

The London Conference and Masterclass: a continuing resource

Events in London on the 2nd and 3rd December 2013 provided more than just a great couple of days for those taking part in the Conference and Masterclass: they also brought together a valuable collection of resources for those leading workplace innovation in enterprises.

The Conference programme can be downloaded [here](#). *Read on to discover other resources related to the Conference.*

So what is workplace innovation?

Euwin's [animated video](#) provided delegates with a clear and memorable answer. It has already been viewed many times before and after the conference and will provide a useful resource for euwin Ambassadors.



Professor Peter Totterdill explained how Euwin is building bridges between academic knowledge and practice. [The Fifth Element](#) will inspire and resource change in enterprises, bringing together diverse research evidence on the business and employee benefits of workplace innovation. Euwin has also produced a [brief summary of the evidence](#).

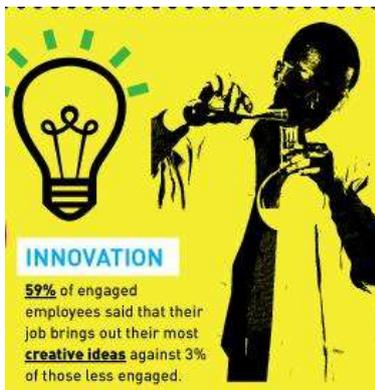
The Fifth Element will also provide the framework for euwin's new **Knowledge Bank**, enabling managers and workers to explore stories of real change and to discover practical tools that they can use in their own workplaces. You can see a preview [here](#).

[See Peter's presentation](#) and [download the slides](#).

David MacLeod's keynote address was one of the highlights of the Conference. David and Co-Chair Nita Clarke lead [Engage for Success](#), a remarkable movement committed to the idea that there is a better way to work, a better way to enable personal growth, organisational growth and ultimately growth for Britain by releasing more of the capability and potential of people at work.



David is passionate about employee engagement both as a driver of economic growth and for well-being. The powerful evidence and analysis contained within the [MacLeod Review](#) (2009) has raised the profile of workplace practices in the UK, demonstrating the scale of the task ahead. Survey after survey indicates that only around one third of UK workers say they are engaged, and employee disengagement is clearly having a negative impact on productivity and innovation.



David draws on research from London Business School to argue that engaged employees do not only perform better in relation to their functional tasks but they also look for new ways of adding value to business processes and find direct opportunities to innovate.

Companies such as **Red Gate Software** and **Innocent** (featured in Euwin's [Employee Driven Innovation video](#)) recognise that commitment to innovation must be embedded in organisational culture and working practice – it is not an add-on.

As a social movement, Engage for Success is seeking to change the tide of management thinking in the UK, recruiting a large army of volunteers from business, research and consultancy to drive the new agenda forward. There is clearly a natural synergy with Euwin, and we look forward to a continuing partnership.

See David's [presentation](#) and download his [slides](#).

Inspirational workplaces



Microsoft UK's People Vision is to be the technology employer of choice where people have the opportunity to do what they do best every day and work towards realising their potential. In other words:

"Come as you are, do what you love"

HR Director **Theresa McHenry's** inspiring presentation demonstrated how the company is striving to live its values by attracting and developing the best talent, delivering results through real teamwork and setting an example in day-to-day working life. You can see [Theresa's presentation](#) and download the [slides](#). There is much more about Microsoft's approach on its [website](#).

During the afternoon [panel discussion](#), **Mary Giles** (UK Compensation and Benefits Manager) and **Matthew Partovi** (Yammer) explained Microsoft's approach in more detail. Matt is leading [The Responsive Organisation](#), a remarkable new network dedicated to sharing ideas and innovations about work and workplaces.

Edwin van Vlieberghe explained how **Bombardier's** approach to teamworking is based on trust and empowerment.

The culture of trust also extends to openness and collaboration with trade unions, and under Edwin's leadership a sense of common purpose has been established which transcends traditional industrial relations.



Jean-Baptiste Obeniche discussed how collaborative platforms with unions and employees have also driven workplace innovation in **EdF**. Smarter ways of working which enable the company to address stress and improve performance are emerging from a joint study visit and from other activities that enable shared learning and reflection. Jean Baptiste explained the "how to" in more depth at the Masterclass on 3rd December. Details will be published soon.

In contrast **Fokke Wijnstra** described an organisation which is remarkably free of formal structures. Finext is a financial consulting company without bosses or organisational divisions, one in which teams and decisions emerge. More detail will emerge from the findings of the Masterclass are published; meanwhile you can read an [article](#) and see a [short video](#) in which Fokke explains Finext's way of working.

Watch the full panel discussion [here](#).

High involvement innovation



Professor John Bessant's starting point is a conviction that every single human being is immensely creative. But how do we mobilise that innate creativity? John says:

"We need to create enabling infrastructures and strategic direction to make Employee-Driven Innovation happen as well as nurturing an understanding that it is a long term, continuous and evolving process and not a magic wand intervention."

John launched [Euwin's new video on employment driven innovation](#) featuring four very different organisations, all of which create spaces in where people can step back from their day-to-day tasks to generate ideas for improvement and innovation.

It can be as simple as establishing regular forums that enable staff at all levels of an organisation to leave job titles and hierarchies behind, and to explore new ideas through open and free-thinking discussion. **Matt Longman** showed how these forums generate ideas for improving the service in **Devon and Cornwall Police** at a time of financial stringency. Electric bicycles, for example, are a great way of improving visibility while ensuring that officers cover enough territory in remote rural areas.



Likewise opportunities such as *Down Tools Week* at [Red Gate Software](#) enable staff to step back from the day job to develop their own ideas for new products and ways of working.

Ideas for improving the business should also be part of the day job. [Innocent](#) encourages staff at every level to think continuously about ideas for improvement and innovation, according to **Tom Fraine**. Being 70% sure that an idea will work is sufficient to get the support needed to take it forward. **Natalie Wilkie** and **Gary Holpin** of **The Met Office** argue strongly that new ideas can come from anyone. A network of volunteers recruited from every level of the organisation is gradually establishing a culture of innovation in ways that break down silos and release new waves of creativity. Watch the panel discussion [here](#).

Case studies of [Innocent](#) and [Red Gate Software](#) are now available and will shortly be published for Devon & Cornwall Police and The Met Office.

John's amazing presentation on high involvement innovation involved two guitars and a vocalist. See part of it [here](#).



Forum Theatre – a resource for workplace innovation and engagement

Unlocking employee creativity is one of the key challenges of workplace innovation to improve performance and enhance working life.

Participants at the Conference experienced a particularly powerful tool for achieving this end. Forum Theatre is a dynamic and interactive event that helps to release employee inhibitions that prevent them from expressing their views while engaging them in critical reflection and creative thinking through facilitated dialogue and collaboration. You can see the session [here](#).

Forum Theatre focuses on organisational practices and culture, not individual behaviour or performance. It is not role-play, is not intimidating and it works for any size or type of group event!

Forum Theatre in Action

After confidential discussions with managers and employees which build a picture of the organisation, experienced actors present their audience with an intriguing set of relationships, challenges and dilemmas in a fictional workplace not too unlike their own.

Audiences are invited to challenge the characters about their actions, motivations and working methods, and to suggest ways in which better outcomes might be achieved. In so doing, participants gain a unique opportunity to reflect on their own organisation's practices and to discover ways in which improvements might be made.



Forum Theatre can address positive opportunities for innovation as well as long-standing problems and obstacles. It is aimed at positive organisational outcomes including:

- enhancing communication
- reinforcing trust and confidence
- building versatility and team working
- harmonising systems and procedures
- creating a continuous improvement culture
- encouraging leadership and creativity throughout the organisation
- establishing a partnership approach to managing recovery from the current Crisis

The Forum Theatre experience helps employees at all levels of the organisation realise they *can* intervene with new ideas and their voice *will* be heard.

Contact Harry for more information on forum theatre:

harry.gilfillan@workplaceinnovation.eu

Europe's challenge

Grzegorz Drozd of the **European Commission's DG Enterprise & Industry** stressed the EU's commitment to workplace innovation as a key element in building European competitiveness. **euwin** is growing as an exciting and dynamic network connecting enterprises, researchers and other stakeholders across Europe.

See [Grzegorz's speech](#) and find out more about euwin and the EU policy context [here](#).

Greet Vermeylen of [Eurofound](#) (the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions) outlined the scale of the challenge facing Europe, drawing on the results of the [European Company Survey 2013](#) and the [European Working Conditions Survey](#)). For example, Duncan Gallie and Ying Zhou's analysis of the Working Conditions Survey shows that just 27% of European workplaces enjoy high levels of employee involvement and task discretion. Worse, nearly 40% are characterised as "Low Involvement Organisations" with profound effects for their economic performance and employee well-being.

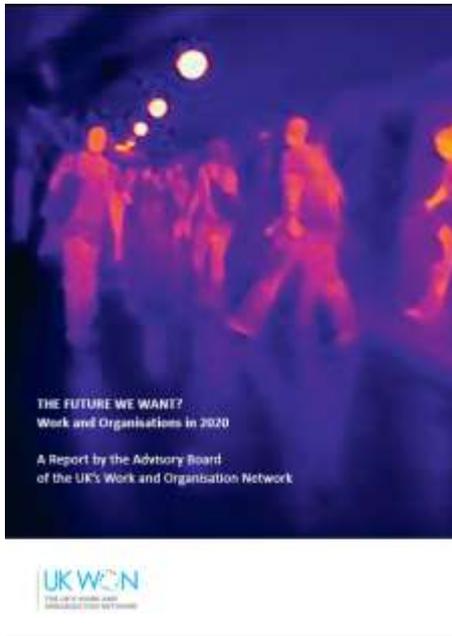
See [Greet's presentation](#) and download her [slides](#).

A panel discussion led by **Steven Dhondt (TNO)**, **Anthony Kallevig (Norwegian Trade Union Confederation)**, **Herman Kok (The Lindum Group)** and **Aoife Ni Luanaigh (UKCES)** explored the challenge from the perspective of different stakeholders.



Launch of the UK WON Advisory Board Report *The Future We Want? Work and Workplaces in 2020*

The idea for this report emerged from a rich and lively discussion during and after a meeting of UKWON's Advisory Board. Subsequently a large number of Advisory Board members, including representatives of employers' organisations, trade unions, public agencies and universities, met on several occasions to share ideas and insight, and contributed further suggestions and material through a variety of online means.



The report makes the case for workplace innovation and participative working and the opportunities and limitless possibilities for creative and rewarding entrepreneurship that these afford. It argues that workplace innovation has a major impact on both the performance of the enterprise and on national economic competitiveness. It boosts productivity, quality and innovation, by making better use of workforce talent and has a profound effect on employees' learning and development, health, well-being, ageing and wider roles as citizens.

Set against a backdrop of changing economic priorities and demographic changes, where organisational hierarchies and jobs for life are being replaced by a knowledge based network economy bristling with innovative communication technologies, this report

argues that the workplace constitutes a vital but neglected asset in facing the challenges of a volatile world economy and that there are missed opportunities amongst politicians and policymakers in maximising the role that workplaces and organisations can play.

The potential of the workplace, the focal point at which wealth creation and social wellbeing come together, is being ignored. There is clear agreement amongst those responsible for this report about the need to challenge such a major gap in the current policy environment at a time when growth and employment rank so highly in the list of national priorities.

[Download the report](#)

Chaired by **David Yeandle OBE**, the launch of *The Future We Want* was accompanied by reflections from three very different stakeholders in the future workplace. **John Edmonds**, former General Secretary of the **GMB**, reflected on past struggles to improve the quality of work in the UK and shared concerns about the current political landscape. **Ségolène Journoud** representing the French **Agence Nationale pour l'Amélioration des Conditions de Travail (ANACT)** spoke of the serious challenges facing work and workplaces in the future (read more [here](#)). In contrast **Oliver Exton**, a final year Cambridge University economics student, spoke with passion about his generation's expectation that work should be intrinsically rewarding and a source of personal development.

Kim Mellor, pioneer of workplace innovation

Euwin and UK WON are grateful to Kim for his generous sponsorship of the Conference and Dinner

Throughout his career, Kim has been passionate about “liberating people and liberating organisations”.

After studying mathematics at Oxford, he gained a fellowship at Harvard in 1947. There he studied Human Relations with Professor Fritz Roethlisberger, author of the first comprehensive findings of the Hawthorne experiments. Kim was particularly influenced by the emerging work of Dale Carnegie (“How to win friends and influence people”), W. Edwards Deming and the Tavistock Institute.

Joining Metal Box in 1949 as “an apprentice in a boiler suit”, Kim quickly realised that the company’s approach to management was shaped by the culture of the UK’s private school system. It was, he argues, designed to crush individuality and suppress creativity.

As he rose through the company, Kim was always happier on the shopfloor than in the office. He felt closer to frontline workers than to his fellow directors and was always something of a non-conformist.



He sought to reshape the company’s working practices in ways that empowered employees at every level. Kim was keen to identify people who were restive in their current roles and offer them opportunities to develop new ideas.

By 1957 Kim realised that the company’s traditional business was dying because of the advent of plastics and other materials. At weekends he made samples for new products at home, then on Monday mornings he worked with the shop steward in the tool room to create new prototypes. Kim’s friendship with Alan Atkins, the shop steward, has continued ever since.



Studying human relations at Harvard, Kim realised that by focusing on the things people can agree on, the issues that separate them soon dissolve. He always saw trade unions as important partners in sustaining competitiveness and employment. Kim even worked closely with the unions in British Steel, the company’s major supplier, to stimulate employee-driven innovation in products and processes.

Kim retired in 1985 as Metal Box’s Director of Corporate Strategy. He has since been involved in a wide range of entrepreneurial and charitable activity.

In 2011 Kim married Kate Baxter, who he had last seen in 1956. Kate is founder and President of [Muzika Charitable Trust](#) which has worked with children and adults in Romanian care homes since 1990.