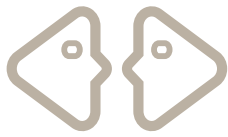


Business



Interface

The knowledge connection for business

Annual Report 2008-09

Profitable

WELCOME



Prof. Dominic Houlihan

Chair, Interface –
The Knowledge Connection for
Business Advisory Board,
Universities Scotland (Research
and Commercialisation)
Representative.
Vice Principal University of
Aberdeen.

Welcome to the first annual report of what has been an exceptionally busy and important year (AY 2008/09) for Interface and has confirmed its contribution to stimulating knowledge exchange in Scotland. Interface undoubtedly contributes to supporting Scottish companies, particularly small to medium sized enterprises, in developing their R&D and innovation requirements.

By working closely with Scotland's entire research base, Interface has links to thousands of world-leading experts who can assist companies from Scotland and further afield in developing solutions for their individual business requirements and key R&D challenges.

As a direct result of Interface partnerships, Scottish Universities and Research Institutes are playing a vital role in helping the economy through the current economic downturn.

Success was borne from the Interface team, coming together in a common endeavour with the University and Research Institute points of contact, to generate further business demand for new knowledge and expertise. Testament to the success of Interface over the last twelve months has been the significant growth in the number of collaborative projects between businesses

and academia which has increased by 35 per cent compared to the previous year.

Additional highlights must include the 98 per cent satisfaction rating for the Interface service from its client companies as well as the 20 per cent build on overall enquiries. In short, Interface has made a very successful and significant delivery of its annual programme, particularly in light of today's challenging economic climate. The Interface Advisory Board and key funders of the programme, Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government, acknowledge the continued focus on effective business demand-driven exchange of knowledge, expertise and access to facilities which promotes economic growth and improves competitiveness.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the team for their hard work over the last twelve months and for providing such a robust foundation for the year ahead. I have no doubt we are in a strong position and that Interface will go onto greater success next year.

Prof. Dominic Houlihan.

GROWTH

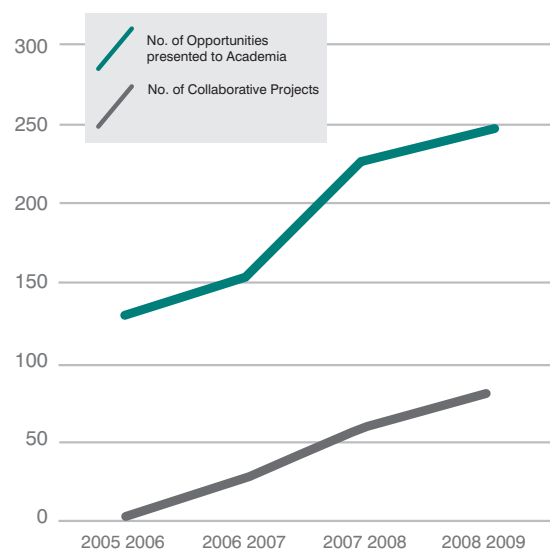
Interface has experienced significant growth in the number of companies seeking academic expertise since its inception in 2005.

End of year analysis (August 2008-July 2009) compared to previous year (AY 2007-8) has indicated:

- Enquiry numbers to Interface service **up by 22%** - 570 in total AY 2008-9
- Opportunities presented to academic institutions - **up by 6%** - 247 propositions presented
- 150 companies held discussions with potential academic partners - **up by 5.5%**
- 80 Collaborative Projects underway AY 2008-9 - **up by 35.6%**

*Current analysis of opportunities presented to academia

- Evaluating/in discussions: 31%
- Collaborative Projects commenced: 23%
- Discussions held but decision taken not to proceed: 25%
- Company not proceeding prior to discussions: 21%



*See note regarding current analysis of opportunities

“Very responsive and helpful. Interface has been excellent in supporting our industry group.”

Lilian Hamilton, Chemicals Team, Scottish Enterprise

“Very encouraging and enthusiastic advisors, who bring a positive air to new collaborations.”

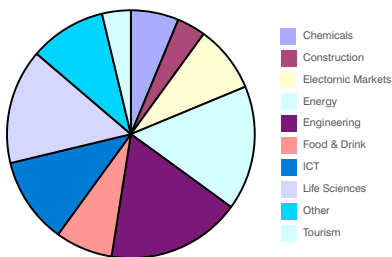
Paul Adderley, Sustainable Opportunity Solutions Ltd.

WORKING TOGETHER DELIVERS A RANGE OF PROFITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

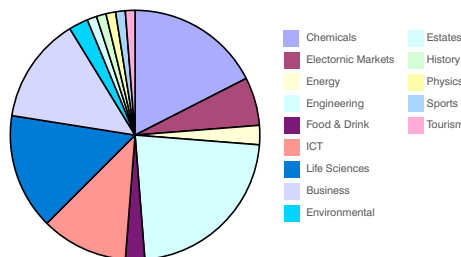
80% of the businesses supported are based in Scotland – the vast majority are SMEs.

76% of the companies currently collaborating with academia had no previous links with their academic partner.

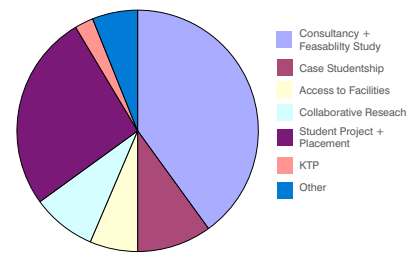
Industry Sectors Engaging with Academia
2008/09



Areas of Academia Engaging with Business
2008/09



Types of collaborative projects
2008/09



DRIVING INNOVATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Highlights from four new innovative partnerships in 2008/09

Quality Scotland

A charitable organisation, Quality Scotland promotes business excellence for competitive advantage across Scotland in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Through Interface the organisation is currently collaborating with North Highland College, UHI to develop online electronic tools for distance learning to enable businesses in rural and remote communities to access vital training.

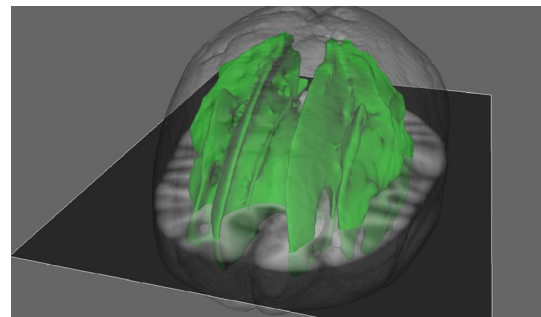


Robop Ltd

Robop Ltd. is responsible for developing an innovative solution to address bird control. The product, Robop, is a robotic bird deterrent which convinces birds that it is a real peregrine falcon and in turn deters them from specific areas. To support further development of the solution, Interface identified expertise in the behavioural ecology of birds at University of St Andrews. This niche area of expertise has enabled Robop Ltd to make significant developments in its core product portfolio of bird deterrent solutions and improve performance.

Toshiba Medical Visualization Systems Europe, Ltd

Toshiba Medical Visualization Systems Europe, Ltd. a global technology company, designs and develops visualization solutions for medical imaging.



Interface facilitated a collaboration with SINAPSE, the imaging network from six Scottish universities. Through this a successful staff exchange programme is underway where staff from the company can spend time in the clinical environment and SINAPSE staff / students can spend time embedded in an industrial environment. This is of enormous benefit to both partners, as university researchers can understand how their research is translated into industry and the tough requirements of commercial software, whilst the company can learn what a clinician really needs to see in an image to aid diagnosis. They also have time in an environment that is conducive to exploring new ideas.

Sunamp Ltd

Sunamp Ltd is currently developing an exciting new energy management system capable of significantly reducing both consumers' energy costs and ultimately household carbon emissions. Through Interface, the company is currently collaborating with the University of Edinburgh. An initial feasibility study funded through the Scottish Funding Council's Innovation Vouchers scheme has led to a successful industrial CASE studentship award from the EPSRC for a further three year study.

“Totally satisfied! Delivery excellent! My clients are happy to have a mechanism which enables them to access the entire Scottish University space.”

Bill Corr, Scottish Enterprise

“Support is very personal by the staff that excel in forming an appropriate relationship very quickly.”

Una Wilson, Open Door Training Ltd.

Interface Team

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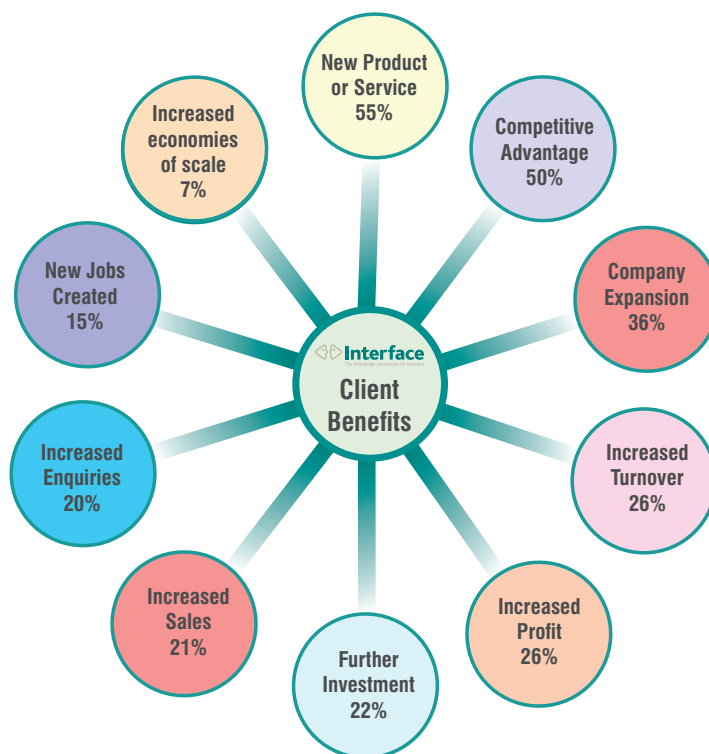
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MAKING AN IMPACT

A recent survey (August 2009) of 149* Interface company clients indicated a 98% satisfaction rating with the service and the following benefits as a result of academic collaborations.

*Respondents selected multiple options



STIMULATING BUSINESS DEMAND

Interface's continued focus on effective, demand-driven exchange of knowledge, expertise and access to facilities for business promotes economic growth and improves competitiveness.

Interface hosted and attended over 90 events in 2008/09. These covered an extensive range of subject matters from funding options to new product development. Interface continues to develop synergies with other key innovation partners to support Scotland's key industry sectors.



Spotlight on Boots New Product Innovation Centre

Having had no previous links to Scottish Universities and Research Institutes, Boots Centre for Innovation approached Interface to address its need to source academic and spin out partners to help drive new innovations in wellness and health. Interface developed a New Product Innovation Seminar, providing over 70 Scottish academics and companies with a unique chance to promote their expertise. This proved to be extremely successful, resulting in 30 opportunities currently being evaluated by the Boots team.

"We have made some excellent connections with the Universities of Dundee and Aberdeen that we would not have been able to do without Interface's support."

Louise Bryce, Marketing Manager, Boots Centre for Innovation