

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

KTP BENEFITS

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships are designed to benefit everyone involved

- 🔄 Businesses will acquire new knowledge and expertise
- 🔄 KTP Associates will gain business-based experience and personal and professional development opportunities
- 🔄 Universities, colleges or research organisations will bring their experience to enhance the business relevance of their research and teaching

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Accelerating business innovation; a Technology Strategy Board programme

<http://www.ktponline.org.uk>

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION BUSINESS-CRITICAL SYSTEMS TRANSFORM CHARITY OPERATIONS

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) entered a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with the University of Reading. The collaboration aimed to design, develop and implement a complete information technology (IT) infrastructure, supporting RDA's strategic vision to modernise, centralise and make more efficient its business processes and communications between RDA National and Member Groups.

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is the UK's leading research funding and training agency addressing economic and social concerns, providing high quality research to business, the public sector and government.

The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led organisation established by the Government. Its mission is to accelerate research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business - building economic growth and quality of life.

FAST FACTS

- 🔄 The Association was transformed into a highly efficient, e-enabled enterprise
- 🔄 Competitiveness, efficiency and quality of service all significant improved
- 🔄 Modern image established and visibility increased, attracting sponsorship, new members and volunteers
- 🔄 Valuable experience of charity sector and e-enablement of a large, complex organisation for the Academic Partner
- 🔄 Opportunity to enhance knowledge and build up management and technical skills for the Associate
- 🔄 The Project won the 2009 Award for the Best ESRC Funded Partnership and the Award for the Best Partnership in North West England

The Company

"With the assistance of the University of Reading this KTP has delivered significant improvements to RDA's IT and data management systems, allowing a step change in the organisations communications."

Ed Bracher, Chief Executive, Riding for the Disabled



Presentation of the 2009 Award for the Best ESRC Funded Partnership and Award for the Best Partnership, North West England.

Founded in 1965, Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities, through the provision of opportunities for riding and/or carriage driving. A federation of over 500 Member Groups, each of which is a separately-registered charity, RDA has over 18,000 volunteers serving more than 25,000 riders and carriage drivers.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

With membership growing, RDA needed to update its working practices and communication procedures to enable it to support each Member Group. Under this KTP, RDA worked with the University of Reading to design and implement an IT infrastructure that would modernise the Organisation and improve efficiency. For such radical technical changes to be successfully adopted in a people-centric

organisation it was also necessary for the project to consider the cultural changes arising from the new working practices and communication procedures.

BENEFITS

This highly successful collaboration has met or exceeded all its objectives, within timescales and below budget. Through the far-reaching work, RDA has been transformed from a largely 'manual' organisation to a highly-efficient, e-enabled enterprise, increasing its competitiveness and improving the quality of service it delivers.

Website, database and infrastructure development have revolutionised how RDA operates, improving its communication and business performance, and increasing its visibility.

A more modern image has been established, attracting younger volunteers and helping the Association to compete strongly with other major charities for supporters and donations. Significant cost savings have also accrued, for example, over 21,000 documents have been downloaded from the website, reducing printing and postage costs by over £25,000/year. Moreover, careful use of free software and solutions available to charities has ensured no additional annual or ongoing fees have been introduced.

Through the KTP project the RDA National Office is now better able to serve and assist its Member Groups. Improved communication systems are in place, enabling RDA to record and contact all its members (including

volunteers, trustees and instructors) rather than solely the designated Group Leader. As a result members feel more connected to the Association, encouraging even greater commitment. The efficient systems implemented have also reduced administration at Group level, freeing up volunteers to spend more time with riders and carriage drivers.

RESULTS

- Effective cultural change, establishing a highly-efficient, e-enabled organisation
- Improved visibility and developed a more modern image, attracting sponsorship and increasing membership
- Significantly increased administrative efficiency and data integrity

The Associate

“The KTP has given me a head-start in my career, and the opportunity to apply my knowledge in projects not normally available to graduates. The funding and support network has allowed me to further my professional development and gain valuable new skills.”

Philip Crabtree, KTP Associate

A BSc in Cybernetics and Computer Science provided Philip Crabtree with the ideal skills and knowledge needed to drive this project forward.

BENEFITS

Philip had a significant positive impact on RDA, introducing the business-critical systems and infrastructure needed to support the growth of the Association and help it achieve its strategic goals.

The challenging targets offered Philip the chance to apply and enhance his people and technical skills, while training opportunities enabled him to build useful management skills. He has also benefited academically, progressing towards an MSc in Engineering and Information Science. The knowledge and experience gained from this project, along with the reputation he developed within the equine community, provided Philip with the confidence to set up and run his own business.

RESULTS

- Enhanced management and technical skills
- Progressed towards MSc
- Contracted to RDA one day a week to maintain, evolve and expand the systems and infrastructure

The Academic Partner

“The success of this project has been recognised by

the senior staff at the University, helping to promote the work being done by the School of Systems Engineering, the success of the KTP Centre and the academics involved.”

Rachel McCrindle, Lead Academic and Supervisor, Professor of Computer and Human Interaction, University of Reading



The University of Reading

Academic staff from the School of Systems Engineering at the University of Reading worked with RDA to deliver this KTP.

BENEFITS

Through the work with RDA, University staff have gained valuable experience of the charity sector and the way in which it operates, providing useful comparisons with regard to e-enablement of businesses in more 'traditional' commercial sectors. The work has also provided further experience of running a large, successful organisation with a complex 'satellite' structure, and of the challenges involved in bringing about a cultural change within such an organisation.

Undergraduates were involved in developing websites for Member Groups, providing useful real life experience, and other project work has been incorporated into case studies for various undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

RESULTS

- Strengthened University's reputation for undertaking applied research and enterprise activities
- Papers planned for refereed journals
- Useful course work developed
- The Project won the 2009 Award for the Best ESRC Funded Partnership and the Award for the Best Partnership in North West England