

Case study: Nottingham City Council

Identifying and engaging with Nottingham's businesses to help provide targeted business support



As part of wider work to assess Nottingham's economic resilience, Experian helped Nottingham City Council identify and engage with those businesses that might benefit from support. Experian's research has resulted in detailed insight into local businesses, better relations with the business community and a strong grounding for future engagement as well as the council's collaborative work with Business Link.

“Experian’s unique access to data and their innovative approach have made this a very valuable exercise. As well as engaging with businesses that we would not normally have targeted, this will stand as a model for future work in helping support growth across Nottingham’s business community.”

Jane Todd
Chief Executive
Nottingham City Council

Challenge

Alongside our work to monitor the resilience of the Nottingham economy, Nottingham City Council (NCC) wanted to identify small businesses that are likely to be key to the short, medium and long-term health of the Nottingham economy because of their strong track record, but which might experience temporary pressures caused by the recession. These

businesses could then be made aware of relevant products and support services available.

Solution

Working closely with NCC, Business Link East Midlands and the Greater Nottingham Partnership, Experian and pH Group developed a list of key criteria indicators.

Figure 1: Indicators used to identify key businesses in need of support

Indicator	Key criterion
Employee size	Less than 200 employees
Employment size profile	Adaptability in employment levels
Megascore risk rating and its trend (Experian Credit Rating)	Has been good in the last 3 years and no improvement seen since recession began
Payment days beyond terms and its trend	Was within 30 days or better in the last 3 years and no improvement seen since recession began
International connections	Seen to Export/Import or foreign parent or in export intensive industry
Location	Is located in an area of higher than average deprivation
Skills base	In a SIC which employs a higher than average level of low skilled workers

Cardinal Place
80 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 5JL
T 44 (0) 203 042 4000
F 44 (0) 207 746 8277
www.experian.co.uk/publicsector

Embankment House
Electric Avenue
Nottingham
NG80 1EH
T 44 (0) 115 941 0888
F 44 (0) 115 968 5003

160 Dundee Street
Edinburgh
EH11 1DQ
T 44 (0) 131 228 8030
F 44 (0) 131 228 8040

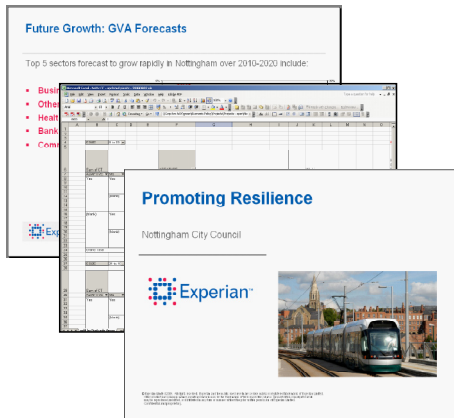


Figure 2: The 'targeted business support' strand is part of Experian's wider 'Promoting Resilience' work for Nottingham City Council

The project team were able to assess Nottingham's business community by combining publicly available data sources with propriety Experian datasets including Mosaic Economics and pH Group business data. This included the pH Megafire (the UK's largest business data source), pH Megascore (an analysis of companies' financial robustness) and unique and up to date information on business insolvency rates, business birth rates and export frequencies. Any business that met two or more of the key criteria was selected for contact – in effect having been identified as important to the city's economy and employment rate, and having performed strongly in the past.

Results

Experian provided pivot tables that allowed for the selection of 103 'key' companies; a communication plan was then agreed between Experian, Business Link and NCC. Economic Development and council account managers were able to make initial contacts with those companies identified. Products and services particularly relevant to each company were identified from the many available.

The research ultimately led to the successful interaction between NCC and local businesses: of those identified, 15% had in-depth meetings with Business Link/NCC and 15% said they would welcome contact at a later date. Although these numbers were not as high as originally planned, the exercise

has proved invaluable in identifying and engaging with businesses that otherwise may not have been approached. More than half of the businesses had already approached Business Link, indicating that the service has a good profile in the area.

As a result of the research, Nottingham City Council has been left with a number of positive results:

- Positive engagement with local businesses
- Detailed discussions with 15% of businesses identified
- Better relations with the local business community with the promise of future interaction
- Greater understanding of local businesses' engagement with existing business support, and their rationales for not engaging
- A detailed list of local businesses that can benefit future council work and business link initiatives

The approach used has considerable relevance for future business support projects and other work involving collaborative work with Business Link. The methodology and its implementation were particularly innovative in terms of identifying businesses for preventative business support in tough economic times.

The success of this exercise and wider research on behalf of NCC has led to the request of an update of Experian's economic resilience work, to raise awareness of the products and services available to help businesses recover strongly.

Contact us:

public.sector@uk.experian.com
www.experian.co.uk/publicsector