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Tuesday  
13 March 2007

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## BRITE Project series: Check your innovation readiness here

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

**THIS issue of the BRITE Project series will provide contractors and construction businesses with a checklist to assist those wishing to develop or improve an innovation program.**

Released by the **BRITE** Project of the Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation these checklists are designed to assess current innovation readiness, and the value of existing staff-related practices.



The checklists are based on the results of a large-scale industry survey and 12 innovation case studies which have formed the basis of the new industry guide *Innovate Now* developed by the **BRITE** Project team.

Each question in the checklists is based on an element of best practice as revealed in *Innovate Now*.

### Checklist 1: Assessing current innovation readiness

From the questions below choose from the Level 1 through Level 5 answers to determine your innovation readiness.

- Level 1 – I haven't thought about it
- Level 2 – I am thinking of doing something
- Level 3 – Yes
- Level 4 – Yes, and we are constantly improving
- Level 5 – Yes, we represent best practice

- Do you have robust relationships with key industry participants – for example clients, manufacturers, consultants and technical support providers?
- Do you actively monitor international best practice in your field?
- Do you actively monitor advances in related industries that might be applicable to your business?
- Do you have a formal system for transferring project learnings into your continuous business processes?
- Do you view problems or failures as opportunities for learning and growth?
- When you make changes, do you measure how well the changes have worked?
- Do you seek to win projects with "demanding" clients?
- Do you allow sufficient time for value management, planning and review activities?
- Do you invest in research and development?

The checklist rating system is based on work by Constructing Excellence in the UK in 2001 [www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/](http://www.constructingexcellence.org.uk/)

Score 1 for each Level 1 response, through to 5 for each Level 5 response. Add the sub-totals for each level to calculate your final score.

### Final score

- 36 or more – your business has excellent innovation practices compared to best practice;
- 18–35 – your business is demonstrating average performance against best practice; or

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- 17 or less – your business is currently underperforming compared to best practice.

Any business achieving a score of 35 or less can use their results to guide improvement strategies, while higher scoring businesses can seek to capitalise on their experiences.

## Checklist 2: Assessing the value of existing staff-related practices

Once again from the questions below choose from the Level 1 through Level 5 answers to determine the value of existing staff-related practices.

- Level 1 – I haven't thought about it
- Level 2 – I am thinking of doing something
- Level 3 – Yes
- Level 4 – Yes, and we are constantly improving
- Level 5 – Yes, we represent best practice

- Are staff rewarded for maintaining networking linkages with other industry participants with complementary skills?
- Are staff rewarded for sharing ideas with management?
- Are staff rewarded for using organisational knowledge bases?
- Do you have a plan to retain key staff?
- Do you employ university graduates?
- Are you providing staff training to develop new skills and competencies to support organisational innovation?
- Do you directly employ staff, on an ongoing basis, to capture the benefits of staff loyalty?

Score 1 for each Level 1 response, through to 5 for each Level 5 response. Add the sub-totals for each level to calculate your final score.

## Final score

- 28 or more – your business has excellent innovation practices, compared to best practice;
- 14–27 – your business is demonstrating average performance against best practice; or
- 13 or less – your business is currently underperforming compared to best practice.

Any business achieving a score of 27 or less can use their results to guide improvement strategies, while higher scoring businesses can seek to capitalise on their experiences.

Having rated your current practices between levels 1 and 5, you can use the associated questions below to plan future action:

- Level 1: Is it in our interests to ignore these activities?
- Level 2: Am I putting in the effort or resources needed to support these activities?
- Level 3: Which of these activities should I make even better?
- Level 4: How can I identify the strengths on which to build and improve even more?
- Level 5: How can I capitalise on these successes?

The results of these checklists can be used to develop an innovation program tailored to meet your specific needs.

In addition to the ideas that have been provided here, you will need to consider the structure of your business and the industry you operate in:

- How will your competitive environment and the current status of economic cycles mould your response to the challenges presented here?
- Are you familiar with all the government programs that may support your efforts?

Additional resources to help businesses structure an innovation program are available from the Australian Government [www.ausindustry.gov.au](http://www.ausindustry.gov.au) or [www.industry.gov.au](http://www.industry.gov.au)

Further information can be found at the **BRITE** Project [www.brite.crccl.info](http://www.brite.crccl.info); the Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation, Australia [www.construction-innovation.info](http://www.construction-innovation.info); and the Constructing Excellence program in the UK [www.constructingexcellence.org.uk](http://www.constructingexcellence.org.uk)

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This abridged guide was prepared by the **BRITE** Project of the CRC for Construction Innovation.

The full version is available at [www.brite.crcci.info](http://www.brite.crcci.info)

The guide provides detailed steps for businesses wanting to improve their innovation performance, along with checklists to assess innovation readiness and to help businesses develop an innovation program.

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