

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WORKING WITH THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER CENTRE

with Richard Bennett | Professor & Research Dean



About Me:

My name is Richard Bennet, and I am a Research Dean in the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development at the University of Reading.

What are the key benefits of working with the KTC in enabling collaboration with partners?

The KTC helps to create, facilitate and manage collaboration with partners. Successful collaboration requires sustained engagement with partners over time.

What's your motivation behind working with external partners?

New perspectives, working on industry relevant challenges, research impact, access to data or expertise, funding, interest.

Has the KTC enabled you to work with companies that you might not otherwise have found / been interested in?

It hasn't just yet, but it has paved the way to do so and I'm confident that it will in the future.

What impacts and benefits have arisen / will arise as a result of the collaboration?

Interesting and innovative research/work, research income, tangible impact (i.e. on the company but sometimes more broadly).

A concern for Academics has previously been raised in that they are not sure if they can still publish when part of KTP. Could you please share your experiences on this?

Publishing should be a key element in the work plan. A danger is that publication is often not seen as important by commercial companies and some may even not want work published. This needs to be agreed at the outset and time and resource set aside for publication.

How do you go about prioritising your workload when part of a project?

Nothing really changed for me in terms of prioritisation; I still focussed on ensuring my work was completed in order of importance, and managed my time as effectively as I would with any other project.

Have the collaborations you've been involved in influenced your research at all? Have they opened up new areas of research interest?

No, but it has provided the potential to further develop an existing area of research interest for me.

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What are the key challenges to be mindful of when working with companies? How did you overcome them?

The main challenges for me were the difference between commercial and academic drivers/imperatives, the changes in company personnel, and the company expectations. To overcome these, it is imperative to make agreements in advance and maintain regular communication to be able to discuss any issues at an early stage. Location and solution of any potential problems as early as possible is the key.

Have the projects you've been involved with helped you develop any specific teaching materials, or realise any teaching and learning benefits?

I don't teach at present, but in the past, they have been extremely useful for teaching materials, in particular case studies.

How has the KTC been able to help you?

The KTC has helped me by providing support with managing relationships, by managing joint application processes, by managing finances, and by offering support when organising meetings.

And lastly, why should other Academics consider working with the Knowledge Transfer Centre?

Academics should collaborate with the Knowledge Transfer Centre as it provides a greater impact for your research, it opens up funding opportunities, and it results in interesting insights and relationships working with industry.