

Interface - The knowledge connection for business

Case Study

Design LED Products

Student Project

2009

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Expertise helps to light up new markets for Design LED

Design LED Products (DLP) has developed and patented innovative printed light-guide and LED illumination and light-guide technology. These thin, flexible displays have a range of applications, including LED backlights, illuminated capacitive and membrane switches, illuminated branding and instrumentation panels.

Formed in 2004, the Livingston-based company's first products were for signage and point-of-sale applications, but with an increasing demand for this technology, the firm has rapidly expanded into other markets. DLP currently operates in a range of sectors, including automotive, medical and consumer, and is continually exploring new market opportunities.

The company identified a number of prospective customers in the consumer electronics and white goods, medical instrumentation and mobile phone markets. However, in order to display the full potential of their printed light-guide technology, they recognised a need to illustrate the product applications for each market opportunity.

It was agreed that development of a full prototype for each market area would be cost-prohibitive, but the firm did require a better means of displaying the full potential of their technology to global clients and potential customers.

Following the success of a previous project with Interface – The knowledge connection for business, DLP approached the team once again to help them source academic expertise which could advise them on how to communicate and showcase their products more effectively.

Interface investigated the possibility of a placement project in a relevant field, for example product design, graphic design or engineering.

Subsequently Interface facilitated the employment of two design students, from Glasgow School of Art and Glasgow Caledonian University, in DLP for a period of three months. During the course of the project the students worked on showcasing the company's technology in graphic renders and investigating design applications for the technology into other new markets.



For more information on Design LED please visit www.designledproducts.com

"Interface helped us identify expertise that enabled us to effectively present our technologies to our customers without the need to develop costly prototypes. The students placed within DLP helped us turn concepts into designs and we now have a professional portfolio to present to our market which has resulted in an upturn in customer enquiries."

Stuart Bain, CEO at Design LED.

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Stuart Bain, CEO at DLP said: "Our first challenge was that we could not cost-effectively present our technology to the market with physical prototypes, whilst at the same time potential customers needed to 'see' the technology in applications they were familiar with.

The second challenge was that, internally, we had great ideas for product applications for the same technology, but no skills or experience in turning the concepts

into designs. With complementary skills, our placement students were able to resolve both issues in a very short period of time with minimal supervision and input. As a result, we now have a professional portfolio to present to the market, have achieved significant upturn in customer projects and have recently been awarded £70,000 SMART funding to test the feasibility of one of the concept designs created."

Marian Kosara, student placement from Glasgow Caledonian

University, added: "My experience with DLP was great. It gave me the opportunity to apply my skills in the real-world and I was thankful for the chance to work with such innovative technology on interesting projects.

I was able to build relationships with the team members and work with them cooperatively to create practical design solutions. As a designer, I can see the potential in LED technology in many design fields."



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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