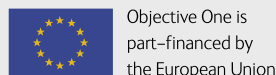


Objective One case study knowledge economy



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The projects in the Knowledge Economy investment cluster include those developing the Combined Universities and activities that support the development of much stronger links between Higher Education and business.

Developing the Combined Universities in Cornwall is considered so important to the development of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly it was the only project specifically outlined in the Single Programming Document contract. Prior to commencing the Objective One Programme in 2000, there was no such university opportunity in Cornwall.

University level provision in Cornwall and its links with business encourages graduates to start their own businesses, attracts new business and encourages innovation and knowledge transfer, thereby increasing the overall wealth of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Dash (South West) Ltd

Unlocking Cornish Potential graduate Mark Jones is ensuring a long established newspaper wholesale business expands and ensures its future by setting up two new website sales companies.

Dash, a family-owned business based at Barncoose Industrial Estate, Redruth, is a company with its trade very firmly based around newspaper delivery to retailers. Since joining Dash last year Mark has greatly expanded the sales range and made products available direct to the public as well as to retailers. This in turn is leading to extra jobs at Dash and a turnover of about half a million pounds for just one of the new companies.

Mark is from Doncaster but moved to Cornwall when he was 18. He later qualified with a BA Honours degree in business and marketing from Bangor University and returned to Cornwall carrying out mainly seasonal work. He began work as business development manager at Dash in October 2006.

He got the job via Unlocking Cornish Potential (UCP), a Combined Universities in Cornwall project that has received Objective One investment and is run by Cornwall College. UCP places graduates with businesses and offers support, including advice from industry experts, for up to one year.

Since then he has worked to launch Dash4it.co.uk and Dash4yourshop.co.uk, which has become particularly successful. He explained: "My brief was diversification and expansion. Dash already goes to



Unlocking Cornish Potential graduate Mark Jones is ensuring a long established newspaper wholesale business expands

all the local shops every morning and had started selling sundry items to those shops. The idea was to expand that sundries trade nationally to retailers and also direct to customers.

"Since I have been here we have built a website and the stock room has been reorganised. As well as newspaper distribution we have been selling things like batteries, memory cards and maps. We are one of only 30 Ordnance Survey official wholesalers in the country so that is a big advantage.

"Dash4yourshop.co.uk is a new idea directly aimed at the smaller, individual retailers so we can break bulk down and they can buy bits of stock so prices are more accessible for them. On the consumer side Dash4it is a website loosely based around outdoor leisure and the walking market and the Ordnance Survey maps have been the big thing. The idea is that we offer a discount and free first class delivery to the general public – so we sell the cheapest and supply the fastest.

"Sales there rocketed during the summer and surprised us all. My brief was to achieve a turnover of £160,000 and we are turning over three to four times that at the moment."

Mark, who has been retained by Dash following his one year UCP placement, said that there are now plans for another website aimed at schools and he aims to focus more on marketing.

One of Mark's mentors during UCP was Stafford Sumner who advised him about digital marketing.

"That was one of many things I got out of Unlocking Cornish Potential and probably the best part for me," said Mark.

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Stafford, who is Managing Director of the Cornish based email marketing agency, Jarrang and one of the British Council's Digital Pioneers in Hong Kong said: "I am delighted with Mark's ambition to develop a traditional business using the online marketing channel as a response to the changing demands of consumers. It is evident by the significant growth experienced by Dash4it in the first six months of trading that a strategic digital marketing plan, harnessing different elements of the online marketing mix, has been a key success factor and has contributed to yet another successful UCP project."

The Unlocking Cornish Potential programme places graduates with small and medium sized businesses in Cornwall for up to 12 months. Investment in UCP through Objective One means that participating businesses receive 30% of the cost of taking on their graduate for the duration of the project. Graduates and their employers also receive support from an independent mentor, 70% of previous UCP graduates have been offered a permanent position with their host company at the end of the project. UCP was the first project launched by the Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) initiative to offer direct business support and is managed by Cornwall College.

UCP has proved highly successful in ensuring graduate knowledge remains in the region and gets harnessed for the benefit of businesses. Two key priorities for the EU's Lisbon Agenda, which aims to achieve economic regeneration, are knowledge and innovation for growth and to create more and better jobs. UCP is an effective way of achieving these aims.



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