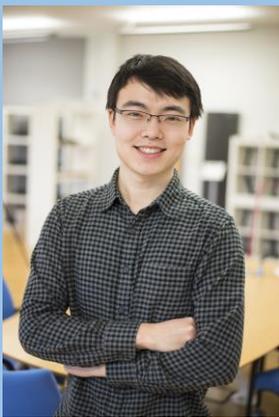


KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS CASE STUDY:

Dr Yi Li | Aircharge / CMS Industries



About Me:

I'm originally from China but graduated from the University of Southampton and now working as an electronic engineer, working in electronic design, system design and testing.



Project duration: 29 Months

End date: 31/01/2018

How did you initially hear about the opportunity of becoming a KTP Associate?

I searched the job online on jobs.ac.uk. I was looking for graduate job relevant to my experience where I could manage a project and found this KTP opportunity.

Please could you give a short description of the project from your perspective?

The project is about wireless charging for phones and tablets. For example, you can already charge with a cable, but you have to remember to plug it in and face issues if the wire gets damaged, but wireless charging eliminates those issues and is far more practical. At Aircharge we have different products to do that; I am involved in developing the electronic design for these chargers and phone cases, and testing the product to ensure everything works as intended.

How did you find the support once the partnership began?

The support has been great from the University and the company. I was integrated into Aircharge by the University well and the job was clearly outlined so I knew what was expected of me day to day. I had supervisors at Aircharge and the University of Reading who are always readily available to offer support whenever I need it, and I am fully aware of my responsibilities as an associate. In actuality, I have double the support which is amazing!

How has the triangular relationship between the business, the University, and yourself resulted in being a key factor in your development?

The key thing in a KTP project is that you are managing your own project so have a clear vision of what you want to learn and how you want to develop. The University and Aircharge offer me frequent meetings to discuss my ongoing career development and how I can best capitalise on the opportunity.

Are there any other factors which have aided your successful undertaking of this Associate position?

From the technical side I feel I have the right knowledge and experience already, but I can always ask for help or even a second opinion for any of my work, especially from the KTP supervisor at the University for any specific expertise. The resources available to me has helped to build my knowledge and confidence, and provided me with an outlet to confirm if what I'm doing is right.

What do you see as being the key successes to the project?

For my project, it's been hard work, definitely! But also talking with other people which helps a lot. Absorbing the knowledge of others has really helped to move the project forward.

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CASE STUDY:

You have been given £2k each year to spend on your own personal career development; how have you utilised this so far and do you have any further plans on how this can benefit you?

I completed the Agile PM (project management) training which is very efficient and beneficial. I also attended conferences in Munich and Nuremberg, plus various other valuable meetings to aid my training. In the future, I'm looking to publish a paper which is how I plan to utilise the remainder of my training and development budget.

Please could you describe the other benefits of becoming an Associate?

Mainly learning new information. For example, for my project I knew a lot already, but I learned how to better the user experience and really develop my knowledge. It's important to learn new areas of development and testing from both Aircharge and the University of Reading to ensure the product is as good as it can be. Also, if you just work for a company you only meet the people who work there, but being part of the KTP it means I'm exposed to students and academics from the university too which is a great benefit.

How do you think being employed under the partnership would differ from a standard post-graduate employment?

It's often the case that starting at a company as a standard post-graduate employee means you're quite restricted on what you can do. Being employed under the Knowledge Transfer Partnership gives you control of your own project, which means you become wiser not only on project management, but also by speaking to the University and the supervisors/experts.

Have you faced any challenges as an Associate so far? And if so what have you, the company, or UoR done to help you overcome these to ensure continued success within the KTP project?

I'm Chinese, so language has been the biggest initial challenge for me. But talking more has been a key factor in working around this, and the KTP project team in Reading suggested I take a language course which I did and really helped. Also, the culture is very different to China and it all seems very different to me here, but people from the University and from Aircharge have taken the time to offer social outings which has really helped me adjust and settle in. I don't think there has been much challenge from the technical side, but I know that if I do have any issues I have the support readily available to help me with it.

Would you recommend KTP to other graduates? If so, why?

Yes, the KTP is great! I think you have so many more options available to you, especially with the training budget. You have so much support available to you, which is fantastic.

And finally, what one piece of advice would you give to a graduate considering KTP?

All I can say is try your best. Don't be afraid to try something new; you may not have already learnt exactly how to do what you will be doing in the project, but trust that the support and expertise is there and take that leap!