

Executive Summary

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The Innovative Future Leaders Programme (IFLP) was sold to me as an innovation programme to provide me with the tools to facilitate and drive advancement at Baxall Construction.

I have since discovered it is much more than that. The programme has included a series of workshops facilitating a journey of personal development, which has expanded my knowledge and empowered me with proven techniques. The course has enabled me to be the best I can be, and optimised not only my performance, but also that of my peers.

I have also been lucky enough to share this journey with a group of unique, like-minded individuals who have collaborated brilliantly throughout, not just on topics and learning within the IFLP, but also outside of the 'learning experience' offering help, input and guidance with both work and personal challenges.

Objective

I had two objectives across the course of the IFLP. The first was to challenge myself in a completely new environment outside my comfort zone. This proved that I could be myself and show my strengths and weaknesses to a whole new audience, and that I was worthy of being an IFLP participant.

The second, I wanted to learn techniques and methods from leading experts to improve myself and maximise my output, to lead initiative development projects and think in a more creative way, but in a style that works for me.

My Business Challenge

Historically when Baxall Construction completed a project, we would congratulate ourselves on a job well done and move onto the next project. On average we spend 12 months working on a project, and then close it out with a 10-minute review of the final margins and project financials. There was no understanding, or post-mortem as to how, where, and why we have made our margin. Key data critical for pricing, planning, making decisions and meeting objectives on future projects was being overlooked and archived away.

I therefore, wanted to enhance our basic end of project reporting, creating an innovative one-stop single point of truth. Capturing, and sharing key financial information and lessons learnt, and sharing this across the Baxall business.

Key Insights:

- **Strategic planning and thinking** – For me, by far the most mind-blowing topic covered was the strategic thinking workshop, which taught us how to build and analyse future scenarios, and how these are affected by external drivers and uncertainties. I have been able to translate this approach at Baxall Construction, where we are currently finalising our 5-year business plan. We have been able to ensure we take advantage of emerging opportunities, whilst minimising the effect of issues both in and out of our control.
- **Collaboration** – Between all the participants, and Sarah we have created a unique environment where we have helped and encouraged each other. Despite only knowing the group members for a combined 8 days, connections have been made that will last long after IFLP is finished. I have also gained a greater insight to the wider industry, where I have given help, advice, tips and pointers to others, which has likewise been reciprocated across the cohort.
- **Value based decision making** – I particularly enjoyed this session. In my role as a Commercial Manager, I am often too focused on financial margins and bottom-line profit. However, I have learnt the importance of measuring overall value considering also the social, human, and environmental delivery outputs of a project. Consequently, this has now been reflected and incorporated into my own business challenge. Moreover, the definition of value and how Baxall Construction's strategic values are aligned throughout the business and our staff, will certainly be an area I will be exploring in the future.