

HR Assets



Innovation name of the game



Transportation of the cages went smoothly.



The cages were manufactured off-site.

Construction companies can gain a valuable competitive edge and improved business performance by encouraging an innovative approach to projects.

The BRITE project, of the CRC Construction Innovation, recently interviewed 20 contractors from the National Innovative Contractors Database to discover the workings of Australia's most innovative construction contractors.

The interviews revealed organisational systems within these companies that promote innovation, coupled with effective communication strategies and high levels of support and encouragement of employees. These are methods that can be employed by all sizes and types of companies.

The contractors interviewed cited employees as a major source of new ideas for innovation, particularly long-term staff who can draw on a wealth of knowledge relative to the industry and the company.

Most of the interviewed companies placed great importance in maintaining and developing staff, providing many hours of training and high levels of support.

Highly innovative companies

tap into employee ideas by greatly encouraging communication at many levels and stages of a project. Daily meetings are used by these companies to provide frequent opportunities for discussion and to encourage an innovative approach to the project.

To facilitate adoption of new practices, many companies have developed an ideas database which employees are encouraged to use as a resource for every project. One company employed a highly tailored database that linked each new development with inhouse experts on the topic.

Application of new ideas can be a stumbling block for innovation due to time and risk constraints. An ideal time to consider innovative strategies is during the initial development of the proposal. Preparing a tender with built-in innovation avoids the difficulties associated with altering established plans, and an estimators overall view and planning position is ideal for assessing new strategies.

The common factor among the companies interviewed for "being the best" is not their size or turnover but a strong culture of innovation that results in creating opportunities and taking advantage of them as they arise. ■

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