Innovation Support Networks

Summary

- Why have an innovation support network?

- Why listen to me about it?

- What makes a good innovation support network?

- How do you measure success?

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Why?

An innovation support network can:

- Make the community better
  - Economic diversity and resilience
    - Not just jobs but better jobs
    - Retain as well as create
  - Enhance a culture of innovation
    - Social innovation as well as business

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Why me?

- Worked in small technology based company.
- Been involved in innovation support since 1999
  - Innovation resource Centre in Prince George
  - Helped found RINSA in Lethbridge region
- I care

What is a Good Network?

- Client focused
  - Avoid turf wars
  - Formal or informal
  - Make it easy for clients
    - No run-around
- Trust and communication between providers

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What does it do?

- Provide:
  - Advice
    - Technical and business
  - Connections
    - Business
    - Financial
    - Technical
    - IP

Measuring success?

- Why?
  - Funders require metrics
- Mechanics of measures
  - Metrics should be easy/cheap to measure
  - Metrics MUST not interfere with the real work
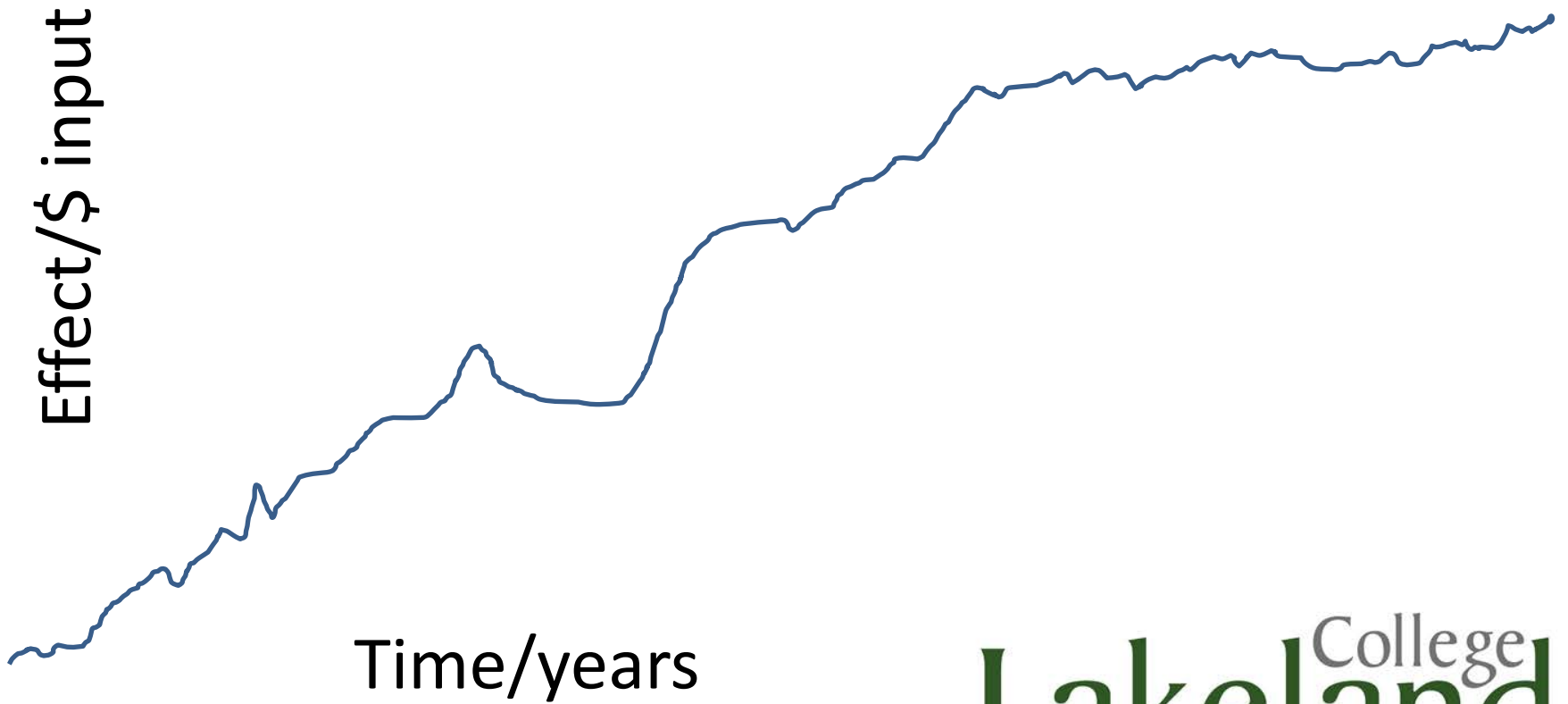
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Potential metrics

- Busyness vs. outcomes
- Jobs created
  - Jobs retained – more valuable but harder to attribute
- Clients served
  - Client satisfaction
  - stories
- Enquiries fielded

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Potential metrics (cont)

- New companies
  - Company survival
    - New companies
    - Existing companies
    - At 1 year, 5 year, 10 years
- Hand off from one network member to another
- Failures prevented

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Key Messages

- It is about the clients not you

- Create a culture

- It takes time

- Don't let measures get in the way of doing the right thing

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Thank you

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