

Case Study

Student placements – access to short term resource: Vinyl Graphics Ltd

Key Facts

- Vinyl Graphics Ltd is a screen and digital print specialist which provides a wide range of fabrics and materials for clients in the retail, transport and advertising sectors
- VgL created a new division called 'Surface View', which provides access to a database of exclusive images used to create interior wall murals. Additional resource was required to generate interest within the design and architectural communities about Surface View.
- Summer Enterprise Experience & Discovery (SEED) is an innovative, project-based internship scheme for University of Reading students which gives local employers access to a resourceful pool of talented students, whilst simultaneously providing students with valuable business based work experience.
- The SEED internship with VgL resulted in the implementation of a marketing strategy for Surface View, a database of contacts and clients and generated over £5,000 worth of initial orders.
- The VgL SEED student was overall winner of the SEED Student Placement Scheme 2007.

The Partner

Vinyl Graphics Limited (VgL) is a screen and digital print specialist which designs and prints graphics on a range of fabrics and materials for interior graphics including textured wall film, billboards and posters, train and bus graphics, building wraps and portable marketing equipment.

VgL has invested over £3m in technology at its comprehensive printing plant where it combines all the quality of off-set lithographic printing with the power of modern digital imaging. VgL supply to the retail, transport and advertising sectors and their clients include Sainsbury's, Viacom, PepsiCo, Liberty, Walkers, O₂ and EMI.

The Challenge

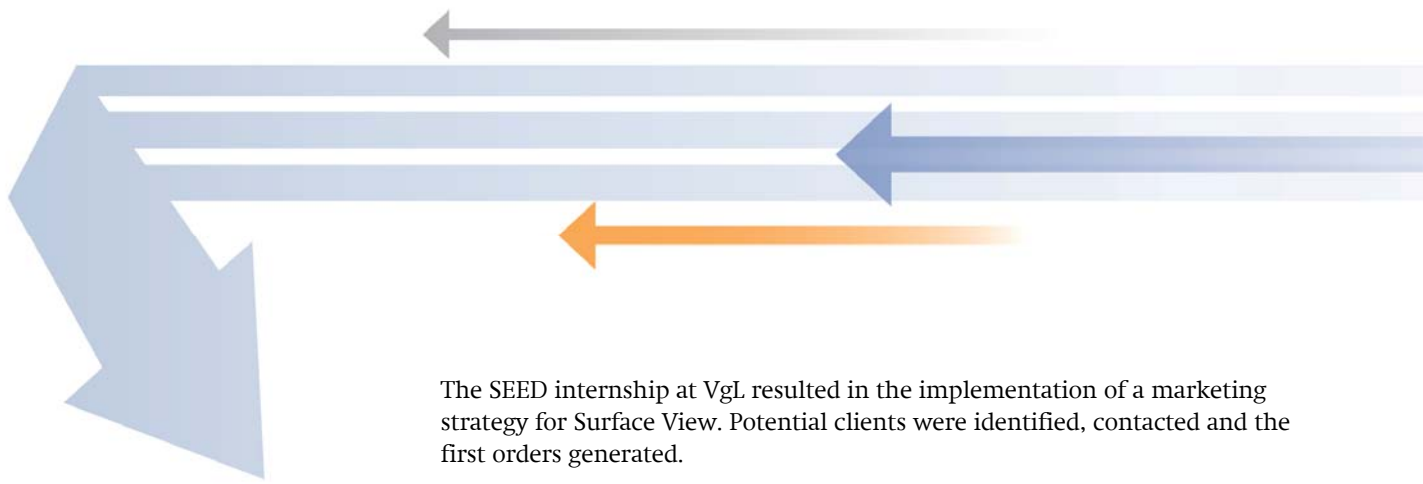
VgL created a new division called 'Surface View', which provides clients with access to a database of exclusive images used to create interior wall murals. The range includes those available from the V&A, the National Maritime Museum, Wayne Hemmingsway's Land of Lost Content and photographer Nic Miller.

VgL needed Surface View to be marketed to high-end clients, including those in the design and architectural community, but were unsure how to identify a large target audience for high quality bespoke wall murals and to present Surface View as a worthwhile investment in previously unknown sectors.

Solution

Summer Enterprise Experience and Discovery (SEED) is an 8 week summer internship scheme from the University of Reading which provides talented and enthusiastic students to local businesses and enterprises. Each student undertakes an individual and business specific project. Previous projects have included website design, creating marketing plans, setting up IT systems, scientific research in commercial field and environmental audits.

The Careers Advisory Service at the University co-ordinates SEED to give local employers, requiring additional help, access to a resourceful pool of talented students, whilst simultaneously providing students with valuable business based work experience.



The SEED internship at VgI resulted in the implementation of a marketing strategy for Surface View. Potential clients were identified, contacted and the first orders generated.

Benefits to the Partner

The short term concentration of time and attention provided by the SEED student gave Surface View the start it needed and resulted in initial orders of over £5,000.

The SEED student developed and implemented a marketing strategy, identified potential clients and came up with innovative ideas to create interest and demand as well as to drive sales.

By the end of the placement, Surface View was receiving daily enquiries thanks to strategic advertising and the SEED student's cold calling of prospective companies.

In exchange for only a one off management fee, the University oversees all of the project administration, including recruitment of student, provision of a training allowance and a finale to showcase the projects.

Benefits to the University

SEED internships help the University of Reading engage with local businesses and provide placement opportunities for a wide range of students.

The scheme also assists in the improvement of employable skills and 'real world' experience for University of Reading students.



'Within 8 weeks Michaela has achieved my primary objective which was to help prove that Surface View has a future and would be a concept worth developing. As a new project, I was not expecting large revenues in the first 8 weeks of its life. However, Michaela has helped generate over £5,000 of orders and create many more in the pipeline.'

Michael Ayerst
Vinyl Graphics Ltd

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.