

Engaged Research in Practice : The BRASS Research Centre

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BRASS Two Starting Points.....

Mission: to promote sustainability, accountability and social responsibility, through research into key business (stakeholder) relationships;

ESRC Centre funding brings an expectation of going beyond contributing to academic knowledge by engaging with businesses and policy makers to influence policy and practice, and contribute to knowledge exchange.

BRASS's Over-Arching Themes

- **The socio-environmental impacts of business:** (including issues of measurement, regulation and implications);
- **Sustainable consumption and production :** (including issues of production systems, supply chains, marketing & consumer lifestyle);
- **Responsible management thinking :** (including issues of accountability, ethics, leadership, investment, partnering & support);

The three are dynamically interlinked.



...has worked with



Chartered Institute of Environmental Health



Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs



What a Difference Ten Years Makes.

Over the past ten years ‘engagement’ in scholarship has gone from an aspiration or a nice ‘added extra’ to become:

- In an ‘era of austerity’, crucial to the survival of social science research funding in the UK;
- Central to the success and failure of research funding applications to the ESRC;
- The focus of a range of research and research funding opportunities;

Where Does “Engagement” Come From ?

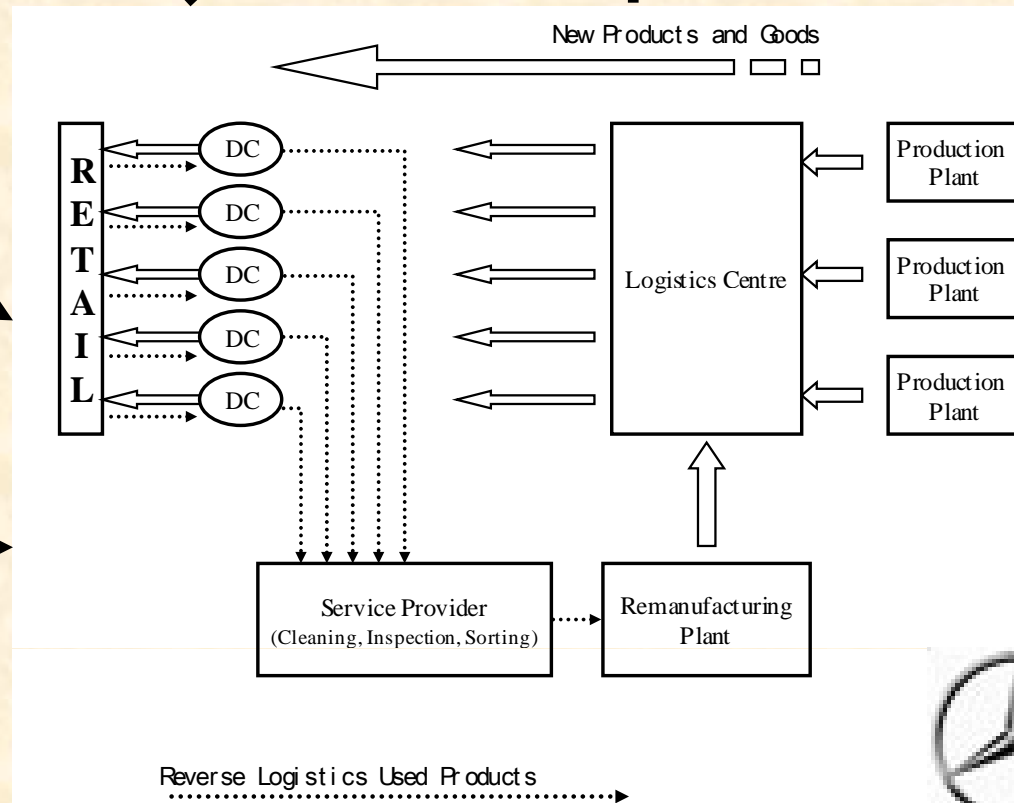
External stakeholders can be :

- Research funders (Defra, WAG, Toyota, WWF);
- Research partners (Fujitsu, Apple, Future Foundation);
- Research subjects (Mercedes-Benz, ONE Water, major supermarkets);
- Consumers of results (WEEE/RoHS survey);
- Consumers of expertise (CIM, DoE-NI, BMRB);
- Consumers of data (Industrial waste data);
- Partners in dialogue, communication & events;

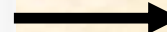
Types of Engagement

- Commissioned research (Defra, DTI, WAG, EA);
- Organisation based (Mercedes, Apple);
- Industry/Sector based (Mining, Nanotech, Pensions, Food, Automotive, Third);
- Community based (StroudCo, Bernie, Burberry);
- Evaluation based (Sustrans; WAG; Cardiff Council; Food for Life);
- Issue based (Fujitsu emissions trading; Human rights;);
- Tool based (UK Sport, UKELA 'Law & Your Environment', Vehicle Env Rating System),

Example 1. Engine Remanufacturing



2. Climate Change & Future of Brands





Project 'Bernie'



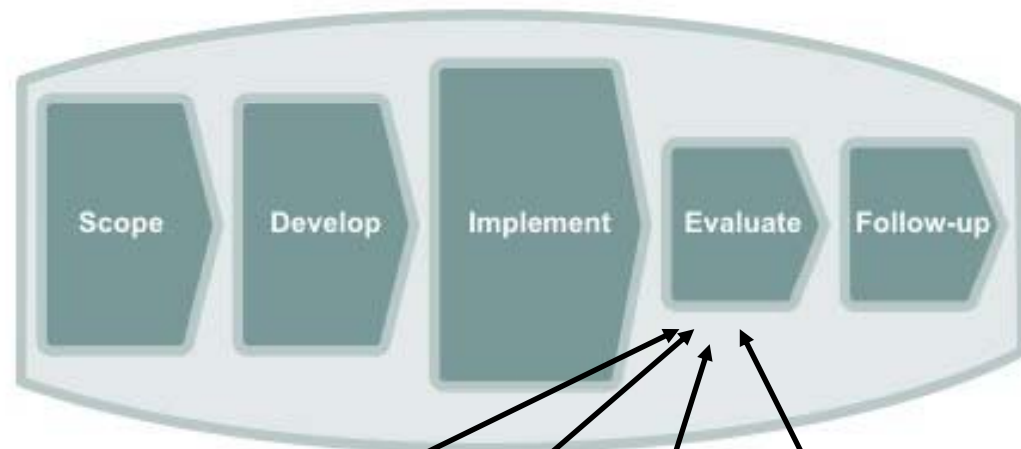
marketing
alongside other
concepts and
techniques

*systematic
application*

for a
'social good'

behavioural goals

Project Process



Project Partners



+ An International Expert Advisory Board

Results



From a public sector management perspective created inter-agency cooperation and changed the way SWFRS approach 'every project'.



31% over 2 weeks

46% over 6 weeks

ASB generally



Dangers, Difficulties and Downsides

- Different timescales business vs scholarship;
- Issues of commercial confidentiality;
- Whole/interesting truths vs “good news”;
- Shifts in power, personnel and permission within firms have the potential to derail projects;
- Multiple project stakeholders can create tensions in relation to objectives & outputs;
- Needs the right project, the right people involved and the right positioning of the research effort;
- Nothing that can't be overcome with some sensible project planning !