GrowthPath NEIS Market Research survey

I'm doing a business course and I'm conducting market research to help me launch a new business, GrowthPath. The survey is mainly about the impact of external change on Australian businesses like yours. Your help is greatly appreciated.

The survey has 12 questions and should take less than 20 minutes to complete. I would appreciate returns by March 10 because the results are a crucial part of my course-work. The results are completely confidential.

Please pass on the survey to other people who are in the target audience. The target audience is business owners, part-owners, sole-traders or independent contractors. For business advisors, there is a different questionnaire version (see http://www.tinyurl.com/neispage)

Take the survey online and I will donate $10 as thanks

You can complete the survey online at http://www.tinyurl.com/neispage

If you take the online option, I will donate $10 to the Australian Red Cross or the Queensland Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal (your choice).

You may also print this form and fax or mail. If mailing back, I suggest printing double-sided if your printer allows. This first page is not needed.

Returning the survey by fax, email or post

You can return surveys to Tim Richardson, 15A Kitchener St, Deepdene 3103 Victoria. To request a stamped return envelope on request, please email tim@growthpath.com.au. Print double-sided if possible; makes for a thinner envelope. Omit this page if you like.

SCAN AND EMAIL: to tim@growthpath.com.au

FAX: Or fax to: 03 8672 0425 (outside Australia: +61 3 8672 0425)

Your Role

Q1. Please choose the role which best describes how you spend most of your time. If you are on extended leave, please answer based on the role you will go back to.

* If more than one answer applies, choose the first one that matches.

○ I am a shareholder or partner in the business I work in (includes startups, contractors and sole-traders)	Please go onto to Q2
○ I am an external professional advisor to businesses (eg accountant, consultant, bookkeeper)	Please complete the business-advisor questionnaire (a separate document available from http://www.tinyurl.com/neispage)
○ I work in senior interim roles (eg CEO, CFO)	Please go onto to Q2
○ I am a manager with five or more people reporting to me	Please go onto to Q2
○ I am a full-time employee (not one of the above)	Please go onto to Q2
○ in non-paying employment (including at-home parent or carer)	Please do not proceed. Thanks for your time.
○ other	Please do not proceed. Thanks for your time.

This is the "business owner or senior manager questionnaire".

Q2a. Please choose the approximate total sales (that is, turnover) of your business, last financial year

○ Less than $2m

○ Between $2m and $10m

○ Between $10m and $50m

○ Between $50m and $100m

○ More than $100m

Q2b. My business has been trading for

○ Less than three years

○ Between three to five years

○ More than five years

Q2c. Please choose the closest match to the main activity of your business

* Please choose the best fit

○ We make or trade mainly in physical products

○ We mainly sell services to consumers

○ We mainly sell services to businesses

○ Our business is an even mix of services and physical products

○ Other: _____

Q2d. Please indicate your ambitions for the business in the next three years, measured by total sales (also known as turnover)

Please choose the best fit

○ We expect to maintain or see a decline in sales

○ We aim to grow sales by up to 10% each of the next three years

○ We aim to grow sales by between 10% to 20% in each of the next three years

○ We aim to grow sales by more than 20% in each of the next three years

○ Other: _____

Q3. Please rate the likely effect of these external changes on your business over the next two to three years

		Very negative effect	Somewhat negative effect	Not much effect either way	Somewhat positive effect	Very positive effect
Online business including social media		○	○	○	○	○
Unpredictable economic growth		○	○	○	○	○
Growth of Australian resources sector		○	○	○	○	○
Asian economic developments		○	○	○	○	○
Carbon tax, emissions trading		○	○	○	○	○
Shortage of skilled labor		○	○	○	○	○
Cost of raising funds for your business (borrowing or equity)		○	○	○	○	○
New consumer technologies or devices		○	○	○	○	○
New entrants to your market, or consolidation among competitors		○	○	○	○	○
High Australian dollar		○	○	○	○	○

You are now half way through the market research questions. Thanks!

Q4. How does your business intend to respond to rapid external change?

○ We expect to use fast response to gain advantage

○ We don't have a pre-defined strategy to deal with change

○ We deliberately wait for others to go first

○ Other: _____

Q5. How satisfied are you with the actual ability of your business to respond to external change?

- The previous question measured intention, this question measures your actual performance

		Highly unsatisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Highly satisfied
How satisfied are you about your business's ability to respond to change?		○	○	○	○	○

Q6. Please rate the following points which may help your business grow in the next two to three years

		Not at all helpful	Not very helpful	Not sure	Somewhat helpful	A key priority
Understanding strengths and weaknesses compared to competitors		○	○	○	○	○
Good understanding of real cash variable costs		○	○	○	○	○
Simple, highly up-to-date business performance information		○	○	○	○	○
Sharing key business performance information widely within your organisation		○	○	○	○	○
Getting your business performing more predictably		○	○	○	○	○
Easy to use decisions tools supporting what-ifs and scenarios		○	○	○	○	○
Understanding profit by customer and product type		○	○	○	○	○
Addressing threats to minimise risk of business failure		○	○	○	○	○
Better business controls or improved GST or tax compliance		○	○	○	○	○
Improving profitability and cash from current business		○	○	○	○	○

Q7. If you would like to add other priorities for your business, please do so here.

Q8a. Some advisors come from large companies, and some from small companies. What positive terms do you associate with small firms compared with large firms?

Q8b. Likewise, what positive terms do you associate with large firms compared with small firms?

Q9. What sort of external advice (apart from day-to-day advice) is of more benefit to your business?

○ Deep expertise in a very specific area of skill ("highly functional")

○ Strong expertise in helping different parts of the business work together better ("cross functional")

○ Other:

Q10. Have you used external advisors in the past three years, excluding day-to-day advice from accountants, solicitors etc? Please answer based on the biggest project.

○ Have not used external experts

○ Have used them for short assignments less than a week, for example a two-day sales course, but not for anything more

○ Have used them for longer projects

○ Other:

Q11. Do you prefer to buy services at an hourly rate or based on fixed fees?

	Strongly prefer per-hour	Somewhat prefer per-hour	Neutral	Somewhat prefer fixed-price	Strongly prefer fixed-price
How do you prefer to buy advice services?	○	○	○	○	○

Q12. Imagine you want to find an advisor to help grow your business. How good are these methods? * Just use your judgement

	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Ask your accountant	○	○	○
Search Google for "business coach"	○	○	○
Search Google for "business mentor"	○	○	○
Ask your personal network or senior staff	○	○	○
Use LinkedIn (a networking website)	○	○	○
Search Google for "finance consultant"	○	○	○
Use Facebook (a social website)	○	○	○
Search google for "management consultant"	○	○	○
Approach an official industry association of management consultants	○	○	○
Approach CPA Australia or the Institute of Chartered Accountants	○	○	○

Thank you!

For instructions on how to submit the survey, please see the first page. You can fax, mail or email a scanned copy.

Referrals would be very helpful

The more replies, the better my data, so I would be extremely grateful if you could forward this survey to other business owners, part-owners, sole-traders or independent contractors. You can direct them to http://www.tinyurl.com/neispage where they can either download a printable version, or take the survey online.