

PA/06

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Businesses divided on training needs

If inventiveness and imagination fuels economic growth then you would expect innovation to be encouraged within a company, no matter how small the enterprise.

However, a monthly internet survey run by the Institute for Enterprise and Innovation at The University of Nottingham has found that opinions within small- and medium-sized businesses are divided over the usefulness of training to promote innovation.

Respondents to the UK Business Barometer's September survey were asked which type of training was required to encourage innovation within their organisation.

While 18 per cent believed the question was not applicable to them, almost one-third thought that training towards creating a culture conducive to innovation was most important. Almost one-quarter (21 per cent) chose team working as the most important training need and training in leadership gained support from 14 per cent.

In its sister survey, the UK Business Advisers Barometer, more than half (53 per cent) also believed that training towards creating a culture conducive to innovation is the most important.

The amount of innovation training taking place in companies also varied widely — 10 per cent hold monthly sessions, while the majority (63 per cent) never do any training in this area.

Introducing organisational changes is recognisably difficult for both businesses and employees. More than half (57 per cent) of business advisers responding to the UKBAB survey confirmed they have found their clients tend to resist fundamental organisational change, although 50 per cent of the businesses responding to the UKBB survey say that their employees do not resist change in the workplace.

The survey prompted some interested 'free responses' from participants. Among the comments on the subject were:

More follows...

- “I believe that brainstorming in a team environment is a useful technique for encouraging ideas from others, and being supportive of change is necessary to implement new ideas.”
- “The trick is to allow people the freedom to express innovation.”

The September survey also sought panellists’ views on new fire regulations, whether the customer is always right and graduates applying for non-graduate vacancies. It also asked respondents whether young people are attracted to their industry in sufficient numbers.

The UK Business Barometer (UKBB) and UK Business Adviser Barometer (UKBAB) operate over the web to generate very rapid results. The survey software enables results to be processed and posted on their respective websites in real time.

The survey results are published monthly and more information, including a press pack, can be found on the web at www.ukbb.ac and www.ukbab.ac Businesses and advisers wishing to contribute as panellists on the project should visit the appropriate Business Barometer website to register.

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