

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>

VISION SUPPORT TRADING LTD VISION SUPPORT TRADING SEES A BETTER FUTURE WITH BANGOR UNIVERSITY

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

The aim of this Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) was to enable Vision Support Trading Ltd (VST) to improve its service quality. By replacing manual processes with an automated IT system, VST would be able to provide more efficient services to its clients as well as creating new business opportunities and increasing turnover. It would also benefit from financial savings.

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

- 🔄 Substantial new business has led to significant business growth
- 🔄 Improved service quality significantly increased sales turnover and profitability
- 🔄 Enhanced business operations generated major cost savings
- 🔄 The Associate secured permanent employment with the Company
- 🔄 The Academic Partner gained valuable commercial experience
- 🔄 Partnership recognised as the Best Partnership in the UK at the KTP Awards 2007

The Company



Vision Support Trading Ltd and Bangor University Partnership receiving its award for Best Overall Partnership at the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships Awards 2007

Left to Right: Dr Rich Edwards (Academic Supervisor, Bangor University), Bryn Jones (KTP Manager, Bangor University), The Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE, Wendy Wedmore (Managing Director, VST), Edmond Yau (KTP Associate)

“This partnership has had a significant impact on the Company’s performance and we have experienced phenomenal growth as a business because of it. Our profits are covenanted to a charity, Vision Support, which provides rehabilitation services for visually-impaired people in the Cheshire and North Wales region, so our success has led to tangible social benefits for these communities.”

Wendy Wedmore, VST Chief Executive

Vision Support is a leading UK charity that provides support services for the visually impaired in Cheshire and North Wales. Its commercial division, Vision Support Trading Ltd (VST) offers high quality transcription services of printed information into larger print, braille and audiotape formats. It is a well established organisation in the transcription industry.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

VST wanted to improve the quality of its transcription service to increase client satisfaction and strengthen its competitive position. To achieve this goal, the Company needed to replace its manual transcription processes by designing and developing an IT system that could automate it, whilst they focused on improving internal operations and generating new business opportunities.

BENEFITS

The KTP, in partnership with the Bangor University, helped VST to design and implement an automated transcription system (ATS), which allowed it to offer a faster, more efficient service, significantly improving service quality. The ATS also provided VST with the capability to produce high quality output from any input format, something it previously could not offer, therefore widening the Company's service offering.

The project also brought benefits to other transcription areas that could only be created through a manual approach. An enhanced system of manual data inputting was developed, which enhanced the efficiency of VST's transcription team and further improved

the quality of its service. Before the KTP, the Company was aware of new competitors emerging within the transcription industry and several of its established processes were preventing it from maintaining its leadership. The implementation of the ATS has enabled VST to cement its position as one of the leading transcription providers in the industry and also created new business opportunities with a competitor.

The ATS system by reducing the amount of manual labour required has generated significant time and cost savings and allowed staff to dedicate more time to develop other key areas of the business. The success of the project generated an increase in sales and revenue and the Company has since

doubled in size. Also due to the success of this partnership both VST and the parent charity, Vision Support have had additional KTPs with Bangor University approved.

RESULTS

- 🌀 New automated system generated business wins with new and existing clients
- 🌀 Major increase in turnover, now 25% of sales
- 🌀 Business operations improved by 50%
- 🌀 Higher quality service offering strengthened VST's competitive position
- 🌀 Major savings in labour and administrative costs

The Associate

"I've benefited a lot from this KTP, it was a very exciting project with lots of new technologies to look at and it was pretty much as exciting as IT gets."

Ed Yau, KTP Associate

The Associate, Ed Yau was able to bring a wealth of knowledge to the KTP, having a 1st Class MEng Hons degree, helped equip the Associate with the key skills required to design and implement the necessary automated system.

BENEFITS

The Associate gained key business skills through company-based training in areas such as performance management, web services and financial management. This was complemented by a KTP driven NVQ Level Four in Management during which the Associate completed several modules, earning key competencies in resource management, planning and teamwork skills.

The experience from the KTP helped to cement the Associate's career path in software development and led to permanent employment with VST. The project also provided him with practical, commercial insight into business processes, which complemented his academic knowledge. Overall, the scheme enabled him to apply his academic IT skills to a real-world situation, increasing both his personal and professional development.

RESULTS

- 🌀 Became a member of two national institutions
- 🌀 Experienced a wide range of personal and professional development
- 🌀 Permanently employed by VST as a software Development Manager

The Academic Partner



"Everything that happened was innovative from the word go, we were fortunate that the Company had well established processes based on paper and manual systems. It gave us a green field opportunity to develop an alternative to the Company's more manually intensive procedures and to enhance several others."

Dr Rich Edwards, Academic Supervisor, University of Bangor

VST was facilitated by the Bangor University's School of Computer Science, where Dr Rich Edwards and Prof Siân Hope took responsibility for the project.

BENEFITS

The KTP has helped the School improve and build on its teaching. Shaping the development of new MSc courses in Computer Science and influencing the curriculum of its undergraduate course. The project has also benefited staff as they experienced a real world situation involving the technical, managerial and cultural issues arising from the adoption of new technologies and processes. This has given staff a more commercial outlook, complementing their research. The KTP helped to reinforce the University's reputation as a leading innovator in computer science and will be used to help build proposals for future funding.

RESULTS

- 🌀 New research areas identified through the KTP
- 🌀 Journals, research papers and case study materials created
- 🌀 Significantly improved the School's commercial knowledge
- 🌀 The success of the KTP has enhanced the School's reputation