

In order to better understand the conditions that support and promote the successful diffusion of health and safety technologies across the construction industry, CPWR organized and hosted a symposium entitled *Best Practices for Health and Safety Technology Transfer in Construction* held on May 30-31, 2012 at the Double Tree Hotel in Silver Spring, Maryland. The symposium featured 7 panelists who headed research projects to introduce, commercialize, and diffuse new health and safety technologies in construction. (see <http://www.cpwr.com/r2p/Technology-Transfer-Symposium.php> for case studies and additional information.)

Break-out groups focused on 3 key questions:

- What is one key point you would like to make based on your own experience with the challenges of tech transfer? What has your experience has been in development of a new technology, production, marketing or promotion, or as an end user or purchaser?
- Among the ideas you have heard today, is there one idea that you think could make the biggest difference in moving the tech transfer process forward?
- What recommendations would you make to CPWR in terms of how we might develop or support a tech transfer “road map” for construction, a smoother and faster pathway for getting important safety innovations to market?

Seven themes came out of the discussion:

1. Identify and involve stakeholders;
2. Make the business case;
3. Test for usability;
4. Understand the pros and cons of patenting and licensing;
5. Be prepared for a long-term commitment;
6. Consider construction industry culture;
7. Consider external factors (economics, regulation)

Seven recommendations followed:

1. Develop and test a “road map” for tech transfer
2. develop and support the testing of a business case model
3. develop additional, and more in-depth, case studies to capture lessons of each phase of the program from development, testing, manufacturing, marketing, and diffusion
4. develop a guide specifically for occupational safety and health researchers on patenting and licensing
5. improve communication between researchers and manufacturers
6. identify funding sources that can support the full work that needs to be done to bring a product into use
7. review European certification systems for engineering equipment

Overall it was clear that construction is generally a highly competitive industry, with many small businesses seeking to maintain a foothold. In this environment, productivity is paramount. It is difficult for contractors to consider long-term return in investment, in health and safety. Pressure to get jobs and complete them on time leads to a focus on the short term costs of any new equipment or methods. Providing tools that support technology transfer, building a library of successful examples, and understanding the construction environment will help promote the use of new tools and safer ways to work.

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