



Cardiff
Metropolitan
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Prifysgol
Metropolitan
Caerdydd

Case study

Working with *Zest*

North Wales garden products business innovates and grows from strength to strength thanks to a collaboration with Cardiff Metropolitan University and support from Welsh Government funding



UK Research
and Innovation



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Part Funded by
Welsh Government

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The Sponsors

The Welsh Government and Innovate UK have invested in a diverse range of programmes to encourage and support industry-university collaboration. The longest established scheme is Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), which for nearly 50 years has helped businesses to innovate and grow by collaborating with a university to bring in new skills and the latest academic thinking to deliver a specific strategic innovation project.

Another programme funded by the Welsh Government are SMART Partnerships. These programmes provide financial support for innovative projects that require academic collaboration and a range of expertise to develop and commercialise a product or technology and grow the business.



About the Zest and Cardiff Metropolitan University projects

An industry-business collaboration, which encompassed both funding programmes mentioned, is the award-winning joint working collaboration between Zest, which is part of the P&A Group of Companies and Cardiff Metropolitan University.

This collaboration started in 2017 with a product design SMART Partnership project with the objective of implementing a new product delivery process. Supervised by Gareth Barham, from Cardiff Met's School of Art & Design, who has extensive experience in industrial and product design processes and strategic marketing. The project not only achieved its original objective but also led to the launch of two new products and the development of an understanding within the company of the impact of efficient manufacture and assembly has on reducing manufacturing costs.

The success of the SMART Partnership was followed in 2019 by a KTP project which continued to build on their earlier work. This KTP again leveraged the expertise of Gareth Barham who worked closely with the Zest team. The overall objectives were to establish a user-centred design capability within Zest; to give products a market leading differentiated position and to introduce the capability to design in manufacturing, assembly, and transportation efficiency to new products. Once again, the collaboration achieved their partnership objectives and more, including 11 new products designed, three of which were award winning at the GLEE Garden and Outdoor Leisure Industry awards. The collaboration also led to the investment and opening of a cutting-edge new design and product development facility, based Flintshire in 2022. The Zest Design Shed as it is named, includes research and concept development facilities, the latest CAD design technology, a prototyping build area, a production studio and a marketing zone.

Over the course of these two projects, staff numbers in the Zest design team have more than quadrupled and profits from new products in existing markets increased by more than 40%.

The Company

Established in 1985 as a manufacturer of timber pallets and packing cases, the P&A Group of Companies is now comprised of five divisions, Zest, The Woodworks Garden Centre and Café, P&A Pallets, Packaging and St Andrews Park.

Zest was established in 2005 to bring high-quality timber garden products to garden centres, online retailers and major purchasing groups across the UK. Their purpose is to “enhance people’s outdoor living experience without costing the earth.” Zest’s pioneering design and innovation and customer focus has led to it winning a number of prestigious awards including the Glee award for New Product in the Garden and Entertaining category and the Best Furniture Product award at SOLEX 2022. Their vision is to be the best choice for outdoor living.

Andrew Baker, Financial Director, P&A Fencing and Sheds Ltd, commented: -

“The KTP has been massively beneficial for the company, the knowledge gained from the university on the design process has proved to be invaluable. By embedding the principles / processes of the KTP I have real confidence that we can drive the market for softwood garden products in the near future. The KTP has also contributed to the SLT becoming more strategically focused.”



The Associate

Luke Roberts, SMART Partnership and KTP Associate, now employed by the company commented: -

“The SMART Partnership and KTP at Zest has been the key driving force to my success as a product designer at Zest, contributing strongly to the award winning products we see at Zest today through applying key design principles such as strategic market research, user centred design and design for manufacture assembly into our design process, I have really enjoyed the opportunities that the Smart Partnership and KTP have presented me and am very appreciative of the personal development that came with them.”



The Academic Partner

Gareth Barham, Cardiff School of Art and Design commented: -

“A strong relationship has developed between the university and the business partner. The business has prospered with the development of commercially successful benefited and a higher level of brand awareness with customers while the university has benefit from the acquirement of new knowledge in how combined academic methodologies are applied in commercial reality with novel outcomes that is informing our research in the field of product design practice and management.”

If you are interested in working with Cardiff Metropolitan University to help you boost your business, please contact Karl Couch (Business Liaison Officer) on kcouch@cardiffmet.ac.uk

To find out more about funding and support from the Welsh Government:

✉ businesssupport@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Astudiaeth achos

Gweithio gyda Zest

Busnes cynnyrch garddio yn Ngogledd Cymru yn arloesi ac yn tyfu o nerth i nerth diolch i gydweithrediad â Phrifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd a chymorth ariannol gan Lywodraeth Cymru

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Y Noddwyr

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru ac Innovate UK wedi buddsoddi mewn ystod amrywiol o raglenni i annog a chefnogi cydweithio rhwng diwydiant a phrifysgolion. Y cynllun hynaf yw Partneriaethau Trosglwyddo Gwybodaeth (PTG), sydd ers bron i 50 mlynedd wedi bod yn helpu busnesau i arloesi a thyfu drwy gydweithio â phrifysgol i ddod â sgiliau newydd a'r meddylfryd academiaidd diweddaraf i gyflwyno prosiect arloesi strategol penodol.

Rhaglen arall a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru yw Partneriaethau SMART. Mae'r rhaglenni hyn yn darparu cymorth ariannol ar gyfer prosiectau arloesol sy'n gofyn am gydweithrediad academiaidd ac ystod o arbenigedd i ddatblygu a masnacheiddio cynnyrch neu dechnoleg a thyfu'r busnes.





Ynglŷn â phrosiectau Zest a Phrifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd

Un cydweithrediad o'r fath rhwng diwydiant a busnes, sy'n cwmpasu'r ddwy raglen ariannu y soniwyd amdanynt, yw'r cydweithrediad cydweithio arobryn rhwng Zest, sy'n rhan o P&A Group of Companies a Phrifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd.

Dechreuodd y cydweithio hwn yn 2017 gyda phrosiect Partneriaeth SMART yn ymwneud â dylunio cynnyrch gyda'r nod o weithredu proses cyflenwi cynnyrch newydd. Dan oruchwyliaeth Gareth Barham, o Ysgol Gelf a Dylunio Met Caerdydd, sydd â phrofiad helaeth mewn dylunio diwydiannol a chynnyrch, datblygu ffurf brand a phrosesau dylunio. Fe wnaeth y prosiect gyflawni ei amcanion gwreiddiol ynghyd â lansio dau gynnyrch newydd a datblygu dealltwriaeth o fewn y cwmni o'r effaith y mae gweithgynhyrchu a chydosod effeithlon yn ei chael ar leihau costau gweithgynhyrchu.

Dilynwyd llwyddiant Partneriaeth SMART yn 2019 gan brosiect PTG a barhaodd i adeiladu ar eu gwaith cynharach. Unwaith eto, fe wnaeth y PTG hwn ddefnyddio arbenigedd Gareth Barham a weithiodd yn agos gyda thîm Zest. Yr amcanion cyffredinol oedd sefydlu gallu dylunio sy'n canolbwyntio ar y defnyddiwr o fewn Zest; rhoi safle sy'n arwain y farchnad i gynhyrchion a chyflwyno'r gallu i ddylunio ym maes gweithgynhyrchu, cydosod, ac effeithlonrwydd cludo i gynhyrchion newydd. Unwaith eto, cyflawnodd y cydweithrediad eu hamcanion partneriaeth ynghyd â dylunio 11 o gynhyrchion newydd, gyda tri ohonynt yn fuddugol yng ngwobrau GLEE Garden a'r Diwydiant Hamdden Awyr Agored. Arweiniodd y cydweithio hefyd at fuddsoddi ac agor cyfleuster dylunio a datblygu cynnyrch newydd arloesol, wedi'i leoli yn Sir y Fflint yn 2022. Mae'r Zest Design Shed fel y'i henwir, yn cynnwys cyfleusterau ymchwil a datblygu cysyniad, y dechnoleg ddylunio CAD ddiweddaraf, ardal adeiladu prototeipio, stiwdio gynhyrchu a pharth marchnata.

Yn ystod y ddau brosiect hyn, mae nifer y staff yn nhîm dylunio Zest wedi cynyddu'n sylweddol iawn a chynyddodd elw o gynhyrchion newydd mewn marchnadoedd presennol fwy na 40%.

Y cwmni

Sefydlwyd y P&A Group of Companies ym 1985 fel gwneuthurwr paledi pren a chasys pacio, ac mae bellach yn cynnwys pum adran, sef Zest, Canolfan Arddio a Chaffi Woodworks, P&A Pallets, Pecynnu a Pharc St Andrews.

Sefydlwyd Zest yn 2005 i ddod â chynhyrchion gardd pren o ansawdd uchel i ganolfannau garddio, manwerthwyr ar-lein a grwpiau prynu mawr ledled y DU. Eu pwrpas yw "gwella profiad byw awyr agored pobl heb gostio ffortiwn..". Mae dylunio ac arloesi Zest a'i ffocws ar gwsmeriaid wedi arwain at ennill nifer o wobrau mawreddog gan gynnwys gwobr Glee am Gynnyrch Newydd yn y categori Gardd a Diddanu a'r wobr Cynnyrch Dodrefn Gorau yn SOLEX 2022, eu gwledigaeth yw bod y dewis gorau ar gyfer byw yn yr awyr agored.

Dyweddodd Andrew Baker, Cyfarwyddwr Ariannol P and A Fencing and Sheds Ltd: -

"Mae'r Bartneriaeth Trosglwyddo Gwybodaeth wedi bod yn fuddiol iawn i'r cwmni. Mae'r wybodaeth a gafwyd gan y Brifysgol am y broses ddylunio wedi bod yn werthfawr iawn. Drwy ymgorffori egwyddorion/prosesau'r Bartneriaeth Trosglwyddo Gwybodaeth rwyf yn hyderus iawn y gallwn yrru'r farchnad ar gyfer cynnyrch gardd pren meddal yn y dyfodol agos. Mae'r Bartneriaeth Trosglwyddo Gwybodaeth hefyd wedi cyfrannu at ganolbwyntio mwy strategol."



Y Cydymaith

Dywedodd Luke Roberts, Partneriaeth SMART a Chydymaith PTG, sydd bellach yn cael eu cyflogi gan y cwmni: -

“Mae Partneriaeth SMART a PTG yn Zest wedi bod yn sbardun allweddol i'm llwyddiant fel dylunydd cynnyrch yn Zest, gan gyfrannu'n gryf at y cynhyrchion arobryn a welwn yn Zest heddiw trwy gymhwyso egwyddorion dylunio allweddol megis ymchwil marchnad strategol, dylunio sy'n canolbwyntio ar y defnyddiwr a dylunio ar gyfer gweithgynhyrchu Cydosod yn ein proses ddylunio. Rwyf wedi mwynhau'r cyfleoedd y mae'r SMART Partnership a'r PTG wedi'u cyflwyno i mi yn fawr ac rwy'n gwerthfawrogi'n fawr y datblygiad personol a ddaeth gyda nhw.”



Y Partner Academaidd

Dywedodd Gareth Barham, Ysgol Gelf a Dylunio Caerdydd: -

“Mae perthynas gref wedi datblygu rhwng y brifysgol a'r partner busnes. Mae'r busnes wedi ffynnu wrth ddatblygu cynhyrchion masnachol llwyddiannus a lefel uchel o ymwybyddiaeth brand gyda chwmeriaid tra bod y brifysgol wedi elwa o gaffael gwybodaeth newydd am sut mae methodolegau academaidd cyfunol yn cael eu cymhwyso mewn byd masnachol go iawn gyda chanlyniadau newydd sy'n llywio ein hymchwil ym maes ymarfer a rheoli dylunio cynnyrch.”

Os oes gennych ddi-ddordeb mewn gweithio gyda Phrifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd i'ch helpu i roi hwb i'ch busnes, cysylltwch â Karl Couch (Swyddog Cyswllt Busnes) ar kcouch@cardiffmet.ac.uk

I gael gwybod mwy am gyllid a chymorth gan Lywodraeth Cymru:

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