



NOTE FOR THE LIAISON COMMITTEE, 10 NOVEMBER 1982

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

1. We have now taken nearly 100 measures of varying degrees of importance directly to help the small business sector. Sixty schemes, changes in legislation, financial and tax incentives and advisory services are solely for small businesses. The others are of general application but particularly help small businesses.
2. After much Herculean effort, it is gradually getting through to the public that under this Government there is a new drive to help small businesses and the self-employed. The theme now features regularly in the press, especially the heavies. But there is still massive ignorance about the individual measures. Time and again I am pressed at small business meetings all over the country to introduce changes in legislation which we have already done. Time and again I come across small businesses, as well as their advisers such as bankers and accountants, who are ignorant of the existence or the details of schemes such as the Loan Guarantee Scheme, the Business Start-Up Scheme, and so on.
3. Getting the individual measures over is an endless task. Small firms, and their advisers, are a huge market. Most do not have the time to read much literature or attend seminars and conferences. They do not have the staff, as in large companies, to keep abreast of changes and advice. We made a useful start in the Business Opportunities Programme, and I and other Ministerial colleagues undertake a continuous programme of meetings, speeches, and contacts in many other ways with the small business sector. There is now also a programme of talks and other contacts by officials.
4. Another major new initiative is now required. If the majority of small firms are not aware of the measures to help them.

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they will not benefit, nor will Government or the economy in general. We are in the position of a company with a lot of good products to sell, but with insufficient resources to market them so that there is a distinct lack of market awareness.

5. We are therefore proposing a major new promotion campaign, using television and other advertising media as well as more normal PR methods. This will be launched in the new year and hopefully will run through to July. I intend to try to gain the support of the banks, accountants and other professions, Chambers of Commerce and all other appropriate outside channels in January and February with a view to the major public campaign starting immediately thereafter. The campaign is being overseen by a team of Ministerial colleagues with me, and we are being advised by three outside advisers, Victor Ross of Readers Digest, John Treasure, and Mark Weinberg. The focus is entirely practical, to get much greater awareness and take-up of the schemes.

6. So far £2 million has been committed to the campaign, but there is a general agreement among the Ministers and outside advisers that a campaign of some £2-2½ million is necessary to make any impact. The Chief Secretary has agreed that we may spend up to £2½ million but the additional resources for 1983/4 have still to be found.


J.M.

8 November 1982