

# DeVIL

## Determining the value of information literacy for employers

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**CILIP Annual Conference 2016**

**Brighton Dome**

**12 July 2016**



## Information Literacy in the workplace

- *“A set of abilities for employees to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, organize and use information effectively, as well as the abilities to create, package and present information effectively to the intended audience”*  
Bonnie Cheuk (2002), ‘Information literacy in the workplace context: issues, best practices and challenges’
- The workplace information environment is different from the academic one
- IL is inherent to many workplace practices, systems, behaviours – but employers tend not to recognise it explicitly
- Demonstrating the value of IL to employers offers the prospect of getting IL better recognised as a contribution to the well-being of enterprises
- This is the premise of the DeVIL project

## Premise for DeVIL

- Key questions:
  - What benefits do enterprises derive from employing people who are competent and confident in the way that they handle information and data?
  - What returns on investment would they derive by training or supporting their employees, and better recognising IL in the professional and career development of their employees?
  - What does the IL of employees add to the performance of enterprises – whether commercial, public or third sector?
- Difficult to answer these questions at present, because of relative lack of evidence
- DeVIL seeks to help plug that gap in the evidence base...
- ... and to provide a practical means for employers to find out how IL contributes to their organisational performance

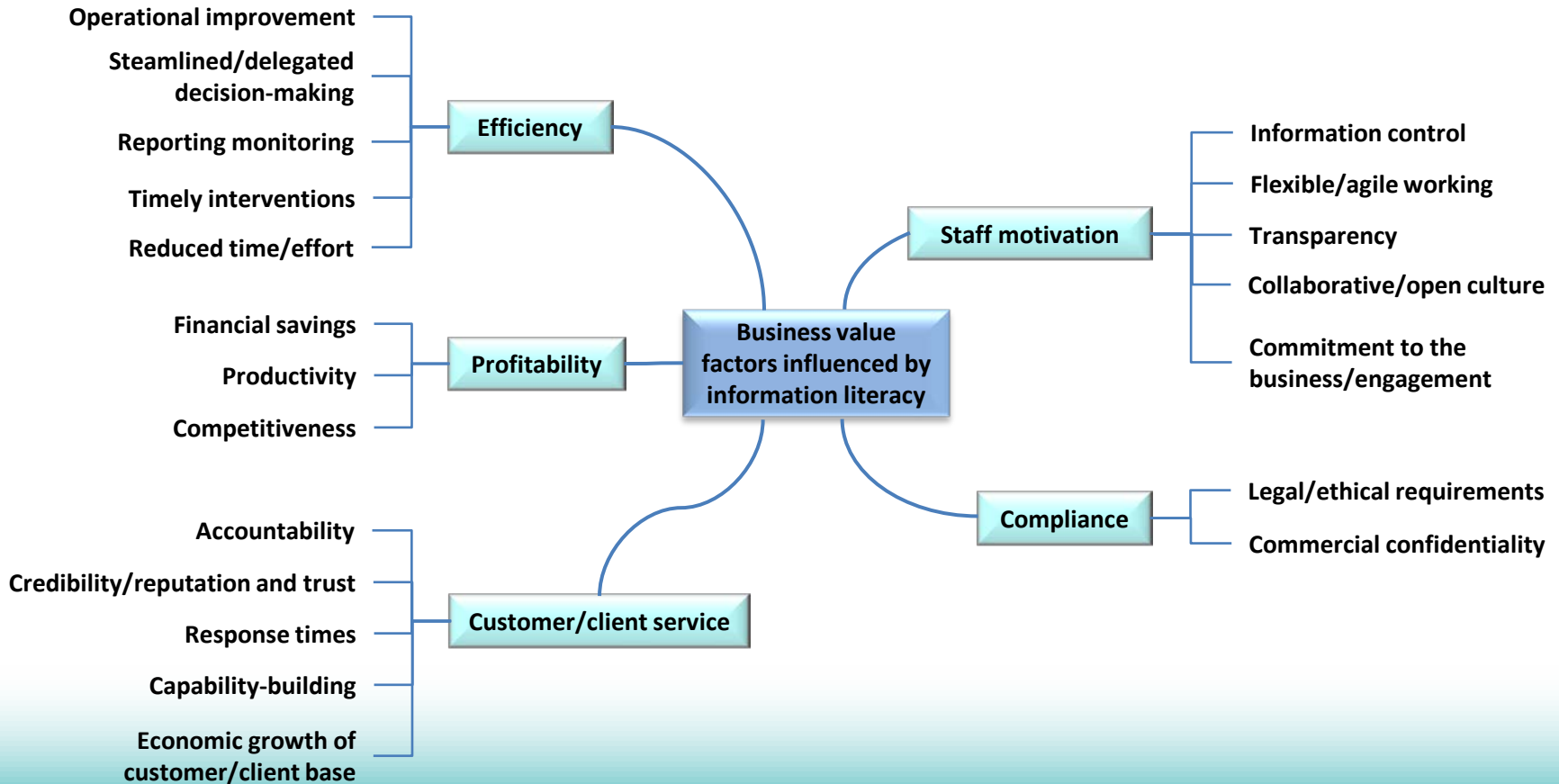
## The tool

- DeVIL's principal output is a prototype tool, consisting of element that enterprises can easily relate to, which can be used to demonstrate the value of investing in IL
- The tool maps out the diverse ways in which investments in IL underpin the performance and effectiveness of enterprises
- The tool is derived from three case studies in the UK
  - *commercial sector*: an SME that develops a human resources information system
  - *public sector*: a large London municipality
  - *third sector*: an organisation that acts as facilitator for voluntary organisations

## The project

- Methodology:
  - analysis of relevant strategy / policy documents from the three case study organisations
  - interviews with a range of managers at the three organisations
- From this research, the project identified:
  - a set of five, broad business value factors: efficiency, profitability, customer/client service, staff motivation and compliance
  - under the heading of these factors, a range of twenty indicators of value: business objectives for which investments in IL can deliver returns

## Overview of the tool (1)



## Overview of the tool (2)

- From the evidence gathered through the case studies, the project has further identified five areas of investment relevant to IL:
  - staff development/training and fostering of organisational culture
  - information systems and technologies
  - business practices
  - use of physical space
  - outreach and client relations
- Each of these areas of investment is matched against the twenty indicators of value, to produce a matrix
- This produces a map (in the form of an Excel spreadsheet) that describes how, in practice, organisations invest in IL-related practices that produce value

## Examples

- ***Investment in organisational practice:*** giving staff the means to collect and input organisational data, and to use that for interpreting and analysing key indicators when making decisions can add value through organisational improvement, productivity, accountability and transparency
- ***Investment in information systems and technologies:*** fostering and encouraging the use of business collaboration and networking tools, such as Yammer can add value through flexible / agile working and increased transparency
- ***Investment in staff development and support:*** the use of designated in-house information experts or champions, e.g. through digital centres of excellence (investment in staff development and support) can add value through streamlined decision-making, improved organisational credibility or reputation and the nurturing of a more collaborative / open working culture
- ***Investment in use of space:*** smart design and use of open-plan office space to encourage collaborative working and freer exchange of information between staff, as part of an effort to change working culture, can add value through flexible / agile working and financial savings



## Use of DeVIL

- DeVIL can be used to navigate around a map of indicators of value and areas of investment, to select which of these variables are of interest and on that basis to find out how organisations deploy resources to meet IL-related objectives
- The tool therefore allows enterprises (and anyone interested in IL) to chart the relationship between how organisations perceive value and factors related to the professional handling of information
- To be of use, the tool must necessarily reflect the experiences and context of enterprises

## Caveats

- The project is a small-scale preliminary investigation providing a snapshot for a limited number of cases.
  - generalised inferences may be drawn, but a greater number of cases would be needed to provide a comprehensive view
  - the tool provides a good indication of the potential variation in how the value of IL can be perceived
- The tool is not designed to calculate quantitatively the value of returns on investment in IL-related areas – further work is required to provide such data
- That is why the tool is a prototype – designed to be tried and tested, as a basis for developing a more comprehensive product

## Next steps?

- Need for future work to consider greater range of:
  - organisations and organisation types
  - stakeholders within organisations (i.e. not just managers)
  - areas of investment
- Desirable to add more data to DeVIL, turning it into a dynamic, evolving tool, with input from enterprises and other interested players. How might we best obtain feedback?
- As things stand, DeVIL should not be seen as a definitive product. We are now seeking ways of refining and improving it
- **Please test it out, experiment with it, let us know your views!**

**Further information about DeVIL at**

**<https://www.informall.org.uk/employment/il-value/>**

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