

Enterprise Solent

Discover - Connect - Grow



SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP



High-growth gateway

How the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership helps ambitious firms

On a roll

The region's innovators discuss product development, skills and market expansion

Backing business

Independent, business support guidance from our Growth Hub

Sailing ahead

Tecsew's unique 3D design is winning admirers across the globe

Your One Stop Growth Shop for Business Support



- What kind of support are you looking for?
- What is stopping your business from growing?
- Are you looking to create jobs?

The Solent Growth Hub call the **navigator** service can help
01329 820 898

We are just a telephone call away and we can identify the best level of support available to you and your business

01329 820 898

www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk



Welcome from the LEP



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Our Growth Hub's first three years have seen tremendous progress on our journey to enable sustainable economic growth and private sector investment through simpler access to business support. This special edition of Enterprise Solent celebrates these achievements.

The Solent region boasts fantastic, creative, innovative and ambitious businesses and we are delighted to be able to share their success stories with you. We feature a selection of those that have worked with our Growth Hub to help achieve growth potential in a variety of ways. We have also included some of the commercial partners we collaborate with to provide support.

Meet the businesses pushing boundaries and thinking outside of the box with KCC, Tecsew and Turbulent Designs all making their own unique stamp on the Solent.

Sometimes having great ideas isn't enough if there's no funding behind it. BDO, leading accountants and business advisers, write about their contribution to helping the region's economic engine power ahead.

We share success stories from Isle of Wight businesses such as the apprenticeships specialists HTP, The Meeting Pod Company and Wight Materials Handling. In Portsmouth, there is a great example of working together from BFES Engineering Services and The Canteen, while The University of Portsmouth describes how a Knowledge Transfer Partnership could help your business.

As we enter the fourth industrial revolution and the exciting challenges it represents, Michael Frisby from Cobweb tells us about how his company will help us stay ahead of the transformational curve and Don Spalinger from the University of Southampton shares with us his vision of Silicon Solent.

Finally, hear from Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, Get Set for Growth and Rachel Hardy from Smith & Williamson who share with us how to scale up and grow your markets.

These are exciting times for us all and as we embrace them our Growth Hub is ready to help support businesses through the opportunities and challenges to come.

We wish to say a very special thank you to the team at our Growth Hub and our commercial partners, without whom this magazine wouldn't have been possible. We hope that this will be the first of many editions of Enterprise Solent. Looking ahead, we will be working with our partners to ensure this special Growth Hub edition can be followed up with a showcase on other LEP investments helping to transform the Solent area.

Gary Jeffries, Chairman of the Solent LEP



LEP region



The Solent Growth Hub is funded by the Solent LEP and is our business support arm. Delivered in partnership with Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, our Growth Hub connects businesses to a wide range of help.

Putting business first

Denise Barlow, Head of the Solent LEP's Growth Hub, discusses its work and why she thinks the region is on the cusp of a fantastic opportunity.

Since its launch in June 2014, the Solent Growth Hub has helped create nearly 400 jobs, supported 141 start-ups and provided support through the helpline to 2070 businesses. 671 of these received between three and 12 hours of support. Referrals to national programmes or via local contacts stands at more than 720.

The Hub is needed, says Denise, because the landscape of business support can be confusing to navigate.

"People want one place to go to for help and we are that independent, first-stop shop they are looking for. We're helping to simplify the process of business support and have become the first point of contact. A large part of our role is to help SMEs scale up which is why we work with the Scale Up Institute. We have no political angle – we simply put business first."

A key benefit of the Hub for regional businesses is that it is staffed by local people. The team of eight advisers or 'navigators' each have their own first-hand commercial experience, in-depth knowledge of the local economic picture and the ability to tap into business networks.

"You need to understand where your challenges are," explains Denise.

"When someone contacts us for the first time, it's a bit like a triage system for hospital diagnosis. If it's a simple issue,

we can do a quick fix on the phone – if it's more complicated, we'll offer to come and see you."

Finance, people management and marketing are among the most critical areas where Growth Hub enquirers need help. Denise says: "On finance, it's not just about getting everything in order so that you can run the business – for those keen to expand it's more often about forecasting for growth and being finance-ready for investment. People management means attracting and retaining customers and staff.

"Businesses fail because they don't get HR right, so this is crucial. With marketing, the seismic shift in digital

People want one place to go to for help and we are that independent, first-stop shop they are looking for. We're helping to simplify the process of business support.

communications has made it more challenging for many SMEs to decide where best to spend their budgets. We can support them in making their decisions, to think about who they are selling to and how to create and deliver effective marketing campaigns.

"Confidence is a central issue in going for growth," says Denise, and is something the Hub definitely provides.

"If you feel good about yourself, you are more likely to take the leap about that investment decision. The strengths of the Solent Growth Hub lie in the understanding we have of business and the connections we can make with local

networks on behalf of clients. The advantages of knowing you can pick up the phone or go and talk to real, local people face-to-face about your challenges cannot be overstated. That's why the government has invested in a growth hub network."

While the Hub works with all strands of business life, the Solent's sector strengths are reflected in particular involvement with marine and maritime, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, creative and digital technology, and other high-growth industries.

Denise enthuses about the strengths of the Solent as a place to do business in. "The capabilities and skills here are second to none. Let's take the marine sector for example. Our history as the home of the Royal Navy gives us huge strengths in marine engineering and that is enhanced with the annual hosting in Southampton of Seawork International, one of the world's biggest commercial marine exhibitions.

"At the same time, we have Ben Ainslie's America's Cup base being incredibly important to the sector, while promoting the region more widely. Looking ahead, we have BAE Systems and other local partners ensuring our workforce is trained, able and ready to support the Navy's two new aircraft carriers, 'HMS Queen Elizabeth' and her sister ship 'HMS Prince of Wales', from their base in Portsmouth.

"Engineering is also a key specialism of Portsmouth's new University Technical College, an initiative which counts BAE, the University of Portsmouth and the Solent LEP among its partners. As with other sectors, marine provides a huge injection to the economy by underpinning a healthy supply chain. Maintaining that eco-system is vital and the Hub plays its part in doing that."

Another prime example of economic success is the range of hospitality and visitor attractions that make the region a destination in its own right. Denise immediately reels off a list of examples, including the heritage of the Isle of Wight, West Quay and SeaCity Museum in Southampton, and the Marie Rose Museum in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard. "For businesses looking to move here," she adds, "there is the added benefit of national and international transport links."

While Brexit is a concern for many businesses, Denise is clear there will be opportunities too. "That's because we have always had to embrace change, and businesses here are adaptable and robust. They will find a way through."

Looking back on the past year, and in particular since the EU referendum in June 2016, Denise says the Growth Hub has continued to see optimism. "It's been a stable year with healthy growth. We can certainly contrast that with the recessionary years when lots of businesses were failing and there was slow trading."

"We are now seeing more business opportunities and growth. We do share in the UK-wide shortage in STEM skills but the LEP is working to address this with investment in developments such as CEMAST (Centre of Excellence in Engineering, Manufacturing and Advanced Skills Training), the forthcoming Advanced Technology centre in Eastleigh College and CECAMM (Centre of Excellence in Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine) on the Isle of Wight."

"Another challenge our education partners are meeting head-on is how to strengthen the mechanisms for translating research and business ideas into jobs. We have a superb track record on that, with both the University of Southampton Science Park and the SETSquared partnership widely recognised as key to business support. I believe we are on the cusp of a fantastic opportunity in this region. We are getting better and better at showcasing ourselves and telling the world we are a fantastic place to live in and make business connections."

Denise's message is clear – our region has fantastic businesses we can celebrate. We all need support at times, and the Solent Growth Hub is an ideal, supremely well-connected first port of call. With everyone working together, we create an environment where all businesses can flourish.





Meet the team

Through our growth Hub, the Solent LEP has created a 'One Stop Shop' that helps Business navigate its way through the complexity of growth initiatives, and promotes growth opportunities to help unlock business finance options.

Our job is to help you unlock the growth potential of your business.

To speak with someone about your business challenges contact our Navigators who are on hand to help you access the right support for your business. Sometimes the challenge is simple and we can help immediately. However, there are times when a face to face meeting is arranged, whether at your premises or at one of our regional offices in Southampton, IOW or Fareham. This is followed by regular contact from the Navigators to support you with what was discussed at your meeting. We can also offer help with Solent LEP and other funding applications as an independent critical friend.

Alternatively, if you prefer to browse you can access our website at www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk which allows you to search for support specific to your business needs.

We also send out regular newsletters with the latest updates and events, as well as keeping our social media accounts on LinkedIn and Twitter (@solentgrowthhub) up to date.

The Solent LEP's Growth Hub team is always on hand to help.

You can contact the team via email:
info@solentgrowthhub.co.uk
or by calling 01329 820 898.



Here to help (l-r): Sophie Taylor, Business Navigator; Rebecca Lawler, Admin Co-ordinator; Denise Barlow, Solent Growth Hub Manager; James Andrews, Marketing & Communications, and Anne-Marie Millham, Business Navigator



Face to Face Navigators (l-r): Ray Cobb, Richard Hall and Julia Pearson

"The Solent Growth Hub team were so helpful to us, and special thanks to James. Apart from the direct help we received from James, the whole team pitched in to support us.

"We are excited to have begun our journey and the ongoing help we can receive from the Growth Hub will help our business going forwards."

Clive and Sarah Johnson, Essence of Strength

Taking the puzzle out of the business support jigsaw

We may be biased about living and working in one of the finest areas in the UK, but looking at the array of entrepreneurial, innovative and successful SME and corporate businesses in the Solent region we are not alone.

Companies based here, like all UK businesses, have seen highs and lows in recent decades, but still they are focused on growing and generating new jobs. They have done so through hard work, dogged determination and belief that they can 'make the difference'. They have, however, often struggled to find business support to help make their journey a little easier.

Since the Solent Growth Hub came into being back in early 2014, the dedicated team has helped more than 1,981 SME businesses across the Solent LEP region access local and national government backed initiatives, local, national and European funding and other business growth resources.

It's amazing how many relevant funding streams are available, how many willing partners there are to help deliver outstanding business advice. The Growth Hub brings all the pieces of the jigsaw together in one place providing businesses with help and support that delivers growth.

Often, all that's needed is a new connection or the right piece of information at the right time – the Growth Hub aims to make sure that businesses know where to go for that information precisely when they need it.

Bringing together education, government and private partners, the Growth Hub provides a series of effective measures including a telephone support service, face-to-face support and signposting to industry experts who provide the skills to help businesses take the next steps towards growth.

Over the last few years the Solent LEP has been increasing its investment in its Growth Hub which is a key part of our business support service. The Hub has worked with numerous national and local partners which, like the Hub, aim to help and support businesses.

It's crucial that we work closely with all 12 local authorities. This will ensure that opportunities are maximised for those businesses within each council area, whether it's to find land available for development, understand the local focus for education and employment, or unlock local funds available specifically for their needs.

Local business support

The Hub's independence means that we can signpost to a range of high quality locally based government-backed programmes. These have helped numerous Growth Hub SME clients across a range of business areas; from delivering hands-on workshops, marketing support, access to finance, business advice, mentoring, training or any number of other business needs. Whether they have been pre-start, startup, growing or scale-ups, the quality and diversity of help available in the local area has been second to none.

Many of the Navigators involved in these initiatives have run their own businesses and are at a stage in their career where their passion is to give something back to the community and use their hard-earned knowledge and skills to help business owners grow their business. The Growth Hub, being located at the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, also provides access to the wider marketplace, including national and international trade and the ever-growing green economy.

National business support

Of course, the ability to help business access national and international initiatives has also seen some outstanding success stories. With close links to national organisations such as Innovate UK, Intellectual Property Office, Department for International Trade and Enterprise Europe Network, the Growth Hub has worked with innovative SMEs who have not only gained significant funding for research and development, but have also expanded their market into lucrative new geographic areas.

The co-ordination of local, national, public and private business support is a core purpose of the Solent Growth Hub. Our Solent businesses want a seamless, simple customer journey to get to the help they need when they need it – and this means just one simple call to our Navigators to start the process. Join those who have already taken advantage of the Solent Growth Hub and see where you can take your business.

Anne-Marie Mountifield, Chief Executive of Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, says the region is well placed to capitalise on its strengths but must keep on working to set itself apart.

The woman tasked by the LEP Board with delivering a £30 billion economic strategy for the Solent has a clear view of the region's potential. As Chief Executive of Solent LEP, Anne-Marie Mountifield is continually engaging with our business leaders, investors, politicians and universities to build on economic momentum and help shape the future.

And what a positive story there is to tell.

"We've seen the Solent economy grow from £24 billion to £27 billion in the past five years," she says. "It hasn't just survived the downturn but met the challenge of developing new opportunities head on. We're now witnessing the emergence of a new, future-facing Solent with SMEs the lifeblood of the economy."

As if to prove the point, independent researchers have just identified the Solent as the LEP region with the strongest rate of increase in high-growth firms following the financial crisis – a remarkable 64%, double the national average.

Among the factors underpinning the success are the strong knowledge assets of our three universities, each of whom invest in the region's small business base. Anne-Marie cites the clustering of high-growth firms at the University of Southampton's Chilworth Science Park and the support for SMEs through the University of Portsmouth's Future Technology Centre as examples of efforts to commercialise research and skills.

The LEP's role, she explains, is to



invest in transformational projects and work in collaboration to support and drive momentum.

"We have a world-leading industrial base in sectors such as

digital sciences, marine and maritime, with exceptional companies championing new technology and doing great things. As far as possible we

On the up



their growth plans.”

The LEP's first point of contact with many businesses is via the Solent Growth Hub which it commissioned as a 'one-stop-shop' three years ago and continues to fund.

The relationship with the Hub is central to the portfolio of funding support programmes available to business applicants. “Our Growth Hub has become a vitally important part of the business support landscape,” Anne-Marie explains. “It helps us to continually up our game on getting out there and engaging with businesses.”

On the challenges that entrepreneurs and companies face, Anne-Marie says it is always important to take into account the direction of travel of the economy. With Brexit, that means supporting exporters seeking to trade both with the EU and elsewhere.

“Yes, people see uncertainty in Brexit but it's also an opportunity to do things differently and embrace the change.

“The Solent has been resilient and innovative in the past when dealing with the winds of change and we are a strong economy with great specialisms. The next step is to further position ourselves in global markets. In order to be world leading, you have to set yourself apart. Our focus on innovation and skills development is central to embracing new ideas.

“We are determined to help businesses in the Solent continue to scale up and unleash their potential.”

want to avoid seeing their pace of change constrained due to cash flow or investment uncertainty. We're here to work with them to help accelerate

LEP factfile

Solent LEP works collaboratively with partners in business, government, education and the third sector to help shape the region's economic growth. It aims to make the Solent a £30 billion economy by 2020 and has an investment plan worth £1.51 billion over the same period.

The Solent has been independently identified as the LEP area with the most dramatic increase in high-growth firms (HGFs) in England during the recovery from the financial crisis.

HGFs are defined as those firms with at least 10 employees at the start of a three-year period and who record average growth of 20% in employment per annum over the three years. They typically represent a small proportion of the UK business population but have a disproportionately positive impact on job creation.

The Enterprise Research Centre, which analyses the drivers of SME growth nationwide, has hailed the Solent as the LEP area that has increased its absolute number of HGFs the most between 2009/12 and 2012/15. The Solent region saw a 64% increase (from 185 firms to 304 between the two periods) as opposed to the national average of 32%.

Official Labour Market Statistics also show encouraging rates of growth among the total numbers of micro, small and medium-sized businesses in the Solent between 2010 and 2016:

	2010	2016
Micro (0-9 employees)	29,685	34,795
Small (10-49 employees)	3,445	4,085
Medium (50-249 employees)	510	655

To date, through our business support programmes, Solent LEP has:

- provided over £8.8m in grant funding to SMEs in the Solent
- supported 248 SMEs, of which 76 are new Start Ups
- helped to create over 860 jobs
- helped to safeguard over 560 jobs
- secured additional investment of over £32.4m into Solent SMEs

The apprenticeship

HTP Apprenticeship College offers Ofsted Outstanding training for businesses in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, with success rates significantly higher than national averages.

Over the last few years the government has embarked on a programme to reform the delivery and funding of apprenticeships in England.

As a result, apprenticeships now offer a more rigorous, structured, independently-assessed career pathway, tailored to the needs of your organisation.

HTP Apprenticeship College, based in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, is now one of the country's leading providers of apprenticeships. Their industry-experienced training teams deliver high-quality training programmes for businesses of all sizes across the Solent region.

Working in conjunction with business leaders, HTP Training Consultants design flexible apprenticeship programmes to develop new staff and upskill the existing workforce in line with the needs of your organisation.

Working alongside your HR and management team, they also provide a free, fully managed recruitment service, saving you time and money.

HTP Apprenticeship College's Ofsted Outstanding training offers businesses the highest quality service with success rates significantly higher than national averages year-on-year. Unlike traditional apprenticeship delivery models, HTP's unique, flexible approach allows training to be

As an independent training provider we are in a great position to design and deliver flexible apprenticeship solutions for employers across a wide range of sectors.

Rachael Randall,
Principal and CEO

administration, management, health and social care, hospitality, customer service and retail.

Rachael Randall, Principal and Chief Executive Officer, said: "As a result of the changes to apprenticeships, we have seen more employers engaging with us to recruit and train their staff through the apprenticeship career pathway.

"As an independent training provider we are in a great position to design and deliver flexible apprenticeship solutions for employers across a wide range of sectors, ensuring the future workforce has the knowledge, skills and attitudes businesses need for the future."

delivered in your workplace, on or near to the job, at times convenient to the organisation.

Their consultants meet with your managers throughout the duration of training on a regular basis to review impact and ensure the business obtains the best return on investment. HTP also provides a detailed online account management service enabling you to monitor the progress of each individual apprentice on an ongoing basis.

HTP deliver training and services to support some of the region's largest employment sectors. Training team specialists, recruited for their industry experience, provide development opportunities in business

● In addition to holding Ofsted outstanding Grade 1 in every area of training, HTP Apprenticeship College holds People 1st Gold, Skills for Health Quality Mark and liP Gold and Champion accreditation.

● To find out more about the opportunities HTP Apprenticeship College offers, please talk to Simon Attrill, Head of Business Development, on **01983 533926** or go to **www.htp.ac.uk**
We look forward to speaking to you soon.

specialists



Rachael Randall,
Principal and CEO
of HTP
Apprenticeship
College



Meet the family

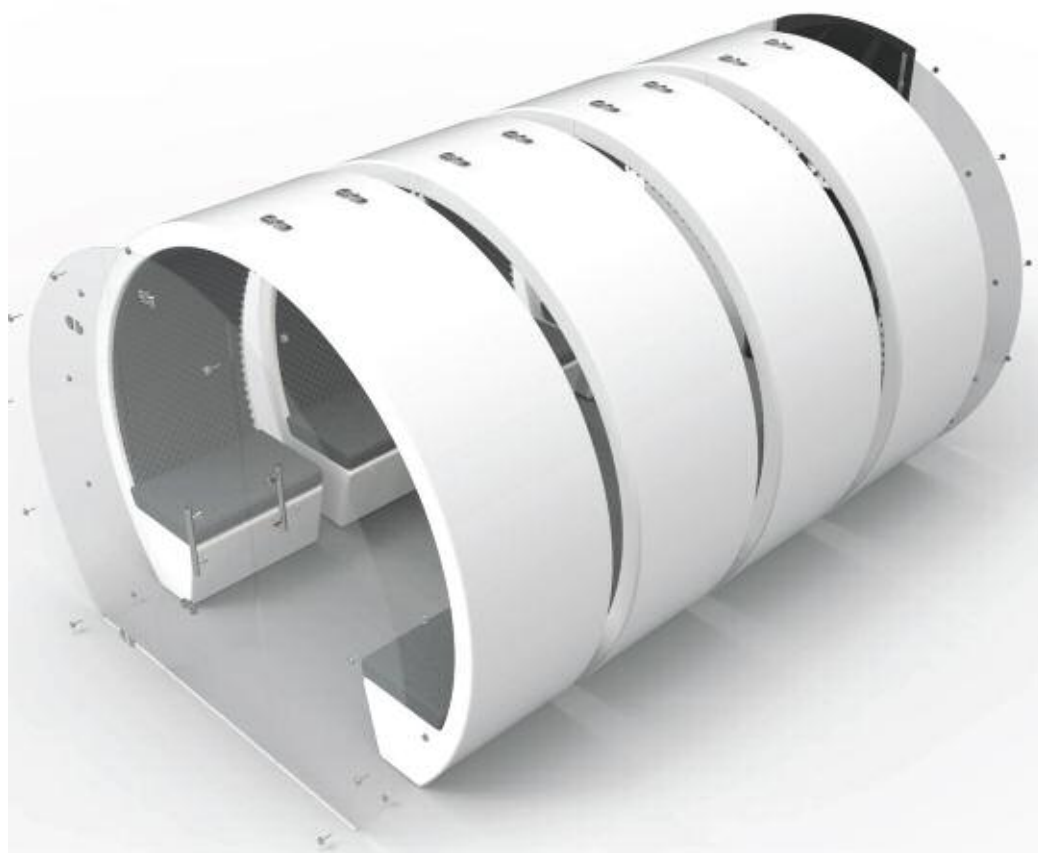
The Meeting Pod as a product and as a company was created from identifying a gap in the commercial furniture market.

In 2015 a market research company based on the Isle of Wight was looking for a contemporary collaborative meeting space for their open plan offices. Despite scouring the market they couldn't find what they were looking for, so they commissioned a local carpenter to build their own.

At The Meeting Pod Company our pods encourage agile working by building a 'third space' solution for flexible working zones. Our forward thinking designs can be totally bespoke in size, shape, colour and accessories, making their possibilities endless.

Our base on the Isle of Wight has allowed us to exploit the technical expertise of the enhanced composite manufacturing that had diligently served the marine industry for years.

The Solent Growth Hub has been really supportive, both in sharing our enthusiasm and vision for the business growth opportunities and providing advice and signposting to the Solent LEPs SME funds, through which we secured the £28,000 financial support necessary to upscale our manufacturing facility and accelerate our product development.



Demand for our products has been exceptional. We have seen an increase in excess of 400% in sales over consecutive quarters, with installations spanning the country from London to the North East. Response to our pods has solidified their ability to transform the working environment.

Allistair Wotton, Head of Creative at TMP Worldwide: *"dynamic edge to the workplace."*

Alex Breingan, Operations Director, Performance in People: *"The Meeting Pod Company is a highly professional organisation delivering a great product and we would have no hesitation in recommending them."*

Our acoustic foam interiors absorb background noise, allowing our pods to create a flexible, semi-enclosed working space. This dynamic working space encourages innovative and spontaneous ideas to evolve.

The modular design of our pods allows each of our products – Meeting Pod, Escape Pod and Modular Pod – to really thrive and create differing configurations for a totally unique area, fitting into any available space.

Each product offers a range of super-efficient uses, from meetings to activity-centric working and also the element to escape the hustle and bustle of a busy environment and enjoy down time.

We found a happy employee is one who is not chained to a desk and has the freedom to seek input from others. This maximises their efficiency and output, offering clients the best possible experience.



Business partnership receives top grade from Innovate UK

University of Portsmouth's KTP with Entec, which supplies maintenance and repair to businesses in the global food industry, benefitted both the university's research base and generated millions of dollars in extra revenue for Entec.

The University of Portsmouth has a long-standing reputation as an organisation that supports and drives small business development.

Our strategic involvement with the Solent Growth Hub has allowed us to offer a wide variety of support, from dedicated incubation space, delivering mentoring and coaching, facilitating business advice and providing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP).

A recent KTP between the University of Portsmouth and Entec International Limited has been awarded the highest possible grade of 'Outstanding' by Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency.

Entec, which have their headquarters in Halesowen, West Midlands, manage the supply of maintenance, repair and operations (MRO) of spare parts to global businesses in the food and beverage industries with manufacturing operations at the end of complex supply chains.

The KTP delivered an extension

The partnership with the University of Portsmouth provided us with significant benefit through training, staff development and the conversion of ideas into workable business strategy

Mike Robinson, Entec

to Entec's business model, moving them one step closer to their clients, which improved the procurement process in their global supply chains.

Business, operations research and maths academics from the University worked with Entec staff and Innovate UK to produce an industry first 'toolset' which calculates and presents complex inventory data, using a series of business algorithms, in a

simplified graphic format. The toolset provides a compelling business case for change in the way Entec clients MRO inventory is managed.

The graphic reports help the Entec sales team in the delivery of complex information and provide strategic decision-makers within clients with the information they need to improve operating efficiency and reduce MRO cost.

Entec generated revenue of \$3m as a result of the partnership and confirmed \$20m of revenue from one major client within two years. Entec also confirmed five new contracts (worth \$16.3m) including a contract in a new sector – mining and minerals – worth \$3m. Entec has also opened an office in Portsmouth to continue to foster the relationship with the University and benefit from the research base.

For the University, success has seen the submission of three peer-reviewed journal papers, discussions at international conferences and three masters and two undergraduate projects go through to completion.



Teamwork (left to right): Dr Philip Brabazon, Senior Lecturer in Portsmouth Business School at the University of Portsmouth; Professor Mark Xu, Professor of Information Management at the University; Mike Robinson, Group COO for Entec, and Sandra Johnson, Collaboration Manager in Research and Innovation Services at the University.

The project continues to build an industry-university collaborative platform which has already delivered two research workshops, two guest lectures, and two keynote addresses at major research and innovation events.

Mark Xu, Professor of Information Management at the University of Portsmouth, said: "In our view, the relationship with Entec, which evolved through this KTP, not only provided a knowledge transfer partner but brought an inextricable link to knowledge creation and innovation into the University."

Mike Robinson, Group COO for Entec, said: "The partnership with the University of Portsmouth provided us with significant benefit through training, staff development and the conversion of ideas into workable business strategy.

"Directors access short courses, ensuring we remain a compliant and professional company. Our supply chain analyst combines practical operations experience with academic research, as he studies toward a doctorate.

"Short projects provide real work experience for students and affords the

company research and development information. Meetings with University staff were always professional, understanding our business, recognising the challenges we face, providing enthusiastic support and lateral thinking. It's simple, we are a team."

The two-year project started in September 2014 and finished in September 2016. It was awarded the highest grade of 'Outstanding' by the KTP Grading Panel, which is funded by Innovate UK, for meeting the KTP's objectives.

Working together

Two successful businesses which have both been helped by Solent Growth Hub are now working together to their mutual benefit.

BF Engineering have also secured £20,000 from the Solent LEP to support the growth of their business.



BF Engineering Services managing director Ed Barlow, right, and marketing manager George Funnell, left, with The Canteen proprietor Bill Branson, centre, at the café in Portsmouth's Hotwalls

Two expanding organisations, BF Engineering Services (BFES) and The Canteen, have linked for a specialist installation.

Emsworth-based BFES – a long-established commercial catering specialist – joined with The Canteen – a popular and vibrant deli-style café in old Portsmouth's historic Hotwalls – to fit out the kitchen and public areas.

The Canteen is a nine-month-old

venture by husband and wife team Bill and Lucy Branson, who have run the classic seafront attraction The Tenth Hole Tearooms & Golf Links Course at Eastern Parade, Southsea, Portsmouth, for six years.

They set up The Canteen as part of Portsmouth City Council's regeneration programme of the previously unused Hotwalls waterside area and opened in June 2016.

Because of the historic nature of

the building in the city's renowned artistic quarter, it would take a lot of planning and adhering to conservation regulations to win the council tender and get the café up and running.

So Bill turned to BFES, which maintains the commercial kitchen at The Tenth Hole, and together they worked for months on complicated designs for the sensitive project.

He said: "We basically took on a



shell which the council had got to the stage where it was habitable and we had to deal with the challenges of the marine environment as well as the awkward shape of the arched building. BFES took our vision and ran with it – making the whole process stress-free.”

BFES managing director Ed Barlow and his team handled the difficult design and installation process with care, due to strict restrictions on the premises, and faced regular inspections.

He said: “The building is a monument covered by Historic England and we had a huge list of constraints, which made planning and designing the space a considerable challenge.”

The BFES team were on site for several days, creating a bespoke wave-shaped servery and open kitchen in keeping with the character of the archways. Large glass areas at both the front and back allow diners to feel at one with the Solent.

Solent Growth Hub has helped Bill to find an apprentice for The Canteen. As part of Bill's tender for the café, and through links with the Coastal Community Fund, he was required to take on a young person.

He said: “We turned to the Solent

Growth Hub for guidance and advice and went to a couple of meetings and they pointed us in the right direction. We would certainly look to them in the future.”

Bill and Lucy's business is continuing to grow with extended summer opening hours and special events at The Canteen and they are now looking for a third outlet in the city

Family firm BFES, founded in 2000, also worked with Solent Growth Hub as the business – now with 14 staff – looked to install field-based management systems to improve its engineers' efficiency through a better, smart IT network.

Ed said: “A lot of capital was required and we hit a barrier. Solent Growth Hub provided advice which helped us secure £20,000 match funding from Solent LEP to help create regional jobs. We have also now managed to double the jobs requirement by taking on four people.”

Ed, who took over as MD from his father Edgar five years ago, said BFES – which covers a triangle between Oxford, Bournemouth and Brighton on everything from tiny cafés to large-scale installations– was also continuing to expand.



● BF Engineering Services,
Unit 9, Palmers Road Industrial Estate,
Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 7DH,
Tel: 02392 498 080
www.bfes.co.uk

● The Canteen, The Hotwalls,
Portsmouth, PO1 2FS,
www.thecanteen.co.uk



Silicon Solent

The Solent has the ideal conditions to be the next Silicon Valley, leading serial entrepreneur Don Spalinger believes.

Don Spalinger sees his adopted region as a place where high-tech job creation and economic growth are increasingly driven by commercialising university research.

The entrepreneur from Texas talks from experience having spent 30 years in Silicon Valley and the past decade as Director of Research & Innovation Services at the University of Southampton.

He points to a mix of factors

coming together in the Solent, which collectively act as magnets for growth and investment.

"Firstly, we have world-beating university research going on in engineering, biomedicine, aerospace, defence, maritime, marine and advanced manufacturing materials – all sectors with truly global reach.

"Secondly, we have more and more talented people choosing to make their homes here and start up or work in high-growth

companies. They are prepared to share their knowledge, foster a 'can do' attitude and accept that failure is part and parcel of being ambitious.

"This is also a fantastic place to live. We have great schools, a broad spectrum of housing and an attractive focus on recreation and culture.

"Being so close to London and having international transport links right on the doorstep, high-tech businesses in the Solent have

There are huge opportunities here in the Solent as long as you have ambition. . . With regard to the Solent being the UK's Silicon Valley, the conditions are definitely here to do it.



ready access to global markets.”

As an example of the region's power to innovate, Don cites the fact that more than 1,000 companies have been 'incubated' through SETsquared (ranked the Global #1 business incubator), a partnership of five universities, including Southampton, that enables start-ups to scale up and early-stage companies to raise investment and go for double-digit growth.

AccelerComm, a Southampton-based communications specialist, recently received funding through the SETsquared initiative ICURe (Innovation & Commercialisation of University Research) to help develop a 5G proposition.

Director and CTO, Dr Taihai Chen, said ICURe helped investigate how well-proposed solutions would meet real telecom industry problems. He said: “During the market validation activity I

met with potential customers, including major multinationals in Europe, the USA and Asia, and attended industry events, gaining insight and fine-tuning our market proposition. It was a huge eye-opener for us.”

In a similar vein, the University of Southampton Science Park has created a vibrant entrepreneurial community specifically designed for tech businesses.

Don has an impressive track record as a senior executive, with names such as Exxon and Texas Instruments on his CV, as well as being the entrepreneur behind five start-ups.

The last of these, fibre laser manufacturer SPI Lasers, provides one of the reasons he thinks the Solent-Silicon Valley comparison is not so far-fetched. The company was only able to attract the serious investment it needed, around £55 million, because of its roots in the University of Southampton's Optoelectronics Research Centre, widely recognised as the world-leader.

Don was associated with SPI up to

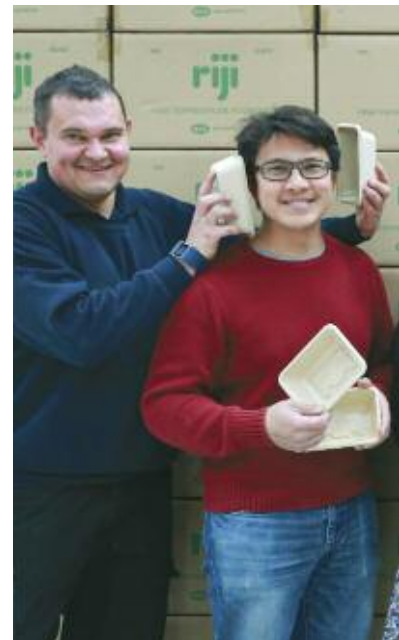
2007 – it went on to be floated, then bought by a German firm, and still employs more than 300 people at Hedge End. “It was only because we had the research credibility and capability right here in Southampton that SPI was able to get off the ground and be successful,” he recalls.

Don continues: “There are huge opportunities here in the Solent as long as you have ambition. We want to encourage more venture capitalists to invest here. I am ex-Silicon Valley and I know we'll only get up to that level by growing, working with talented people and being ambitious.

“If you are really ambitious you will fail many times, but you will succeed in the end. With regard to the Solent being the UK's Silicon Valley, the conditions are definitely here to do it.”

He adds: “We are very engaged with Solent Growth Hub, acting on referrals from them. If you are a high-tech business aiming for high growth we are here to help. As a research-intensive university anchored in business support, we have all types of capabilities we can offer you.”

R&D is key to a green



The grant for R&D helped make our product more credible with major retailers

Andy Lee, Finance Manager at KCC, checks the smooth running of the production line.

A Solent food packaging specialist is poised for high growth and job creation as a lengthy period of research and development finally culminates in a worldwide market launch this year.

KCC helps retailers to replace petroleum-based plastics and aluminium foil used in ready-meal

trays with a compostable alternative.

The company's 'riji' products, so-called because they stay rigid at high temperatures, are made from plant fibre discarded during the processing of natural materials such as sugar cane and wheat.

Riji offers significant performance and sustainability benefits when

compared with fossil fuel materials – CPet production creates seven times its own weight in CO₂ emissions and aluminium generates 20 times its own weight.

What makes KCC's solution even more innovative is that the trays are able to cope with higher temperatures and can still be home composted.

revolution in packaging



Andy Lee, Finance Manager, said: "Barrier coating on the inside is required for shelf life where the food product has moisture. While plant fibre trays and cups are not new, being used for wet foods in chilled ready meals in a low carbon tray is new.

"What we're doing is making the whole tray or cup compostable and recyclable. We have potential for high growth because we don't know of any direct competitor producing a similar item that works. Lots of variations have been tried but none have got near the finishing line.

"We have created a unique UK-led product for the global market."

KCC's solution has been rigorously tested following initial plans by company founder and Managing Director Kevin Clarke a decade ago.

To help push through development and production proposals, various avenues for grant funding have been explored along the way.

In March 2014, KCC received a regional growth fund grant of £100,000 to help with R&D via the low-carbon partnership Future Solent, now Future South. Other grants were provided through UKTI, the Business Growth Service, LoToNo and EU-funding.

Kevin said: "This has all been

pivotal in helping us push through development and production plans. The grant for R&D helped make our product more credible with major retailers in the UK who have taken an interest in what we are doing. The funding we've received is helping with our strategy to create valuable jobs and exports and make a major splash in the marketplace."

KCC has opened a 7,400-sq-ft office and production hub in Eastleigh. It includes an export production line to service an American food producer that sells organic soup and other items to a fast food company with 10,000 US outlets.

In the UK, discussions are under way with producers and major supermarkets, while exhibiting at this year's UK packaging industry show Pro2Pac generated hundreds of significant leads.

Andy's view is that gaining business support from outside organisations certainly wasn't a clear cut process before – unless you were 'in the know'.

He said: "R&D is an essential process to go through but it's inevitably trial and error, not a straight line. It's worse than the Hampton Court maze. You have to take different routes.

"If a company is trying to

engage in R&D and needs funds it has to know where to start. We persevered, went to lots of events and talked to lots of people. The involvement of Solent Growth Hub and Solent LEP has certainly helped speed up the journey over the past two or three years. They have centralised the whole business support process for us and given us good signposting at all times."

KCC is currently working with Solent Growth Hub and Hampshire County Council on further growth plans. The aim is to buy more equipment to boost productivity as part of a two-year investment programme worth up to £1 million.

All going well, the eight-strong production and administration team will expand to employ 15 to 20 people.

Andy added: "The Solent Growth Hub and Solent LEP have been on our side, helping us to acquire the knowledge we need. Going to the Growth Hub seminars, exhibitions and accessing their network of contacts and business connections has essentially enabled us to do the R&D we needed.

"You can feel there is genuine purpose to starting a company and going forward if you have good people working with you."

Rangewell is a new way for businesses to find the finance they need.



Traditional funding solutions may work for traditional businesses, but modern enterprises need a new approach to secure the funding they need

When it comes to finance, every business has its own, unique needs. At Rangewell we have created a new kind of service, designed to make finding and securing the right funding fast and simple for businesses across the Solent area – and beyond.

We help both SMEs and their advisers find, compare and apply for all types of business finance. We source thousands of products from across the entire UK business funding market, including high street banks, challenger banks, specialist niche lenders, and alternative and peer-to-peer lenders.

Our service covers the entire finance spectrum; lending, commercial mortgages, asset finance, invoice finance and

many other innovative funding solutions.

Apart from our advanced online search system, our second core strength is our team of business finance experts. They combine industry expertise with local knowledge, work with you to understand your needs, and help you identify and secure the products you need.

The Rangewell service also includes several types of grant support. Some Economic and Enterprise Development grants require businesses to demonstrate that they can attract private finance, and to prove they have searched the whole market. Grant finance may cover 20% to 40% of the overall project cost. We can also provide jigsaw finance – funding designed to fit in with grant finance to allow a

project to go ahead.

Our services are completely independent and absolutely free to use. So, if you are a business owner or advisor in the Solent Growth Hub region looking for the right business finance solution, Rangewell could be the simplest and fastest way to help you find it.

It's a new approach that has made us official Access to Finance partners for the Solent Growth Hub and the Hampshire Chamber of Commerce.

● For more information contact the Solent Growth Hub on 01329 820898 or visit our website at www.rangewell.com/solentgrowthhub



Investing in growth

The Solent LEP has a range of SME investment funds which aim to support high-growth SMEs, businesses in key sectors and businesses experiencing challenging trading conditions.

To date, the Solent LEP has awarded in excess of £8.8m grant funding to more than 240 SMEs, of which over 75 are new Start-Ups.

The LEP has also leveraged more than £32.4m additional funding, created over 860 new jobs and safeguarded in excess of 560 jobs.



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● For further information on LEP funding, visit www.solentlep.org.uk and go to the Solent Growth Hub, who can provide access to free help, expert advice and specialist services.

Helping the economic

Rapidly changing technology, the growth of populist politics, an uncertain relationship with the EU and the prospect of a raft of fresh trade deals worldwide – a whole series of factors are transforming the Solent's business landscape, says Malcolm Thixton of BDO.

Shifting boundaries and unprecedented ways of working inevitably create risks but also fresh opportunities for those able to capitalise on them.

BDO, leading accountants and business advisers, has run a well-received campaign in the Solent and across the Central South over the last three years, to discuss such issues with mid-market and high growth companies, champion their importance to the local economy and increasingly represent their views to policymakers.

"Our experience is that the local economy is in good shape," says Malcolm Thixton, Lead Partner of BDO's Southampton office and Head of Audit.

"If you look at exports, profit growth, the focus on talent retention, and innovation through R&D spend, the overall message these businesses are giving us is one of confidence and resilience. We see a lot of activity going on with owners and directors working to ensure their companies are fit for future growth and risk-ready, given the volatile nature of the world we live in.

"There is a common need to strike the right balance between focusing on what the business is good at now and responding to new market opportunities. Bound up with that growth trajectory is a necessary

transition to corporate processes when success to date has been largely down to entrepreneurial flair and flexibility. These are challenges that businesses in the region are getting on with despite the economic uncertainty."

BDO's mid-market clients are turning over anywhere between £10 million and £300 million and span a range of sectors including manufacturing, technology and motor retail. Malcolm says there are around 300 companies in the Central South who fall into the 'mid-market' category.

"To help make the most of their talents and create a truly sustainable and balanced economy that works for everyone, we're calling on policymakers to do three things. First, encourage mid-sized, fast-growing entrepreneurial businesses, recognising that they are an essential and dynamic contributor to prosperity – the economic engine.

"Second, create sector and geographic powerhouses to drive growth. Third, work to ensure there is ready, open access to world markets for exporters and global talent for all ambitious businesses."

Malcolm is generally optimistic about the region's post-Brexit future. "How well we collectively adapt to Brexit and beyond will depend on grasping the potential of a new economy that is not



engine power ahead



How well we collectively adapt to Brexit and beyond will depend on grasping the potential of a new economy that is not over-reliant on any one sector, but which makes the most of our entrepreneurialism, talents and skills.

over-reliant on any one sector, but which makes the most of our entrepreneurialism, talents and skills.

"Businesses do need to plan, not just for immediate concerns such as the impact of currency rates, but strategically for the long-term.

"There is no simple check list but at the moment some people are perhaps not doing the deep thinking they need to do to prepare for Brexit. It will be particularly relevant for businesses looking to Southampton as a major port to understand the impact on free movement of goods, custom barriers and the bureaucracy surrounding exchanges and tariffs.

"The Solent is a thriving area full of

people who are entrepreneurial and they will find a way of dealing with Brexit. Business wants to make money and find efficient answers."

One response to the challenges faced by growing businesses has been the firm's launch of BDODrive, a service that harnesses a range of expertise and technology to help clients with issues such as compliance, tax and financial reporting. As well as the mid-market, BDODrive is also ideal for smaller high-growth companies, scale-ups and start-ups.

"The Solent and wider Central South has a successful economy but one that still needs to evolve and be sustainable," says Malcolm.

"We're passionate about helping its economic engine to thrive. While there are a number of positive developments taking place, a clear vision and strategic plan for infrastructure and growth could unlock opportunities and deliver greater economic competitiveness.

"That's why, as well as working with individual businesses, we support the Solent Growth Hub and the LEP. It's good to have devolved decision-making on business support and both the Hub and the LEP can be agile in making the right decisions locally.

"We encourage business and public sector leaders to continue to exchange ideas and agree what can be done to support the growth of our region."

● To find out more about how BDO can support your growth contact Cheryl Martin on 023 8088 1754

Plotting the pathway to

**141**

Total number of individuals who have been helped to start a business

**386**

New jobs created

**451**

Total number of businesses that have received intensive face-to-face support

future growth

**720**

Total number of referrals to local and national support programmes

**2,070**

Supported through the local business helpline

**39,809**

Total number of business engagements



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Launched in 2014, the Solent LEP's Growth Hub is our independent, essential first stop for businesses seeking help, be it financial or advisory.

The Hub helps simplify the process of business support, with a large part of its role being to help SMEs grow.





We are passionate about helping businesses and individuals to grow.

Rachel Hardy,
Director, Smith
& Williamson

Scaling up the Solent

Smith & Williamson is a corporate founder of the ScaleUp Institute, a not-for-profit organisation which aims to remove barriers to corporate growth.

With a population of 1.35 million, 50,000-plus businesses and relatively low unemployment as a whole, the Solent region should be a fertile ground for economic growth.

Yet a recent government report indicates that productivity performance in the Solent economy lags behind the UK by 5% and by 12% in the south-east.

This lower productivity will inevitably lead to slower economic growth for our region, so how do we change this?

One of the solutions to this issue is to 'scale-up' ambitious,

entrepreneurial firms which have survived the perilous journey as start-ups and are now well-established.

According to the ScaleUp Institute, closing the scale-up gap has the potential to deliver up to 150,000 additional jobs and add £225 billion to UK GDP by 2034, across every region of the UK, including the Solent.

Scale-up challenges

Rachel Hardy, a director at the South Coast office of Smith & Williamson, the accountancy, investment management and tax group, works closely with the Solent Growth Hub in supporting a number of enterprises in a

range of sectors, such as technology, advanced manufacturing and property. She helps businesses in the region make the challenging transition from start-up to scale-up.

She explained: "The Solent Growth Hub and Smith & Williamson have a commonality in goals – we are all very passionate about helping businesses and individuals to grow. We are trying to make the Solent, and the UK, one of the best places to scale a business."

Regarding scale-up challenges, there are quite a few to give business owners grey hairs. Surprisingly, according to what scale-ups tell Rachel, access to

finance appears on the worry list but not at the top – it features below employment of talent, skills retention and having the right leadership.

Talent

"If your business is on the scale-up journey, you may well find key employees who have been with you every step of the way are tempted away because you're not yet able to pay market-leading salaries. How do you retain them if you haven't necessarily got the money to pay them?"

"Also, you may have several staff who are so critical to your business that, if they did leave to set up on their own or join a competitor, that gives you quite a difficult commercial challenge on the viability of the business."

Leadership

"Leadership is the second most common problem for scale-up businesses," Rachel observed.

"You may have a business owner who has seen the firm, which he or she started, grow. They were involved in everything on a day-to-day basis, which was fine when it was small enough to have this level of oversight.

"But as the business scales, the owner has a tendency to go two ways – getting the balance right is difficult.

"Some owners still want to be involved in everything and don't delegate any decision making anywhere. That's a danger. Similarly, at the other end you get your first finance director for example and you think 'brilliant, I don't need to worry so much about the finances now'.

"But if that is not your skillset, how do you know you've employed the right person? They have come in and told you all the right things but they don't always deliver – you need an FD that's been in a fast growth business before."

Long-term scale-up potential

Despite these myriad of challenges, Rachel is confident that the firms in the Solent region can do the business when it comes to scaling up and will create long-term economic growth, productivity and employment in the region.

Rachel, through Smith & Williamson, leads relevant, insightful events, including masterclasses, which help growth companies identify challenges and solutions in the region's scale-up ecosystem.

"Leaning in with the Solent Growth Hub, the focus is on providing experts to help scale-ups think differently about problems and how they might solve them," said Rachel.

"This is all about improving the ecosystem so that scale-ups can find the employees with the skills they need as well as building leadership capability, identifying and accessing new growth markets and tapping into the right combination of finance.

"I'm a parent, I've got children that in 10 years' time will be entering the workforce; we have all got to look at how we can make these scale-up businesses grow if there is to be future for our children. It is quite scary how fast time goes."

● For more details about how Smith & Williamson can help you scale-up your business, contact Rachel Hardy.

Email: rachel.hardy@smithandwilliamson.com
Tel: 02380 827600
Cumberland House,
15-17 Cumberland Place, Southampton,
SO15 2BG

 **Smith & Williamson**
Accountancy • Investment Management • Tax

ScaleUp Institute

The ScaleUp Institute is a private sector, not-for-profit organisation which aims to deliver tangible benefits and remove barriers to corporate growth.

It is committed to taking the UK's international reputation for start-up businesses to the next level, by closing the scale-up gaps and developing a world-leading nation of high-growth enterprises for the benefit of current and future generations.

Smith & Williamson is a corporate founder of the Institute, helping to influence and improve the ecosystem for entrepreneurial businesses and facilitating their development and growth.

A key aspect of the ScaleUp Institute is the formation of 'Thematic Groups'. These have been formed to address the critical 'scale-up gaps', many of which will be familiar to you in your own business. These gaps are the main barriers many thousands of business leaders reported as preventing them from scaling their businesses faster:

- Attracting and retaining the right talent and skills
- Building leadership capacity
- Access to markets, both domestic and internationally, public and private sector
- Appropriate finance and risk capital
- Infrastructure
- Evidence – how do you identify a scale up business and champion success stories?

Scale-up business report for Solent region

The UK is currently on track to become a 'scale-up nation,' according to the 2016 ScaleUp Review conducted by the ScaleUp Institute.

The 2016 survey of scale-up CEOs reflects that more than four out of five (83%) scale-up leaders expect their growth to continue despite the uncertainties created by Brexit. It also found two out of three survey respondents are already exporters. Europe and North America remain the core markets of focus for those seeking international expansion, followed by Asia.

These developments are encouraging. However, leaders still cite key barriers to growth in relation to developing leadership capacity, access to corporate buyers at home and abroad and access to the right talent and skills for their scaling businesses.

ScaleUp Institute Headline Survey Results 2016:

Building leadership capacity when growing fast: 88% of scale-up CEOs agreed that they would be able to grow their business faster if it were easier to develop leadership talent at the firm.

Local Support – The Solent Growth Hub

Scale-up leaders also place great importance on local support: more than seven out of ten said



Image courtesy of Pixabay

they would be able to grow faster if were easier to find effective mentoring and professional support schemes near them. The survey also showed a growing desire to see local universities and business schools develop executive education programmes tailored for scale-ups and their teams.

Attracting large corporate companies as customers both at home and abroad: 86% of scale-up CEOs agreed that they would be able to grow their business faster if it were easier to attract larger corporates as customers in the UK.

Access to talent and the right skill sets from schools and graduate leavers: 82% of scale-

up CEOs agreed that they would be able to grow their business faster if graduates and school leavers had the skills needed to meet customer demand, including business and general management alongside technical abilities.

Solent scale-ups factfile

- £54bn turnover
- £220K average turnover growth
- 28K combined number of employers

To download the ScaleUp Review, visit scaleupinstitute.org.uk

Education is key to the fourth industrial revolution

The dramatic pace of technological change at work has led Solent researchers to call for an urgent shift in how employers engage with education and skills providers.

It follows a study looking at how jobs will evolve in the 'fourth industrial revolution' era of robots, drones, driverless cars, 3D printing and other kinds of automation.

The research, involving Southampton Solent University, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Business South, examined the skills, competencies and behaviours that will be needed in the workplace over the next ten years.

Among the respondents were employers from high-growth sectors of the Solent economy, including advanced manufacturing, marine, aerospace and the creative and cultural industries.

Explaining the findings, Professor Mike Wilkinson, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Southampton Solent University, said: "The fourth industrial revolution is happening right now. Automation in the workplace has moved from something evolutionary to something revolutionary. This seismic shift means that how we respond as employers and education providers is more important and urgent than ever.

"What our respondents are telling us is that the key to managing this transformation and disruption is by building stronger, ongoing connections between education and employment. This is the best way to help identify the skills needed in this new era and nurture



Apprentices discuss their workplace experiences with employers from the creative and cultural industries at the launch of a forum designed to champion work-based learning for young people.

the talent of both young people and those further into their working lives."

The research highlighted a growing need for skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, IT, science, maths, coaching, talent management, communications, customer service, sales and marketing.

Employers from the Solent's creative sector discussed the findings at the launch of a forum which aims to grow the range and diversity of work-based learning in the region for young people.

Among those giving presentations was Charles Freeman of Creative Network South, a body that promotes and co-ordinates investment in digital arts, design, publishing, marketing, media and gaming.

Charles told the audience: "The number of graduates leaving Hampshire's universities and working elsewhere,

particularly London, means we are a net exporter of creative skills. We must make our region 'stickier' so we can retain skills and not lose our young graduates."

The employers' forum will support a new training programme for the creative sector run by Southampton-based youth development agency Artswork.

Creativity Plus gives 16 to 25-year-olds the chance to explore ideas for their own enterprising arts projects, learn about entrepreneurship and gain qualifications. It covers subjects from CV writing and interview techniques to budgeting, planning and the benefits of partnership working and social enterprise.

Artswork has been invited to deliver the two-year programme following a successful bid by Hampshire Chamber of Commerce to Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts fund.

Sailing ahead



A unique 3D CAD design process is attracting a growing international clientele and a worldwide reputation for the quality of Tecsew's yacht canopies and other marine textiles following investment of £37,500 from the LEP.

Gosport firm Tecsew is gaining an enviable worldwide reputation for the quality of its yacht canopies and other marine textiles.

The secret, according to Managing Director John Bland, lies in continual innovation. "You have got to move things on from traditional production processes," he said. "Business is all about enhancing techniques, finding better way of doing things, and giving customers a better performing, better engineered product."

In Tecsew's case, innovation involves a unique 3D CAD design process which is attracting a growing international clientele of boat owners and traders.

John said: "We've built our own 3D design process that renders bespoke CAD models and from which we create production files to help manufacture our products more efficiently and with improved quality.

"It means that once we have taken the client brief and signed off on the CAD designs, we can go straight to computer-programmed fabric cutting. It's a process that ensures aesthetically pleasing design as well as functional products, and it's so much more efficient than relying on artist's impressions, which our competitors still use."

Industry recognition has included a glowing review in 'Yachting Monthly', the first time the yacht owners' bible had awarded any product design a '10 out of 10'.

John also gave a presentation in Tampa, Florida, via the web, to marine fabricators attending the 2016 conference of the IFAI, the US-based Industrial Fabrics Association International. "We're being very well received in the industry," he said. "In fact, we're surprised and delighted that there is so much awareness."

To cope with demand and expansion plans, John recognised the need to move from the company's long-standing Gosport premises. "We knew we had an old, dated facility that had become a chain around our necks.

"It was becoming too small and we had no proper office facilities, no reception and no parking spaces to offer staff or visitors."

Working closely with Ally, his wife,

“We’re being very well received in the industry. In fact, we’re surprised and delighted that there is so much awareness.”



Ally and John Bland sought help from the Growth Hub towards financing the company’s move to new premises at Daedalus Park, Lee-on-the-Solent

business partner and Tecsew’s Finance Director, John set about looking for grant aid. “We’ve been going full-time since 1984 and had never tapped into grants before. We knew the move would require substantial investment but we have no outside backer and so are limited to raising finances ourselves through the business.”

It was important for Tecsew to stay in the Solent. Most of the nine-strong company team live in the area, while Gosport and nearby Hamble have popular marinas for clients including UK boat importers.

Discussions began with Solent LEP and their Growth Hub and a potential facility was identified for Tecsew at Daedalus Park. On the site of ‘HMS Daedalus’, the former headquarters of the Fleet Air Arm at Lee-on-the-Solent, the park offers a range of industrial units and occupier benefits as the new Solent Enterprise Zone.

The outcome was a £37,500 grant towards capital equipment and fit-out costs via the Solent LEP. Although relatively small compared to his overall investment programme of £0.75 million, John said the money has been vital.

“I don’t think we could have agreed our move to Daedalus without the financing through the Solent LEP and support from their Growth Hub. It has been a real facilitator. We could only get so far on our own and the grant really has made a difference. It helped us avoid a cash drain during the project.”

The new facility expands the company’s footprint from 5,000 to 8,500 sq ft. As well as the production floor, there is a mezzanine level with rooms for offices and client meetings, plus a bright new reception and car parking.

John said: “This all gives a much better impression of the business to prospective clients and creates a better working environment for our team. We’ve also taken on four apprentices and are looking to grow our overall staff number to 16.”

Ahead of the relocation to Daedalus Park, scheduled for August 2017, John added: “We’re all very excited about the move and I have nothing but praise for Solent Growth Hub.

“We couldn’t have asked for anything more. They have been absolutely fantastic. I would recommend anyone contemplating applying for a grant to go to them first. They’ve made the grant



process very clear, ensuring all the information you need is there, all road mapped in a methodical way. The workshops they run are very helpful and informative.

“The Growth Hub have given us help that wouldn’t have been there otherwise, enabling us to concentrate on growing the business.”



Cobweb has successfully navigated the volatile IT industry for 20 years.

Born in the cloud

“Nobody in the business world buys technology just for the sake of it,” says Michael Frisby, Managing Director of Fareham-based Cobweb Solutions, Europe’s biggest Hosted Exchange provider. “You

do it to become more efficient, save on costs, attract customers, do something new – there’s always a business reason.”

That understanding of customer motivation, particularly among its growing client base of small and medium-sized businesses, has

helped propel the cloud services enabler on a remarkable 20-year journey.

From hosting the websites of a few local businesses to partnering with Microsoft and last year celebrating passing the 150,000 Exchange users

milestone, Cobweb has successfully navigated an IT industry in a continual state of disruption and innovation.

With offices in London, Dublin and Dubai, the company last year launched Vuzion, a dedicated business focused on its partner and reseller 'eco-system'. Vuzion is a cloud aggregator that ties together its entire portfolio of cloud offerings and services and is focused on helping IT resellers make a successful and profitable transition to a cloud-first business.

Michael, who was previously at Microsoft, cites sensible investments, adaptability and finding the right customer price point as crucial chapters in Cobweb's story.

"Our customer base is still overwhelmingly in the SME space. Ninety-eight per cent of our customers employ fewer than 250 people – the average is 29 users.

“We know that moving to the cloud can be a big step for a business. It’s a massive opportunity but at the same time the lack of skills in the market can be an inhibitor. As a result, we always stay very focused on the needs of the customer rather than simply evangelise about technology. It’s never a case of ‘build it and then they will come’. On the contrary, you need to fully understand the business challenge the customer faces and only then look at how technology can help. This is how we have driven our growth in a sustainable way, by adapting to the market and the needs of our customers.”

Michael – the technical architect on the world's first online supermarket, Tesco.com, in pre-Cobweb days way back in 1996 – says the launch of Vuzion supports the needs of IT resellers to adapt their businesses as evergreen cloud services change the IT landscape.

“Gone are the days when customers need to upgrade their IT every five to seven years. Cloud services ensure



Gone are the days when customers needed to upgrade their IT every five to seven years. Cloud services ensure customers always have the latest version.

customers always have the latest version.

"But what customers do need is help to unlock the full potential of those services and that is where the delivery of managed services is so important. Vuzon packages up Cobweb's 20-plus years of providing IT services for SME customers to help all IT resellers make the transition to a cloud-first world and so increase lifetime value. Cobweb was born in the cloud before anyone called it 'cloud'. Since then we've built up a great depth of expertise and skills and we are using that to help our resellers and partners be more successful."

The strategy is clearly working judging by the recurring revenues growth since the launch of Vuzion as a dedicated cloud aggregator. Monthly revenue has gone

up by 28% in the last year, adding more than £3 million to turnover.

The enduring focus on SMEs means that Cobweb has a lot of shared ground with the Solent LEP, Solent Growth Hub and Hampshire Chamber of Commerce.

"We have a good relationship with all of them," explains Michael. "They each play a big part in helping to drive the local economy and there is a lot of investment going into that. For our part, we want to become more involved with local business. We spend a lot of time on education and training. We're participating in more events, publications, meetings and networks. It's a sensible way to build customer relationships and, in line with our CSR policy, become a more active member of the local community."

Looking to the future, Michael says there will continue to be disruptive technology as the fourth industrial revolution and Artificial Intelligence takes hold, heralding greater automation in all aspects of business. He adds: "What won't change for Cobweb and Vuzion is that we'll stay focused on helping our customers take advantage of the amazing possibilities of IT. The cloud and associated digital transformation possibilities present a massive opportunity for every business."

Businesses must for their new data

The new General Data Protection Regulation comes into law from May next year, when all companies that hold personal data will have to guarantee that their protection procedures are fit for purpose – or face tough measures.

With a year to go until the General Data Protection Regulation comes into law, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is urging businesses to start preparing to ensure that they are compliant with the legislation when it comes into force.

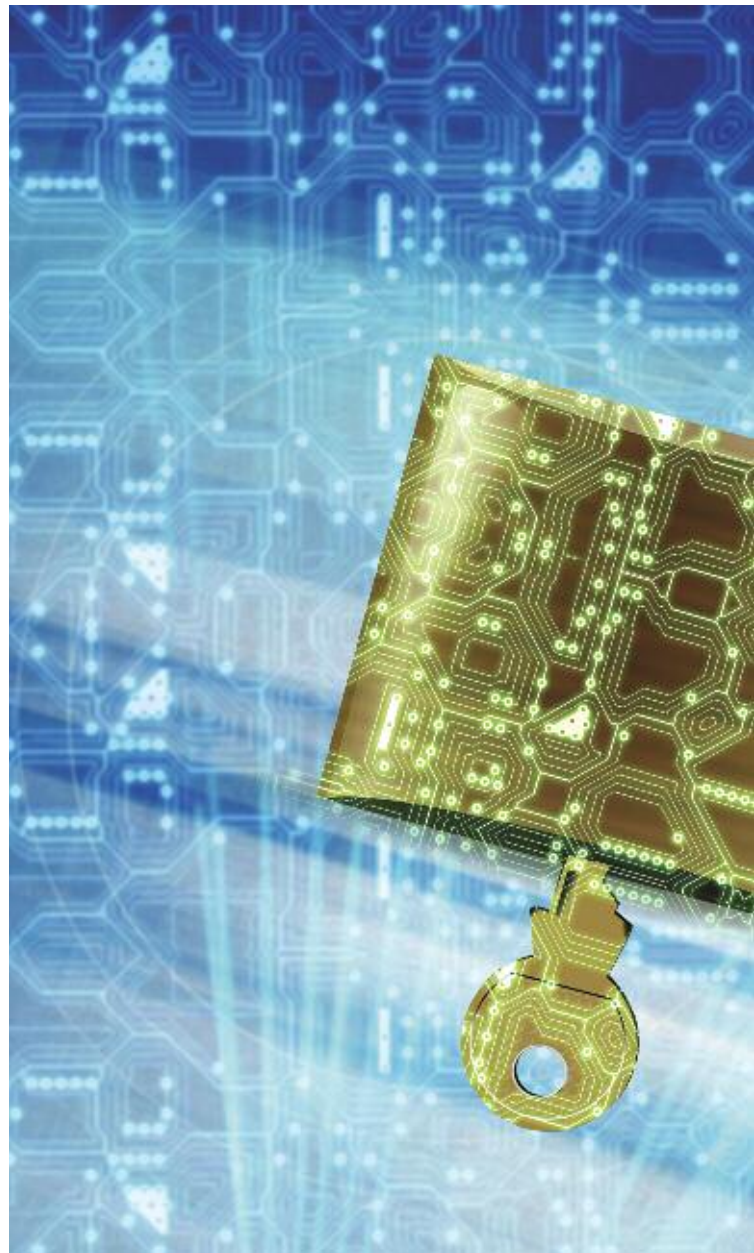
From 25 May 2018, all businesses that hold personal data will have to guarantee that their data procedures are fit for purpose and compliant with the new regulation.

While the GDPR is an EU-initiative, the UK government has already made it clear that the legislation will still take effect in the UK after Brexit. Businesses that are found to be non-compliant risk potential fines of up to €20 million or 4% of annual worldwide turnover.

Chambers of Commerce around the country are urging their members to start taking the necessary preparations to ensure they are ready for the introduction of GDPR.

Steps for businesses to take include:

- Document what personal data the company holds, where it came from and who it is shared with. Firms may want to consider organising an information audit or speaking to a data expert
- Review current privacy notices and plan for any necessary changes needed before the implementation deadline
- Check procedures to ensure that they cover all the rights individuals have under the new rules, including how to delete personal data or provide data electronically if needed



take action to prepare protection obligations



Image courtesy of Pixabay

- Review how the company seeks, obtains and records consent from individuals, and whether any changes are necessary
- Ensure the right procedures are in place to detect, report and investigate a personal data breach
- Determine whether a Data Protection Officer is required, and designate one if so, to take responsibility for data protection compliance and assess how the role will sit within the organisation.

For more steps on preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation, businesses should revert to the Information Commissioner's Office checklist.

David Riches, Executive Director at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said: "Businesses need to be proactive about ensuring they are ready for the new data protection regulations when they come into force this time next year, and not leave preparations until the eleventh hour. Those firms that don't fulfil the necessary responsibilities leave themselves vulnerable to tough penalties, not to mention public scrutiny.

"With twelve months to go, there are a number of procedures businesses should be reviewing to determine what changes may need to be introduced to be compliant. Businesses that are already vigilant about their data protection responsibilities won't be unduly burdened by the new legislation.

"The General Data Protection Regulation is intended to reflect modern working practices in the digital age, and will strengthen consumer trust and confidence in businesses.

"It will establish a single set of rules across Europe, which will make it simpler and cheaper for UK companies to do business across the continent, even after we leave the EU."

Big lift for

The Isle of Wight's only fork lift truck specialist is opening a new driver training centre after the Solent Growth Hub helped find a route to £25,000 funding through the Solent LEP's Isle of Wight Rural Fund.

Newport-based Wight Materials Handling plans to expand its training team from eleven to 16 and says the purpose-built facility will help boost turnover by at least 15%.

Formed in 1999 by the now Managing Director Kevin Sykes, the company owns 130 trucks which it rents out to clients working mainly in the construction and industrial sectors. Its service and maintenance contracts cover more than 400 vehicles altogether.

Training has become an increasingly significant part of the operation, hence the search for bigger and better facilities.

Director Mac Herbert said: "We have a large focus on driver training and had been looking into simulation equipment for some time. It's actually very limited in the UK and we knew that if we were to offer it, we'd be one of the first in the country to do so. Simulation equipment helps to replicate dangerous conditions such as slopes and slippery surfaces. It's ideal for practising how to manoeuvre at height and avoid overbalancing and tipping. We did lots of research and made contact with Dutch and Canadian companies who already use it."

Located at Shalfleet, where Wight Materials Handling has an existing depot, the new centre will house simulation equipment for training on all types of work-based transport. As well as fork lift trucks, simulations will cover scissor lifts, cherry pickers and other hydraulic lifts and cranes.

Mac said: "We will be able to reproduce all typical hazardous scenarios in complete safety. In addition, our current training centre only facilitates input from one trainer at a time. With the purpose-built facility, we can



Island firm



do two lots of training at the same time indoors and another session outdoors so it gives us far more capacity and flexibility."

Mac and his colleagues costed the investment at £150,000 but were initially unsure of any outside sources of advice or grants.

He said: "I was referred to the Solent Growth Hub by Ian Jenkins, then chairman of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce. We knew we wanted to build something and Ian suggested that the Growth Hub could possibly help us get it off the ground. I had a meeting in Fareham and they were so helpful, talking through the various options and sharing in my excitement about the project. Eventually we went to the Isle of Wight Rural Fund who awarded us a grant of £25,000 from the Solent LEP's SME funding programme towards the first stage of installing simulation equipment."

The grant was part of the government's Growth Deals funding and delivered on the Island by Natural Enterprise on behalf of the Solent LEP. The cash injection was a major boost for the project, which will see construction due to complete in the second half of 2017.

Mac added: "Training represents about 15% of our £900,000 turnover at the moment, but we should be able to increase our productivity by double, so making it more like 30%. There is quite a large demand for training. It's mainly Island-based clients but with the simulation equipment we may be able to encourage other people to come across from the mainland. The Solent LEP's Growth Hub opened up so many different gateways to find funding. It was invaluable to have them advise us and point us in the right direction."

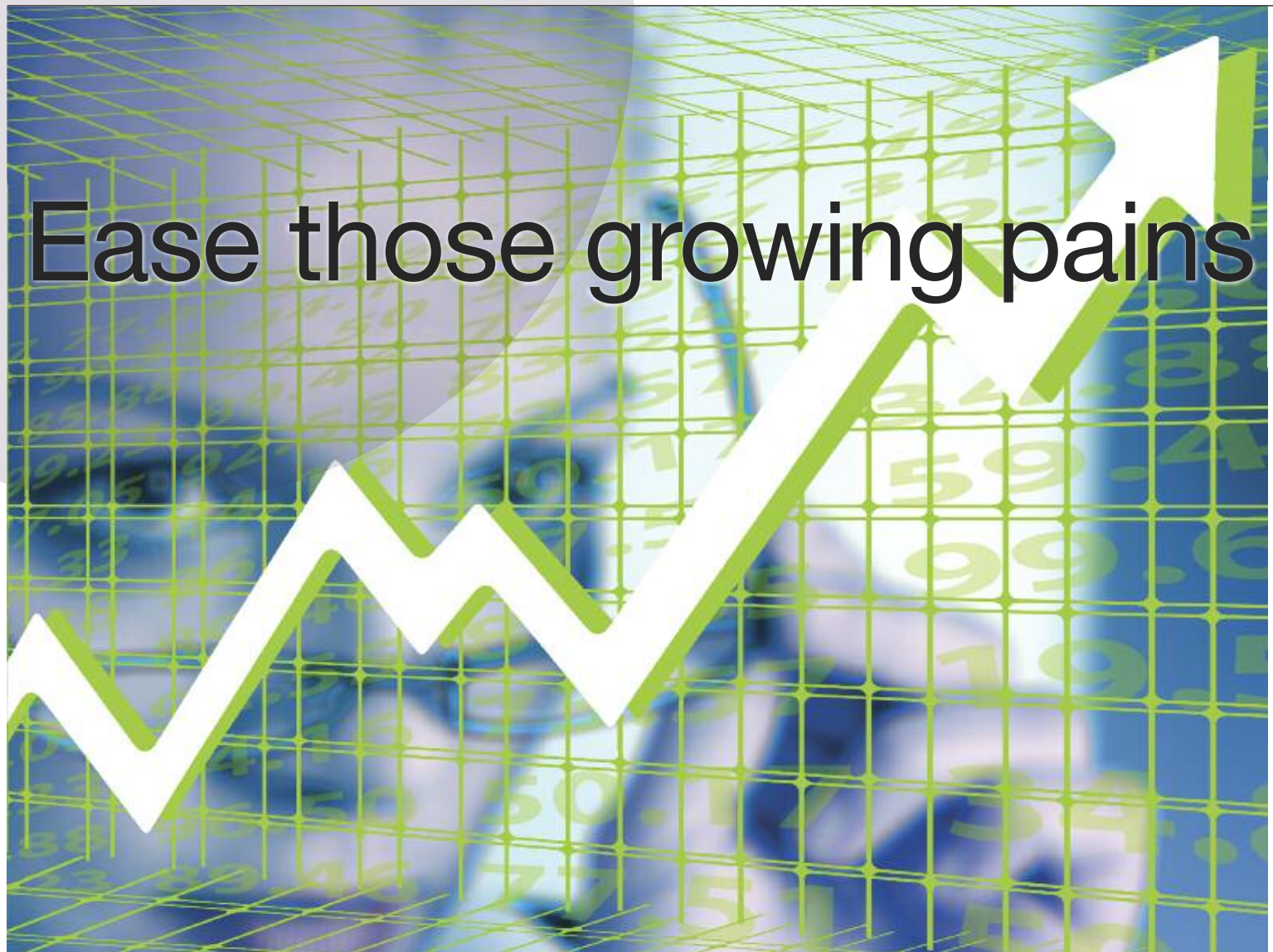


Image courtesy of Pixabay

GetSet for Growth provides specialist marketing, business growth strategy, operations and investment readiness support to ambitious established businesses.

GetSet, part of the YTKO Group, delivers a proven recipe for success, helping clients overcome the challenges of scaling up a business.

The Group's services have helped more than 15,000 entrepreneurs and businesses in the last decade, from fast-growth start-ups to companies turning over £20m+, from a wide range of sectors. The GetSet community now contributes over £1.4 billion to the UK economy each year.

In the South, we've contributed to all of this by helping our clients

improve their confidence, strategic knowledge and skills, increase productivity and performance, and grow their turnover and profitability.

Our specialist support includes advising on alternative sources of investment and grants, development of business growth and marketing strategies, tactical marketing campaigns, supply chain and procurement support, process, production and operational streamlining.

It has accelerated the growth and improved the bottom line of many local businesses, such as Brush-Baby featured opposite.

We also support and collaborate closely with the Solent Growth Hub and a number of trusted partners across the private sector. Partnerships based on mutual respect and focused on high quality, proactive and professional services, deliver added value to business clients. These strong local and national relationships are an important part of our service.

GetSet is transitioning from being a government-funded programme to a fully commercial service, and is already seeing a huge demand from established businesses in the Solent area.

Case study: Manufacturer gets set for global growth



Brush-Baby started out as an idea of founder and mother Dominique Tillen to help address dental decay by enabling parents to help their children take care of their teeth – even before they have them!

More than 500 children are hospitalised each week for dental extractions, and a third of primary school children have some form of dental decay.

Dominique devised a range of products, including tastebud-friendly toothpastes, easy-grip Silicone Chewable Teether/Toothbrushes and Mini Electric Toothbrushes, helping parents establish a routine for their children to get into the habit of as their skills increase.

Having positioned Brush-Baby products in the major supermarkets, John Lewis, Mothercare, Superdrug and JoJo Maman Bebe, and with

I would highly recommend any business owner to use GetSet. . .

The team has a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Dominique Tillen

distributors in 22 countries, Dominique was facing many of the challenges of growth. Like many manufacturing and distribution businesses, long lead times from manufacture to payment was impacting negatively on cashflow, the lifeblood of any business.

It was time to take the next big step, bringing in outside, impartial and experienced support to help prepare the business and its founder to grow to international level.

Dominique says: “As a business

owner, you’re managing products, money, people and ideas, trying to stay one step ahead of the game, so focus can often get lost. I was getting bogged down in the day-to-day minutiae.” She turned to GetSet Solent to give her that strategic, professional support.

We’ve helped Dominique secure a £1m financing facility, revisited and structured her business plan, and helped her to develop a new marketing strategy. A monthly coaching session with director Helen Stratton to stop, step back, and work on the bigger picture, helps ensure Brush-Baby stays on track with its plans for growth and its goal to be the ‘go to’ name in dental care products for children.

Dominique concludes: “I would highly recommend any business owner to use GetSet – it’s one of the best business services that I have ever found. The team has a wealth of knowledge and experience.”



Image courtesy of Pixabay

Innovate UK works to identify and drive forward the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy

Innovation is at the heart of UK growth

Innovation should be at the heart of growth for the UK and the Solent region.

The Solent Growth Hub, working with the LEP innovation board and partners, has innovation at its centre, driving growth and productivity. The Solent Growth Hub is working towards creating the right environment to propagate innovation.

How do we create an economy that supports our future, and plan for the jobs that this will provide? The new industrial strategy puts innovation at the forefront when adapting the economy for a post-Brexit era, and revitalising areas of the country left behind by a manufacturing decline over decades.

Investing in science, research and becoming a more innovative economy will commercialise our world-leading science base to drive growth across the UK.

Innovation is the prime source of industrial productivity, and is what makes businesses sustainably competitive: good industrial policy is good innovation policy, and vice versa.

Innovate UK

Based in Swindon, and with staff drawn mainly from the business sector, Innovate UK works with people, companies and partner organisations to identify and drive forward the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy.

Since 2007, Innovate UK has helped more than 5,000 innovative companies in projects estimated to add £7.5 billion to the UK economy and create 35,000 extra new jobs.

Innovate UK works locally, meeting with innovators with great ideas in the fields we are focused on, funding the strongest opportunities, connecting innovators with the right partners they need to succeed and helping our innovators launch, build and grow successful businesses.

Solent Growth Hub works with Innovate UK to help our innovative businesses access the assistance they need to thrive.

Do you know your trade mark from your copyright? And do you know how to protect your company's assets, such as its logo – or even its name? IP for Business online tools are designed to help you understand, identify, protect and exploit your intellectual property assets.

Intellectual property is your business

It is almost certain that every business, large or small, will own or use intellectual property (IP), even without realising it.

IP covers any original creation – including your business name, logo, images, promotional material and even your website.

There are four main types of IP: Patents, Designs, Trade marks, and Copyright

Intellectual property assets can be integral to the growth and sustainability of a business. It's important to identify and protect your IP early on, but where do you start?

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is the government body responsible for granting IP rights. Our IP for Business online tools are designed to help you understand, identify, protect and exploit your IP assets.

Whether you're a complete novice or looking to brush up on existing skills, we have the right tool for you:

IP Equip – Aimed at everyone, from small business owners to professional advisors. A free, interactive online learning tool to help you identify assets which may be protected by IP rights. Made up of four modules on the



main IP rights, it takes around an hour to complete and is also CPD accredited.

IP Health Check – Aimed at businesses looking for a more detailed look at their IP. A free online assessment of your business to help you identify and add value to your IP assets. Based on your answers to a series of simple questions, it provides a confidential report with advice on how to protect your IP.

IP Master Class – Aimed at professionals looking for a comprehensive course in IP. A specialist course for business professionals. It will help you develop an in-depth understanding of IP and practical

skills you can use in a business environment. Can be completed in a classroom (face-to-face) setting or online.

You can find our tools on our IP for business pages at www.gov.uk/government/collections/ip-for-business-events-guidance-tools-and-case-studies. The collection is also packed with useful advice including; case studies, details of upcoming events and where to access further support.

General IP information, including protecting your IP abroad, can be found on our homepage www.gov.uk/ipo. You can also find us on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Designs on growth

Turbulent Designs is using high quality 3D animation, originally developed for gaming, for business training applications in areas such as aviation, marine navigation and the emergency services.

High-quality 3D animation and modelling has helped propel the worldwide computer games industry to annual revenues of more than \$90 billion.

Increasingly, however, the same technology is powering business-to-business training applications in areas such as commercial aviation, marine navigation and emergency response.

One company making an impressive impact in the B2B virtual simulation space is Turbulent Designs, based at Langstone Technology Park in Havant.

When it launched just two years ago, Turbulent had three designers mainly using off-the-shelf software.

Chief Executive Trevor Linn, whose 40-year career includes

mechanical and electrical engineering, R&D and project management, had identified a niche in producing bespoke 3D virtual reality airports to help commercial pilot training and flight simulation.

“Very quickly we were pushing off-the-shelf software to the limit,” said Trevor. “The demand was there and we wanted to improve, so a year ago we bit the bullet and brought in our own coders.

“There are now nine of us. We still license software but that’s really for the basics. We now write our own code over and above that, to create the simulations our clients want. It’s the bespoke data that has made us unique in the industry.

“We aim for realism, recreating how buildings and features look on the ground and providing depth and

perception down to the tiniest detail.”

Turbulent’s success has been recognised in multiple business and industry awards. Its initial aviation applications have been followed by interest from the commercial marine, emergency services and land and property sectors.

The client list features major B2B brands such as Lockheed Martin and QinetiQ, plus a mix of developers and training providers including Orbx, JWC International, Dovetail Games and EDM.


A major challenge Trevor faced was the search for funding to help expand the team. As well as salaries, equipment and other employer overheads, costs for a company such as Turbulent typically involve licences for software use running into several thousand pounds a year.

Trevor tried and failed to source bank funding, but he was already working closely with the University of Portsmouth, who referred him to the Solent Growth Hub.

Trevor said: “The Hub advised us about funding and how to go about it, who to see and talk to. We used a £9,000 grant from Solent LEP towards the costs of licences and equipment for two team members, which helped us to expand at the time.”



The Turbulent Designs team is growing following a grant from the Solent LEP



Trevor said the input of Solent LEP and their Growth Hub had directly helped him to provide employment.

“My goal is to give the team continuous work and stability. The Solent Growth Hub has set us on the right course. We have more than doubled turnover in the last year. This year we expect turnover to treble and we’ll be employing 12 or 13 people in all.”

Current activities include a further push into the marine space with a presence at this year’s Seawork International exhibition, discussions with a large architectural company and developing new modelling applications for autonomous vehicles and even medical rehabilitation.

“Our technology is scalable,” explained Trevor. “We can go from 3D models of an entire cityscape right down to the modelling of the arteries around your heart ahead of surgery – 360 sq miles to a pin prick. I am really excited to be working with a team of such talented designers in what is a rapidly evolving industry.”

Our technology is scalable. We can go from 3D models of an entire cityscape right down to the modelling of the arteries around your heart ahead of surgery

Delivering for business

Presence, relevance and experience are among the reasons why Hampshire Chamber of Commerce holds the contract to deliver the Solent Growth Hub's one-stop-shop services. Newly appointed Chamber Chief Executive Maureen Frost explains why the relationship is a great match.

Consolidating sources of business support into hubs or one-stop-shops was one of the recommendations Lord Heseltine put forward in his widely applauded 'No Stone Unturned' report on how best to stimulate regional economies.

Speaking at the Solent LEP's 2013 conference, he told delegates: "There is a clear need for a much more powerful and integrated private sector voice."

The message was understood and accepted across the business support community, not least by Hampshire Chamber as the leading business membership organisation in the region.

In 2014, the Chamber began delivering the Solent Growth Hub as part of a consortium of partners led by the University of Portsmouth. More than £1.9 million in regional growth funding was distributed to start-ups, small businesses and others in the first year, while 2,100 businesses in all were signposted to sources of help and finance.

Twice contracted by Solent LEP since then, the Chamber is ideally placed to deliver, says Maureen Frost, who became Chief Executive earlier this year. "We are a well-recognised brand in the business support market. We have the recognition, clout and local presence, and we are located in Fareham, the

geographic centre of the Solent region.

"Our membership, business connections and knowledge networks are extensive, enabling us to make referrals to the Hub from both members and non-members."

Maureen, whose career experience includes 15 years in the banking sector, five of them in SME lending, describes the Hub as an important free resource for Solent-based businesses.

"It helps them identify relevant funding streams and other sources of support, and provides a 1-2-1 navigation service to guide them through the application process and therefore increase their chances of success with receiving grants. If there is any specific issue that the Hub cannot immediately help with, the Chamber can pick it up, so the individual business still gets the support. We are ideal complementary partners in this way."

Maureen cites the Chamber's training expertise – including its free legal advice, social media training for members and focus on the General Data Protection Regulations changes due in 2018 – and its international trade services as prime examples of where Hub clients can especially benefit from Chamber involvement.

A key driver on training is the need to ensure services are relevant to the business



Hampshire Chamber's Maureen

community whatever the size of the company. "One of our objectives as a training facilitator is to significantly improve our digital communications, both for members and non-members.

"We're delivering more training by webinars and e-learning and reaching out through more LinkedIn groups and other social media platforms. This is a reflection of changing business practices and the time pressures working people face that, for example, make it more difficult to

at home and abroad



Frost (right) and Jacqueline Highmore

attend face-to-face training workshops.”

On international trade, the Chamber has an experienced team of advisers led by manager Jacqueline Highmore who can help clients open up business opportunities, not just in exporting goods but also in the services sector.

“International trade is a definite USP for us as a Chamber,” explains Maureen.

“We can advise on different countries, including the considerations that businesses need to take into account over language, culture, currency and documentation. We provide training for

those who are new to export as well as the more established companies who are looking for new opportunities. Because we are part of the global network of chambers across the world, we can facilitate access to specialist markets, providing research, connections, meeting rooms and so on.”

Hampshire Chamber's most recent trade missions have been to China and Romania – and much collaborative working goes on with partners such as the Department of International Trade, UK Export Finance and commercial providers including high street banks

who help on the funding side and with arrangements for visits in countries where they have a presence.

Such partnership and collaboration is the way forward, Maureen argues, not only on the practicalities of signposting firms to advice and support here and overseas, but also for ensuring the voice of the business community is heard loud and clear in the corridors of power.

“From the Chamber's point of view, it's more important than ever that we have a combined voice to influence future plans with Brexit. Since the referendum, we have been seeing an increase in the number of companies keen to keep a presence in Europe and we will work collaboratively with the Solent business community through Brexit and beyond.

“We are well placed to advise on changing trading terms and obligations as Brexit moves forward. When talking to fellow Chambers across the UK, it's pleasing to see that the Solent area is regarded as a place that is performing very well with confidence levels that are high, but uncertainty over Brexit doesn't help. Whatever your views on Brexit, businesses need to know the issues that may affect investment and growth. Our politicians must not lose sight of all the other things that are important, such as business rate reform and improving infrastructure and skills.”

Maureen believes the Solent Growth Hub has a pivotal role to play in shaping the region's future prosperity, adding: “The Hub has become a superb support service, underpinning economic growth. It is helping to boost skills, create jobs, attract investment and foster collaboration. Hampshire Chamber is delighted to be playing its part in the Hub's success.”

Around 225 jobs have been created at 130 low-carbon firms under investment channelled through Future South, a partnership of businesses leaders, technologists, academics and local authorities.

Green for growth

Future South has attracted more than £30 million in government and private investment and created Greentech South, the UK's first 'environment and energy cluster', a dedicated EU-recognised network designed to support green business.

Future South has been established as a joint approach to growing a low-carbon economy by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, businesses and universities, supported by the Solent LEP.

Programme Manager Richard Hall said: "There is a growing green economy in the South, with world-class strengths emerging in research and development, environmental technologies, renewable energy, waste recycling and green construction. Future South aims to capitalise on this progress to create green jobs and further economic prosperity.

"We work closely with the Solent Growth Hub to support those low-carbon enterprises, from start-ups, through to established businesses looking to innovate. The average salary of the jobs so far created under funding distributed by Future South is £30,000 a year."

At Future South's fifth annual conference in November 2016, delegates heard that Greentech



Keynote speaker Sir Vince Cable at the Future South conference

South had been accepted on to the International Cleantech Network (ICN), a worldwide collaboration of clusters involving leading energy-efficient and low-carbon businesses.

Dr David Hutchinson, Future South board member and Innovation and Impact Development Manager for the University of Portsmouth, said: "Joining ICN affords Greentech South members benefits that could lead to accelerated growth and access to international companies and markets in a growing sector, to which we, as the UK leader, can make a significant contribution."

Keynote speaker at the conference was former Business Secretary Sir Vince Cable. He said the growth of the South's low-carbon economy must 'remain an imperative' despite the uncertainties of Brexit and a weak sterling. He added that companies and organisations needed to have environmental sustainability in mind as a long-term strategy.

● For more information, visit www.futuresouth.org and www.greentechsouth.com

Flexible manufacturing firm needs flexible opportunities

The Solent Growth Hub is always keen to help growing businesses looking to relocate to the Solent LEP area; particularly businesses that demonstrate innovation and potential for fast growth.

Alastair (Ali) McGregor, MD of The McGregor Group – which incorporates McGregor Fabric Structures and McGregor Polytunnels, currently based at Bramdean near Petersfield – contacted the Solent Growth Hub after a conversation with Solent LEP.

McGregor Fabric Structures designs and manufactures PVC, Composite and Steel industrial partitions, for use in warehouses or factories – as well as for free-standing structures which now includes a range of aircraft hangars.

“I was delighted to find that there was a single point of contact for our growing business and the Growth Hub input has been very useful to date,” says Ali. “Having outgrown our existing site, we are looking for facilities that will offer a range of benefits to our business and staff.”

Ali had already discussed the Solent Enterprise Zone (SEZ) at Daedelus in Gosport with Solent LEP.

“The SEZ works for the McGregor Group at several levels, as it has the CEMAST technical college nearby,” Ali comments. “The site would allow us to purchase



and build a bespoke factory that suits our business needs perfectly. In addition, the Solent group of universities are close by and there is support for advanced manufacturing businesses in the area.”

In scaling up the business Ali recognised numerous challenges; and prior to approaching the Solent LEP was recommended by a friend to participate in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK programme.

The programme provides high-quality, practical education and business support to leaders of high-growth small businesses and social enterprises across the country. It brings together leaders of small businesses from across industry sectors and creates unique networking and peer learning opportunities.

“I applied to join the programme because I wanted to grow my business,” says Ali. “The standard for being accepted on the course is high and the award of a place is competitive. I had to supply a detailed review of my business and had a panel interview with senior people from Goldman Sachs.”

The programme is offered on a fully funded basis to small businesses and

social enterprise leaders who want to grow their businesses, create local employment and have scalable business models. It is not intended for start-up businesses, sole traders or businesses that are not seeking to grow. There

are strict criteria – including having operated for at least three years, having between five and 40 employees and an annual turnover of at least £250,000.

“The programme provides tools that ensure better decision-making,” comments Ali. “It offers time to review what you already know, improve your self-confidence across all processes and gain an amazing network of contacts.”

“That, alongside the help from the Solent LEP and Solent Growth Hub, means that my ambition to grow and scale up my business is in a more focused place. I really would highly recommend the Goldman Sachs programme to anyone who is driven and has the ambition to develop themselves and their business to the next level.”

● For more information on the McGregor Group:
fabricstructures.co.uk/

● For more information on the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK programme:
www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000-small-businesses/UK

A-Z listing of universities, councils and national organisations

A

Academy for Chief Executives	www.chiefexecutive.com
Apprenticeships	www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship
Action Hampshire	www.actionhampshire.org
Arts Council	www.artscouncil.org.uk
ALPHI	www.alphi.org.uk

B

Better Business for All	www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-regulation-better-business-for-all
British Business and General Aviation Association	www.bbga.aero
British Marine Federations	www.britishmarine.co.uk
British Chambers of Commerce	www.britishchambers.org.uk

C

Catapults & Incubators	www.catapult.org.uk
Creative Network South	www.creativenetworksouth.co.uk
CleanTech Cluster	www.greentechsouth.com
Carbon Trust	www.carbontrust.com/home

D

Data Protection	www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act
Department for International Trade	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade
Design Council	www.designcouncil.org.uk

E

Enterprise Europe Network	www.een.ec.europa.eu
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance
Enterprise First	www.enterprisefirst.co.uk
EISC	www.eiscltd.eu
Export Britain	www.exportbritain.org.uk
Europe Direct	www.europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us/unitedkingdom_en

F

Fareham Borough Council	www.fareham.gov.uk
Federation of Small Business	www.fsb.org.uk
Further Education	www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/course-directory/home
Future South	www.futuresouth.org

G

Get Set for Growth	www.getsetforgrowth.com
Goldman Sachs	www.goldmansachs.com/citizenship/10000-small-businesses/UK/#overview
Greentech South	www.greentechsouth.com
Gosport Borough Council	www.gosport.gov.uk
Gosport Marine Scene	www.gosportmarinescene.com

H

Horizon 20/20	www.gov.uk/business-finance-support/horizon-2020-business-grants-uk
HMRC	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs
Hampshire	chamber of Commerce
	www.hampshirechamber.co.uk
Hampshire Fare	www.hampshirefare.co.uk
Hampshire County Council	www.hants.gov.uk

I

Intellectual Property Office	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office
Innovate UK	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk
International Trade	www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/international-trade/
ICAEW	www.icaew.com
Institute of Directors	www.iod.com
IHUB	www.ihubbub.com
IOW Chamber	www.iwchamber.co.uk

J

Junior Chamber of Commerce	www.jciuk.org.uk
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K

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships	www.ktp.innovateuk.org
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L

Loans	www.rangewell.com
Low Carbon	www.futuresouth.org
Lombard	www.lombard.co.uk

M

Marine South East Ltd	www.marinesoutheast.co.uk
Marketing -Chartered Institute of marketing	www.cim.co.uk
Mentor Net	www.mentonet.org

N

New Forest Business Partnership	www.nfbp.org.uk
Natural Enterprise	www.naturalenterprise.co.uk
National Helpline	www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline

O

Open 4 Funding	www.open4funding.info
Open to export	www.opentoexport.com
Oxford Innovation	www.oxin.co.uk

P

Portsmouth City Council	www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/business/business/business-premises.aspx
Parity Trust	www.paritytrust.org.uk
Princes Trust	www.princes-trust.org.uk

Q

Queens Award	www.gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise
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And if it's not on this page, visit
www.solentgrowthhub.co.uk

R

Running a Limited Company	www.gov.uk/browse/business/limited-company
Rangewell	www.rangewell.com/solentgrowthhub
Research Councils	www.rcuk.ac.uk
Rural Development Programme	www.gov.uk/rural-development-programme-for-england
R&D Tax Relief	www.hmrc.gov.uk/gds/cird/attachments/rdsimpleguide.pdf

S

Spark – Nat West	www.entrepreneurial-spark.com
Setting up a business	www.gov.uk/browse/business/setting-up
Solent Enterprise	www.socialenterpriselink.co.uk
Set Squared	www.setsquared.co.uk
Shaping Portsmouth	www.shapingportsmouth.co.uk
Solent LEP	www.solentlep.org.uk
Start Up Britain	www.startupbritain.org
Sustainable Business Network	www.sustainablebusiness.org.uk/network
Southampton City Council	www.southampton.gov.uk

T

Training	www.hampshirechamber.co.uk/events-and-news/training
Tax	www.gov.uk/browse/business/business-tax
Tradeshaw Access Programme	www.gov.uk/guidance/tradeshaw-access-programme
Test Valley Borough Council	www.testvalley.gov.uk
Tourism South East	www.tourismsoutheast.com
Tech Nation	www.technation.techcityuk.com

U

Solent University	www.solent.ac.uk
University of Portsmouth	www.port.ac.uk
University of Southampton	www.southampton.ac.uk
University of Winchester	www.winchester.ac.uk/pages/home.aspx
Urica	www.urica.com

V

Virgin Start-Up Loans	www.virginstartup.org
VAT	www.gov.uk/vat-businesses/how-vat-works
Visit Hampshire	www.visit-hampshire.co.uk

W

WSX Enterprise	www.wsxenterprise.co.uk
Wessex Partnerships	www.wessexpartnerships.com/index.asp
Winchester County Council	www.winchester.gov.uk
Winchester BID	www.winchesterbid.co.uk

X

X-Forces	www.x-forces.com
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Y

Young Entrepreneurs	www.young-enterprise.org.uk
Yes Growth	www.yesgrowth.com

Z

Zopa	www.zopa.com
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