

## **Barriers to Innovation**

We all recognise the need to innovate – as they say, innovate or die – well, at the very least, if you do not innovate, others will surely be doing so, and so you will stagnate. However, all too often, barriers to innovation occur. This post looks at some of these barriers and how they might be overcome. The following list of barriers have all been identified in research undertaken by various organisations:

1. Lack of internal resources
2. Unclear responsibilities
3. Organisational barriers/lack of coordination within the company
4. No clear evaluation criteria/inability to adequately measure performance
5. Incentive system not promoting innovation/compensation not tied to innovation results
6. Corporate culture hostile to innovation
7. Lack of skilled personnel
8. Risk averse culture
9. Lengthy development times
10. Insufficient support from leadership and management
11. Lack of market intelligence/not enough customer insight
12. Badly defined innovation strategy
13. External administrative barriers
14. External financial barriers
15. Difficulty selecting the right ideas to commercialise
16. Ineffective marketing and communications

A review of this list indicates that a number of barriers relate to an organisation's structure and culture. Given that these are the ones which relate to human emotion, this is probably no surprise to anyone! These are probably the most difficult to overcome, requiring, as you would expect, a significant amount of time and willingness to adapt to change. However, with the



right leadership and support, these aspects can be changed.

A lack of market intelligence can be addressed relatively easily with additional research – something which should be undertaken in any event. Likewise, with a little bit of effort, a badly defined innovation strategy can be overcome! Selecting the right ideas to commercialise is an often quoted barrier or difficulty. In reality, consideration of an appropriate scoring mechanism and, if required, a financial appraisal can give guidance on which projects to progress.

It is interesting to note that there is what might be considered an obvious omission from this list – a lack of ideas being a barrier. In practice, it is unlikely that an organisation will suffer from this, although a lack of useful ideas might be expected!

The important message from this post is that whilst barriers to innovation do exist, they are surmountable given a desire and the appropriate senior leadership to do so.