Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Key Benefits
• Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are designed to benefit everyone involved
• Businesses are solving strategic challenges and long-term problems by drawing on the expertise of the knowledge base
• 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:
an Innovate UK programme
http://ktp.innovateuk.org/

ADL Smartcare Ltd
Data analytics for assistive technology

About this Case Study
ADL Smartcare Ltd provide systems to support the provision of assistive technology that help maximise the physical independence of older people at home. In this KTP, they have worked with Newcastle University to further improve their systems and services using data analysis and mining techniques.

About the Sponsor
KTP is primarily funded and managed by Innovate UK. It supports UK businesses wanting to improve their competitiveness, productivity and performance by accessing the knowledge and expertise available within UK Universities and Colleges. 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
• New “Data Insight” package has generated increased sales in new and existing markets
• KTP “exceeded ADL Smartcare’s expectations” in its wide reaching impact
• Growth of ADL Smartcare’s business offerings leading to significant cultural change
• Production of case studies for use in marketing material
• Upskilling of existing staff and improved recruitment strategies to meet business needs

The Company

“We company data was seen as a potential source of new business and revenue – this KTP has provided us with the statistical knowhow to exploit this powerful resource.”

Prof Peter Gore, Managing Director, ADL Smartcare Ltd

About the project
ADL Smartcare produce state-of-the-art software tools to help match people to the assistive devices best suited to their needs. The company produces simple to use web-based applications to be used by staff working across the health and social care sectors.

Over the 14 years since ADL Smartcare was founded, the company has accrued significant and unique data relating to the the problems people experience with Activities for Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental ADLS (iADLS), as well as specific solutions available to individuals.

This has allowed the Company to produce summary reports on an ad hoc basis. It has since become evident that ADL Smartcare could develop an income stream from the data at their disposal, particularly with an increased number of requests for more in depth data analysis.

ADL Smartcare’s unique data - and the emerging possibilities for connecting to open datasets - allows them derive unique insight. This allows them to guide suppliers and manufacturers of assisted living devices in their marketing of existing products and the development of new ones.

With this in mind, ADL Smartcare took the strategic decision to embrace new markets in the corporate and SME sector, shifting emphasis from their traditional focus on the public sector.

KTP Associate Sophie Whitfield, presenting her work on the ADL Smartcare project at a Newcastle University KTP event.
The Company

The Company’s core business remains the same, but has been broadened significantly as a result of the KTP. ADL Smartcare have been transformed into a data aware company with statistics at its core. As a result, it is now an insight based business, capable of offering data analytics services and more comprehensive use of data. The KTP has underpinned the expanded direction of the company.

ADL Smartcare have launched a “Data Insight” package, providing customers with insight based on statistical and business analysis. The product has been well received, leading to sales to early adopters.

The relevance of the KTP to ADL Smartcare has been enhanced by external factors, not least the growing interest in data analytics and associated benefits, which is evident on a global scale. This has helped drive the success of the KTP and made its undertaking particularly timely.

All of this has had major implications for ADL Smartcare’s skill base. Prior to the project, the Company had the capacity to produce basic statistical support for internal consumption. The KTP has built upon this sound foundation by providing new knowledge of statistical techniques and raising awareness of the range of open data available. This has led to a significant culture change at ADL Smartcare, with the introduction of new data related skills to existing staff, the allocation of specific budgets to research and data analytics and improved communication of statistics internally.

Results

• Increased sales and profits
• Improved operational efficiency
• Improvements to ADL LifeCurve™ product
• Developed a bespoke data transfer protocol

The Associate

“It’s been a fantastic opportunity. I would highly recommend being a KTP Associate.”

Sophie Whithfield, KTP Associate

Benefits

The Associate played a leading role in embedding data-related skills within the Company, particularly by providing training sessions to existing staff. She also delivered a series of presentations illustrating the benefits of the new data analytical capabilities introduced at ADL Smartcare.

Work undertaken by the Associate necessitated the production of a Company data transfer protocol, which she helped develop.

The Associate benefitted from interdisciplinary supervision from academic supervisors with expertise in statistical analysis and business modelling.

Results

• Continued employment at ADL Smartcare
• Co-authored publications
• Attended conferences
• Working towards a higher degree

The Academic Partner

“The KTP mechanism is an effective way for academics to interact with business and industry. I would highly recommend all academic staff to enrich their work life by taking part in a KTP”

Dr Shirley Coleman, Technical Director, Industrial Statistics Research Unit, School of Maths and Statistics, Newcastle University

Benefits

Work on the KTP formed the basis for academics to scope projects to offer to students. These projects are invaluable for the development of an academic’s practical skills and to help raise the profile of the University and its staff.

The KTP has enlarged academic interest in the “ethics of big data”, enabling them to interact with new sets of people, widen their outlook and grow their sphere of influence.

The academics have been invited to organise sessions and give talks at a number of prestigious conferences. Ideas also fed into an EU research proposal.

The KTP will form part of an impact case study for the School of Maths and Statistics.

Results

• Impact case study for REF
• Student research projects
• Case study material for teaching
• Publications & conferences

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