

# INTERVIEWS WITH SMEs

## Sarah Naylor Academy Dublin - SME owner

**Sarah's comment:** In today's rapidly changing world, the importance of sustainable and green practices in business cannot be overstated. As the demand for environmentally friendly products and services continues to grow, businesses are under increasing pressure to adapt and embrace green practices. However, many business owners still face competence gaps in understanding and implementing sustainable practices in their operations. This essay will explore some of the key competence gaps that business owners often encounter in green areas and discuss the importance of addressing these gaps. Main gaps are:

### **Lack of knowledge and understanding:**

One of the primary competence gaps that business owners face in green areas is a lack of knowledge and understanding of sustainable practices. Many entrepreneurs may not have a background in environmental studies or sustainability, which can hinder their ability to make informed decisions regarding green initiatives. Without a solid understanding of the principles and benefits of sustainability, business owners may struggle to implement effective green strategies in their operations.

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### Careldine Nolan - Food Watchers - SME owner

**Careldine's comment:** Addressing the competence gaps of business owners in green areas is essential for fostering the adoption of sustainable practices in businesses. By addressing these gaps through education and training, promoting awareness of available resources, and encouraging a culture of innovation and openness to change, business owners can overcome these challenges and embrace green practices. Investing in sustainable practices not only benefits the environment but also enhances the reputation and long-term viability of businesses. It is crucial for business owners to recognize the importance of bridging the competence gaps in green areas and take proactive steps towards building a sustainable and environmentally responsible business.

Main gaps are:

#### **Resistance to change:**

Implementing green practices often requires significant changes to existing business operations, which can be met with resistance from business owners. Some entrepreneurs may be hesitant to invest in renewable energy or eco-friendly technologies due to concerns about cost or uncertainty about the return on investment.

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This resistance to change can be a significant competence gap, as it prevents businesses from taking the necessary steps to reduce their environmental impact and adapt to the changing expectations of consumers and stakeholders.

### **Inadequate measurement and monitoring:**

Measuring and monitoring the environmental impact of business operations is crucial for identifying areas for improvement and tracking progress towards sustainability goals. However, many business owners lack the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively measure and monitor their environmental performance. This competence gap can hinder businesses from identifying and addressing inefficiencies or areas of waste, ultimately hindering their ability to become more sustainable.

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### **Anne-Marie Graham GREAT MINDSET- SME owner**

**Anne-Marrie's comment:** Addressing these competence gaps is essential for business owners to successfully navigate and thrive in green areas, capitalize on sustainability opportunities, and contribute to environmental stewardship.

Main gaps are:

**Difficulty in measuring and reporting environmental impact:** Measuring and reporting environmental impact is crucial for businesses to track progress and communicate their sustainability efforts to stakeholders. However, business owners may lack the expertise or tools to effectively measure and report their environmental impact, making it difficult to set meaningful goals and demonstrate progress.

**Lack of awareness on green business opportunities:** Business owners may be unaware of the various green business opportunities available, such as renewable energy investments, green product development, or sustainable business models. This lack of awareness can prevent businesses from tapping into these opportunities and benefiting from the growing demand for sustainable products and services.

### **The Strand Pharmacy Dublin Iwona Machaczka** **- SME owner**

**Iwona's comment:** Implementing green practices often requires significant changes to existing business operations. Some business owners may be resistant to change due to concerns about cost or uncertainty about the return on investment. This resistance can prevent businesses from taking the necessary steps to reduce their environmental impact and adapt to changing consumer expectations.

Main gaps are:

**Inadequate measurement and monitoring:** Many business owners may lack the tools and knowledge to effectively measure and monitor their environmental performance. Without proper measurement and monitoring, businesses may struggle to identify areas for improvement and track progress towards sustainability goals.

Addressing these competence gaps is crucial for businesses to successfully embrace green practices and contribute to a more sustainable future.

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**Limited awareness of available resources:** Business owners may not be aware of the numerous government programs, grants, and incentives available to support green practices. This lack of awareness can prevent businesses from accessing resources that could help them invest in renewable energy, reduce waste, or implement other environmentally friendly practices.

Green areas often have specific regulations and certifications that businesses must comply with to operate sustainably. However, business owners may have limited knowledge of these requirements, making it challenging to navigate and ensure compliance with environmental standards.

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### **Darryl Smith PIES CONSULTING LTD - SME owner**

**Darryl's comment:** Implementing sustainable initiatives often requires upfront investments in new technologies, equipment, or infrastructure. Business owners may face financial constraints and find it challenging to allocate the necessary funds for these initiatives, especially for small or newly established businesses.

Main gaps are:

**Insufficient expertise in measuring and reporting environmental impact:** Measuring and reporting environmental impact is crucial for businesses to track progress and communicate their sustainability efforts. However, business owners may lack the necessary expertise to accurately measure and report on their environmental footprint, hindering their ability to set meaningful goals and demonstrate progress.

**Lack of awareness of green business opportunities:** Business owners may be unaware of the potential green business opportunities available to them, such as renewable energy investments, sustainable product development, or green supply chain management. This lack of awareness can prevent businesses from capitalizing on these opportunities and staying competitive in the green market.