MAP, but felt they could not definitely say that MAP had an impact on their businesses.

The view of the SEEL account managers was that those that had attended MAP had generally improved their management capability. We also conclude that MAP has raised skill levels, given the large proportion of the individuals had moved on to other companies and that we found that at least two of the attendees had been promoted within their company or group.

From our interviews with the delegates and account managers, we would have to say that the MAP programme appears to have influenced and changed the behaviour of some participants, but in other cases, the programme appears to have had limited or no effect on the behaviour of

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

managers. Certainly, we are able to point to several cases where companies involved have changed their processes or changed their structures, but the majority of the companies seem to be operating in a similar way to the way in which they were operating before going on the programme.

We would also have to conclude that the degree of genuine skills transfer across the companies and embedding of strategic marketing within organisations appears to have been somewhat limited.

From our examination of the marketing plans in the company files, we can see that there is a very wide variation in the detail and quality of plans produced, going from one page documents, at one extreme, to long reports at the other. However, while 12 out of the 15 companies interviewed professed to be following their marketing plan, only six were updating this regularly.

From our interviews with the delegates and account managers, we would have to say that the MAP programme appears to have influenced and changed the behaviour of some participants, but in other cases, the programme appears to have had limited or no effect on the behaviour of companies. Certainly, we are able to point to several cases where companies involved have changed their processes or changed their structures. However, as less than half of the attendees were actively updating their marketing plan on a regular basis, the long term impact on the company is questionable and supports the calls for planned follow-up sessions.

We would also draw attention to the fact that many of the attendees have moved on since MAP. Given this and the foregoing paragraph, we therefore have to conclude that the degree of genuine skills transfer within the companies and embedding of strategic marketing within organisations appears to have been somewhat limited.

Benefits and Impact

In our telephone survey, we asked clients of MAP to provide information concerning the impact of the programme on their businesses.

Of the 15 respondents interviewed, eight businesses really appear to have benefited from MAP:

- Of the eight, four companies were clear that the results could be attributed to attendance at MAP
- Two reported that they had developed new products or services or enhanced their product range
- Three reported that they had entered new markets
- Four claimed to have increased sales since the programme

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

- Three of these companies also reported increases in employment
- At least four companies indicated that their strategic marketing skills had been improved as a result of being on the programme.

The limited quantitative data provided by the sample of 15 businesses interviewed and the extent to which any increases in sales and employment can be attributed to MAP means that it would be misleading to derive figures for the economic impact of the MAP programme from 1999 to 2005.

Other Programmes

We were asked to look at “similar marketing programmes... that help companies, particularly SMEs, develop their marketing strategy and produce costed marketing plans.” In doing so, we found that there are very few comparable, high quality marketing programmes running.

Perhaps the closest equivalent in Scotland is the “Strategic and Tactical Marketing” programme, delivered by Iain Fraser (a member of Giraffe Consulting) to companies in North Glasgow in association with Glasgow North Limited (GNL) and in the Highlands in association with Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise (CASE). This programme comprises 6 x six hour workshop sessions and a final residential weekend. The cost is £3,000 per programme (approximately £600 per company, excluding residential costs) and over 150 SMEs have been through this programme over the past six years.

From speaking to the account managers and LEC contacts, it appears there are no other strategic marketing programmes at the same sort of level currently running. Milestones International’s “Marketing for Results” programme, which is widely used in the Business Gateway is, in our opinion, not of a similar quality and not in any way comparable to the MAP programme.

At a UK level, the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) runs a number of marketing courses, the closest of which to MAP is “Foundations of Strategic Marketing”. This course is held in the South-East of England, runs for three days and costs £1,900 + VAT. CIM would probably consider arranging a course in Scotland if a minimum number of delegates could be guaranteed.

The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) has five years experience with its “Winning Business” programme. This is similar in structure to MAP and comprises a two-day diagnostic with the company at the outset, following which the company can select to attend up to 10 x half-day workshops. The WDA “Winning Business” programme is expensive and costs each participating company between £2,500 and £3,000 (dependent on whether they are in Objective One locations or not). According to WDA, 220 Welsh SMEs took part in “Winning Business” in the five years to March 2005 and they estimate that the programme has generated £90 million worth of new business and created or safeguarded 880 jobs. It has also produced a return on investment of £100 for every £1 invested by the WDA.

Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

As mentioned previously, ONE NorthEast uses a “brokerage model” and although there are marketing modules available to companies, ONE prefers very customised workshops and has moved away from marketing programmes, towards more one-to-one support for companies, which it believes is more effective.

In examining these other programmes, we found that the cost of MAP at just over £3,000 per company is very similar to the CIM and WDA programmes and we therefore conclude that MAP provides value for money in comparison to these programmes. However, the programme developed by Iain Fraser is much less costly, at only £600 per company.

However, we should point out that interviews with the account and client managers suggested that each manager was inputting, on average, between three and four days per participating company. Taking into account the costs of their time and the time input from the SEEL project manager, we estimate the real cost of MAP to the Network may be closer to £4,500 per company. Most of the account managers feel that their involvement with MAP is “time well spent”, but Scottish Enterprise senior managers need to be aware of the resource implications of the MAP programme in terms of account manager time input and consider this in any cost-benefit analysis.

Strategic Fit of MAP

The Marketing Advance Programme has a very good strategic fit with the Enterprise Networks’ “Smart, Successful Scotland” strategy. “Smart, Successful Scotland” contains the following comments and MAP fits these strategic objectives well.

“Creativity and drive are increasingly differentiators that lead to success”

“Level of ambition and management capability can be among the principal barriers to growth”

“Support for businesses needs to ensure maximum impact and achieve value for money. Resources [should be] focused on where there is the greatest potential contribution to the economy.”

“Programmes tailored to the needs of the customer.”

This report was written at the start of July 2005, before Scottish Enterprise’s Business Growth strategy had been finalised and disseminated, so it is not possible to comment on the fit of the MAP programme within Scottish Enterprise’s new Business Growth strategy. However, it is clear that MAP hits many of the “hot buttons”, in that it is a programme designed to improve the strategic development of companies, enhance the practical business development operations of companies and improve the management capability of participating SME owners, directors and senior managers.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

Scottish Enterprise Intervention Frameworks

At the time that this report was written, Scottish Enterprise was in the process of evaluating its Network Products and we were asked to comment on where the Marketing Advance Programme best fits in Scottish Enterprise's intervention frameworks.

Our view is that MAP is a holistic business development programme that straddles many of Scottish Enterprise's intervention frameworks, in that it engages companies and moves them from developing an awareness and understanding of the management issues not only related to marketing and the companies' strategic development, but also covers other management issues such as business improvement, workforce development and innovation. A case could certainly be made for including MAP across all six intervention framework areas, thereby giving LEC product managers maximum flexibility.

Clearly the programme is most directly relevant to the marketing development and strategic development intervention frameworks and in our view MAP should certainly appear on these two listings. However, if it were only possible to include any product within just one intervention framework, we would suggest that MAP should appear in the market development framework, because it covers both strategic marketing and tactical marketing issues.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Recommendation

1. We recommend that the Marketing Advance Programme should definitely continue and, in our view, should be listed under both the marketing development and strategic development intervention frameworks.

The Programme

2. We recommend that there should be no fundamental change to structure of the course.
3. We recommend that SEEL and Brilliant Red should strongly encourage attendance from more than one individual in each company to facilitate implementation of the plan and increase the likelihood that knowledge is spread within and retained by the organisation.
4. We recommend that the quality of the MAP materials and slides should be improved and that Brilliant Red should continue to refresh and update the materials, based on delegate feedback.
5. We recommend that Keith McDermott should take greater responsibility for critiquing marketing plans produced by the companies and do more to ensure that all companies' plans are of a reasonable quality. Specifically, all marketing plans should be costed and the plans should detail resources required and actions, timescales and responsibilities.
6. Given the time commitment required from account managers, we recommend that each account manager should have no more than two clients undertaking MAP at any one time.

Follow Up

7. We recommend that there should be systematic and on-going support from SEEL account managers, or alternatively a consultant or non-executive director, after the programme in order to maintain momentum and maximise return on investment for the company and SEEL.
8. We recommend that the follow up networking sessions for participants should be re-introduced, to encourage companies to maintain their enthusiasm, maximise peer pressure in a positive way, and continue to work on their strategic development.
9. We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should consider setting up an online forum for all MAP graduates and current participants, across the different LEC areas, to encourage greater group activity and debate in response to strategic marketing questions, and to enhance the spread of learning.

**Evaluation of the Marketing Advance Programme
Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian**

Prepared by Giraffe Consulting
July 2005

10. We recommend that SEEL should attempt to keep in touch with individuals who move on after MAP and to gather information which can be probed to assess the impact of the course not only on individual's learning and career development, but on the enhancement of the skills base of the workforce.

Contract Issues

11. We recommend that, where possible, Scottish Enterprise should plan courses over a longer time period and consider tendering MAP over a three year period, with the option to terminate should it prove impossible to recruit a sufficient number of delegates or if the quality of the programme appears to be deteriorating over time.
12. We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should bear in mind the critical role of Keith McDermott in the success of the MAP programme and specify that Keith McDermott should deliver the Marketing Advance Programme. Commissioners should also ensure that Keith McDermott has the capacity / time to deliver the programme.
13. We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should not seek to license MAP from Brilliant Red.
14. We recommend that Scottish Enterprise should examine and consider Iain Fraser's "Strategic and Tactical Marketing" programme as a possible substitute or complement to MAP.

Monitoring and Evaluation

15. We recommend that benchmarking data on sales and employment should be collected at the start of each wave to enable pre- and post- MAP performance comparisons to be made and a proper economic impact assessment to be undertaken in future.
16. We recommend that "attitudinal / behavioural change" should also be examined as a key performance indicator.

SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS -- INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

15 participants from businesses that had participated in waves 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Marketing Advance Programme were interviewed by telephone during the period from Friday 3 June to Monday 13 June.

Wave	Company	Participant
10	Tayburn Limited	John Stevenson
11	Camera Obscura	Andrew Johnson
11	Capital Credit Union	Marlene Shiels
11	Great Scottish & Western Railway Company	Stephen Coupe
12	Cambric Ltd	Ewan Nicol
12	Dynamic Earth Enterprise Ltd	John Simpson
12	Hopetoun House	Pamela McMahon
12	Mercat Tours	Win Brogan
12	Perident Ltd	James Hill
12	Tsunami Event Management	Susanna Freedman
12	Zot Engineering	Durk Molloy
13	John Laing of Hawick Ltd	Graham Wilson
13	Office Personnel	Kathryn Gardner
13	Rabbies Trailburners	Robin Worsnop
13	Wicken Fen	Paul Weeks

SURVEY OF FACILITATORS, ACCOUNT MANAGERS, LEC AND RDA EXECS

Brilliant Red

Keith McDermott
Avril Linden

Account Managers

Ute Beck
Julie Franchetti (F)
Rupert Jones (F)
James Mason
James Stevenson
Mike Tucker

Other LEC Staff

Cathy Black	SE Borders (Formerly with SE Edinburgh & Lothian)
Jim Kavanagh	SE Borders
Bill Clark	Building Buchan
Penny Godfrey	SE Borders
Ian Ross	SE Tayside (Former Manager of MAP for SE Grampian)
Bill Watt	SE Borders
David Wood	SE Fife

RDA Staff

Daljit Gill	East Midlands Development Agency
Mike Hawkins	ONE North East
Anthony Pritchard	Welsh Development Agency

Note

All interviews were conducted by telephone, except (F), which were conducted face-to-face