



Better by Design – New Centre Opens



A new Product Development Centre has been opened to help improve the performance of small and medium sized businesses across Leicestershire by offering free design advice and assistance. The centre received £500,000 funding from LSEP and is based at the Leicester campus of De Montfort University (DMU).

The centre was set up as a result of the success of Improving Business by Design, a pilot project run by DMU and funded by LSEP to advise local manufacturing companies on increasing the quality of their production processes and goods.

In addition to offering expert advice, the centre contains state of the art design and manufacturing equipment so businesses and consultancies can see the value of new techniques in developing their products.

Peter Ford, principal lecturer and design consultant at DMU, said, *“The vision for the new Product Development Centre is to help energise local design and manufacturing businesses. Design is a key sector within the sub-region’s economy and with DMU providing access to its significant expertise in this way will help ensure a greater number of design ideas become commercially viable.”*

Kishor Tailor, chief executive of LSEP, said, *“We recognise the value of the manufacturing sector and a need to continue to enhance its performance. The facilities at the Product Development Centre will provide a much needed service to businesses so they can develop and make an increased contribution to the sub-regional economy.”*

LSEP chief executive Kishor Tailor, LSEP interim chairman Martin Traynor, LSEP programme manager Niloofar Sarkari, DMU dean of the faculty of art and design Dr Gerard Moran and DMU lecturer in industrial design Peter Ford.

LABA Recognise Success

Eleven awards were made to local Asian Businesses at the Leicestershire Asian Business Association (LABA) annual dinner and presentation evening. Dr Bryan Jackson, chair of East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*), was the keynote speaker at the event and Jaspal Singh Minhas, president of LABA, used the occasion to review the association’s current plans.

Mr Minhas is hoping that businesses will welcome the opportunity to have a greater say in the future direction of the association and that membership will increase. He made the Presidents award to Baroness Sandip Verma who founded the home care business Domiciliary Care Services UK.

A lifetime contribution award was presented to a businessman who started his career running a fish and chip shop and is now responsible for a multi million pound company employing more than 50 people. Dinesh Bhai Patel is founder and a director of Cofresh Snack Foods, which has also received recognition for its export achievements.

LSEP sponsored an award for market diversification, which was awarded to Rita Chandarana, managing director of Leicester based photography business Maz.



LABA president Jaspal Singh Minhas, LSEP chief executive Kishor Tailor and *emda* chairman Bryan Jackson.

Leicester Shire Day 2007

LSEP is planning a third Leicester Shire Day that will build on the success of events held in 2004 and 2005. Leicester Shire Day is unique in bringing together representatives from different sectors to examine how joint working can benefit the sub-region.

Planned for Spring 2007, the event will explore the long-term vision for Leicester Shire and debate issues that are affecting economic growth.

Feedback from the last event showed that delegates would like more time in constructive workshops and consultation has been carried out to identify which issues would prove popular. The consultation took place through Leicester Shire Intelligence's

Business Survey and at a breakfast meeting attended by representatives of the private sector.

LSEP is keen that the private sector is better represented during Leicester Shire Day 2007 and the agenda will identify issues hampering businesses and explore what role companies have in overcoming these barriers.

LSEP board member Philip Hammersley, working closely with chief executive Kishor Tailor, is leading the event.

Kishor Tailor said, "We are organising an event that will appeal to people who take major decisions on behalf of their business or

the public sector. We recognise the importance of a stronger working relationship and the impact this will have on the sub-region. Our aim is that the importance of these relationships will become apparent during the workshops and be productive after the event."

More information on Leicester Shire Day is available via www.lsep.co.uk



New Training Resources

A CD containing resources to help people gain the skills and capacity to make a difference in their communities and neighbourhoods is now available. The CD is aimed at people working with hard to reach adult learners who want to be able to take part in regeneration and renewal activities.

The resources are part of a £70,000 project being delivered by the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership. LSEP has contributed £53,000 to the project and Quadrant Associates have produced the materials.

Included on the CD are over 200 resource files in 16 themed folders. Hyperlinks are used to guide users around the information. The materials can be used with any workers and community volunteers seeking to build individual and community capacity.

Phil Durban, programme controller of LSEP, said, "LSEP investment in this resource will allow more adults to be engaged in learning and improve their chances of gaining employment. The CD is one element of a larger project that will provide a range of support to communities in need."

Ray Flude, manager of the Learning Partnership Leicestershire and Leicester City says, "We are very pleased that the Learning Partnership with support from LSEP has been able to produce what will, I think, prove to be a valuable tool for improving the skills of workers and volunteers engaged in community development and regeneration."

Any organisation that is interested in using the CD is asked to contact Ray Flude on 0116 282 3780, rflude@llclp.org.uk



Home Grown

If you were a £3-5 million turnover Leicester Shire company in 2006 and growing at a rate of 20%, where would you have gone to get the right kind of help for your business? Would you have turned to the High Growth Company Support Programme, funded by *emda* and LSEP?

A number of companies have done exactly that and four were selected to receive individually tailored support to overcome their own specific barriers to high growth.

A further two companies were chosen to receive general support to help them fulfil their potential. The High Growth Company Support Programme is run by Pera

“the Innovation Company” based in Melton Mowbray.

AB Produce plc from Measham, East Coast Fittings Ltd from Rearsby, together with Lestercast Ltd and Polar Print Group from Leicester, are the first four companies to receive individually tailored support. Label Apeel Ltd and Taylor Bloxham Ltd will receive general support.

The first four chose their own ‘growth coach’ – an expert that will assist the companies in overcoming at least one barrier. Each coach is helping to address immediate issues whilst devising a plan designed to deliver 20% growth over the next five years.

The other two companies are looking to carry out short projects designed to help them address a specific growth related issue in their business.

Niloofer Sarkari, programme manager (enterprise & innovation) of LSEP, said, “We are delighted that a High Growth pilot programme is benefiting Leicester Shire businesses. We want our companies to grow and prosper and be competitive. Such a targeted approach with intensive coaching is the kind of support that will assist companies in achieving their objectives.”

PERA
THE INNOVATION COMPANY

Case Study 1

East Coast Fittings Ltd

East Coast Fittings Ltd, under the leadership of managing director Derek Goodman, has been growing well over the last five years but is looking to do even better. Working closely with their growth coach Chris Edwards, the company has concentrated on strategic business planning and better use of management information. A three-year sales plan is now able to forecast what resources and capacity will be required to achieve high growth in a sustainable way.

Derek Goodman said, “East Coast Fittings, as one of the leaders in its field, has achieved a lot over the past few years, but the insight and support offered through the Growth Coaching Programme provides the opportunity to take these and future achievements to a whole new level of excellence.”

John Ventham, programme manager of Pera, added, “East Coast Fittings Ltd are always looking to improve. They are exceptionally welcoming of new ideas and initiatives and as a result have benefited from the experience our growth coach has brought to the company. They have been a pleasure to work with.”



www.eastcoastfittings.co.uk

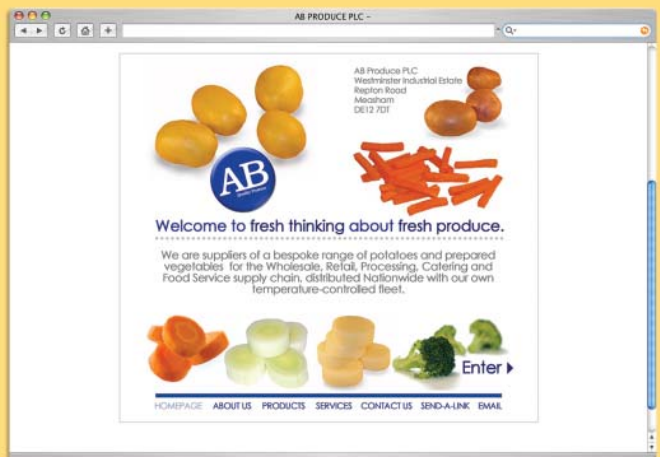
Case Study 2

AB Produce plc

A business in Measham that employs 230 people is also benefiting from the intensive coaching programme. AB Produce plc, which distributes freshly prepared vegetables in temperature controlled vehicles, is looking to increase its annual turnover to £23 million in the next 12 months.

Andrew Bridgen, chairman of AB Produce plc, said, “I have not worked for any other company in the last 19 years and so we benefited enormously from our growth coach who, having worked for hundreds of companies, could offer us the benefit of their experience.

“They helped us to manage growth by being able to recognise and help address changes that needed to be made in the structure of the company.”



www.abproduce.co.uk

Leicester Shire Now Available on DVD

Leicester Shire and its people are the stars of a new series of DVD's. Managed by LSEP on behalf of several agencies, a project has been set up to develop a series of DVD's that will promote Leicester Shire as an ambitious sub-region. Seven dynamic DVD's have been produced for use during presentations and at conferences and will also be available online.

The project brings together Leicestershire County Council, Leicester Shire Promotions, Learning and Skills Council and LSEP and aims to attract new companies to Leicester Shire, address concerns of expanding businesses, improve the case

for Leicester Shire as a destination for Government office relocations, increase awareness of learning opportunities and generally promote the city and county as great places to live or visit.

Channel 2020 produced the DVD's and have carried out interviews with around 40 people, including members of the public. Each module will include footage of Leicester Shire.

Kishor Tailor, chief executive of LSEP, said, "We need to use every opportunity to show that Leicester Shire's economy is developing. It's a vibrant place to do business and a desirable place

to live and work. These DVD modules will increase the marketing products for the sub-region and will be used to promote Leicester Shire to domestic and international markets."

For more information, please contact David Rider on 0116 257 5625 or email davidr@lsep.co.uk



Economic Baseline Study 2006

Leicester Shire Intelligence has published the Leicester Shire Economic Baseline Study 2006. This document presents a comprehensive and robust analysis of local economic conditions.

One of the key features of the Economic Baseline study is the use of Ecotec Research and Consulting's Local Economy Audit Model (LEAM) to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy. The model provides a systematic analysis of local economic performance and allows the sub-regional economy to be benchmarked with other areas across the country.

The chart below shows progress since 2003 against the competitiveness domains used in the model.

The report has highlighted some key messages:

The dynamic profile of Leicester Shire's economy has improved in recent years and performance is now comparable with the overall national economy. In particular, Leicester Shire has exhibited notably stronger growth in both employment and businesses during the last few years.

- The statistical evidence indicates that Leicester Shire's economy is steadily diversifying away from a dependency on 'traditional' industries and activities and moving into higher value added, higher wage economic activities.

- The sub-region has also made some progress in terms of improvements to its labour market and skills profile: Leicester Shire's workforce profile now compares favourably against that of the East Midlands overall.
- Performance in terms of the enterprise indicators continue to be slightly below the national average.

Copies of the Leicester Shire Economic Baseline Study are available from www.lsint.info/reports or 0116 257 5699.

Economic profiles for Leicester City, Leicestershire County and each Local Authority District are also available to download from www.lsint.info.

Merging Websites

Plans are going ahead to bring the Leicester Shire Intelligence www.lsint.info and LSORA www.lsora.org websites together to create a single source of research and statistics about the sub-region.

For more information, please contact Caroline Boucher on 0116 257 5684.

Leicester Shire Performance

Overall Economic Profile: Comparison of the LEAM Scores for Leicester Shire 2003 & 2006



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