



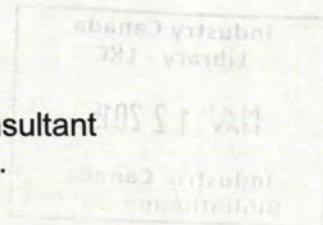
"INNOVATION IN CANADA" WEBSITE EVALUATION

SUMMARY FOCUS GROUP REPORT (OTTAWA AND HALIFAX FOCUS GROUPS)

Prepared for: Industry Canada

Date: July 6, 2000

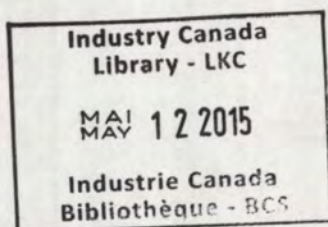
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I) BACKGROUND:.....	3
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	3
II) METHODOLOGY:	4
GROUP COMPOSITION	5
REPORT LAYOUT	5
RESULTS	6
III) CURRENT INNOVATION EFFORTS/ STRATEGIES	6
IV) CURRENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION	7
V) "INNOVATION IN CANADA" - GENERAL	8
VI) "INNOVATION IN CANADA" - SPECIFIC	10
VII) INNOVATION MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT	14
VIII) STANDARD SECTIONS OF A WEBSITE	18
IX) SITE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION	19
X) FINAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE SITE	20
APPENDIX A: MODERATION GUIDE	
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT SCREENER	
APPENDIX C: HOME PAGE PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS	



I) BACKGROUND:

The 'Innovation in Canada' Internet portal aims to improve accessibility to the wealth of resources, expertise and knowledge in innovation, science and technology that currently exists in Canada. Bringing together existing innovation products at Industry Canada, NRC and other government and private sector partners, the IIC Portal hopes to integrate the information and expertise networks that support innovation in Canada.

Key features of the IIC Portal project include:

- Assistance for SMEs to incorporate innovation into their operations and strategic business plans
- Promotion of new technologies and innovations
- Diagnostic tools
- Increased linkages between research and technology creators and firms able to commercialize technologies
- International promotion of Canada as an innovative, information-rich and highly skilled knowledge economy

Before making the website public, Industry Canada wished to conduct a series of focus groups with members of the target market. With this in mind, Industry Canada requested the assistance of Decima Research to plan and conduct the necessary marketing research work. It is to be noted that the website evaluation was conducted in English in Ottawa and Halifax among small and medium businesses.

Research Objectives

The research team identified the following key research objectives:

- ☒ Obtain insights into current attitudes towards innovation and its importance to the organization;
- ☒ Obtain insights into current sources of information on innovation and related components (such as funding, patents, etc.);
- ☒ Obtain general impressions of an Industry Canada website called "Innovation in Canada";
- ☒ Obtain specific input on the website components and organization;
- ☒ Obtain specific input on the Innovation Management Toolkit;
- ☒ Measure usability and attractiveness of the concept and the site.

II) METHODOLOGY:

To obtain the information required, the following audience was considered:

Small and Medium Businesses: 1 focus group was conducted in Ottawa and 1 in Halifax whereby approximately half the groups consisted of high tech businesses involved in product and service research and development – these included businesses that either develop products and services and/ or those that purchase products and services to improve their competitive edge. An effort was made to recruit some “start-ups” and “incubators” where possible. The remaining participants consisted of other non-high tech businesses that undertake R&D or that purchase products and services to improve their competitive edge, including manufacturers and business service enterprises.

To maximize participant input in a realistic context, the focus groups involved the use of a wide-screen video apparatus at the front of the focus group room to project the website under evaluation, allowing all the participants to view the “live” display of the IIC portal. Each participant also had a printed copy of certain web pages for convenient and easy perusal of the site content, organization and appearance.

Group Composition

The table below presents the breakdown of participants for each of the focus groups conducted.

Date, Location and Number of Participants		Position/ Job Function
One group held in Ottawa on April 26 th , 2000	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manager ▪ President ▪ VP of Marketing & COO ▪ President ▪ President ▪ Hardware Design Engineer ▪ General Manager
One group held in Halifax on June 22 nd , 2000	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ President ▪ Head of R&D ▪ Vice-President ▪ Executive Director ▪ Owner ▪ Manager ▪ General Manager ▪ Owner/ President ▪ President ▪ Contract Manager

Report Layout

Since many changes were introduced to the main IIC website and to the Innovation Management Toolkit, it is important to distinguish participant responses in Ottawa from those in Halifax. In order to facilitate reading and understanding the source of the feedback, the report will display two types of bullets. The first, consisting of one blue "talking head" represents responses from the Ottawa session and the second, consisting of two red "heads" represents responses from the Halifax session.



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Ottawa session




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
Halifax session


RESULTS


III) Current Innovation Efforts/ Strategies

- Importance of innovation
- Role of innovation; ie do they create/ design new products and services and/or do they use/ seek new products and services to improve their organization
- What are they currently undertaking?
- How can your innovation process be improved?


 Among the 7 participants in Ottawa, a total of 4 indicated their organization produces or designs innovative products whereas 6 out of 7 indicated they seek innovative processes, techniques, services and products to improve the competitive nature of their organization.

 In terms of what and how products services are developed and provided, a few participants emphasized the importance of customer feedback.

 Among participants that only seek innovative products that make their organization more competitive, for the most part, there are no dedicated resources or internal structure devoted to developing or integrating innovation. Understandably, the opposite is true among firms that develop innovative products and services. These participants explain that, given the dependence of the firm's success on its new products, it must have a structure to ensure proper and efficient development of its output.

 One participant actually explained that innovation was more of an integral part of the firm rather than a completely separate entity that requires structure:

"I think for anyone who runs a small business it's a matter of survival. Innovation is really tied in with evolution, change, growth and I don't think any small business really has a structure approach to innovation. It's really...if you are not innovating, if you're not changing, if you're not growing, then you're not just standing still, you're actually going backwards because all your competitors are surpassing you."

 Among the 10 participants in Halifax, a total of 5 indicated their organization produces or designs innovative products whereas 9 out of 10 indicated they seek innovative processes, techniques, services and products to improve the competitive nature of their organization.

IV) Current Sources of Information

- *What sources are used?*
- *How satisfied are you with these sources? Explain.*
- *Is the information complete? What is missing?*











- Some participants immediately referred to the Internet as a source of information and medium for seeking new suppliers and technologies to make their business more efficient.
- The use of the Internet however was more the result of demand for a service that could not be immediately fulfilled by the company rather than a voluntary intention to seek improvements. For instance, a customer or potential customer would ask for a service or product. Since in-house capabilities could not meet this demand, participants indicated they used the Internet to "source" the technology or service to meet the demand.
- One participant indicated using magazines to seek out new products and services, then perhaps follow up the search over the Internet. Organizations and associations were also mentioned as a valuable source of information (e.g. IEEE – The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.).
- When explicitly asked about funding, a few admitted to looking into forms of financing other than traditional financial institutions (such as government programs) but most resort to private investors, cash flow and banks. Most admitted that there are many sources of information on financing but because of bad experiences and lack of time and resources, have not explored all possible avenues.

V) "Innovation in Canada" - General

What if Industry Canada were to introduce a website dedicated to small and medium businesses called "Innovation in Canada":

- *What would you expect to find on such a website?*
- *What are your opinions on Industry Canada as a reference on innovation for small and medium businesses in Canada? Positives? Negatives?*
- *If you had the choice, what would you like to see on such a site?*

- An initial reaction was the fear of finding "more government mumbo-jumbo."
- There was initial confusion regarding the way that government could accommodate all types of businesses and industries. It was perceived as an immense challenge.
- Another participant viewed the initiative as long overdue.
- Most participants seemed to understand that the website would be a "program" for which businesses must qualify. They seemed to associate it to a funding program whereby businesses need to read a lot of information only to apply and not qualify for whatever it is the government is offering. Again, past experiences with such programs lead some participants to believe they would not find such a website useful.
- When asked what they would like to see on the website...
 - One participant mentioned information on funding, investment prospects and a section on "What's going on in technology". This participant also proposed providing information on human resources – more specifically how do you find people with special and unique skills and where to find the money to pay them.
 - Another referred to access to information on IT, information from "people who know" and who can offer advice (specifically referring to IT upgrading).
 - The information needs to be "pertinent, effective and easily available."
 - Another mentioned he would like to see ways in which IC can help him be more innovative, especially regarding funding and technical support. It should especially be a dynamic site that is continually updated.
 - The website should be interactive and not be limited to pages with information.
- One participant was more focussed on how the information is used rather than how the information is structured and disseminated.

-  In Halifax, it was interesting to notice that a lot of the requests and recommendations during the up front part of the discussion on the Toolkit were for items available in the main IIC website. Examples included links to resources, regional information and databases.
-  Initial reactions to a website from Industry Canada called "Innovation in Canada" included:
 -  Demographics and statistics, especially to allow for target marketing
 -  Tools to help improve organization performance and profitability
 -  Success stories in Canadian innovation
 -  Information on R&D and how the government can help their business
 -  Copyright information
 -  How to bring the development cycle to a close for developing new products
 -  Funding from the government (many acknowledged the difficulty in obtaining government funding to the point where many gave up the quest)
 -  Regional information and databases – "It should hone in on Eastern Canada."

VI) "Innovation in Canada" - Specific

(HAND-OUT COLOR COPY OF HOME PAGE/ BRING UP THE SITE ON THE TV)

- Obtain general comments
- Evaluate home page – layout/ organization
- Discuss sub-headers:
 - ✎ What is of interest?
 - ✎ What catches their eye?
 - ✎ Where would they go first?
 - ✎ Are the link titles appropriate
- Briefly browse all the sub-headers and discuss generally


✎ Upon distributing a copy of the cover page:

- ✎ An immediate reaction from a few participants was that it was too busy – too much information. Another recommended that a possible solution would be to have all the sub-headers appear only for "mouse-overs." "It's pretty daunting when you first look at it."
- ✎ After having taken the time to go over the entire page, one participant indicated strong interest: "I would just dive into this. This is really good." Particular interest was expressed in sourcing and manufacturing processes.
- ✎ The participant that was earlier focussed on how the information was used rather than the medium acknowledged that the site "looks interesting" with particular interest expressed in patents.
- ✎ Another stated: "This is quite amazing actually. It's almost as if it is trying to be all things to all people. There is an awful lot of stuff here....Like someone said, I would like to dive in here and just see how it works...spend a couple of hours because...if you were to get some effective results here, it would be an invaluable resource, no question about it. But I would want to test it out...I want to see how many dead ends there are."
- ✎ There was some concern expressed over how such valuable sources of information as this are disseminated: "If this is what it purports to be, this should be in the hands of every business owner in Canada...now!"
- ✎ One participant did not think that the existence and predominance of the Web site quality statement is necessary. Since he did not know what it was and that Industry Canada should not have to worry about credibility, it should only be a small symbol at the bottom of the page if anywhere at all.
- ✎ When wondering what kind of links are presented in the site, a few believed that the links are probably just government sites although they hoped that there would be non-government links as well.

- There was concern that the site would not be useful if it was not constantly updated.
- A recommendation was made to add "live customer service" as a window that follows the browser as they move throughout the site.
- Another recommendation supported by a number of participants involved expanding all the anagrams such as CTN, IRAP, etc. presented under "Innovation Services" and at the bottom of the page under "Innovation in Canada Partners."
- A comment was made regarding the labeling of the "Feedback" link. A participant specified that a "Feedback" link reminds him of something browsers would use to complain whereas a "Contact Us" link would be used (and should be used in this case) to ask a question or to request information.
- Under "Take a Sectoral View", there should be Business Services (B2B).
- One participant did not understand the term "sourcing".
- Throughout the discussion, one participant incessantly noticed typos and grammatical errors. This clearly disturbed him and caught his attention. Such errors might lead to issues regarding credibility and confidence in the website and the information offered.
- Participants were asked to rank their first three destinations on the home page (see Appendix for a copy of the home page tested). The headers below were mentioned – the number beside the header represents how many people mentioned it in their top three. Where a specific sub-header was highlighted, it is provided below in parenthesis after the associated major headers.





Financing	11111
Find local information	11
Human Resources (Skills)	11
Managing	11
Product Development (Prototyping)	11
Business Intelligence	1
Business Intelligence (Customer Supplier Relations)	1
Sectoral View (Information technology)	1
Innovation Services	1
Intellectual Property (Patents)	1
International	1
International (Joint Research)	1
Production Process (Rapid Prototyping)	1






- One participant expressed concern over the credibility of the sources of financing – he wondered how they were rated or evaluated.
- One respondent felt that the website was heavily weighted towards technology companies – many other participants supported this statement.

-  Upon distributing a copy of the cover page in the Halifax session, participants were asked to rank their first three destinations on the home page (see Appendix for a copy of the home page tested¹). The headers below were mentioned – the number beside the header represents how many people mentioned it in their top three:





Business Intelligence	1111
Human Resources	111
Product Development	111
Nova Scotia	111
Steps to Growth Capital	11
Managing	11
Financing	11
Technology Commercialization Toolbox	1
Self Diagnostic	1
Technology Transfer	1
Research Services	1
Our Stats: 20,000 links, 50 tools, traffic	1
Research Expertise	1
Regions	1
Outsourcing	1

*One participant did not complete the exercise

-  Initial reactions to the home page included:
-  "Looks governmenty – that's good."
 -  One participant found the content repetitive of what she has found on other sites such as Strategis.
 -  There was further desire to customize the home page and content according to company profiling information (size, industry, region, etc.):

"If you can put in what industry segment you're in, maybe these 20,000 links that it promotes down here on the bottom right hand corner, maybe they're down to 10...and I can take the time to cruise around 10 links."
 -  "For a home page, it's well layed out."
 -  "It's layed out great and you can see where you want to go."
 -  A participant suggested adding how frequently the site is updated – a statement immediately supported by other participants.
 -  "Why isn't the maple leaf there?"
-  There was strong demand for Canadian information and content on the website.

¹ A different home page was tested in Halifax from what was tested in the Ottawa session.

-  Upon gathering initial reactions to the home page, the moderator showed the participants the contents to the "Financing" link.
-  The sub-headers met participant expectations.
-  A lot of the information contained on the link was interesting to participants however there was still a sense that it would take too much time to peruse all the sites that provide information on financial support from various government agencies only to fill out the required forms and find out they do not qualify. There was a desire for a simplified form that they could fill out once to determine if they qualify for certain sources of financing.
-  A "What's new" section was recommended for sub-sections (not just on the home page). Interest in new and pertinent information was so strong for one participant that she wanted to be notified by email (she had not noticed the Newswire service). Upon showing her the Newswire service, there was a feeling that it could be improved if the type of business and the type of information requested could be customized.








VII) Innovation Management Toolkit




(HAND OUT AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED EVALUATION)





- Presentation / Explanation of the toolkit
- General comments
- What is of value?
- Advantages vs. drawbacks?
- Would it be used? Who in the organization would use it?
- Would it become an integral part of the organization's innovation strategy? Explain.

- It was mentioned that it is not entirely obvious that the "Firm-Level Diagnostic" is a subset of the "In-Depth Diagnostic". This ambiguity remains even after reading the overall description of The Innovation Management ToolKit located at: (http://prodt.businesscanada.gc.ca/cfdocs/firm_en/frame.cfm)
- Upon looking at what the firm-level diagnostic required, there was a clear sentiment that the diagnostic was very long and time consuming: "I think that after filling out the first one [referring to the first module], I would say 'I don't want to do it anymore'".
- Given the length of the exercise, it makes it difficult to remember which statement had been selected when reviewing the output. Respondents did not like that the output did not show which statement they entered in the first place. This made it difficult to fully appreciate the output.
- There was some argument over the value of such an exercise, especially in the level of confidence that should be given to the output. A few participants insisted that dependence on such a simple mechanical diagnostic tool to guide business decision making was very dangerous and warranted caution: "Can future diversity be built on simplicity."
- On the other hand, a few participants understood the tool to be a general guideline and could provide businesses a good "heads up" and a starting point. One participant indicated:






"It's kinda cool to see it all wrapped up in one box. You fill in the questions and out pops a number. For some companies it gives them a good, clear heads up and it doesn't cost you anything either. You don't have to get some consultant in to tell you whether you're ready or not. You can sort of get a rough idea of what kind of shape your company is in."

-  A few participants applauded the effort put in and information provided by the diagnostic however insisted that it had no relevance to them. One of the factors driving the lack of interest was an already overloaded schedule that does not allow them the luxury to sit down and complete this kind of exercise. Being small business owners or managers, their job functions and responsibilities are wide and varied. Another factor was simply a general lack of enthusiasm towards this sort of task.
-  Some confusion was expressed in the way the values for "Readiness for Innovative Change" were computed.
-  Other perceptions of the Innovation Management Tool included:
 -  It is more for large companies that have more to worry about and are currently paying consultants to achieve what this tool achieves for free.
 -  The tool is for inexperienced individuals who are trying to build their business.
 -  The privacy aspect of the evaluation is appreciated.
-  In the Halifax session, participants were provided with a general description of a diagnostic application that could be used to evaluate their organization without any website or handout as reference. They were asked what themes the application should explore to allow them to make good decisions about the performance of their organization. One participant responded with:

"Quality, efficiency, effectiveness. Quality of product, processes, people, the company overall. [...] Efficiency of the organization overall, automation of processes, every aspect of the organization. Effectiveness: getting the right people doing the right things. Making sure our efforts have results."
-  Many participants were particularly interested in a diagnostic tool that reported on the organization's financial efficiency, both on an accounting level and on a resource utilization level, i.e. are the people and equipment they are using maximizing return.
-  Another level of interest was with regards to the adoption and roll-out of new products and services. They would like a tool that could help them introduce new products efficiently and profitably and/ or a tool that could help them make the most out of a new product or service that has recently been introduced into their organization.
-  There was some mention of integrating a "customer satisfaction" component to the diagnostic tool that would allow the customers to evaluate performance and have this input become an integral part of the overall organization evaluation.

-  Another concern, prior to being shown the actual IIC Toolkit was regarding credibility: "Who is behind the diagnostic?"
-  Another concern expressed prior to viewing the actual Toolkit was time. More specifically, as small businesses, participants worried about spending the needed time to undertake the diagnostic. This was furthered after the complete diagnostic was explained and demonstrated.
-  There was an expectation that, upon completing the diagnostic, there would be guidance and recommendations in terms of acting on the results.
-  **Upon being distributed the questions making up the firm-level diagnostic**, an important concern among participants was with regards to benchmarking. They were concerned that the output produced by the diagnostic may not be appropriate for their size and type of organization. "Is it comparing us to companies in our industry?" "Are they comparing apples to oranges?" And again...

"I think it's impossible. The whole thing is striking me as off the wall. It doesn't make sense that the criteria to assess a small, 1 or 2 person company, this is a broad scope here. Where are the levels? How could I trust the information? The information that would be good for a 10 person company can't possibly be relevant during assessment for a 500 employee company. I don't see that there."

-  There was near consensus that the exercise would become more valid if the diagnostic allowed the user to specify the number of employees and their industry. As in the Ottawa session, some participants viewed the diagnostic as more appropriate for larger organizations.
-  There was interest in having the output recognized by other parties such as banks. A concern however was the "categorizing" nature of the tool that would label the firm by simply obtaining answers to the questions in the diagnostic. There was an interest in having the diagnostic help as one of the tools in supporting the organization, as opposed to the ultimate tool to categorize the firm.
-  Upon being explained what the output would be (the moderator read what was presented on the page: http://prodt.businesscanada.gc.ca/cfdocs/firm_en/frame.cfm, a skeptic participant expressed interest in items "5" (*Signposting to the in-depth diagnostics which you are recommended to complete for areas of weakness*) and "6" (*A listing of hot keys to sources of support.*)
-  Interestingly, the fact that the diagnostic was a free tool available over the Internet hindered its credibility: "You get what you pay for."
-  In terms of the "expertise" available for support, one participant was interested in finding out whether the information available is free (just as the diagnostic tool is) or whether it consists of links to consulting companies for whose services they would have to pay.



It is important to note that some participants yearned for the support and resources that should accompany the diagnostic tool (what is in fact found on the main IIC portal - these comments were made prior to viewing the actual IIC portal.) There was emphasis that answering the questions would increase user awareness of a variety of issues but the exercise would be more relevant and useful if there were links and support for each question.



Up reviewing the explanations for the scores (see box below) one participant noted that the feedback was not very encouraging. In fact, irrespective of the score, the comments are negative. High scores are interpreted skeptically and low scores warrant urgent action. "They don't expect anyone to be performing that well...There's nothing encouraging."

4.5 - 5.0 Best Practice standard – check that you really meet these standards as they are extremely high.

3.5 - 4.5 Close to Best Practice standard – still a very high standard and you should check your scores. Clearly there are gaps that you should work on.

2.5 - 3.5 You have a number of areas of strength but clearly need to develop a more structured and comprehensive approach.

2.0 - 2.5 You have some good areas but need to review the low scores and establish prioritised action plans.

1.0 - 2.0 These are low scores and you need to give urgent attention to improving standards – look for actions to maximise spin off into other areas.

Source: http://prodt.businesscanada.gc.ca/cfdocs/firm_en/diag_en/frame.cfm











About half of the participants would do the diagnostic however certain conditions had to be met, such as establish credibility (e.g. that the product and service development evaluation is done by an expert or experts in that field), links and an ability to customize according to company size and industry.



One participant would have liked to know ahead of time how long it will take to fill out the questionnaire.

VIII) Standard Sections of a Website

Obtain general comments and usage on the website header sections (REFER TO HANDOUT IF POSSIBLE):

-  The moderator undertook a search on CAD/CAM and participants were not impressed with the results provided. This is critical since many browsers simply use the search engine to directly obtain the relevant information they need. If the output is not satisfactory, then the browser loses interest in the entire site. It must be remembered that this evaluation of the search engine and the site was made without following any of the links that the search generated. Had we had more time, a more in-depth search via the links may have satisfied the participants.
-  In Halifax, particular attention was paid to the "Search" function on the home page. The moderator demonstrated a "blank" search in one of the major headers – "Outsourcing" (i.e. selected Outsourcing from the drop-down box and left the search box blank). The following comments arose from this exercise:
 -  There was surprise in the low incidence of Canadian sites available. Canadian sites should be prioritized and presented by default.
 -  The "blank search" was not intuitive since participants would customarily enter text in the search box. Participants believed that the equivalent of the blank search was to go directly to the sub-header link on the home page.
 -  There was also an expectation that **all** the information that is available under the blank search should be available via the sub-header link on the home page.
 -  It would be important to display a date of publication or issue in the search results.
 -  When directly asked, some participants were interested in links to the private sector, but to make sure the site is not overwhelmed with lists of companies. One recommendation was to make a link to private sector companies allowing browsers to access it at their own leisure.
-  When asked to comment on the links on the home page header, there was interest in the "Contact us" feature. The usefulness of this feature could be improved if browsers could contact someone directly that could guide them to appropriate sections of the website.


IX) Site Structure and Organization


- *General comments*
- *Comparison with other sites*
- *Improvements/ Changes*


- In terms of site organization, one of the first comments made referred to the sequence of the major headings (i.e. Sourcing, Intellectual Property, etc.) on the home page compared to their sequence in the left ledge when following one of the major header links. Participants believed the sequence should be the same.
- Three key comments were made in reference to the sub-headers:
 - The sub-headers on the home page can not be found anywhere upon following the major header link. For instance, the sub-headers "Outsourcing", "Licensing", etc. can not be found when following the "Sourcing" link. Participants believed it made it very difficult to find the information you are looking for, especially since expectations are set via the sub-headers on the home page.
 - Since the sub-headers on the home page are not direct links, they should definitely be "mouse-overs." Participants expected these to be links.
 - The sub-headers in the left ledge in any of the major header links are not the same as the sub-headers on the home page. For instance, when following the "Sourcing" link, the sub-headers under "Sourcing" in the left ledge are "How To - Outsource Technologies", "Tools - Know Your Needs", etc. as opposed the sub-headers under this same major header presented on the home page.
- A few participants believed that the links on the upper left hand side of a major header link (i.e. "History", "Fullscreen", "Print") were redundant since they are currently available on their Internet browser.
- "The site is pleasantly light on slow-downloading graphics."
- None of the participants in Halifax had any negative comments regarding overall structure and organization of the site. Words such as "simple" and "easy" were used to qualify the structure.
- Participants did not have any negative comments on the sub-headers and the way that the information was displayed on these pages.

X) Final Impressions of the Site

- *General comments*
- *Does this site contain the information you regularly seek on innovation?*
- *Improvements/ Changes*
- *Would they recommend it to someone else?*
- *How important would the site be to them/ their organization?*
- *Would they return to it? Would they bookmark it?*

 There was an overwhelming appreciation for the kind of information that the site provides however the interest in the site is dependent on better organization of the information.

 The majority of respondents indicated they would bookmark the site on two conditions: that the information is well organized and that the information is updated on an on-going basis.

 At the end of the Halifax session, two concepts were tested with participants.

1. The first concept was a website customization option that would allow the user to build their own IIC website based on their needs and specifications. A comparison to "My Yahoo" was made as a point of reference. This idea received highly enthusiastic support from most if not all participants.
2. The second concept consisted of a one-time on-line application form that could be used to determine if the organization qualifies for any of the various types of financial support from all the government agencies. This concept also received strong support from the participants. Furthermore, there was no concern with submitting firm-sensitive information over the Internet via this on-line application form.

APPENDIX A: Moderation Guide

OUTLINE

1. Introduction	5 minutes
2. Participants presentation	5 minutes
3. Current innovation efforts/ strategies	10 minutes
4. Current sources of information	5 minutes
5. "Innovation in Canada" - General	5 minutes
6. "Innovation in Canada" - Specific	30 minutes
7. Innovation Management Toolkit	10 minutes
8. Standard Sections of a Website	10 minutes
9. Site Structure and Organization	10 minutes
10. Final Impressions of the Site	10 minutes
11. Conclusion	5 minutes
Total	105 minutes

1. INTRODUCTION

(5)

Welcome. You are about to be part of an important process in assisting Industry Canada develop a new service for small and medium businesses such as yours. Your experience and insight are extremely important, since they will directly influence the products and services that will be made available to you.

Before we begin, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Rick and I have been hired to lead you in the discussion tonight. To do that, I'll ask a number of different questions and have you discuss your opinions with each other. I am interested in hearing from everyone in the group. It is important to remember that there are no right or wrong answers. It is your opinion that counts.

In reporting the results, I may take some notes. However, I will be audio and video recording this session so that I don't miss any details. These tapes will only be used to help me recall enough details to enable me to report people's opinions accurately. Nothing you say or do will be identified to you as an individual and you will never be contacted in connection with this particular session.

(IF APPLICABLE) One final note, this room is equipped with a one-way mirror. A few of my clients are back there to hear firsthand your ideas and thoughts.

Again, there are no right or wrong answers. Thank you for joining me tonight. Are there any questions before we begin?

2. PARTICIPANT PRESENTATION

(5)

- Name
- Occupation – title (short description of functions/responsibilities within the company)
- Type of company/industry represented (type of products/services sold)

3. CURRENT INNOVATION EFFORTS/ STRATEGIES (10)

- Importance of innovation
- Role of innovation; ie do they create/ design new products and services and/or do they use/ seek new products and services to improve their organization
- What are they currently undertaking?
- How can your innovation process be improved?

4. CURRENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION (5)

- What sources are used?
- How satisfied are you with these sources? Explain.
- Is the information complete? What is missing?

5. "INNOVATION IN CANADA" - GENERAL (5)

What if Industry Canada were to introduce a website dedicated to small and medium businesses called "Innovation in Canada":

- What would you expect to find on such a website?
- What are your opinions on Industry Canada as a reference on innovation for small and medium businesses in Canada? Positives? Negatives?
- If you had the choice, what would you like to see on such a site?

6. "INNOVATION IN CANADA" – SPECIFIC (30)

(HAND-OUT COLOR COPY OF HOME PAGE/ BRING UP THE SITE ON THE TV)

- Obtain general comments
- Evaluate home page – layout/ organization
- Discuss sub-headers:
 - ↳ What is of interest?
 - ↳ What catches their eye?
 - ↳ Where would they go first?
 - ↳ Are the link titles appropriate
- Briefly browse all the sub-headers and discuss generally

7. INNOVATION MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT**(10)****(HAND OUT AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED EVALUATION)**

- Presentation / Explanation of the toolkit
- General comments
- What is of value?
- Advantages vs. drawbacks?
- Would it be used? Who in the organization would use it?
- Would it become an integral part of the organization's innovation strategy? Explain.

8. STANDARD SECTIONS OF THE WEBSITE**(10)**

Obtain general comments and usage on the following website sections **(PROVIDE HANDOUT IF POSSIBLE)**:

- Feedback
- About Us
- Help
- Search
- Site Map
- Tools
- Services
- Guides
- Newswire

9. SITE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**(10)**

- General comments
- Comparison with other sites
- Improvements/ Changes

10. FINAL IMPRESSION OF THE SITE**(10)**

- General comments
- Does this site contain the information you regularly seek on innovation?
- Improvements/ Changes
- Would they recommend it to someone else?
- How important would the site be to them/ their organization?
- Would they return to it? Would they bookmark it?

11. CONCLUSION**(5)**

- Does anyone have any additional comments about the website?
- Are there any questions or issues that should be passed on the website development people?

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Screener

Industry Canada (IIC Portal)

Screener for Businesses (Buyers)

Questionnaire: _____

City: Day, Month, Date	Study#: XXXX CSRC Reg#: XXXX Call: 1-800-554-9996 recruit 12 for 10 to show
Respondent's name: _____ Respondent's phone #: _____ (home) Respondent's phone #: _____ (work) Respondent's fax #: _____ sent? or Respondent's e-mail : _____ sent? Sample source (circle): client focus dbase random referral	Interviewer: _____ Date : _____ Validated: _____ Central Files: _____ On List: _____ On Quotas: _____

Targeted Businesses:

- Half the group will consist of high tech businesses involved in product and service R&D – these can include businesses that either develop products and services and/ or those that purchase products and services to improve their competitive edge. There is a preference for having a few "start-ups" and "incubators" if possible.
- Half the group will consist of other non-high tech businesses that undertake R&D or that purchase products and services to improve their competitive edge.

Hello, may I please speak to the individual in your organization responsible for either business development or technology research and innovation?

Recruiters: This can be the person responsible for developing new products and services in the company or someone responsible for purchasing new products, services or systems for the company.

IF NOT AVAILABLE, ASK FOR THEIR NAME AND AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO CALL BACK.

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Decima Research on behalf of Industry Canada. We are calling to invite people to a group discussion on issues related to technology development and innovation in Canadian firms. **EXPLAIN FOCUS GROUPS EMPHASIZING NO SALES, RESEARCH ONLY & CONFIDENTIALITY.** The session is being organized to explore the extent to which services currently made available to Canadian businesses are meeting their R&D needs. For instance, we are interested to knowing how satisfied you are with:

- ↳ The amount of information available on product and service patents;
- ↳ The amount of information on funding for the R&D of new products and services;
- ↳ The amount of information on funding for the purchase of new and innovative products and services for your company.

Up to a dozen people like yourself will be taking part. For their time, participants will receive a cash gift of **\$75.00**. But before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix/variety of people. May I ask you a few questions?

Participation is voluntary and all your answers will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. We are simply interested in hearing your opinions, no attempt will be made to sell you anything. The format is a "round table" discussion lead by a research professional.

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	THANK & DISCONTINUE

I have a few questions to ask to see if you qualify for the groups.

- 1) Are you responsible to some extent for developing new products and services in your organization or responsible for purchasing new products, services or systems for your organization?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	ASK FOR THE CORRECT PERSON TO CONTINUE THE RECRUIT

- 2) Would you be available to attend a discussion group the evening of (**TBD: Day, April Date at Time**)? (It will last about 2 hours and you will receive \$75.00 for your time)

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	ASK FOR REFERRAL, THANK & TERMINATE

- 3) Are you or is your company involved in any of the following areas:
READ LIST...

	YES	NO
Marketing Research	1	2
Advertising	1	2
Media Organization (TV, Radio, Newspaper, Magazine)	1	2
Public Relations	1	2
Municipal, provincial or federal government department or agency	1	2

IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE INDUSTRIES, THANK & TERMINATE

- 4) In what industry does your company operate?

High Technology	1
Other: _____	2

- 4a) What is your title? _____

- 5) And approximately how many full-time equivalent employees does your company have?

1-4	1	Obtain a good mix
5-19	2	
20-99	3	
100-499	4	Thank and Terminate
500+	5	
DK/RF	9	Make sure it is under 100

6) Do you access the Internet for work purposes?

Yes	1	Obtain a good mix
No	2	

7) Do you currently undertake any of the following:

	YES	NO
A) Obtain patent information on products and/ or services developed by your organization?	1	2
B) Obtain funding information for the products and/ or services developed by your organization?	1	2
C) Obtain other critical information on the procedures involved and requirements for the launch of new products and/ or services developed by your organization?	1	2
D) Obtain information on the availability of new products, technologies or systems that would improve the competitive nature of your organization?	1	2
E) Obtain funding information for the purchase of new products, technologies or systems to be used by your organization?	1	2

IF NO TO ALL OF THE ABOVE, ASK FOR REFERRAL, OTHERWISE THANK & TERMINATE

8) Sometimes participants are also asked to write out their answers to a questionnaire or view a web site during the discussion. Is there any reason why you could not participate?

Yes	1	THANK & TERMINATE
No	2	

TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT OFFERS ANY REASON SUCH AS SIGHT OR HEARING PROBLEM, A WRITTEN OR VERBAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, A CONCERN WITH NOT BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.

As I mentioned earlier, the group discussion will take place the evening of (TBD: **Day, April Date at Time**) for 2 hours. Would you be willing to attend?

Yes	1	
No	2	THANK & DISCONTINUE

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held. It will be held at:

INSERT FOCUS GROUP FACILITY ADDRESS

We ask that you arrive fifteen minutes early to be sure you find parking, locate the facility and have time to check-in with the hosts. The hosts may be checking respondent's identification prior to the group, so please be sure to bring some personal identification with you (i.e. driver's license). Also, if you require glasses for reading, please bring them with you.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call so that we may get someone to replace you. You can reach us at **613-230-2013** at our office. Please ask for **Eric Turcotte**. Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the discussion.

May I please get your name: **ON FRONT PAGE**

Thank you very much for your help!

APPENDIX C: Participant Hand-out

- **Ottawa Participants: 1st Home Page**
- **Halifax Participants: 2nd Home Page**

"Innovation in Canada" website evaluation
summary focus group report (Ottawa and
Halifax focus groups)

[illegible]

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