Independent Retail & Hospitality Businesses Pandemic Survival Research

Following on from the Build Back Better COVID Grimsey Review Supplement published in June 2020, Bill Grimsey, is turning his attention to independent businesses and embarking on new research to find out how they survived the pandemic and what more can be done to support them.

The former chief executive of Wickes and Iceland has assembled a team of researchers and experts to examine the experiences of independents over the last year in order to improve local and central government policy and raise awareness of their needs.

The purpose of this note is to ask for your help by broadcasting an appeal to your members/readers to submit their experiences in general and specifically under one of the following four headings:

Have you made changes during COVID in any or all of the following ways?

Business Format

How the business gets goods and services to consumers? (e.g., have you traditionally just sold goods through physical outlets and now set up online ordering and delivery? Have you set up a click and collect service? Have you closed aspects of the business and opened others?)

Please give as much detail about the changes and comment on how successful these changes have been? What problems have you experienced if any?

Marketing activities

Have you targeted new groups of consumers?
Have you changed the *range of products and services* that you offer?
Have you made changes to branding? Added new products/brands?
Have you *communicated* with customers in different ways e.g. developed a social media strategy?
Have you changed *pricing* strategy?
Have you made changes to the way goods and services are presented to consumer e.g. re packaging?
Have you adopted any new technology?
Have you implemented any new systems to deal with customers?

Please give details about the changes and comment on how successful these changes have been. What problems have you experienced if any?

Governance

Have you taken on more/less staff?
Have you collaborated with other businesses, either formally or informally?
Have you changed ownership of all/parts of the business?
Have you sold parts of the business? Or acquired new?

Please give details about the changes and comment on how successful these changes have been. What problems have you experienced if any?

External influences

Have you accessed any external funding support during COVID? If so, what was it and how useful has it been? What further support would have been useful?

The information provided in response to this call will be analysed and published in June 2021. Respondents will have the opportunity to remain anonymous. All data collected will be used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully.

The examples should be sent to highstreetreview@gmail.com and all respondents will be contacted before anything is published in June.

Thank you in advance of your help in this important area of research, which will inform Central and Local Governments, Independent Businesses and other Stakeholders, so that best practice can be shared, and lessons learned for future challenges.

Bill Grimsey