High involvement innovation – Self-assessment questionnaire

Below you'll find a number of statements describing aspects of High Involvement continuous improvement (CI) in your organisation. For each statement please put a score between 1 & 5 that you think most closely describes the situation as you see it.

(Score 1 – 5, where 1 is very badly and 5 is very well)

	Score 1-5
1. The improvement activity in my work unit is focused on issues that help us to meet our aims and objectives	
2. My manager helps me to focus my improvement activities on issues which are important to the business	
3. In my work area the methods we use for capturing and sharing learning are effective (e.g. project reviews, newsletter, storyboards, etc.).	
4. There is a high level of trust and co-operation between my work unit and other groups involved in our processes.	
5. My manager is willing to take action on suggestions for change.	
6. Someone(individual or group) takes responsibility for developing involvement in CI.	
7. If someone finds a solution to a problem in one part of the organisation it is not re-invented in another	
8. Regular monitoring and measuring of processes and performance helps the organisation to plan its future improvement activities.	
9. I receive feedback on my suggestions and ideas for improvement	
10. I understand the relationship between my work and the work of colleagues in other departments.	
11. I can identify the individuals in my organisation who are responsible for co-ordinating and managing improvement activities	
12. The organisation's policies and procedures encourage people to make improvements in their work area.	
13. We have adopted a formal process to find and solve problems.	
14. We learn about how other people have solved problems through newsletters, bulletins, displays, etc.	
15. My manager encourages me to take part in HII activity	
16. The organisation's business aims are used as a means of prioritising areas for improvement within my department	
17. Monitoring and measurement help me drive HII activity	
18. My work unit co-operates well with other groups in the organisation	
19. I actively seek out problems as opportunities for HII activity	
20. People feel they share in the benefits resulting from their improvement efforts	
21. We capture what we've learned through procedures, rules, etc.	
22. We meet with other groups to talk about how we dealt with common problems	
23. Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for the regular review and refinement of our continuous improvement process.	

24. When something goes wrong in my work unit, we focus on sorting out the problem, not looking for someone to blame.

25. My manager listens to my ideas

26. Someone (individual or group) regularly assesses the contribution HII is making to our business results

27. I have been trained to use problem-solving tools and techniques.

28. I share my learning with people in other departments.

29. Managers and supervisors 'walk the talk' by getting involved in HII activities themselves.

30. Our organisation regularly reviews the communication process.

31. I have a good understanding of my customers' requirements

32. I am able to implement my own improvement ideas.

33. This organisation values people's ideas, no matter how small

34. Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for adapting structures and procedures so as to ensure consistency with our HII process.

35. Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for pulling together our approach to CI.

36. Rather than being bystanders, people are actively involved in our HII process.

37. Our approach to recognition helps sustain people's involvement in CI

38. If I have a suggestion for an improvement I know there are mechanisms to take it forward

39. Our HII process is regularly reviewed and updated

40. This organisation allows us time to work on improvement activities

Scoring sheet

Add the scores for each of the questions and divide by 5 to give an indication of performance on each area of the model.

Area	Add scores for these questions	Divide by 5
Core values in high involvement	9,24,32,33,37	
Strategy deployment	1,8,16,17,26	
Leadership	2,5,15,25,29	
Involvement	13,19,27,36,38	
Consistency	12,20,30,34,40	
Cross-boundary	4,10,18,22,31	
Capturing learning	3,7,14,21,28	
Improving the high involvement system	6,11,23,35,39	

1	The improvement activity in my work unit is focused on issues that help us to meet our aims and objectives	People do not link their activities to what the organisation is trying to do. Even if they are enthusiastically making suggestions these will not have an impact on the 'bottom line' – and eventually people may become disillusioned that their efforts don't seem to make a difference.	Policy deployment tools – strategy communication and deployment Tiers of objectives /how/why charts Sprint targets
2	My manager helps me to focus my improvement activities on issues which are important to the business	People are not sure in which direction they should be focusing their efforts towards – and they receive no help or support from their managers. Without guidance and direction there is a risk that enthusiasm gradually wanes and people lose interest in HII	Walking the talk – managers doing projects and setting an example Policy deployment tools – how/why charts, bowling charts, etc. to give direction and targets
3	In my work area the methods we use for capturing and sharing learning are effective (e.g. project reviews, newsletter, storyboards, etc.).	People don't share ideas or experiences within and between groups, mainly because they don't know how. When improvement ideas are suggested or implemented it is a very informal process and there is little in the way of mechanisms for capturing and showing the ideas and their results to others	Write up/ present projects Storyboards Newsletters with case examples Project reviews
44	There is a high level of trust and co-operation between my work unit and other groups involved in our processes.	People tend to distrust other groups and there is conflict and non-co-operation across departmental or divisional boundaries. As a result HII activities are likely to be limited to local areas and not have an impact on the big challenges facing the firm.	Cross functional problem solving teams Secondment Rotation of staff
5	My manager is willing to take action on suggestions for change.	If managers appear aloof or disinterested in suggestions then it quickly sends a signal that it is not worth bothering – and people will give up. Equally if mangers listen but appear to do nothing – give no feedback or acknowledgement – then people begin to believe it is not worth bothering and that the company is not serious about HII or wanting their ideas.	Active participation in HII groups and teams Policy of rapid response
6	Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for developing involvement in HII.	If no-one takes responsibility for developing HII it is likely to stagnate and fall into disuse. HII activities need constantly updating and supporting, and the strategic development of such behaviour patterns needs constant monitoring and intervention. If no one takes responsibility for spreading the word and encouraging and facilitating involvement then HII is likely only to catch on with a small group of enthusiasts. There is a need to cajole, explain, challenge and in other ways facilitate	HII steering group Secondment or tasking of key individuals via appraisal process/job description Allocate time and space for HII management and development Provide a board level champion

		people learning about and getting the courage to try out the ideas.	
7	If someone finds a solution to a problem in one part of the organisation it is not re-invented in another	If there is no communication or sharing of ideas and experiences across groups or departments there is a real risk of re-inventing the wheel and of wasted efforts. This can build a sense of frustration.	Cross-functional teams Storyboards Newsletters Presentations to other groups Documentation and display
8	Regular monitoring and measuring of processes and performance helps the organisation to plan its future improvement activities.	If people do not define measures and then monitor against those measures they will not be able to say whether and by how much things have improved. HII will this be a series of one-off suggestions and ad hoc improvements rather than a sustained and strategic drive for improvement.	Training in measurement and process thinking Process management tools – e.g. SPC, process mapping Regular review sessions – e.g. daily meetings
9	I receive feedback on my suggestions and ideas for improvement	If people do not receive some acknowledgement of their ideas they will quickly stop offering them and become disillusioned with the HII process. Equally if the feedback they get is critical and negative the same will happen.	Quick response for acknowledging receipt of ideas Token rewards and thankyous Idea management system
1000	I understand the relationship between my work and the work of colleagues in other departments.	If people do not understand how the work of others fits together with their own, they may become preoccupied with promoting their own group interests ahead of working towards improvement which benefit the whole organisation.	Cross functional teams Rotation or secondment Presentations to other groups Policy deployment Newsletters and communication devices Campaigns
11	I can identify the individual in my organisation who are responsible for co-ordinating and managing improvement activities	If there is no one directly responsible for developing HII – or if people are unaware who this is – then HII is likely to falter. It needs constant monitoring and fine-tuning and people need various kinds of facilitation early on in the process.	Identifiable individual or team Resources – time, equipment, space and budget – to enable their activities Visible management support
12	The organisations policies and procedures encourage people to make improvement sin their work area	HII is a different way of behaving for most organisations – and it is often the case that existing procedures and policies actually militate against it. For example, hierarchical structures or reward systems which pay for output and for individual efforts may conflict with attempts to get team-based problem solving. The	Process re-engineering/review Organisational development around creating appropriate support structures and processes Ask people what stops them working with HII

		organisation needs to review the way it works and adapt it to ensure it reinforces rather than undermines HII.	
13	We have adopted a formal process to find and solve problems	If people have no training in problem solving their approach will be very much hit and miss, and may end up tackling symptoms rather than core problems. HII requires the development and embedding of a systematic approach to finding and solving problems. This learning cycle can take many forms – from the Deming Wheel of plan-do-check-act to various more sophisticated models, but the requirement is for people to understand and make use of a formal process.	Training in formal problem solving model

Regular practice and review

Tools and techniques to help embed the process – e.g. fishbones, brainstorming, etc.

Time and space allocation to encourage regular practice and reinforcement. |
| 14 | We learn about how other people have solved problems through newsletters, bulletins, displays, etc. | If people do not know what others are doing they will tend to feel isolated and their enthusiasm for HII may wane. HII involves learning and practising a new set of behaviours. Much of this learning can benefit from sharing ideas and experiences – not only to ensure that re-inventing wheels doesn't happen but also to reinforce and encourage the development of a HII culture | Regular communication and experience sharing – through newsletters, bulletins, websites, workshops, etc.

Presentations to other groups/ visits to other groups

Visits to other firms where this issues has been tackled

Networking and workshop events |
| 15 | My manager encourages me to take part in HII activity | If people feel there is no direct support and guidance for their HII activities they may gradually lose confidence and enthusiasm. Managers need to take a lead in encouraging and demonstrating then kinds of behaviour which they want their staff to engage in. | Active participation in HII projects by management

Briefing and communication sessions

Policy deployment and appraisal process – personal goal setting |
| 16 | The organisation's business aims are used as a means of prioritising areas for improvement within my department | If there is no link between the strategic goals of the business and what people do in the way of improvement activities there is a real risk that problem solving – if it happens at all – will just be random in its effect. In the long run enthusiasm and support will wane because it is not really having an impact | Policy deployment

Monitoring and measurement against strategic targets |
| 17 | Monitoring and measuring help me to drive HII activity | If there is no link between the strategic goals of the business and what people do in the way of improvement activities there is a real risk that problem solving – if it happens at all – will just be random in its effect. In the long run enthusiasm and support will wane because it is not really having an impact Whether at an early stage – when people may be focusing on locally important goals – or at a more developed stage when they are concerned with the overall strategic targets of the business, measurement is | Clear strategic framework and communication process – so everyone knows what the overall goals are.

Policy deployment process to break these down into tiers of objectives and define HII projects

Links to appraisal and reward systems

Clear monitoring and measurement process and training and tools to support it |

		what will drive the process. Essentially the old adage holds – 'what gets measured gets done!'	
18	My work unit co-operates well with other groups in the organisation	If people do not understand how the work of others fits together with their own, they may become preoccupied with promoting their own group interests ahead of working towards improvement which benefit the whole organisation. Many problems are not concentrated in one area but spill over between departments for functions – so there is a need to ensure that these issues are picked up and solved in a shared fashion which builds on co-operation, information sharing, etc. The same is true for inter-firm CI.	Cross-functional teams for HII

Secondment and rotation to give experience of different areas and issues.

Regular communication and experience sharing – through newsletters, bulletins, websites, workshops, etc. |
| 19 | I actively seek out problems as opportunities for HII activity | Looking for problems is not normally the way people work – if anything there is often a tendency to live with them or ignore them in the hope that they will go away. HII, by contrast, emphasises a continuous search for improvement, driving down costs, pushing up quality, etc. The phrase 'best is the enemy of better' is a powerful reminder of the need to keep looking for problems – and if this motivation is not present it is likely that HII will fall off after the initial flush of enthusiasm. | Tools and techniques for finding problems.

Tools for breaking big – apparently fixed problems – into smaller chunks about which something might be done

'Campaigns' aimed at focusing HII efforts on a short term stretch target

Policy deployment

Monitoring and measuring tools, techniques and training. |
| 20 | People feel they share in the benefits resulting from their improvement efforts | Low scores here mean that people feel they are not sharing in the gains which result from improvement activity. At its heart this question opens up the issue of 'what's in it for me?' (WIFM) in HII – people may be capable of finding and solving problems but they need to feel that they are not being exploited. They will provide and continue to contribute ideas if they feel they are valued and rewarded for doing so – and if they feel that the reward is relevant and related to the nature of the gains. This does not mean they automatically want a financial reward – though that may be appropriate if there are substantial financial gains to the organisation. | At a minimum ensure that there is a measure of job security - no –one will suggest things which might put them out of a job.

Reward and recognition system

Review nature and extent of rewards

Link to appraisal and promotion system

Diverse rewards = e.g. training

Bonus schemes

Profit and other schemes

ESOPs |
| 21 | We capture what we've learned through procedures, rules, etc. | HII can be a powerful resource for eliminating or reducing problems – but people will soon stop contributing if it becomes apparent that the organisation is making the same mistakes over and over again. A key feature of successful HII is | Procedures and documentation – simple photos and charts

Displays and storyboards

Newsletters |

		making sure the individuals and the organisation as a whole learns from its HII efforts – and this means finding ways to capture and share knowledge. It could be from project to project, from area to area or between different functional parts of the organisation. If people feel there is a tendency to repeat mistakes and a failure to learn then it may be important to look for ways of pinning this down.	Database Regular and frequent review and capture
22	We meet with other groups to talk about how we deal with common problems	If people do not understand how the work of others fits together with their own, they may become preoccupied with promoting their own group interests ahead of working towards improvement which benefit the whole organisation. Many problems are not concentrated in one area but spill over between departments or functions – so there is a need to ensure that these issues are picked up and solved in a shared fashion which builds on co-operation, information sharing, etc. (The same is true for inter-firm HII).	Cross-functional teams for HII Secondment and rotation to give experience of different areas and issues. Regular communication and experience sharing – through newsletters, bulletins, websites, workshops, etc.
23	Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for the regular review and refinement of our HII process	HII is a learning cycle and it needs continuous adaptation and modification to remain relevant and focused, and to ensure high involvement. As earlier	HII co-ordinator Resources to support team or individual Review frameworks – benchmarks Visits and comparisons – learning from others
24	When something goes wrong in my work unit we focus on sorting out the problem, not looking for someone to blame.	Very often the tendency is to look for scapegoats or someone to blame if things go wrong – and often systems in the organisation reinforce this. But people won't risk offering their ideas or trying new things out if they feel they are likely to be blamed – and they won't offer information which might help solve the problem if they think someone will blame or punish them as a result.	Establish formal procedures for finding and solving problems Develop and reinforce the idea that problems and mistakes are something positive since they offer opportunities for learning and improving. The only bad mistake is repeating the same mistake twice.
25	My manager listens to my ideas	As earlier – key point here is receptive in place and time – and acknowledging that they have been heard – even if it is not easy to do something with them	Rapid response system – giving fast acknowledgement that ideas have been heard – and if possible rapid feedback or permission to implement them 'Management by walking about – take an active interest in what is going on and arrange opportunities to hear – from individuals and groups – their ideas and proposals Presence at HII meetings

26	Someone (individual or group) regularly assesses the contribution HII is making to our business results	Part of the HII development system – this is the performance axis. Needs a developed measurement framework and commitment to use it. Maintains momentum because top support follows perceived impact on business	Policy deployment

Monitoring and measurement
Process management |
| 27 | I have been trained to use problem solving tools and techniques | This question checks to see whether people have been trained in relevant tools and techniques for finding and solving problems – and if the problem is one of awareness and skill or one of application (i.e. do they actually use what they know?)_ | If the problem is a lack of knowledge or awareness of such a process then training in relevant tools and techniques

If the problem is one of application – actually using them – then creating simple 'pilot' projects to practice on followed by regular reinforcement |
| 28 | I share my learning with people in other departments | If people do not understand how the work of others fits together with their own, they may become preoccupied with promoting their own group interests ahead of working towards improvement which benefit the whole organisation. Many problems are not concentrated in one area but spill over between departments or functions – so there is a need to ensure that these issues are picked up and solved in a shared fashion which builds on co-operation, information sharing, etc. (The same is true for inter-firm HII).

This question checks whether the commitment in practice is there – the test is to ask how? | Cross-functional teams for HII

Secondment and rotation to give experience of different areas and issues.

Regular communication and experience sharing – through newsletters, bulletins, websites, workshops, etc. |
| 29 | Managers and supervisors 'walk the talk' by getting involved in HII activities themselves | One of the common problems in HII is perceived inconsistency – 'do as I say not as I do' – such 'lip service' to the ideas of HII is easy to see through and if the commitment is limited from managers and others in influential positions, then there is not likely to be much follow-through on the part of employees. | Active involvement in teaching and training- this also helps improve understanding by the managers themselves

Active participation in problem solving groups and activities

Taking a lead in communications to others – e.g. wiring in newsletters, running presentations, etc. |
| 30 | Our organisation regularly reviews the communication process | HII depends critically on information being shared and used – and if the communication processes are weakly developed between individuals, groups, departments and even firms, then this is likely to be a major block. | Regular and systematic review and surveys of how communications are working and where and how people think they can be improved.

Benchmarking how others do it – different departments and different firms |
| 31 | I have a good understanding of my customers requirements | People don't recognise the importance of the next person in the chain and may be | Involve people in customer visits |

		somewhat inward looking in their attempts to improve things. By thinking of customers and using their feedback to drive improvements there is a sharper focus to what they do	Use concept of internal customer Publish and circulate customer feedback – positive and negative – and use this to drive discussion and improvement sessions
32	I am able to implement my own improvement ideas	HII can work at the level of telling people what to do and how to solve the problems – but this risks their feeling uninvolved in the process – something which management does. Ideally we are looking for a sense of personal commitment and a direct link between perceiving a problem and implementing ideas to solve it. There is a strong sense of motivation attached to such direct problem finding and solving.	LIFE – activities – 'Little improvements from everyone' – where emphasis is on small scale projects which can be done quickly by the individual who made the suggestion Training to increase the range of skills and hence the scope of projects which people an work on Team membership, where even if an individual lacks particular skills he/she can work with a group capable of solving the problem
33	This organisation values people's ideas, no matter how small	Key value and test of leadership and consistency. If people don't feel this is the case, then HII is likely to be patchy and difficult because of going for the big ones. Need to encourage –even if the ideas are trivial – volume is important, quantity breeds quality	Reward system Suggestion scheme overhaul Storyboarding – and stress small ones c.f. case study Make heroes out of small things – c.f. Honda Bicycles case where the prize-winning award for HII saved a few seconds on packing each bicycle – but where a throughput of hundreds of thousands of bicycles each year meant that this added up to significant gains.
34	Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for adapting structures and procedures so as to ensure consistency with our HII process.	HII is a different way of behaving for most organisations – and it is often the case that existing procedures and policies actually militate against it. For example, hierarchical structures or reward systems which pay for output and for individual efforts may conflict with attempts to get team-based problem solving. The organisation needs to review the way it works and adapt it to ensure it reinforces rather than undermines HII. HII needs opt be supported by a context which reinforces and enables. But someone has to be watching out for this and championing the changes to bribing it into line	Process re-engineering/review Organisational development around creating appropriate support structures and processes Ask people what stops them working with HII HII co-ordinator Surveys and tools to check consistency BPR and other tools for organisational development
35	Someone (individual or group) takes responsibility for pulling together our approach to HII	Uncoordinated efforts may falter because of lack of support, lack of critical mass or even conflicts between efforts in one area and another. Potential for sharing and focusing efforts depends on integrated view	HII Co-ordinator/ team HII strategy Progress measure – c.f. external frameworks such as EFQM, model, etc.

36	Rather than being bystanders, people are actively involved in our HII process	Test of how well HII diffuses. Measure might be involvement level by area	Campaigns Reward systems which encourage participation LIFE Top mgt support Policy deployment and personal objectives
37	Our approach to recognition helps sustain people's involvement in HII	Questions reward and recognition system – does it work if so how?	Establish a recognition and reward system Extend and modify – simple tokens Bonus and benefit sharing etc.
38	If I have a suggestion for improvement I know there are mechanisms to take it forward	Whilst everyone is capable of HII behaviour there is a need for systems and structure to enable this to become a part of 'the way we do things around here'. Unless people know where and how to make their suggestions and where they can get support, they will either not bother or try and fail and become resistant to trying again.	Supporting structures and systems HII co-ordinator or team Awareness raising and training Fast response systems for recognising and receiving ideas
39	Our HII process is regularly reviewed and updated	If there is no attempt to capture and retain knowledge gained through HII projects – for example, by changing standard operating procedures – then the result will be that the organisation keeps on making the same mistakes and does not learn. HII efforts – although interesting – will have no real impact and may become seen as a waste of time.	Formal mechanisms for capture and review – for example changing SOPs Measurement and documentation Display and communication
40	This organisation allows us time to work on improvement activity	HII is above all a learning process and it requires that the organisation take some time out to think about what it is doing and how it could be done better. If the systems militate against this – for example, not allowing time for problem solving meetings or activities, or not releasing people for training, then the activity level is likely to remain low and HII will be undermined.	