

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ Ian Mills
- ▶ Solent and Open Universities
- ▶ Spoken at previous BP conferences on marketing/strategy
- ▶ Previously with Logistics Institute, University of Hull
- ▶ Wide port experience on Humber and elsewhere

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ A port is a business
- ▶ As such it can learn/use techniques from the business world
- ▶ One such technique is the so called Delphi technique
- ▶ Can be used to solve a range of problems including forecasting and consultation
- ▶ Can be applied to a variety of levels including sector, port or section

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ Two recent very successful examples I have been involved with:
- ▶ How to drive the carbon footprint out of a organisation's supply chain
- ▶ How to determine the direction of innovation in a wind power generation business

- ▶ Both of these are applicable to ports

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ Is a way of benefiting from the knowledge and opinions of a wide range experts one would normally not be able to achieve
- ▶ Creates ownership and political buy in within the organisation/port
- ▶ Overcomes many of the limitations of normal consulting at a much reduced cost

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ The process
- ▶ 1. Determine the task
 - ▶ Ensure that it is tightly specified and one has ‘buy in’ from the organisation
- ▶ 2. Recruit experts
- ▶ Fundamental is its success is to select and recruit a panel of experts relevant to the task in hand - could be internal staff but normally external or combination
- ▶ Depending on the task - could include trade association, stakeholders, customers, University experts, media, government department staff etc max - 6 - 8
- ▶ Can be use to get political ownership

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ The process
- ▶ 3. Design the questions/format you want to ask experts
- ▶ 4. Send this question format out to experts
 - ▶ Fundamental to the success is to ask them to respond to the questions, but importantly, WHY they decided to answer like they did
- ▶ 5. Collect and analyse the responses
 - ▶ Identify the most widely held view and reasons why. Often the 80/20 rule will apply
- ▶ 6. Return this 'majority held view' and reasons to the experts, asking them as a result of this new information if they wish to refine their original response
 - ▶ Collect and collate these revised views

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- ▶ The process
- ▶ Often, this single wave of revised opinions is sufficient to come to an agreed answer.
- ▶ If not - repeat until one does.
- ▶ Finally broadcast the result to the sponsoring organisation but also the experts

The Delphi Forecasting and consulting technique

- ▶ The benefits
- ▶ Gets the views/opinions from a wide cross section of people
- ▶ Is time effective for experts - don't have to travel/attend meetings
- ▶ Allows them to change, modify views (no loss of face)
- ▶ Gets political buy in
- ▶ Far more cost effective than asking a consulting firm or less biased from doing it internally

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