

For Diversity



Against Discrimination

DIVERSITY

in small and medium-sized enterprises



EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2006



CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH
AND INTELLIGENCE

Understanding Diversity in SMEs

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An initiative of the European Union

www.stop-discrimination.info

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What is the Message for SMEs?

Diversity



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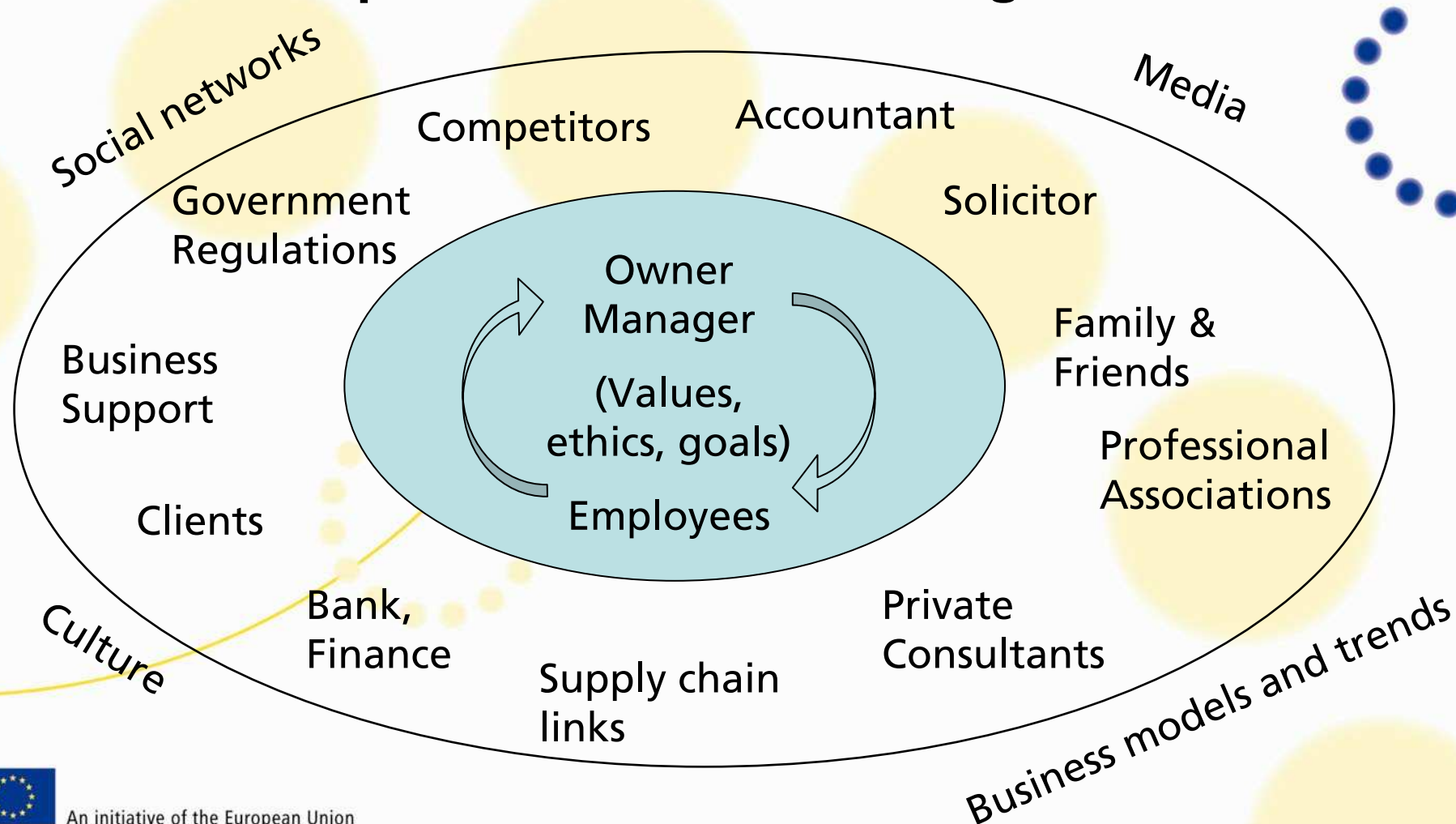


but research shows barriers to message

- SMEs – particularly micro businesses are personal and protective – more than just a business – life
- Human Resource and workforce issues driven by personal interpretations and informality – ‘gut instinct’
- Legislation – huge weight, complex and authoritarian – avoid or just comply
- Language of Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility not the language of business or SME
- Historically operate within an adversarial environment – business needs versus social justice



barriers are part of the decision making environment





how to dismantle the barriers – an action plan?

- Focus on business solutions for business problems – avoid diversity language and concentrate on workforce issues
- Deal in business related language – recruitment, retention, market share, new markets, exploiting the different talents, knowledge and flair of staff, commitment, loyalty, procurement, supply chains
- Practical activities to formalise the 'gut instinct' approach – methods for recruitment, monitoring staff performance, appraisal processes – avoiding 'word of mouth' and informal
- Change the decision making environment – education and training, build diversity sense into the process and influence the 'trusted' influencers, bring together adversaries





counting the cost

- Ultimately who will pay – SME time and resources precious
- Regional resources for key developed regions being reduced
- The business case for diversity is more than just an issue for an individual SME – it is a regional economic issue for governance structures –
- To find the competitive edge from human capital and innovative approaches – need strategy for all!

