

A JOURNEY FROM A TO WHAT CAN BE

THE FUTURE FACTORY PROGRAMME

SUBMISSION TO THE EFMD
EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE AWARDS



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ireland is a small, open island economy on the periphery of Europe. Despite our size, our knowledge economy and infectious entrepreneurial spirit has earned us an outstanding reputation the world over.

Sometimes referred to as the “Singapore of Europe”, Ireland serves as a hub for over a thousand multinational organisations in the management of their European operations and has produced some of the world’s most successful enterprises.

As an island community intrinsically linked into the world economy, we see ourselves as a society which is ‘born global’. An integral component in the successful running of our economy is Dublin Airport, owned and operated by Dublin Airport Authority [*daa*].

Now the 5th busiest airport in Europe and one of the fastest growing in the world with passenger numbers going from 18.4 million in 2010 to a staggering 32.9 million in 2019, *daa* face daunting challenges ahead.

With passenger numbers predicted to double over the next 10 years, the organisation understands the need to put innovation at the centre of their development strategy in order to meet these challenges.

With this in mind *daa* established the dedicated innovation and business development function, *The Future Factory* as part of a new 5-year group strategy.

The Future Factory was born with a twofold mandate; Firstly; to stimulate and support innovation initiatives that clearly demonstrate commercial viability and add value by delivering projects that either decrease costs or increase revenue for *daa* and the wider airport eco-system.

Secondly, to foster a culture of innovation through the development of capabilities across the group – infusing and inspiring creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset throughout the organisation and the wider Dublin Airport eco-system.

With this significant task at hand, *The Future Factory* approached Trinity Business School [TBS] to discuss a collaboration and commitment to develop an innovation programme that combines academic learning with practical real-world projects that align with *daa*’s strategic goals.

These discussions lead to the establishment of *The Future Factory* Innovation Programme. Designed as a catalyst for people, organisational and eco-system transformation with the aim of embedding a culture of innovation into *daa*.

The programme seeks to identify potential leaders with the skills, knowledge and mindset to act as Innovation Ambassadors.

The impact of the programme has been astounding and widely recognised throughout *daa*. From a funnel of 23 ideas, 3 are now actively in development with a potential estimated value of €1.2 million.

The personal and professional development of the Innovators as a result of the programme have been outstanding, and it has impacted each and every participant in a unique and transformative way. Eight of the Innovators from the 2019 programme have achieved promotions or new roles. In addition, many of these Innovators are now coaches and mentors as part of the 2020 programme.

This is the story of how this partnership created a “from the ground up” innovation framework for the organisation, fostering and celebrating innovation while, in turn launching many leadership development journeys.

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