



Welcome to:

European Workplace Innovation Network | November Bulletin
EUWIN is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Workplace innovation in the Polish context EUWIN's Warsaw workshop



Today it's hard to find an organisation that would reject innovation. It has become a 'mantra' for the business that is constantly seeking newer and better solutions. But keeping up with competitors and securing a constant flow of new and creative ideas cannot be achieved in one go. It needs a process.

On 19th October in Warsaw we were discussing how to create an organisation that recognises the natural instinct of employees, the instinct to solve problems and to be creative. A topic of real importance for an innovation agency such as PARP, I must say.

So, when Grzegorz Drozd from the European Commission's DG GROW approached me a couple of months ago with the concept of organising the workshop in Warsaw, it was obvious that I should support the idea.

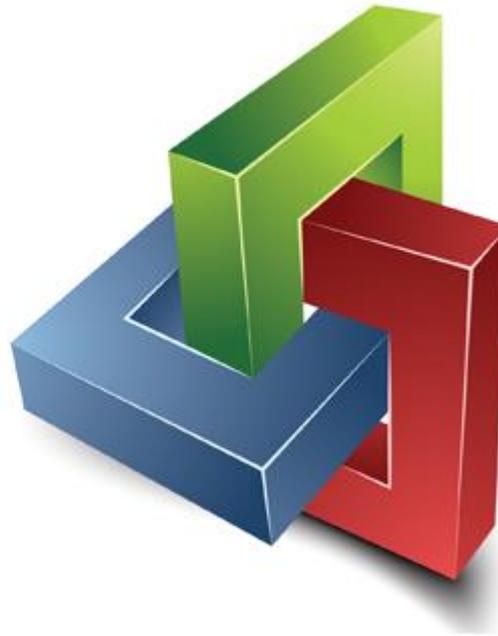


Anna Brussa
Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)

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Tackling skills shortage through workplace innovation

Skill shortages and gaps in European enterprises



STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AND THE LABOUR MARKET

A recent report from Cedefop, the European Union's centre for vocational education and training, points to the negative effects that skills shortages can have on business performance and development. It also suggests that “the inability of firms to attract the ‘right’ workers and fill their vacancies may arise for many reasons other than genuine shortages of skill”, including poor quality jobs and lack of learning opportunities in the workplace.

As the report argues, “tackling skill shortages cannot be a one-sided endeavour” and we need to look much further than traditional skills strategies. An important minority of firms recognise this by creating a learning environment throughout the workplace. Central to this is job autonomy, which “can mean that challenges are mastered by the individuals themselves instead of others (e.g. managers, supervisors): exposure to such challenges provides a learning stimulus, even if the learning process is not intended”.

Although the Cedefop report makes no explicit reference to ‘workplace innovation’ it underlines a key message. Traditional approaches to training and qualification are necessary but not sufficient; they need to be complemented by workplaces that enable employees at all levels to use and develop their full range of knowledge, skills, experience and creativity in their day-to-day work.

[Download the report](#)

Weaving a Sustainable Future

How design thinking unlocked the door to innovation in Scott & Fyfe



Since the 1980s there has been a tendency to write off the textiles sector as a sunset industry, unable to compete in Europe in the face of low cost competition globally. This case study tells the remarkable story of a traditional company that decided to undertake a transformational journey, unlocking the talent and creativity within its workforce.

Established 140 years ago, Scott & Fyfe has manufactured woven and knitted textiles for a variety of markets worldwide. The company was proud of its ability to serve its customers' need for new products and to provide specific solutions. However it identified that, with product life cycles becoming ever shorter, it needed to be more proactive in seeking new opportunities, technologies and markets.

Scott & Fyfe's long heritage harbours a wealth of job specific knowledge and experience within the separate departments across the company, but this wasn't being accessed systematically. A chance meeting with the Glasgow School of Art at a business networking event led to the company's involvement in the pilot [Creating Cultures of Innovation](#) design intervention project, supported by the Scottish Funding Council in partnership with the Institute of Directors.

[Visit Scott & Fyfe'S innovation website](#)

[Find out what happened next](#)

Trade Unions And Innovation: Co-Creating The Future Of Our Industries

Seminar, November 19th, Brussels



In the public debate and policy discussions it is often assumed that unions undermine the innovation capacity of enterprises, or at least that they don't favour innovation capacity. A growing volume of international research, however, points to various ways in which indirect employee participation can strengthen the innovation capacity and results of companies.

This raises a key question for Flanders: How does one translate these findings to the Flemish business and policy context? What are the opportunities and challenges of such an approach for companies, employees and employers? How can policymakers and the existing structures play a role in this? ACV and HIVA KU Leuven searched for answers to these important questions. Funded by the Flemish *Agentschap Ondernemen* they launched an intensive case study research project in Flanders and abroad, determined to find inspiration in existing practices within companies and unions.

On November 19th the findings of the study will be presented in Brussels. Employers, researchers and policymakers will reflect on the findings and practical conditions for an innovation-oriented dialogue between trade unions and business world. A sustainable future for industry in Flanders is at stake.

Seminar in Dutch. More information and / or registration [here](#).

Read more about [trade unions as knowledgeable participants in workplace innovation](#) and watch our short film about [a remarkable story of trade union-led turnaround in an Irish company](#).

Changing how we create well-being at work



The debate examining how 'good work' helps to achieve high performing and resilient organisations, as well as enhancing the health and wellbeing of workers at every level, is maturing as more leaders and managers begin to understand the issues they face.

The concept of employee mental health and well-being is evolving rapidly. Good employers are already helping managers to identify the symptoms of mental ill-health and stress, and providing individuals with the support they need. The challenge however is to identify the ways in which workplace practices and cultures either contribute to positive mental health or undermine it. For many organisations this raises some pretty fundamental questions about how they organise work.

Participants at UK WON's *Symposium Bringing wellbeing, mental health and productivity together in the workplace of the future*, hosted by E.ON at its new Nottingham offices in October 2015, shared a variety of experiences on how to create good workplaces which combine economic performance and high quality working life. The starting point, inspired by UK WON's publication [The Future we want? Work and organisations in 2020](#) was 'how do good organisations adapt to a changing economic, demographic and social environment in an increasingly volatile world?'

It became clear that the group, drawn from a wide variety of public and private sector enterprises, agreed that the past is an increasingly unreliable guide to the future and if we want to adapt, challenging and even redefining received orthodoxies is imperative.

[Read more](#)

Save the Date

Keep up to date with EUWIN events



3-5 th November	Paris, France	Project Meeting InGRID (FP7 Inclusive Growth Research Infrastructure Diffusion). Objective is to integrate and to innovate existing European social sciences research infrastructures on 'Poverty and living conditions' and 'Working conditions and vulnerability'. More info here.
19 th November	Brussels, Belgium	ACV and HIVA KU Leuven launched an intensive case study research project in Flanders and abroad, determined to find inspiration in existing practices within companies and unions. On November 19 th the findings of the study will be presented in Brussels. Seminar in Dutch. More information and / or registration here .
TBA December	Sofia, Bulgaria	ARC Fund and EEN – Bulgaria organize the Annual Contest for Innovative Enterprise of the Year. Workplace innovation is among the innovation categories included in this year's contest. The best innovation performers will be announced during the 11 th National Innovation Policy Forum. More info soon

[Find out more about our events](#)

Please Forward

Thank you for being part of [EUWIN](#). Together we bring together the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of enterprises, employees, unions, employers' organisations, policymakers and researchers from across Europe. Spread the word! Please forward this briefing to your colleagues, associates and suppliers. Ask them to sign up [here](#). Make sure they don't miss out.

