

Let's Talk

A Case Study Streamlining Software Systems for Business Efficiency Improvements

*Comtec Translations in partnership with the
Department of Computer Science at the
University of Leicester*



Boosting business growth

Comtec Translations is a Midlands-based SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) specialising in language translation and interpreting services for industries as diverse as tourism, automotive and fashion. With a global network of freelance translators, it offers clients over 200 languages on projects ranging from website development to technical manual translations.

With expansion, the company recognised that its increasingly complex business needs could not be efficiently managed through manual processes which were inhibiting growth; its systems needed a total overhaul and streamlining.

Comtec partnered with the University of Leicester to help develop a dynamic software system that would allow for company growth and the easy integration of new technologies resulting in increased productivity, improved quality assessment and maximised business value.

The University's Enterprise and Business Development team believed that the company's challenge could best be met by experts from the Department of Computer Science, initially, through a short Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project, enabling Comtec to access specific knowledge and skills to solve its business needs, followed by a project through Innovation Partnerships offering funds and an extra pair of hands through a graduate internship to implement the solutions identified. The team helped set up the project.

The Department of Computer Science is internationally recognised, regularly taking part in research projects and partnerships involving academia and industry. It takes a scientific approach to computing and its research focuses on the foundations of computational models, processes and structures.

What are Knowledge Transfer Partnerships?

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) are a UK-wide grant funded scheme helping businesses improve their competitiveness, productivity and performance.

A KTP achieves this through a partnership between a business and an academic institution, such as a University, giving access to skills, technology, expertise and qualified people to help the business grow and increase profitability. The knowledge is embedded via a project which can vary in length from a few months to 3 years carried out by a graduate recruited specifically to implement that project.

(www.ktponline.org.uk)



Innovation the key to success

The KTP project was led by the Department's Computer Science experts who worked closely with Comtec Translations in developing the specification for a bespoke software system. The company's requirements were for a system which could be implemented with minimal delay and would result in savings to the bottom line. The system required in-built efficiency improvements in every aspect of the business process – from matching translators and interpreters based on skills and location to each job through to ranking the quality of translations and customer satisfaction and billing.

With expertise in the engineering of software intensive systems, the Department carried out an in-depth interrogation and analysis of the company's core business needs, the software technologies required to meet these needs and thereafter undertook a complete re-design of the whole system making it fit-for-purpose.

Meeting the need

The KTP project was hugely successful: it led to a customised software specification that met Comtec's needs for a bespoke system and which has become unique to the sector. It also led to an increased understanding of how each organisation worked and an exchange of innovative thinking between the two.

On the KTP project's conclusion, Comtec Translations and the University moved into phase two of the partnership to implement the solutions identified by the KTP project.

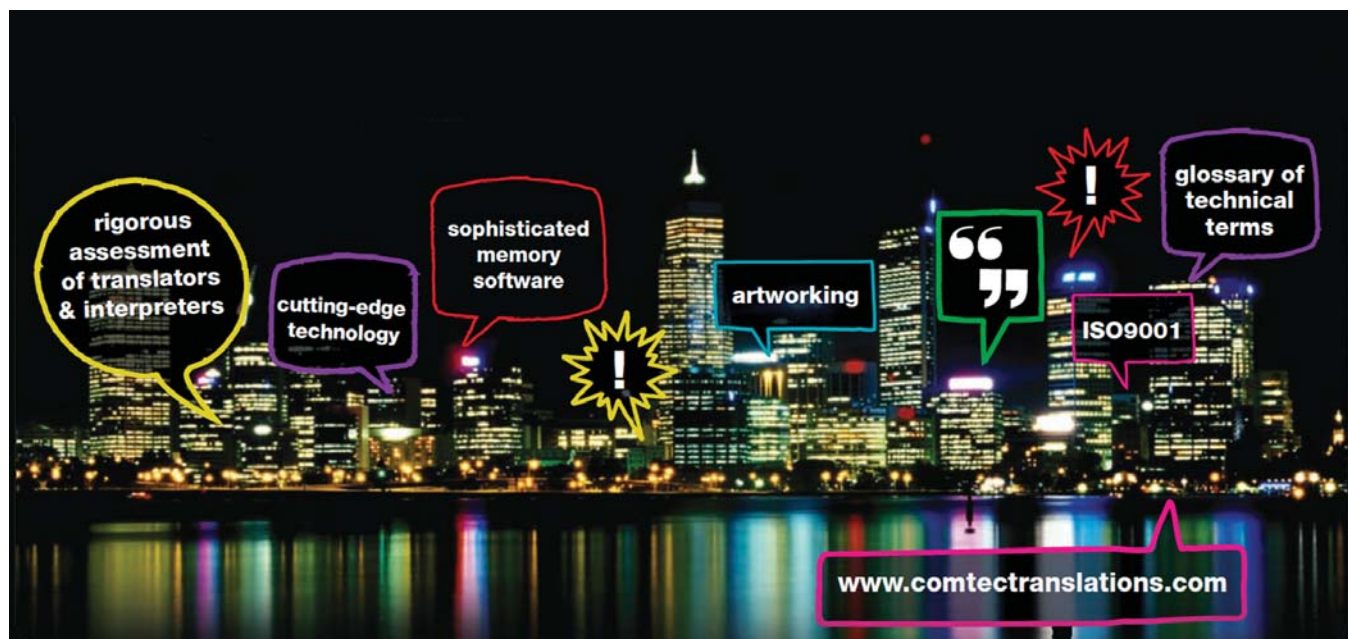
The route chosen was through the University's own Innovation Partnerships project: funding from the University enabled recruitment of a recently qualified graduate to work full-time within Comtec Translations to implement the KTP specification and build the new software system over a 5-month period – delivering the company an efficient, up-to-date process for managing the business, bringing a great competitive advantage along with the freedom to grow.

What is Innovation Partnerships?

Innovation Partnerships, unique to the University of Leicester, is a new scheme offering up to 100% funded support to SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) to tackle some of the major resource efficiency challenges of today such as reducing energy and materials consumption, using sustainable materials and energy sources to optimise their carbon footprint. The project (part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund) offers companies a flexible route to relevant and practical expertise and know-how from the University of Leicester to develop resource efficient innovations and profit from consumer demand for low carbon products and services.

(www.le.ac.uk/innovationpartnerships)

Let's
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Innovation
Partnerships



Wide-ranging benefits for Comtec Translations and the University of Leicester

Although barely 2 years old, the partnership between **Comtec Translations** and the University is thriving and bringing immediate benefits. For Comtec, it has:

- delivered a bespoke software system and improved the sales order and business processes;
- resulted in an understanding of how latest cutting-edge technology can be applied for business improvements through innovation;
- stream-lined their business processes to make cost savings of 60% and provide competitive advantage;
- encouraged innovative thinking which in turn has driven new developments with an immediate impact on the business bottom line and greater profitability;
- provided additional resources – funds and an extra pair of hands – to allow completion of a strategically important project.

For the **Department of Computer Science** and the University the partnership with an SME has brought:

- insight into business issues faced by an SME and useful practical applications of research;
- identification of new research themes in computer science;
- development of computer science-based innovations and know-how;
- the chance to see a research and analytical project move quickly to practical implementation;
- the opportunity of a long term partnership with openings for future collaboration;
- employment and work experience for a recent Leicester graduate enhancing their CV and long term career prospects.

The solutions identified by the Department of Computer Science in the collaboration and partnership with Comtec Translations are widely applicable in the business sector. Companies interested in overhauling their processes or streamlining their software for greater business efficiency, will find the relevant expertise in the University of Leicester along with access to funding and business support to:

- form a Knowledge Transfer Partnership – a tried and tested route to accessing skills and expertise from the University to improve business competitiveness and profitability;
- set up an Innovation Partnership project which can provide funding to help business develop leaner technologies, identify new market opportunities and become more resource efficient.

Let's talk and find out how we can form a successful partnership



Sophie Howe

Managing Director, Comtec Translations

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Our company was in real need of a software systems overhaul that would support the expansion of Comtec's operations. We turned to the University of Leicester whose expertise and funding were invaluable in delivering a system that now meets our business requirements and made tangible cost savings. The KTP and Innovation Partnerships schemes enabled us to leverage knowledge and experience from Leicester Graduates and Academics. The collaboration has demonstrated the considerable benefits to business of working with a University.



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Working with Comtec Translations gave our team a unique opportunity to apply theoretical solutions in computer science to a real-life commercial problem aligned to software systems. We gained an excellent insight into working with an SME and a hands-on understanding of the needs and challenges of a small business.



Nasir Siddique

Innovation Partnerships Graduate Intern



I am very pleased to have had the chance of working with Comtec Translations to develop their translations web Portal. The Internship through the University of Leicester provided me with relevant paid work experience and the chance to be creative, i.e. 'think outside the box'. I was also able to explore the practical application of new cutting-edge programming languages and technologies, apply my computing knowledge and build my professional skills in a business environment. Best of all, the company has offered me 6 more months employment!



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Helping companies develop their business through the implementation of new ideas and technology is at the heart of the support offered by our Enterprise and Business Development team and through our Innovation Partnerships project. I'm really pleased to see the excellent benefits delivered by our partnership with Comtec Translations and delighted a recent graduate gained valuable work experience.



Anjuu Trevedi

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