

## HOW PLATO™ IMPACTS ON BUSINESS

This is a summary of the business benefits of PLATO™ carried-out by an independent evaluation<sup>1</sup> that was undertaken over a two year period designed to measure expectations, experiences and the impact of the PLATO™ programme from between 2003-2006. In-depth telephone interviews lasting in excess of 30 minutes were carried out with members of PLATO™; from Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Three to six months after the end of their PLATO™ programme, participants were well placed to answer a number of questions relating to impacts that had been achieved.

- All the respondents felt PLATO™ had had a positive impact on them personally. Additionally, 90% of those interviewed felt there had been a positive impact on their business.
- Overall, 60% of respondents identified a positive impact on their employees who hadn't been directly involved with PLATO™. This was either due to changes in policies and systems or through spreading ideas or information gained at PLATO™ with employees
- Knowledge sharing and learning is a key benefit of PLATO™ and members have often passed on what they have learnt to their employees, which in some instances has led to improvements in the way businesses are run through new processes and procedures.
- 48% reported an increase in their turnover since becoming involved with PLATO™, with a 34% average increase. As well as this 29% had seen an increase in the numbers of staff employed at their business.
- 85% noted improvement in internal systems.
- Networking benefits are demonstrated by the fact that 62% now had more business contacts, while 42% reported doing business with other PLATO™ members and 5% working in partnership with other PLATO™ members.
- One in five of those interviewed (21%) were expecting to develop a new business venture in the future, which they attributed to PLATO™.
- Other impacts have been more difficult to quantify, for example feeling more positive about doing business or the benefits of time out of the day-to-day running of the business to reflect.

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<sup>1</sup> PLATO™: Impacts & Lessons, An Evaluation of PLATO™ by QA Research