

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 development opportunities
-  University, college or research organisation will bring their experience to enhance the business relevance of their research and teaching

A DTI Business Support Solution

BEACONS BUSINESS INTERIORS LIMITED (BBI) OPTIMISING BUSINESS PROCESSES







ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP (KTP) COLLABORATION BETWEEN BEACONS BUSINESS INTERIORS LTD (BBI) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE PROVIDED BBI WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO OPTIMISE THEIR BUSINESS PROCESSES. IN PARTICULAR, THE KTP AIMED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND TO LEVERAGE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS THROUGH NEW ON LINE REPORTING SYSTEMS AND IMPROVED SYSTEMS AND DATA INTEGRATION.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI) DRIVES THE AMBITION OF 'PROSPERITY FOR ALL' BY WORKING TO CREATE THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS IN THE UK. THE DTI HELPS PEOPLE AND COMPANIES BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE BY PROMOTING ENTERPRISE, INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.

FAST FACTS

-  Introduction of new systems to improve management information and support process linkage and efficiency gains.
-  Embedded a new information culture into the organisation
-  Developed programming skills of Associate and contributed to lecture programme and short course provision at the University
-  Helped secure new business for the company worth over £1.75m
-  KTP achieved significant growth in sales turnover through duration of project
-  Established a clear information systems strategy to support future growth.

The Company

"The KTP project vastly improved management information in key business areas and established information strategy options for future years".

Steve Lesbirel, Strategy Director, Beacons Business Interiors Ltd.



Beacons Business Interiors was established in 1989 as an interiors construction company. By the start of the KTP project the company had grown its turnover to £7million, by providing blue chip clients with facilities support services, incorporating office furniture installation and design, mechanical and electrical design and construction services.

Operating from bases in Brecon, Leeds and Cheltenham, and employing over 60 personnel, BBI has extensive knowledge of the creative and practical requirements of planning, adapting and refurbishing buildings.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In order to support and drive through planned company growth, new systems were urgently required to speed communication and improve information provision generally. With the help of the Associate, BBI re-defined the project to streamline core business processes and take full advantage of current systems. They acknowledged that this was of paramount importance in providing customer satisfaction and real-time responses to customer enquiries.

BENEFITS

As a result of the KTP, the company has been able to respond to customers' information and collaboration requirements. This has produced numerous benefits in maintaining existing relationships and securing new business. In addition, internal processes have been streamlined and a new awareness of the importance of timely, consistent management information in customer facing roles has been embedded in the business. BBI now has a

clear information strategy based on optimising and integrating its current software packages and migrating to a new integrated ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) platform at an appropriate stage in the company's future growth.

RESULTS

Development of an integrated project-costing sheet which eliminates the re-keying of data and provides an on-line snapshot of project profitability

- Introduction of automated programmes to produce on-line reports for all purchase and sales orders
- Provision of detailed sales analysis to provide improved management information
- Opportunities for flexible working from home for sales staff
- Significant growth in sales turnover from £7m at start of project to over £11m per annum at end of project.

The Associate

“The KTP project gave me new insights into the realities of business process change, and allowed me to develop my programming and analysis skills in support of improved business operations”.

Omar Robb, KTP Associate at BBI

The Associate appointed to deliver this KTP was Omar Robb. After qualifying in electrical engineering in the United Arab Emirates, Omar moved to the UK to study for an MBA at Huddersfield University Business School. He subsequently completed a Masters Degree in “Computer Integrated Manufacturing and Its Management”.

In April 2004, Omar took up the post of KTP Associate at BBI Ltd and remained there until April 2006, having re-engineered the company's current business processes and introduced a range of new reporting and analysis systems to improve customer satisfaction and overall efficiencies.

RESULTS

- Omar gained an NVQ level four in Management
- He was able to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Commercial Computing at the university of Gloucestershire
- He gained experience of a number of market leading software packages: Goldmine, Sage Line 50 and MS Outlook at an advanced level
- Omar organised and trained company staff to consolidate the changes made in internal processes. He also trained company staff in the support and maintenance of new systems in Visual Basic and Excel. This training was of both end-users, who had become adept in using the new systems, and also for a new information support analyst who joined the company towards the end of the project.
- Omar also played a leading role in the major change programme that supported the growth of BBI from a £7million turnover company to reach £11 million plus turnover at the end of the project year.

The Academic Partner

“This KTP provided the University teaching programme with a live case study on information systems strategy development.

It also showed how project direction can change but still deliver benefit to all parties.“

Dr Martin Wynn, Principal Lecturer, Department of Computing at the University of Gloucestershire.



The Department of Computing is one of six academic departments at the University of Gloucestershire Business School. The Business School has fifteen KTP projects currently underway with a variety of local businesses and organisations.

BENEFITS

As a result of the KTP, Martin Wynn has been able to provide direct input into research on the development and implementation of IS strategy in SMEs. This case study has already featured in a published article and will be the subject of a forthcoming conference presentation.

In addition there has been an extension of the Department of Computing's experience and expertise in a new business area - office design, assembly and delivery, and particularly in the appreciation of the importance of project costing.

RESULTS

- Case Study Lecture given by Associate on 3rd Year Undergraduate module on E-Business Integration added to realism and relevance of the lecture programme.
- Involvement of other staff members of the Business School in the KTP in a support capacity provided consultancy for the Associate in the use of Visual Basic and Object Oriented Programming to guide the design and implementation of the mini-systems at BBI.
- The KTP project was the instigation for the provision of other courses for KTP Associates by the Business School in project management (PRINCE2) and personality profiling (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator).
- Comparative article published in International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business features BBI as a case study. (IJESB Vol 3, Nos 3&4, 2006)