DTL BROADCAST LIMITED
GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY
DTL BROADCAST LTD WORKED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF READING ON THIS KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP (KTP), WHICH SET OUT TO INCORPORATE THE LATEST DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES INTO AN EXISTING RANGE OF MODULAR PRODUCTS FOR THE BROADCAST INDUSTRY, AND TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP ADDITIONAL INNOVATIVE MODULES FOR THIS PRODUCT RANGE.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS
THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI) DRIVES THE AMBITION OF ‘PROSPERITY FOR ALL’ BY WORKING TO CREATE THE BEST ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS IN THE UK. THE DTI HELPS PEOPLE AND COMPANIES BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE BY PROMOTING ENTERPRISE, INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.

FAST FACTS
- Over 20 innovative digital video and audio products developed and launched to market
- New technologies and products drive major upturn in company's performance
- Significant improvement in host company's reputation in market place, attracting new customers
- Increased exports, turnover and profits
- Timely opportunity to work on High Definition video devices for Academic Partner
- Enhanced technical and management skills for Associate

The Company

"The KTP project led to our launching a range of niche digital products. Their success plus our enhanced technical skills means we can now tackle the rapidly evolving international broadcast market with confidence."

Mike McHugh, Managing Director, DTL Broadcast Ltd

DTL Broadcast Ltd designs and manufactures conversion, distribution and associated interfaces for the international broadcast market at its base in Hayes, Middlesex.

ABOUT THE PROJECT
With over 30 years of experience, DTL was adept at designing analogue video and audio products; however, the company relied on bought-in expertise for the few digital products in its portfolio. This KTP was initiated to provide DTL with the knowledge to develop digital products in-house. Specific aims were to help it incorporate the latest digital technologies into an existing range of modular products for the broadcast industry, capitalising on the company's brand name and reputation, and to identify and develop additional innovative modules for this product range.
**BENEFITS**

The KTP collaboration proved highly successful. On the back of extensive market research to assess the products required to satisfy such a fast-developing market, the MiniBlox(tm) range of conversion and distribution products was developed. These miniature units are housed in rugged extruded aluminium boxes and utilise the latest digital technology for use in studio, outside broadcast and news-gathering environments.

Over 20 MiniBlox digital video and audio products were developed and launched to market during the project, including standard definition and high definition video distribution units, and various analogue-to-digital and digital-to-analogue video converters. The products have been well received by the market and are contributing to an upturn in turnover, exports and profits. Moreover, these innovative products have enhanced the company’s reputation for competence in the digital domain, attracting many major new customers, such as the BBC and BSkyB in the UK and ABC TV in the USA.

DTL is now well positioned to ensure that its product portfolio keeps pace with market requirements. A small but competent team of in-house engineers has the skills needed to develop future products, for example for the emerging high definition market.

**RESULTS**

- Good knowledge of broadcast industry needs
- Company proficient at designing digital products
- New products account for 70% of sales
- Turnover and profits both increasing
- Business expanding internationally, with major inroads into the US market

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**The Associate**

Paul Harding was the Associate on this KTP project, working with DTL Broadcast Ltd.

**BENEFITS**

Being involved in this KTP project gave Paul the opportunity for significant personal development soon after graduation. The use of Personal Development Plans, KTP modules and other KTP-promoted techniques should prove an excellent foundation for his future career.

Paul led the technical development of the MiniBlox range, enhancing his practical and problem-solving skills, as well as offering him a chance to build on his management, marketing and consulting skills. He also created new working practices, and demonstrated excellent communication skills by interpreting customer needs and converting these to product specifications.

**RESULTS**

- Enhanced technical skills, leading development of new product range
- Developed skills in management, marketing, consulting, training and communication
- Progressed towards completing an MSc and achieving Chartered Engineer status
- Offered a permanent job at the company

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**The University of Reading**

“The University of Reading has an excellent reputation for video engineering; DTL has expertise and industrial knowledge in product development. Consequently the partnership worked well, aiding DTL in the difficult transition from analogue video to digital video.”

Eur Ings, Academic Supervisor

Eur Ings Chris Guy and Dr Simon Sherratt from the University of Reading, School of Systems Engineering, led this KTP project.

**BENEFITS**

Many benefits have accrued from this partnership. Helping to bring new products to the market place enabled the lead academics to update their industrial experience and prove theoretical concepts in a commercial context.

Working on technology in an emerging field provided an excellent opportunity for strengthening existing research ideas and developing new ones. Two research papers were published at an international conference, and the Academic Supervisor presented an award-winning tutorial on the latest digital video technology at an International Symposium. This tutorial forms the basis of a new undergraduate teaching module, while the engineering aspects have been integrated into other modules.

**RESULTS**

- Cutting-edge research, proving theoretical concepts in a commercial context
- Two research papers published
- Award-winning tutorial presented by Academic Supervisor
- Useful teaching modules developed