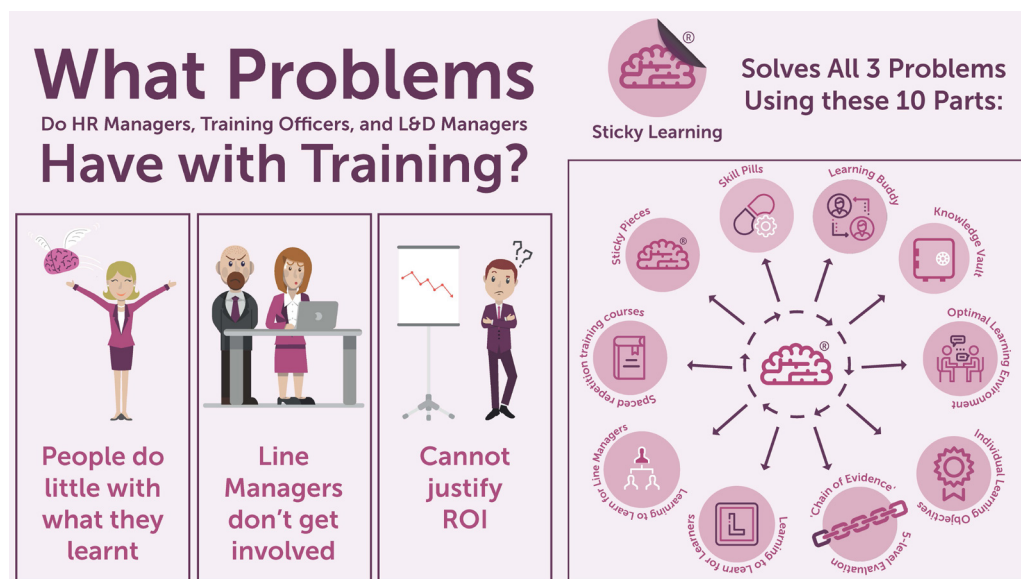


# Making Business Matter



Managing Director  
Darren A. Smith

**M**aking Business Matter is a training provider for the UK grocery industry. Managing Director Darren A. Smith says that MBM's work is split across three pillars: justifying investment in training, looking for the right people in the industry and making learning "stick". Darren tells *The Parliamentary Review* that MBM has pioneered something called "Sticky Learning"; he says this unique method solves a key problem for grocery companies across the country, and provides real, recognisable impact.

"We are the soft skills training provider to the UK grocery industry, helping suppliers to win more business. They choose us because of our money-back guarantee, our relevant experience, and because we make their learning stick."

Those 36 words are our elevator pitch and they have taken 17 years to perfect. As an SME it is essential to provide clarity on what we do, why we do it, and why a company should choose us to be their soft skills training provider.

Based in Oxford and covering the UK, and beyond, our daily lives centre on the UK grocery industry – the world of supermarkets, shoppers, promotions and trolleys. This is known as category management. We train suppliers to negotiate more effectively, to be present with more engagement, and to influence with more passion. Our values will continue to guide us to achieve the very best for our clients and ourselves: determination, trust and improvement.

Two clients have been exceptionally supportive over the years: Hilton Foods plc and A.G. Barr. The first supplies meat to supermarkets and the second is famous

## FACTS ABOUT MAKING BUSINESS MATTER

- » Managing Director: Darren A. Smith
- » Founded in 2002
- » Located in Oxford
- » Services: Soft skills training provider to the UK grocery industry
- » No. of employees: 20
- » [www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk](http://www.makingbusinessmatter.co.uk)

“Here at MBM,  
we created our  
unique training  
method –  
“Sticky  
Learning” ”

for Irn-Bru. Both have embraced the Sticky Learning approach, turning their backs on traditional one-day training courses having been disappointed with the results.

It is clients such as these that enable SMEs such as us to prosper against larger training providers. We owe a great deal to them and their considerate payment terms.

### Achieving real behavioural change

If you think back to your last one-day training course, you probably had a good day and possibly took away something. The challenge is that for the eight hours you spent training, the long-term changes you will have made to your behaviour will be minimal to none, certainly not the performance-enhancing, significant behavioural changing results that you wanted.

Here at MBM, we created our unique training method – “Sticky Learning”.

MBM provides popcorn  
as a snack on its courses

**Popcorn is provided because it  
releases energy slowly.**

HR managers and learners told us that they were frustrated by people coming back from training courses and doing nothing differently. We continue to refine, update, assess and adjust our training method until we achieve the significant behavioural changes that every learner deserves.

Proving that behavioural change has occurred for learners is the holy grail for most training companies. Kirkpatrick created a four-level training evaluation model in 1953 and most training companies do not go beyond what is known as the happy sheet – the part where you are asked at the end of a training day if you liked it.

We create a chain of evidence, which asks the learner four distinct questions pertaining to their reaction, how much they learnt, how their behaviours have changed and the results throughout the training programme.

### Search engine optimisation

A challenge for all businesses, especially SMEs, is search engine optimisation. Any and every business wants to be found by Google, and to be on the first page. Featuring on the first page has been one of our toughest challenges over the last 17 years and is not going away anytime soon.

One of our goals was to rank highly according to Alexa, a website that ranks the 200,000,000 active websites from #1, which is google.com to #200,000,000. Our aim has always been to rank in the top 0.25 per cent, or top 500,000 websites, on the planet. Until five years ago we did not rank. Then we ranked 25 millionth. Today we rank 552,000, only 52,000 places away from our goal.

My advice to all SME owners is to not shy away from SEO any longer. SEO is here to stay.



The MBM team

**Learning is like  
a banana**

**If it is not used  
it will disappear  
in 7 days**



Learning is like a banana

## Continuing to grow

As we continue to grow, we embrace the challenges of SEO and hope to continue to make Sticky Learning the best way to achieve real behavioural change. We implore all businesses to consider whether they want to simply tick the box of training, or whether they want their people to achieve real behavioural change. Only the latter option will increase bottom-line performance.

Our latest campaign aims to support mental health. We know that food factories can be a place where instructions are shouted, leading to an unpleasant working environment for all involved. We are asking Mental Health England and the government to support us in publicising this campaign, whereby we offer free online training for line managers to help them to delegate effectively. The training includes exercises, assessments, best practice videos and why change is needed. The campaign is called "Don't Shout".

We are looking to the future and are hoping to work with 10,000 companies in the UK who supply the

UK market. We hope to continue to gain clients every day, and to co-operate with those on a higher level. We want to train suppliers in understanding their supermarket better, and to ensure that the needs of their shoppers can be met.

“SEO is here  
to stay”

## » T R U S T

Trust is important. Trust is one of those grey areas. Without it, you struggle with your friends. You will struggle at work. I don't trust our neighbour. I dampproofed our joining fence. One weekend when we were out he completely redid it. Trust can be easily understood. Clearing the fog. It is made-up of 4 parts; reliability, credibility, intimacy and self-orientation.

Think of someone you trust and also someone else, that you don't trust. Consider them when you read this:

- » Reliability: Do they do what they say they're going to do?
- » Credibility: When you ask the 'expert' a question, do they know the answer?
- » Intimacy: How much do you know about them personally?
- » Self-Orientation: How much do they talk about themselves?

Now back to your trusted person and the other non-trusted person. When you think of the trusted person, do they tick all 4 boxes? Yes, good. This is why you trust them. When you think of the person that you don't trust, which part, or parts is missing? This is why you do not trust them. Consider. If you people don't trust you, which one of the 4 parts of the trust equation are you not doing, or doing?