

Interview with Peter Block, Executive Director of BTR

Peter Block is Executive Director at BTR (Broadcast Training & Skills Regulator) and this month he talks to abdi's CEO Jane Massy about the importance of a sector that delivers significant economic value as well as employment in the UK and is a leading global player in building creativity and innovation in some of the most advanced technologies in the world today.

'We have overall a very high skilled workforce and over 85% have a first degree, but one that needs continual investment if we are to continue to compete and maintain our position as one of the world's leaders in the broadcast sector. We are charged with gathering and reviewing the data on the quality and status of training and skills in the sector. But gathering data doesn't focus on how we might encourage improvement and target where investment/improvement is needed.'

Peter led the team that developed a grid, providing a framework for quality and shared this with the industry where it has been used for the past three years, the last two online. It has proven to be a hugely successful tool for everyone in the industry to self evaluate and benchmark their performance against specified criteria within an overall standard. 'However, we'd really like to show that through aligned planning and robust evaluation, companies can show and legitimise in bottom line results the investment made by the best companies.'

The BTR has helped define through its grid, a standard from 'none to excellent' in professional practice in training and skills development which has helped sector organisations to review their provision as a first step to improve and develop their approach to investing in people. However, better business alignment up front for all investment and better evaluation and measurement at the end (Strands 1 and 7 on the BTR grid) remain weak.

With this in mind and following Jane Massy's workshop at the Learning & Development in Broadcasting Conference 2009, Skillset, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media industries agreed to host a dedicated ROI Foundation workshop in January. Peter will be watching with great interest: our hope here at abdi is that we'll be able to see a real impact in the next BTR survey results on these two fundamental aspects of professional practice as the ROI Methodology is embedded into the planning, measurement and reporting practice of the sector.

Peter promises to spend some time with the workshop participants in January and we look forward to welcoming him and to working with professionals in the sector in the coming months to deliver results.