

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>

BROMSGROVE GLASS AND WINDOWS LTD KTP OFFERS CLEAR ROUTE TO NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

Bromsgrove Glass and Windows Ltd worked with the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Birmingham City University (formerly University of Central England in Birmingham) to deliver this Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP). The collaboration aimed to develop an in-house process for the manufacture of a new range of glass furniture, and to establish a new customer base using a website.

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

- 🔄 Niche market exploited through new company
- 🔄 In-house design and manufacturing capability for glass furniture established
- 🔄 Skills in three-dimensional modelling techniques acquired
- 🔄 New marketing strategies and software skills developed and utilised
- 🔄 Knowledge base Partner gained new knowledge and generated useful teaching material
- 🔄 Associate developed professionally and extended his expertise in design

The Company



Contemporary Glass Furniture – The Apartment Range.

“At glassdomain we are committed to using design to improve lifestyle. Through this KTP, BIAD has been instrumental in realising a ‘design’ function within our company.”

Graham Southall, Managing Director, Bromsgrove Glass & Windows Ltd

Founded in 1981, Bromsgrove Glass and Windows Ltd (BGW) employs more than 50 people at its Bromsgrove site and had a turnover in excess of £4 million in 2006. The company established its core business in the manufacture and

supply of glass and fenestration products to the building and shop-fitting industries, and successfully diversified into the production and installation of conservatories and double glazing units for the domestic market.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2003, BGW identified a niche market for glass furniture, and planned further expansion to exploit this opening. The company realised that establishing a position within this market would depend on designing and

manufacturing high-quality, desirable products, and would necessitate use of new marketing strategies to attract sufficient customers. BGW therefore embarked on this KTP with the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, part of Birmingham City University, to access the knowledge needed for the company to realise its ambition.

BENEFITS

This successful KTP has given BGW the opportunity to expand its business, developing and launching a range of high quality, contemporary glass furniture products and accessories to market through a new, dedicated company. Through this KTP BGW has increased its knowledge of techniques for glass bonding, lighting and

manufacturing, and has a greater insight into worldwide trends in glass products.

A customised three-dimensional modelling system has been implemented to fast-track new product development, and a component library has been created for use in future projects. In-house design and manufacturing capabilities have been developed and refined through the production of full-scale prototypes, which also enabled quality assessment and product proving before any commitment to volume manufacturing.

In July 2005, BGW launched a new company (glassdomain ltd) to sell its glass furniture range, primarily through the Internet (www.glassdomain.co.uk).

A highly-refined website was designed in-house and is database-driven, ensuring data is up-to-date. Feedback from potential customers has been positive and sales of the new products are rising steadily.

RESULTS

- Established position in the glass furniture market
- In-house product development, prototyping and direct manufacturing capabilities, without the need for external consultancy
- Shorter product development time and more efficient working processes, increasing profitability

The Associate

“This KTP proved that when academia and manufacturing work together we can create something truly valuable. We have successfully installed a custom-designed glass furniture range for the new Wembley Stadium Hospitality suites.”

Peter Wardleworth, Design Director, glassdomain ltd (part of BGW)

Peter Wardleworth was recruited as an Associate on this KTP, and his skills and qualifications proved instrumental in the project's success.

BENEFITS

The Associate faced the challenging task of designing a range of products to lead an established business into a new market area. Peter rose to the challenge and successfully developed over 30 glass furniture products, building expert skills in the use of advanced modelling software. His design and marketing skills have been exploited and enhanced through work to develop a brand and identity for BGW's new company, and to develop the company websites. Technically, Peter now has a greater understanding of the manufacturing processes involved and has applied this knowledge to shorten the product development time.

RESULTS

- Enhanced design and technical skills
- Progressed towards Chartered Institute of Marketing Professional Diploma
- Offered and accepted a job with BGW as Designer/Project Manager

The Academic Partner



“The Product Design programme at BIAD has a long history of working with local industries. This KTP provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the quality of the University's teaching staff and its graduates.”

Panch Suntharalingam, Programme Director in Product Design, BIAD

Panch Suntharalingam and Richard Snell led a team from the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD), a faculty of Birmingham City University, to deliver this KTP.

BENEFITS

The academic partners have benefited in several ways. Staff have extended their knowledge of contemporary professional practice and small business application of design methodologies, and have increased their understanding of the latest computer rendering techniques in computer-aided design. Experience has also been gained in industrial collaboration, and applied research and development.

These experiences have been effectively integrated into the teaching at BIAD. For example, case studies in applied information technology have been prepared and details of new techniques in, say, glass bonding are being disseminated to Product Design students.

RESULTS

- Excellent working relationship with host company
- Useful course work developed
- Expertise transferred to both undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Paper published in refereed journal