

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

KTP BENEFITS

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are designed to benefit everyone involved

- 🔄 Businesses will acquire new knowledge and expertise
- 🔄 KTP Associates will gain business-based experience and personal and professional development opportunities
- 🔄 Universities, colleges or research organisations will bring their experience to enhance the business relevance of their research and teaching

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Accelerating business innovation; a Technology Strategy Board programme

<http://www.ktponline.org.uk>

EASIBIND INTERNATIONAL LTD PRINT INNOVATIONS GIVE COMPANY THE EDGE

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

Specialist printer Easibind International Ltd worked with De Montfort University (DMU) to deliver this Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP). The collaboration aimed to develop and embed holographic/3-D lenticular technology and apply it to the print process, to enable Easibind to secure a significant share of the 3-D print market.

ABOUT THE SPONSOR

The European Social Fund (ESF) supports national employment and skills priorities, in line with EU regulations by helping unemployed and inactive people enter work, promoting lifelong learning, skills development and gender equality.

FAST FACTS

- 🔄 Enhanced technical capabilities and expertise in lenticular printing
- 🔄 Ability to print lenticular effects cost-effectively on short runs, widening customer base
- 🔄 New market areas exploited providing sustainable business growth, offsetting decline in traditional markets
- 🔄 New sales strategy in place, set to increase sales turnover by 40%
- 🔄 Research strategy of the Academic Partner enhanced and developed, and the Lead Academic awarded Professorship
- 🔄 The Associate gained much greater commercial awareness and was employed by the Company

The Company



KTP Associate James Malbon is looking forward to the challenges and breakthroughs he will experience in his ongoing role at Easibind

“This KTP has put Easibind on the global map, with major suppliers and international companies wanting to work with us. We have also gained a talented and creative individual in the KTP Associate.”

Harry Skidmore, Managing Director, Easibind International Ltd

Founded in 1977, Easibind International Ltd offers a one-stop shop for performance materials, high-definition colour print, and professional product design and finishing, providing its customers with rapid prototyping, on-demand services and full-length production. The Company currently employs over 100 people at its purpose-built site in Heanor, Derbyshire.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Through its policy of continuous investment in people, processes, plant and technology, Easibind had built a reputation for delivering cost-effective solutions to its customers' stationery needs. However, competition from the Far East for traditional stationery manufacturing and the increasing business uptake of paperless technologies were impacting on

turnover and profits. To survive and thrive management recognised the need to develop new business, and identified holographic/3-D lenticular printing as a key market area. This KTP with the Department of Imaging and Communication Design at De Montfort University was initiated to introduce the necessary skills and knowledge into Easibind.

BENEFITS

Overall the project has been a success, substantially developing Easibind's technical capabilities and proving a major income generator for the Company. New knowledge and expertise has been embedded, transforming the business into a designed, service-oriented organisation, positioned for further growth.

Easibind is now able to produce cost-effective printed lenticular effects, include 3-D, morphing and animation, from single sheets to large volume runs. This has increased the customer base by opening the market to

designers working on a lower budget. This innovative use of on-demand printing has provided the Company with a competitive advantage and enabled it to secure a significant share of the 3-D print market.

A successful new sales strategy has been introduced, with the lenticular technology acting as the flagship for new business development. The Company has been able to enter new market areas, such as security, direct mail and packaging. The new business is set to bring in over £1 million/year, offsetting the decline in traditional stationery markets.

RESULTS

- Enhanced technical capabilities, supporting further growth of the Company
- Gained competitive advantage through innovative use of on-demand printing
- New market areas being exploited, helping to build sustainable business
- The Company is establishing a reputation as the UK premier creator of lenticular printing, strengthening market position

The Associate

"The KTP has been a great learning experience, opening up a new commercial world to me and helping to advance my career in a way which is relevant to my skill base and degree."

James Malbon, KTP Associate

James Malbon was recruited as Associate on this KTP project and proved an effective conduit for knowledge transfer into Easibind. His skills and creativity have proved instrumental in establishing and exploiting new lenticular technology within the Company.

BENEFITS

This KTP has enabled James to develop a much greater commercial awareness. Working in a successful business environment has helped his personal development and provided him with the opportunity to work with several prestigious clients, building useful contacts. James has applied and enhanced his communication and interpersonal skills to get his point across and form good working relationships, fostering support for his endeavours. He also learnt the importance of remaining flexible, amending project objectives to capitalise on business opportunities.

RESULTS

- Developed greater commercial awareness
- Enhanced professional, project management and technical skills
- Offered and accepted a position with Easibind as Design Consultant and Web Developer

The Academic Partner

"This project has broadened the advance of three-dimensional printing for retail and point of purchase material. James achieved exactly what was required and the project

has strengthened DMU's position as a leading provider of successful university and business partnerships."

Martin Richardson, Professor of Modern Holography, De Montfort University



De Montfort University's Department of Imaging and Communication Design worked with Easibind to deliver this KTP, with Professor Martin Richardson acting as Lead Academic.

BENEFITS

Being involved in this project has provided academics with valuable experience of working with industry to develop commercial products to tight deadlines. The publicised success will strengthen the Department's reputation, increasing its credibility with existing and potential business partners.

As a leading-edge example of holography research, the project has acted as a springboard to other research, and has enhanced the research strategy of the University as a whole.

Project work has been incorporated into teaching material and case studies for BA and Masters courses, and students have benefited from access to hi-tech equipment, purchased by Easibind for cross faculty use.

RESULTS

- Springboard to further holography research
- Papers planned for relevant journals
- Increased industry relevance of teaching
- Professorship for Lead Academic