

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

KTP BENEFITS

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are designed to benefit everyone involved

- 🌀 Businesses will acquire new knowledge and expertise
- 🌀 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; a Technology Strategy Board programme

<http://www.ktponline.org.uk>

COMTEC GROUP LTD KTP ENHANCES TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY DATA MINING ABILITY

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

This Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project brought the successful collaboration between Comtec Group Ltd and Cardiff University. The aim was to become a world leader in the travel industry by introducing pro-active data mining methods to identify new travel package opportunities.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led organisation established by the Government. 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.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is responsible for developing and implementing policies and programmes for all issues that have been devolved to Wales, including rural affairs, education, environment, health and transport.

FAST FACTS

- 🌀 A data analysis prototype has been developed
- 🌀 New technical ability and software expertise acquired
- 🌀 Greater knowledge and expertise to bring products to market
- 🌀 Sales turnover is expected to increase by £250,000
- 🌀 Experience and employment for the Associate
- 🌀 Research opportunities and enhanced profile for the University

The Company



“I’ve been impressed with the KTP programme and taking part has enhanced our status as a leading technology platform provider to the global leisure travel industry.”

Humphrey Sheil, Chief Technology Officer, Comtec Group Ltd

Comtec Group Ltd was formed in 1995 to provide a selling system for use within the leisure travel business, which would enable travel agents and tour operators to compare holiday availability more easily. Since then, Comtec has grown to become one of the largest travel technology suppliers to the travel and leisure industry, with a team of over 110 staff and a range of travel selling and management systems available in the UK, USA, Canada and further afield.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Comtec recognised that it had a wealth of data which could be used to provide more information both for its customers and the Company itself. It needed to exploit its vast amount of information using data warehousing and data mining techniques. To help it extract business intelligence from its wealth of data, Comtec looked to the School of Computer Science at Cardiff University.

BENEFITS

All parties considered this KTP to have been very successful and for Comtec, two key objects were achieved. The first was to better understand and prepare data asset for knowledge discovery, and the second was to develop data mining and visualisation tools to derive business intelligence from the data. Although preparing Comtec's data sets on a full-scale proved to be more difficult and time-consuming than initially anticipated, the Company now has a proof-of-concept data analysis prototype, which allows complex travel booking patterns to be visualised intuitively and analysed efficiently.

Comtec has been able to improve its operations and competitive position through this KTP. The Company has improved its understanding of leading-

edge data warehousing and data mining techniques. The developed prototype and its potential have been presented to prospective clients and this has enhanced Comtec's position in the market place. Not only does it help maintain its position and perception as a forward-looking and innovative technology company, but it has also been able to tap into new business and new market areas.

The Company has become more experienced and skilled as a professional software technology provider. It has acquired new skills as a result of the KTP so that it now enjoys an enhanced status. Greater technological expertise will also help it to be more competitive in a demanding market.

Due to the enhanced understanding of the available holiday data, customer requirements, data mining and reporting techniques that the KTP brought, annual sales turnover is due to rise by £250,000. The KTP has also had a positive effect on the expected value of exports which should rise by at least £100,000.

RESULTS

- 🌀 A data analysis prototype has been developed
- 🌀 New technical ability and software expertise acquired
- 🌀 Enhanced status as a software technology provider
- 🌀 Greater knowledge and expertise to bring products to market
- 🌀 Sales turnover is expected to increase by £250,000
- 🌀 The value of exports should rise by £100,000

The Associate

"It's been an excellent project. I feel I have come a long way since graduating and I have learnt a great deal about the travel technology industry and about myself."

Mark Bond, KTP Associate

BENEFITS

The Associate brought a First Class BSc Hons degree in Computer Science to this project. In return, the Associate has had the opportunity of carrying out advanced computation on very large data sets. He has also learnt more about working in a commercial setting and a new programming language. He has acquired skills in leadership, managing people and project management. The Associate has also achieved membership of the Chartered Management Institute and a position of Integration Team Developer at Comtec.

RESULTS

- 🌀 Greater experience of a commercial business
- 🌀 The chance to learn more about programming and data mining
- 🌀 A greater understanding of project management and introducing change
- 🌀 The Associate was offered a position with the Company

The Academic Partner

"This collaboration has brought greater experience of data mining techniques within commercial settings. This has contributed directly to our subsequent success in winning new projects and informed the teaching about real world applications."

Dr Jianhua Shao, Lead Academic, School of Computer Science, Cardiff University



BENEFITS

This KTP has been of benefit to the University in a number of ways. It has helped to bring staff together from different research groups and encouraged collaboration on research projects. It also brought them the opportunity to improve their understanding and skills in working with industrial partners. Working on joint research proposals has proved beneficial and experience from the KTP project has helped to win the University a lucrative data mining project with a large international company. The KTP also helped to enhance the reputation of the University and its staff. In addition, the experience has informed the teaching about real world applications within various computer science modules.

RESULTS

- 🌀 A greater insight into how to transfer knowledge that can benefit business
- 🌀 An enhanced understanding of commercial data mining techniques
- 🌀 New opportunities for collaboration both within the University and outside
- 🌀 New areas for future research
- 🌀 Useful case study material for undergraduate teaching