

# 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.

## WES Engineering Solutions

Local business management graduate James Gazzard, from Frogpool, is the latest success story to emerge from the Combined Universities in Cornwall's Unlocking Cornish Potential (UCP) graduate placement scheme, after being offered a permanent position as Marketing Co-ordinator by Redruth based WES Engineering Solutions.

WES, one of the major suppliers of resistance welding equipment to the motor industry - with clients including Honda, BOC, Nissan, Jaguar, Land Rover and Vauxhall - also offer Hardmetal Engineering and Advanced Engineering capabilities. The company approached the UCP team looking for a graduate to take on a twelve month project researching and developing a complete marketing function to support the company's future plans for expansion.

Having graduated from the University of Wales with an admirable first class degree in Business Management, James was keen to use his skills and knowledge to find employment in his home county of Cornwall. The UCP team matched his expertise to the needs that WES had indicated and arranged a twelve month placement for James, as Marketing Strategist in January 2006.

The UCP scheme, which is part of the Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) initiative, supported by Objective One, aims to assist small businesses in



James Gazzard (right) being congratulated by managing director of WES, Andrew Hosking.

Cornwall by placing graduates within companies to undertake specific business development projects. This also provides the graduates with real life working experience and has achieved an impressive graduate employment rate of over 70% at the end of the placements to date.

The project at WES involved in-depth market research and a complete rebranding of the company's activities and provided James with working experience of project management, IT systems, customer and personnel relations as well as strategic decision making.

James explains how the scheme has benefited him, "The UCP project has provided an outstanding opportunity to perform a role that is in line with both my degree course and my career aspirations. It has been a fascinating year which I have thoroughly enjoyed and will no doubt look back on as a key stage in my professional development. I am delighted that the successful completion of the project objectives resulted in the offer of a full time, permanent position with WES, which I have gratefully accepted."

Managing Director of WES, Andrew Hosking, is a keen exponent of the scheme, commenting, "This is the third time that we've used the UCP scheme to find high calibre graduates to perform specific projects within the company. We now have a dedicated marketing function which will play a valuable role in

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the future development of the company, and will compliment our comprehensive investment and expansion programme.”

**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.**

**For more information about Unlocking Cornish Potential visit [www.unlockingcornishpotential.co.uk](http://www.unlockingcornishpotential.co.uk).**