7 PRIORITY ENABLERS: SOLUTION PROVIDERS

This page summarises the many enablers highlighted in the 'Barriers & Enablers' report into a priority list for solutions providers, which need to ensure they can meet the needs of industry and become market ready.

Technical support and training

There needs to be consideration of the wrap around services required to support an adopter in understanding and embedding a solution. This includes resources and training that demonstrate how to use and/or install a solution successfully, and considering things like machine-readable data transfer. Much of this support can be automated over time, but capacity should be built in to address change management and adoption challenges, especially if a solution targets more fragmented users. An approach to support this further is the concept of 'training the trainer', where providers train others to be the main point of contact for support to reduce the bottleneck. As well as support in using the solution, in the case of digital solutions support may also be needed to consider how the outputs from the tool can be best utilised.

Building scalable infrastructure

From the early stages, solutions should be designed to consider how the solution is going to scale beyond the minimum viable product. To build scalable infrastructure, solution providers should look beyond their individual solution at how it integrates with and can benefit from other processes and systems across industry. For digital solutions, this considers building in a level of automation and 'self-service' in the platform, whilst looking at outputs being machine readable. For physical solutions this includes considering the manufacturing process from the outset, and whether this can make use of any existing manufacturing infrastructure or distribution systems. It should also consider the retraining required by installers, which can be fragmented and limit scale. Some solutions will be inherently disruptive and may demand the creation of whole new supply chains and systems, however for some this can be minimised to avoid friction and enable faster scaling.

Modular solutions

Solution providers should explore the idea of offering modular packages to adopters, to provide flexibility in the solution. Many adopters will have different combinations of processes and systems and a one size fits all approach may limit the chance of adoption. A modular approach also enables adopters to select the aspects of the solutions that they most need which also may then be at more favourable rates rather than paying for full access, lowering the threshold for acceptance.

Collaboration between providers

Many adopters struggle with the volume of different solutions on the market. Partnering with other providers with complementary solutions can simplify engagement for the adopter, potentially even providing a single point of contact for a range of solutions, and provide additional points of entry into adopters. It also can enhance the solution itself by making it interoperable with other solutions on the market.

Alternative models to funding innovation

Many solutions in the built environment can suffer from high upfront costs to develop the solution or scaling infrastructure, especially for physical products or materials, manufacturing heavy solutions or first of a kind technologies. Alternative models exist and are already used to overcome this, including licensing, leasing and revenue sharing. These models can shift risk and capital burden and unlock existing supply chains.

Transparency around capabilities

Many adopters are open to collaboration, but they need transparency from the innovators around their capabilities, expectations and implementation challenges. Through this, challenges can be collaboratively addressed, building trust and more likely leading to a long-term collaboration. Adopters may also have methods, resources or connections that can support with overcoming the challenges.