



Business Improvement Agent

Implementing continuous improvement

November 2007

Introduction

A business improvement agent (BIA) is a dedicated in-company resource whose role is to promote an ethos of continuous improvement within the business.

The use of a BIA is especially relevant to businesses that need a dedicated management resource to help it compete in global markets, improve the performance of its people and processes, and increase the competitiveness by delivering measurable performance improvements.

The programme is primarily aimed at businesses that employ between 50 and 250 people

How will it help me?

Through the programme your business will develop and implement a rolling plan of continuous improvement activities which will be managed by the BIA. These improvements should:

- result in a minimum return on investment of 3:1 on total employment costs of the individual; and
- produce bottom-line benefits and generate new business opportunities in the short and longer-term.

How does it work?

The programme is delivered through one-to-one consultations and specialist advice. Financial assistance is also available. The BIA, in consultation with your other managers, will help you develop and implement a plan based on the outcomes of an Invest NI Business Health Check.

The plan will:

- be approved by your senior management team and board;
- be regularly reviewed and updated by your senior management team or board to ensure it is consistent with current business priorities; and
- include a clear statement of benefits to be gained from implementing each of the activities

Invest NI's Business Improvement Services team will monitor the progress of the plan and be on hand to offer advice and guidance to the BIA.

To ensure best practice is applied, the BIA will also participate in a wide range of training and networking sessions organised by Invest NI.

How much does it cost?

The BIA is your employee and you will therefore need to decide on the level of remuneration. However, Invest NI can provide financial support as follows:

Year	Invest NI support	Maximum grant available
Year 1	50 per cent of starting basic salary cost	£20,000
Year 2	30 per cent of starting basic salary cost	£12,000
Year 3	20 per cent of starting basic salary cost	£8,000



Who is eligible?

The programme is available to all Invest NI clients that have in the first instance participated in our Business Health Check.

Recruitment for the programme is carried out on a competitive basis and is primarily aimed at those businesses that employ between 50 and 250 people and need a dedicated management resource.

Becoming an Invest NI client

To qualify as an Invest NI client company, your business must meet certain criteria.

You should typically be from the manufacturing or international tradeable sectors and be able to demonstrate that currently, or over the next three years, your business will have:

- total sales of over £100,000 a year;
- sales outside Northern Ireland of greater than 25 per cent of turnover **or** greater than £250,000 a year; and
- the capability and willingness to work with Invest NI

If you are not an Invest NI client, but can satisfy the above criteria and would like to become one, please contact the Invest NI office in your area.

Full details can be found at www.investni.com.

Contact

Please contact your Client Executive if you feel your business will benefit from this programme. Alternatively you can also contact:

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Invest Northern Ireland
Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
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T: 028 9069 8402
E: BSinfo@investni.com

nibusinessinfo.co.uk

Invest NI has launched a new online information and support facility, **nibusinessinfo.co.uk**

This web site provides all Northern Ireland businesses and entrepreneurs with free access to an extensive source of essential business information.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk provides 24x7 advice, information, guidance and signposting, with over 5,000 fact sheets and over 70 interactive tools on offer. Every aspect of setting up and running a business is covered, from the earliest days of developing a business idea to the legal issues involved in selling a business concern.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk also features case studies showing how local businesses have handled particular business challenges.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk provides you with a single point of access for all your business information needs, freeing up time for to concentrate on running operations.