



CASE STUDY

Innovation Voucher used to access specialist research which informed the development of a new product, enabling access to a new market, increased turnover and job creation.

Based in West Bromwich, Tansun Ltd is the UK's leading infrared heater manufacturer.

The business was established over 35 years ago and produces a wide range of infrared heaters, each range designed with unique features specific to the heating sectors they target. Examples of applications include those for commercial heating, factory heating, hospital heating, church heating and alfresco dining heating. In addition to serving the UK market, Tansun also exports to over 60 countries.



Challenge

Tansun has a history of developing successful innovation and, recognising emerging competition from China, started to explore new technologies to extend its core competencies. It identified the potential introduction of a flexible infra-red heating panel, or 'blanket', for domestic pet and commercial animal use; the panels could be placed within, or on top of, the animals' living environment, and also directly onto horses.

To further develop this opportunity, Tansun required external research and expertise regarding the technology behind the element that fitted within the potential new product, and how best to utilise it. Managing Director of Tansun, Pete Rana, commented:

“ Whilst we have a long history of innovation, we are engineers and therefore we needed additional expertise to understand the technology which would enable us to put the finishing touches to the product and bring it to market.



“ Having selected the preferred supplier, and receiving acceptance of the Innovation Vouchers application, Tansun worked closely with Magiled UK Ltd for approximately three months. ”



Innovation Voucher Solution

Through word of mouth via another business, Tansun became aware of the Innovation Vouchers scheme. The business therefore approached the university and subsequently completed the application forms. The application process included Tansun identifying, and obtaining quotes from, three potential suppliers of the research.

Having selected the preferred supplier, and receiving acceptance of the Innovation Vouchers application, Tansun worked closely with Magiled UK Ltd for approximately three months. This ultimately led to a research report detailing the relevant technology and how it could be utilised within the product. Subsequently, Tansun sourced the technology and materials and started to manufacture the product.

Pete Rana commented:

“ The research provided us with the knowledge we were missing to complete the product.”



Impact

The key initial impacts for Tansun were obtaining the knowledge regarding the technology behind the product, and therefore being able to manufacture it. The product represented a completely new market for Tansun, having never previously provided products for the domestic pet and commercial animal sector. It therefore led to new customers for the business.

Following the manufacture and distribution of the product, a series of other impacts have occurred, or are expected to occur. Over the next year Tansun anticipates achieving between £300k-£500k turnover from the new product alone, with associated profit. The product has already led to one new production job, with another two to three expected within the next year.

Pete Rana commented on further anticipated impacts in the future:

“ We plan to expand the product and hope to hit £1 million turnover from it within 2.5 years. This will lead to further jobs, not only in production but also sales and marketing and possibly R&D.”

It was stated that, without the support of the Innovation Vouchers scheme, the product would probably still have been developed but would have taken much longer. Hence, the scheme brought forward the impacts. Pete Rana was unaware of any other sources by which Tansun could have accessed the funding.

