

PAPER:

***EMERGING TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISES FROM PROTOTYPE TO
PRACTICE: RESEARCH ON TRAINING NEEDS***

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Abstract:

Incubators, Up-Coming Multi-nationals (UCMs) and emerging technology enterprises are three descriptors not found in the traditional vocational and educational training (VET) setting. However, at the Australian Technology Park (ATP), these descriptors represent the enterprises of the ATP.

When the ATP was established, TAFE recognised the opportunities as a VET provider and the challenges these enterprises posed for TAFE. The TAFE Industry Partnership Centre (IPC) was established to research the needs of these enterprises for training and educational support; take a forward look at the consequences for current training and educational provision; the need for creation/adaptation of educational/training provision and the need to promote a wider community awareness of emerging technologies.

Traditional training need analysis has served established companies as they moved through the product improvement cycle. However, the enterprises at the ATP are based on emerging technologies. Their business is to move from concept, to prototype and then to manufacture. An initial question arises about the suitability of traditional training need analysis methodology in an emerging technology enterprise that move from one person's concept to prototype to maturity in a period that could be as short as twelve to eighteen months. The consequence of the question includes developing a repertoire of questions on the skills of the enterprise, identifying gaps between current skills, needed skills and skills to grow the business.

This paper reports a work in progress that has had outcomes. The initial outcome is a research methodology that relates to traditional training need analysis, but in a unique setting. A second level of the study has been the discussion on the feedback to the enterprises involved in the study relating to their training needs. A third level of the study has been to determine the valuation of intangible assets of the enterprise. In the past, companies have classified items such as goodwill as an asset. These emerging companies have no goodwill, however there is intellectual capital. A question then arises about the quantification of this capital as a support for venture capital infusion to support training as one avenue of moving the enterprise from concept to a tangible entity.