1. **Introduction and overall description**
   This pilot project aimed to design and launch five, postgraduate-level, Creativity in Business on-line learning modules for businesses, large or small. The modules would be created by Falmouth University academics and sought to introduce businesses to the creative thinking processes and exercises used in arts subjects to facilitate problem solving and divergent thinking. In addition, the pilot was designed as a research aid in developing Falmouth's postgraduate provision.

2. **Project Objectives (what you were seeking to achieve)**
   The objectives were to provide benefits for both businesses and academic departments, and as a result, benefit employability of students at Falmouth. The modules were designed to introduce businesses to ideas used in problem solving in creative settings in order to apply them to the business environment; a discontinuity that would enable finding alternative and creative approaches to problem solving and ideas generation. Necessarily that would involve taking the business participants out of their comfort zones, as we do our students, in order to enable them to think (radically) differently about the challenges that face them. On the academic side, the objective was to help staff at Falmouth to recognise the synergies between the business world and their creative way of thinking. This was designed both to feed into a future expanded portfolio of business facing courses, such as a creative MBA and to boost student employability by redesigning parts of the curriculum to better enable students to recognise and voice their skills for a business audience. It was also hoped that introducing local businesses to the university community would provide more opportunities for student placements and even offer businesses the chance to become more involved in curriculum design and collaborative working with students.

3. **Outputs and Implementation (what action you undertook to achieve objectives; and what worked- triggers and tipping points- and what didn't)**
   Four postgraduate-level modules were created successfully. One module was not completed, due to time constraints mainly due to the seniority of the member of staff. The modules could be used for free by local businesses to enhance their creative thinking skills. The project's production manager ensured that each module was designed to fit a common online template within the university's Moodle platform. This was achieved by providing academics with a 'learning journey' template to enable them to structure their module. Participants progressed at different speeds. This, along with their differing locations and departmental working structures, hampered creating a smooth team dynamic to a degree. We learnt that facilitating such team dynamic is vital for the success of future projects. Course design assistance was provided by the production manager, but varying levels of curriculum design experience from academic participants was noticed, and some needed more assistance than others. The project was designed with staggered deadlines for the modules to allow businesses more time to complete each module, which might have contributed to delays. Future projects of this kind would benefit from strict common deadlines. Businesses were recruited and given advance notice of the modules. There was little difficulty in gaining strong expressions of interest, although this, in the end, did not translate to businesses making their staff available to complete the modules in the short window of opportunity that they had. The schedule also put this opportunity in the Easter holiday period, which was a major contributor to the lack of participants at this stage. Additionally, the marking period for academic staff, scheduled for January, coincided with the crucial finishing off period for the online courses. A greater scrutiny of both the academic year and difficult times for businesses would have helped the planning and implementation processes.

4. Outcomes (the extent to which the planned objectives were achieved)

Areas of success include the design and management of the modules, the translation of creative problem solving skills into business-friendly formats and the awakening of interest in the business community to working with the university. Also of major importance is the effect of participation on academic staff in turning their expertise towards greater employability skills, specific to their subject discipline, for students. Less successful was the final business engagement. Four of the five modules were launched but very few businesses were able to release staff to undertake them. This is due to the timing over the Easter holidays and some areas of job cuts locally, were staff are in a changing situation regarding workload and, in some cases, duties. We do not believe that this has diminished their interest in the project, and we are continuing to keep our modules live to get more feedback on their content. A key consideration in future projects would be the free and (unavoidable) unaccredited nature of the modules. A paid-for or accredited module would hold far more value for businesses and also provide managers with more incentive to offer it to staff, if there were more 'proven' benefits.

5. Likely longer term impact

Although getting significant amounts of feedback from businesses will take more time than the project time afforded, the impact for academic departments and the university as a whole is likely to be great. As a precursor to a university-wide creative MBA programme and as a model for enhancing business-facing curriculum design, the project has been very useful. Its results will feed into both our current project to redesign our curriculum design process and the reconsideration of how to teach business-facing skills, particularly for final year students. The lessons learned about 'extra-curricular' research projects that do not follow the academic or business year in structure have also been useful. Continued engagement with businesses will give us feedback on the actual content of the courses, which will give us a good idea of how to write to engage business with our practices and how they can most usefully enhance their practice with creative thinking.

6. Summary (including your perception of the success of the project and particularly identify the levers and techniques you used to yield that success)

In summary, the project has been extremely useful in forwarding our thinking both in terms of planning to work with business and in promoting student employability within our curriculum. The levers for success lie in the solidity of the concept itself – that creative thinking has a strong place in business problem solving. Bringing businesses closer to the university will bring benefits for all involved in the sharing of ideas and our strategic goal of producing graduates that get great jobs.

7. Contact details for any enquiries from interested readers

Jeremy Richards - Jeremy.richards@falmouth.ac.uk

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