

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.

Providers of Telecoms Training (PTT)

A company which specialises in online e-learning for the telecommunications industry is set for a large expansion after taking advantage of Objective One support.

PTT (Providers of Telecoms Training) operates from a converted dairy in a small village west of Penzance. Its expansion plans are about to put it at the forefront of the international software training industry and the team has already more than doubled its employees.

The company was set up in 1993 by Bob Nott and Alan Knight, both previously lecturers at the Cable and Wireless Telecommunications College, Porthcurno.

"We began by offering what was then called computer-based training to the telecoms industry," explained Bob Nott. "That is what we have mainly been doing until the last couple of years."

Expansion plans began in September 2004 when computer science graduate Ross Trehwella was taken on under the Unlocking Cornish Potential (UCP) scheme. UCP is a highly successful Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) project which has received Objective One investment and places graduates with businesses in the region.

Ross helped to improve PTT's course delivery systems so that now everyone can be involved in the training. For instance, as well as a trainee taking a



The Providers of Telecoms Training Team, left to right: Maria Clifford (Marketing), Ross Trehwella (Programmer), and Bob Nott (PTT Founder).

course, the management can monitor the progress.

Ross was supported by a specially appointed mentor, University of Plymouth Computing, Electronics and Communications lecturer, Phil Culverhouse, who said: "As an active developer of an online distance learning tool, called MTutor, I was able to support Ross through the complexities of online learning protocols and generally as a person to bounce ideas off. As one of the main partners of CUC, it was good to see the University of Plymouth involved."

For Ross' work, which has meant the company's area of work can broaden, he was awarded the Best Use of ICT award at the first Unlocking Cornish Potential Celebration Event and Awards, held at Tremough, Penryn.

In October 2005 PTT also took advantage of the **Cornwall Research Fund**, another CUC project which uses Objective One investment to support small businesses wanting to carry out research and development.

That investment helped PTT work on an expansion project with two strands – to improve existing courses and to develop a brand new Learning Management System (LMS) that any organisation can use, not just the telecoms industry. The CRF investment has also meant PTT can work to gain the necessary international accreditation via SCORM.

The company has now grown from its two founders to five employees, including Maria Clifford, marketing manager. Part of her remit is to organise a big company launch for trade shows.

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Peter Castell, CUC business development manager, said: “One of the CUC’s most important roles is to work with businesses; helping them to exploit new know-how and technology. PTT are a great company to work with as they are ambitious and looking to grow quickly by expanding into new markets.”

Bob Nott commented that knowledge-based companies such as PTT are not restricted by Cornwall’s geographic position. He added: “Objective One investment has helped us exploit the internet to expand our market and potential.”

**For more information about the Cornwall
Research Fund contact Peter Castell on 01872
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