

## Going **BEYOND** Awards

# CAPTURED



Captured is an innovative program, based on Newcastle University Business School research, which support micro-business learning through a series of facilitated workshops where micro- business owners are matched with managers from large regional businesses.

Since 2016, Captured has worked with over 150 businesses in the North East of England and engaged with managers from more than 30 large regional organizations.

The program is delivered free of charge and enables owners micro-businesses to develop their management and leadership skills via 4 half-day workshops over a 2 month period.

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Each cohort of Captured has up to eight business owners and a key part of the program is that each business owner is paired with an experienced manager from one of the region's larger businesses who can provide an objective sounding board and a fresh perspective. Over the course of the program, the business owners identify key areas of their business that they want to develop. Through support from fellow business owners and by building a one-to-one relationship with their 'mentor-manager' they leave the program with an action plan for taking their business forward.

A new partnership with The Millin Charity (<https://www.themillincharity.co.uk>) saw Newcastle University Business School develop and deliver a tailored version of the Captured program called Your Enterprise to a cohort of female micro-business owners from the North East.

The Millin Charity works with women who are typically defined as hard to reach, who face multiple disadvantages due to lack of local opportunity, language barriers, limited skills and education, cycles of ongoing poverty, racial discrimination and lack of self-belief. Through engaging with The Millin Charity, women gain the confidence and skills to not only achieve their goals, but to improve their well-being, their connections, and their opportunities.

The Your Enterprise program, delayed by the pandemic, launched online in April 2021 with a cohort of seven amazing women who Millin have supported to establish a business. These businesses included cake making, Portuguese vegan food, arts and crafts and natural hair products. They were supported by an all-female cohort of 'mentor managers'.

Captured, and its spin-off Your Enterprise, are contextually significant: The North East of England is one of the less prosperous regions of England and Newcastle University Business School has been able to use its 'anchor status to catalyze involvement of larger organizations based in the region, including Go North East, Home Group, HSBC, Nexus, IBM, HSBC and Virgin Money, to provide mentor-managers to support the micro-business community.

This in contrast to experiences revealed in a recent report (<https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/open-for-business-21.html>) from the Federation of Small Businesses (2021) which highlighted that micro-businesses are under-served by universities in the UK, with only 2% of their survey respondents saying that they had been able to access support from universities.

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## PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

The workshops have led to enhanced capabilities and improved business performance for micro-businesses. A variety of methods are used to measure the program's success and impact. To ascertain changes in their capabilities, two months after participation the business owners are asked questions in a survey adapted from the European Union's EntreComp framework.

52 participants from Captured have completed the survey. As a result of participating,

**94%**

agreed or strongly agreed that they were more able to believe in themselves and keep developing

**88%**

were more able to 'communicate a compelling value proposition'

**87%**

to 'stay focused and not give up'

**79%**

to 'prioritize, organize and follow-up'

**88%**

to 'reflect and learn from both success and failure'

When asked if they would recommend Captured to another business owner, the average score was 9.1 out of 10.

To test whether the impacts of Captured are a follow-up survey with all previous participants was conducted in 2020, with participants being asked about changes they had made to their business practices as a consequence of participating in 'Captured'.

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### PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

Sixteen responses were obtained and examples included:

"Growing class sizes and marketing opportunities. It also gave me confidence to implement changes, for example bringing in new teachers to enable growth" [#16]

"The main change has been in my role where I made a conscious decision to step away from getting involved in every day-to-day activity and solving every problem" [I#15]

"We import our fair-trade goods directly from the makers now. This gives us more flexibility and allows us to pay the makers better prices" [#2]

When asked whether they had gained customers or clients from participating, 9 of the 16 respondents said they had. Other examples of impact were more personal.

A 2019 participant, already coping with long-term post-traumatic stress disorder, had permanently lost her speech due to an attack outside her shop in 2018. She was concerned about taking part as she struggled to go to unfamiliar venues on her own but, due to the supportive environment that 'Captured' created, she completed the program. Three months later she sent an email [IMP3a]:

**'I thought you would like to know that I won an award this week, the entrepreneurial spirit award at the regional finals of the great British entrepreneur awards ... Doing capture [sic] has definitely made me realise I do have skills and perseverance that others don't have. It's also given me the confidence to do more.'**

Early indications from a focus group conducted immediately after the Your Enterprise program has been seen as equally valuable by the participants.

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### SDG IMPACT

Predominantly **GOAL 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

#### **GOAL 5: Gender Equality**

Many of our participants are women, and we have now developed Your Enterprise with The Millin Charity to support women who face multiple disadvantages in their local community.

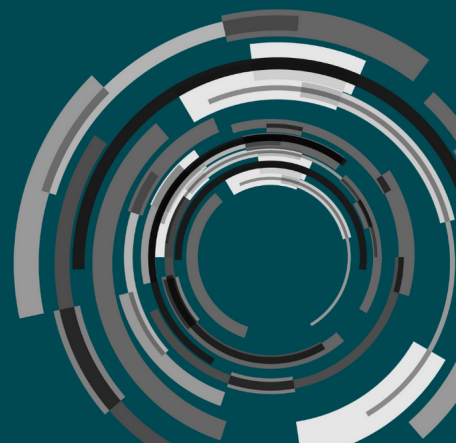


## Captured

Connect Reflect Develop

Applications are now  
open for the 2021  
Programme

[ncl.ac.uk/business/captured](http://ncl.ac.uk/business/captured)





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## LOOKING FORWARD

Our future goals are to continue to build on the success of the programs and return to some in-person delivery post pandemic. That said we have recognized the potential of delivering virtual sessions, so we will be adopting a blended approach. As well as running Captured, we will continue our partnership with the Millin Charity and run another cohort of Your Enterprise.

We will also continue to offer a program called 'ReCaptured' which we piloted in 2021 which offers previous participants the opportunity to take the program again with a different cohort and mentor-manager.

Due to the continued engagement and support that the team provide around the programs, including offering masterclasses often provided by Captured alumni, facilitating a festive fayre to provided participants trading opportunities, and hosting a social media community, Captured has evolved into a genuine self-organized community of engaged individuals who want to 'do more' with Newcastle University and we will co-develop further opportunities of value to the community.

**[ncl.ac.uk/business/captured](https://ncl.ac.uk/business/captured)**