

Case Study

Knowledge Transfer Partnership: Solarcentury



Key Facts

- Solarcentury design and install intelligent solar electric solutions.
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a government subsidised scheme to encourage the transfer of expertise between research organisations and businesses.
- The KTP Associate worked on the development of new products.
- The project successfully developed two new products: C21 Solar Electric roof tile and a mounting system for the Sanyo Photovoltaic Module. The KTP also provided a solid grounding for 2nd generation versions.
- Solarcentury's turnover increased by £500,000 and a pre-tax profit of approximately £150,000 was generated.
- Enhanced company's knowledge of equipment and project management.
- Opened a new market within the construction industry.

The Partner

Solarcentury Holdings Ltd is the UK's leading solar solutions company working with architects, housing developers and engineers to deliver large scale renewable energy and carbon reduction solutions.

The Challenge

The aim was to launch a new product development team and find opportunities during the design and supply of photovoltaic installations which could be translated into new products and services for a growing UK solar market.

Solution

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a government subsidised scheme to encourage the transfer of expertise between research organisations and businesses through employing an Associate to work on a business challenge under the guidance of University experts.

The KTP Associate successfully carried out research and development as well the market launch of two innovative building-integrated photovoltaic products, and undertook fundamental design work towards second generation versions.

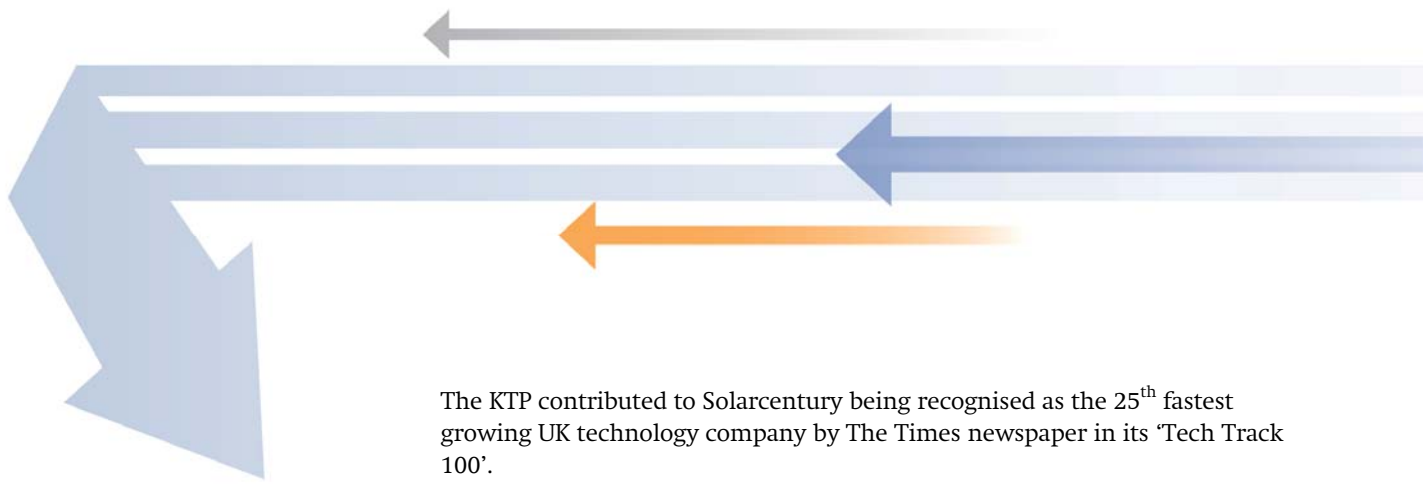
Benefits to the Partner

Developed new products with two designs registered and one worldwide patent pending.

Advanced its in-house construction product knowledge and evolution, turning Solarcentury into an industry leading authority in building integration of solar powered products.

Developed photovoltaic products that, by the end of the KTP, had been installed on 200kW of solar projects, with the capability to offset 80 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.

Developed a presence in a new sector: the construction market.



The KTP contributed to Solarcentury being recognised as the 25th fastest growing UK technology company by The Times newspaper in its 'Tech Track 100'.

Turnover was increased by £500,000 and a pre-tax profit of approximately £150,000 was generated.

Benefits to the University

The KTP has created opportunities for MSc projects and raised the academic profile of the University.

The KTP also provided extensive experience of commercial product development for staff and students.

In 2004 a solar roof tile developed as part of the KTP program won Best Exterior Product at the Interbuild New Product Awards.

The University of Reading was one of just nine KTPs out of the 320 nominees to win an award for best project in 2005.

Benefits to the Associate

The Associate was awarded a MSc degree in recognition of the work undertaken, and achieved specialist training in business, management, finance and technical skills which, coupled with project experience, have also advanced his interpersonal skills and career opportunities.

As a result of the success of this KTP project, the Associate was employed by the company as the Design and Development Engineer and has become an authority on photovoltaic roof tiles and other photovoltaic integration methods.



'The KTP provided a dedicated person to help us develop an award winning product. The collaboration gave us access to resources and skills which we did not have in the company and enabled us to move forward quickly.'

Dr Daniel Davies
Chief Technical Officer Solarcentury

University of Reading

The University of Reading is a world-class research-intensive university covering a broad spectrum of disciplines across the Life and Physical Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Henley Business School. Areas of particular strength include: Climate Systems Science, Preventative and Therapeutic Health Sciences, Sustainable Construction and Environments and Computational Science and Informatics.

The University works with businesses providing support for research and development, as well as access to expertise and equipment to solve business challenges. To find out how you can access the leading minds at the University of Reading please contact our Knowledge Transfer Centre.