
INNOVATION COUNCIL MEETING • 20th Oct 2020

Introduction:

- Pat Doody Chair of LEP attended the meeting
- Focus of the meeting – Productivity Programme update, business owners’ case studies from the Survive, Revive, Thrive programme and discussion focused on leadership in a post Covid 19 environment – led by Dr Craig Marsh, PVC for International Partnerships and Director of the Lincoln International Business School.
- Mary Stuart introduced the meeting and noted the UK low levels of productivity and the critical role that innovation plays in improvements.
- The vital part that leadership plays in innovation and improved productivity.

Recovery Plan:

- Ruth Carver update on the recovery plan. Focus on short term recovery plans and ‘shovel ready’ schemes. Working on a 1 – 5 year recovery plan. Second wave has put recovery in question and is slower than anticipated. Twin track recovery some businesses flourishing and others struggling, in particular leisure and hospitality. 6% take up in Universal Credit which is a proxy for unemployment numbers. Cash flow is a major issue for many businesses. Balance between health and economy are key issues and will continue into 2021. Redundancy support and job creation are a major focus.

Productivity Programme:

- Productivity Programme update - In the first 12 months of delivery the programme has gained momentum, we have completed 106 x 12hr Business support interventions, 9 Productivity grants, 2 Productivity Vouchers, 14 placements on Growing Graduate Enterprise and completed 11 Internships. Using on-line delivery for most of the programme but it is difficult for the graduate recruitment element during the pandemic.

Survive, Revive, Thrive case studies:

- Case studies on Survive, Revive, Thrive programme. Wendy Clarkson at Fizz Co. Timing of contact from the University was helpful and appropriate. Meeting people, getting out of the office, being challenged during the tasks has been incredibly valuable. Thinking about what is possible rather than not possible. Wanted to have an improved digital presence and now have 3D visuals on line and this would not have happened without the programme. Enabled stability and innovation during the pandemic.
- Benedict Heaver, Streets Heaver, key issue - how to keep the identity of the business during a period of growth. The programme helped to solidify thinking around culture and values. Created a responsibility chart rather than an organisational chart. Business has adapted well during the pandemic as a consequence. 12 jobs created during lock down and the most profitable year to date. Company has grown by @20 since the start of the programme. Meetings on line, in person and at other venues has been invaluable in terms of thinking and planning. Using the LIBS course for all new starters. Moved away completely from ‘command and control’ model of management.



Leadership in a Post Covid 19 Environment:

- Dr Craig Marsh, PVC International Partnerships and Director for International Business School. How do you lead innovation in these times? Commonality across sectors. Trust, free flow of information, empowerment at junior levels, culture of kindness and empathy. Collaboration, communication, involve others, creating space for difficult conversations, admitting failure and showing vulnerability.
- Common challenges – Technology, pandemic, post-millennials. Younger people are more likely to see transformational opportunities/trends, older leaders need to embrace this as they are less likely to see these opportunities.
- Leaders need to resist taking resources away from innovation during times of crisis. Larger firms working with innovative small firms is an opportunity. Balancing execution while incubating new opportunities and trendspotting is a key challenge.
- Improvised solutions when there are scarcity of resources.
- Young Innovators are more interested in solving societal issues rather than making money per se.
- Everyone in their own way has a leadership role within organisations. Floating ideas in an appropriate environment is key. Letting ideas grow, which can be re-visited over time.
- Context of big state leadership in the current climate and how this relates to a business leadership context. How can we make this work for innovation leadership in Lincolnshire?
- Embedding no blame culture and organisational collaboration is critical moving forward. Remote working has enabled trust and non-directed behaviours.
- Empowering individuals to 'fail fast'
- I generation – performance to receive immediate response, values driven, not to be told but convinced.
- Getting more empirical data on young people's views in the Lincolnshire area.
- Support for lifestyle businesses in the area.
- Discussion highlighted how important leadership in innovation is. Facilitated discussion is helpful.
- What more can the Innovation Council help to assist the LEP with to fill the gaps.

