



Welcome to:

## European Workplace Innovation Network | June Bulletin

EUWIN is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

## Unleashing Workplace Innovation in Scotland and Europe



This week I returned from Tallinn, in Estonia where I attended an EU-wide knowledge-sharing conference on Workplace Innovation. Tallinn is the major political, financial, cultural and educational centre of Estonia. Often dubbed as the Silicon Valley of Europe, it has the highest number of start-ups per person in Europe and is the birthplace of many international companies, including Skype.

EUWIN arranged the event, and as I took my seat on the stage to share Scottish Enterprise's emerging approach to support companies around Workplace Innovation I was reminded of the importance of collaboration and knowledge sharing. In the coming months a number of conferences and practice-oriented workshops throughout Europe will be rolled out so it was a real privilege to share information about the dynamic movement that's happening in Scotland right now.

During the conference it was reinforced that Workplace Innovation has been widely identified throughout Europe as a key enabler to drive productivity. I wanted to convey that we have developed our approach, drawing on EU research. Companies which address this properly – that is to say, through the systematic use of evidence-based workplace practices - will see increased productivity, innovation and staff retention. Scottish companies are now starting to implement this type of approach.



*Clare Alexander*  
*Scottish Enterprise*

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## Making it personal



It's hard to pinpoint a time when our transformation started and when we began to get clarity on what we wanted to achieve, but for the “aha” moment came when I heard the term “fit for future, fit for people”. I think the phrase has been plagiarised from Gary Hamel’s [Fit for the Future, and for Human Beings](#)? but for me it sums up what we are trying to do – yes, of course we want to focus on the business (profitability etc.) to ensure that we are here in 350 years (we just had our 350th birthday), but it also puts in equal balance that it has to be a place that is fit for people. By this I mean we want to provide an environment that the whole person can turn up to and contribute, and not just a portion of the person.



*Tom Francis  
Business Manager at Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, Bristol, UK*

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## Change is inevitable: do you adapt to it or do you lead it?



Organisations of every type need to adapt to an increasingly uncertain future. Reshaping organisations, building new levels of organisational competence, finding new ways to work and future-proofing organisations have become critical factors in determining future competitiveness and performance.

For example we have already witnessed the rapid change in culture, lifestyle and aspirations between the now retiring baby boomers and Generation Y. Gen Y-ers are now the ones starting up businesses and research in the US reveals that as many as 9 out of 10 of them believe that business success should be measured by more than profit. That's a change many didn't see coming, so who's to say that the businesses that will be built by the following generation won't be different again with different products, different hierarchies and structures and different ways of working?

Change is inevitable but do you adapt to it or do you lead it?

Are you constrained by a short term focus or energised by a long term vision?

If you have a vision of the future of your organisation and the determination to achieve it, how are you to go about it and overcome the many obstacle and challenges along the way?

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# Performing without managers



In traditional hierarchical companies there are many managers and their numbers tend to grow with the development of the company, both numerically and relatively. These managers do not usually contribute directly to production or the service and they cost a lot. So the question: “*can we do without...?*” is obvious.

A growing number of companies answer this question with “yes”. They are inspired by [Ricardo Semler](#) who, in 1993, described how his successful company Semco operated without managers; or by Brian Robertson who introduced the concept of [Holacracy](#), inspired by Gary Hamel’s proposal: “First, let’s fire all the managers” in a [Harvard Business Review](#) article; or by the social media discussion (#nomanager). In the Netherlands there are several successful companies (almost) without managers.

But how are communication and coordination with upstream, downstream or parallel departments, or with clients, organised?



*Fietje Vaas*  
*TNO, The Netherlands*

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## Building the Portuguese Workplace Innovation Network



Universidade Europeia, an institution of the Laureate International Universities network, hosted, a European conference on workplace innovation in Lisbon on 20th May supported by EUWIN.

Professor Peter Totterdill, representing EUWIN and with several published works in the field of innovation in the workplace, was the event's main speaker. With the help of films and case studies from [EUWIN's Knowledge Bank](#) he shared his experiences of workplace innovation and its consequences for the competitiveness of enterprises and the health of workers.

EUWIN Ambassador in Portugal and Professor at Universidade Europeia Maria José Sousa, emphasised the important contribution of universities in creating EUWIN as a European network of innovation. She told delegates that *"at the moment, Portugal is strengthening its contribution to EUWIN by creating a national partnership between private companies, business associations, government agencies, research centers, universities and other entities. Innovation in the workplace is an important factor to consider in the development of the knowledge economy and workers' skills, influencing thus the competitiveness of businesses"*.

The EUWIN conference hosted more than 25 participants - Portuguese Business Associations, Universities, Research Centers, Public Organisations, Private Organisations and Experts in Innovation – with the goal of discussing ***"why is workplace innovation important for Portuguese business, workers and society?"***



*Maria José Sousa*  
*Universidade Europeia, Portugal*

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## Save the Date

Keep up to date with EUWIN events



**27-29 June 2016**      **Leuven, Belgium**      Workshop **Representative participation in Industry 4.0** organised by HIVA-KU Leuven. More details to come.

**27-29 June 2016**      **Brussels, Belgium**      **Shaping the new world of work. The impacts of digitalisation and robotisation.** The purpose of this ETUC/ETUI conference is to discuss how the world and nature of work and employment is being changed radically by the digital revolution. More details [here](#).

**20-21 September 2016**      **Berlin, Germany**      **Innovations for Society – New approaches and methods for developing the potentials of social innovations.** More details to come.

**30 September 2016**      **Brussels, Belgium**      **EUWIN Conference in Brussels.** More details soon.

**6-7 October 2016**      **San Sebastian, Spain**      **Urban Social Innovation: System, Policies and Impact.** A European Meeting to debate issues related to Urban Social Innovation. Organiser: Sinnergia Social Innovation. More details [here](#).

[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.

