

Time2Grow for Omflow

The University of Derby's Institute for Innovation in Sustainable Engineering (IISE) helps manufacturing and engineering companies in the region to innovate and grow. Omflow works closely with IISE to advance its engineering solutions and was fortunate to participate in IISE's Time2Innovate scheme. This scheme provides vouchers and credits to SMEs to aid with developing engineering solutions.

Derby-based Omflow received support from Time2Innovate in the form of a consultancy package for their software development. A senior computer science lecturer at the University of Derby acts as an expert member of Omflow's team and provides first-class support in software design and development. He works closely with managing director Stephen Powley and the software development team.



The initial voucher provided by Time2Innovate allowed Omflow to kick-start their software development project. Within an eight-week period, Omflow secured a software development intern from the University of Derby to assist with development and produced a prototype that demonstrated the basic concept that Omflow wanted to achieve.

A second credit allowed Omflow to further develop and expand on their early trial to build a working prototype. The preliminary work from the initial funding evolved into a much more advanced concept and has resulted in a fully functional demonstration product. Omflow's latest software demonstrates both key functionality and fundamental principles to prospective clients.

The software tool developed makes a valuable contribution by enabling international engineering companies to deal with complex data sets containing text that needs to be presented in multiple human languages. It is a tool that facilitates the translation of data in an engineering requirements database. The company is now looking to secure a second graduate during the summer. The graduate placements are more substantial roles than previous interns, and will lay the groundwork for future products.

Stephen Powley has been involved in every aspect of Omflow's software development project, providing the vision to create this specialist engineering solution, supporting his team of young interns and delivering strategic direction for the business. Time2Innovate has allowed Omflow to blossom as a new business and create their first home-grown software. Through the association with IISE, Omflow now has the foundation to expand and be creative, allowing the business to serve potential clients in the UK and abroad with their advanced solutions.

Omflow continues to work with IISE to explore ways to develop commercially viable software. A scheme known as 'Collaboration for Innovation' provides access to larger funding networks nationally and internationally. With the help of IISE's expert bid writers, Omflow intends to submit an application with the aim of realising their full vision for the business and its expanding capabilities.

Jenny Clementson, who is part of the team at IISE, said "Omflow have been quite unique in how they've used their voucher and credit". Discussing Omflow's aim to receive national or international funding, she added, "Omflow are starting to work towards that now. We're trying to get to the point where they have a demo and it is mature enough to show its capabilities to get an interest. Then funds can be invested into productionising it and to take it to the next level."

Omflow's MD Stephen Powley says, "The Time2Innovate scheme provided by IISE has allowed us to receive excellent support for designing software and has contributed to the creation of multiple prototypes. We look forward to sustaining our innovation partnership."

Omflow Ltd. (www.omflow.com) is a consultancy and services company focused on helping technology businesses to develop complex products in a global environment.

IISE (<http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/iise/>) helps manufacturing and engineering companies in our region to innovate and grow.