

Interface - The knowledge connection for business

Case Study

Alan Polkinghorne Ltd.

Consulting

2007

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Supports building company to develop eco-friendly wall insulation

Spotting the potential for growth within the building and construction industry, Alan Polkinghorne of APMW Limited, a company that specialises in land remediation and developments based in Dumfries and Galloway, became interested in exploring the feasibility of a system that installs a new form of insulation into the wall cavities of established buildings.

Within an age that is increasingly environmentally aware and the trend towards construction and development of environmentally friendly "green" buildings, developing a new method of installing natural fibres in almost all buildings, old and new, could add great value to the market and prove a more popular choice of material. However developing such a system and using new materials from eco friendly renewable sources required further investigation to prove there was a market for the product and if the concept was feasible.

Directed to Interface - The knowledge connection for business, via the Scottish Government, Alan was keen to find a partner that could really see the value in the project. After spending time with Interface establishing the key

aims of the proposed study, they brokered contact with the most likely candidates for a collaborative project. A partnership was subsequently agreed with the Competitive Scotland programme, within the Department of Design Manufacture and Engineering Management at the University of Strathclyde.

David Mackay, Research Fellow at the University of Strathclyde, was attracted to the project by the challenge of researching the feasibility of the idea, coupled with the potential to bring a new product to market that has environmentally friendly benefits. He commented "The project had two parts – firstly we needed to identify a process by which a completely natural form of insulation could be installed in an existing building. From there we needed to develop a marketable product that could actually fulfil this function. I was interested in the idea of adding value to the natural fibres as an insulation material, particularly as it is not only a highly effective insulator but also energy efficient and carbon-neutral."

The project relies on extensive capabilities and expertise within both design and construction.



For further information on APMW please visit www.amwcontractors.com

"Interface played a key role in identifying a suitable partner for research and the team has been excellent to work with, taking the time to understand exactly where the project needed to go. It really has been a great way of making sure the project was run efficiently and I have been very pleased with the progress so far – so much so that we are now planning a follow up stage."

Alan Polkinghorne, Founder of APMW Ltd.

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Alongside Strathclyde's strengths in design, it was decided that the Mackintosh School of Architecture at Glasgow School of Art could contribute key skills in construction. As a result, the study is being run as a collaboration between the two Higher Education Institutions and the company.

Alan has obtained funding for the feasibility study, by applying for an award through the Knowledge and Technology Transfer in the Built Environment (KTTBE). KTTBE

is run by the Centre for the Built Environment (CBE) on behalf of Scottish Government's SEEKIT programme.

The feasibility study is now complete and Alan is continuing to work with Glasgow School of Art and the University of Strathclyde to bring the concept to market.

Alan is pleased with how the project developed so quickly and would highly recommend approaching Interface.

David Mackay concludes "I think that when companies and universities collaborate, and spend time making sure the project is coordinated appropriately, as it is through Interface, what results is the definition of a win-win situation – the academics see their ideas become a reality and businesses gain access to technical insight which they wouldn't otherwise have had."



About Interface - The knowledge connection for business

There is a wealth of world-class technology, skills and research facilities available within Scotland's universities and research institutes.

With established links to thousands of world-class leading experts, Interface finds and introduces companies to the perfect academic partner.

Interface overcomes the challenge facing companies in understanding what is available or who to contact

in academia, for R&D or expertise capabilities by matching relevant expertise to specific business requirements.

Collaborating with academic partners brings significant business benefits:

- Develop innovative new products, services and processes
- Improve performance using technological advances
- Increase competitive advantage in key markets

- Enhance profitability in existing and new markets

Many companies don't know that innovative solutions to help their business grow can be developed with academic assistance.

Interface is here to help make the right connections for businesses.

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