

## 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>

## R PLATNAUER LTD GOING FOR GOLD

### ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

This three-year, award-winning scheme with the Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) of the University of Central England, Birmingham, was a catalyst for the transformation of company culture and technology at R Platnauer Ltd, a leading UK jewellery design and manufacturing business based in Handsworth Wood, Birmingham.

### ABOUT THE SPONSOR

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led organisation established by the Government. Its mission is to accelerate research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business - building economic growth and quality of life.

### FAST FACTS

- 🔄 Increased margins
- 🔄 Improved product quality
- 🔄 Turnover increased by £7million
- 🔄 Course material and commercial experience for TIC
- 🔄 Career development for Associates

## The Company



KTP Associate, Mark Lais in discussion with modelmaker, Kamal Kumar

R Platnauer Ltd is a significant designer and manufacturer of gold and silver jewellery, with a wide-range of associated giftware. The latter part of the nineties saw significant shifts in Platnauer's markets because of the strong pound, exacerbated by increased competition from low-cost-base countries. Platnauer invited the Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) to help it move from volume jewellery to customised design, manufacture, packaging and marketing for major national clients.

“Our partnership with the TIC over the last few years has enabled our business to take a quantum leap in technology”

Paul Platnauer, Managing Director, R Platnauer Ltd

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The first two Associates focused on the implementation of CAD/CAM equipment. Then Mok Lais undertook an assessment of the company's business systems and benchmarking to define a fundamental organisational and technological step-change. Working closely with Platnauer's Finance Director, an affordable I.T. strategy to implement the benefits of CAD/CAM and Lean Manufacturing was devised. Substantial investment made the re-engineering of all management information systems possible.

## BENEFITS

Platnauer has successfully moved from high volume, low margin products into markets for more moderate volumes, but with significantly higher values and margins. The company also moved into new markets for customised and individually designed 'short-run' products. With the change in

business focus came significant steps to improve quality and productivity.

Staff skills have been upgraded to meet the technological advances.

## RESULTS

- 🌀 Sales turnover increased by £7million, with a £500,000 increase in exports and £200,000 profit before tax
- 🌀 The company is a national partner in the DTI's Silver Project, established to introduce new production technologies to the jewellery, giftware, silverware and cutlery sectors and also a partner in the European Virtual Jewellery Supply Chain Project
- 🌀 Platnauer has subsequently invested in a second KTP programme with UCE Birmingham Technology Innovation Centre

## The Associate

David Harris, Joanna Major (replaced by Laura Leyland after Joanna left the programme) and Mokshudar (Mok) Lais, joined this KTP to develop Platnauer's jewellery business.

## BENEFITS

Mok's work enabled the re-engineering of many business processes. He gained a wide range of skills and expertise, including database design, business analysis, strategy, CAD/CAM, supply chain and business processes, people management, communication and project management.

David Harris's work allowed the re-engineering of the new product development and manufacturing processes. A CAD/CAM department was formed, now considered to be one of the best in the industry. He developed skills in leadership and team working, CAD/CAM and new jewellery manufacturing technologies, as well as experience of change and project management.

Joanna and Laura both benefited from experience and training in commercial jewellery design and model making technologies and techniques, as well as CAD/CAM systems.

## RESULTS

- 🌀 Mok accepted a position as I.T. Manager at Platnauer
- 🌀 David was offered a post at Platnauer, but decided to progress his career with another large UK jewellery manufacturer
- 🌀 Associates gained NVQ Level Four in Management

## The Academic Partner

**UCE**  
Birmingham



**“The UCE Technology Innovation Centre has worked collaboratively with R. Platnauer Ltd for nearly eight years.”**

**Dr Tim Burden**, Head of Product and Process Innovation, TIC, University of Central England

Dr Tim Burden led the Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) and Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD) team from the University of Central England in Birmingham.

## BENEFITS

The KTP provided a valuable case study to promote the benefits of Lean Manufacturing and design innovation to the UK jewellery industry. Platnauer supports the University's research programmes as a member of the European Jewellery Network 2000 project and in the TIC-co-ordinated Silver Project. This was developed and TIC is forming a start-up business with Platnauer to exploit the opportunities created.

## RESULTS

- 🌀 The TIC has created a virtual product development theme in the BSc Multi-media degree and Professional Development Certificate courses, with plans for the latter to be made available on-line
- 🌀 Several papers have been published
- 🌀 Another KTP with Platnauer is underway