

MADE FOR BUSINESS

N&R Needham Company Ltd
Case Study

NRN N&R Needham
Co Ltd.

N&R Needham (N&R) is a precision engineering company offering precision machining of components to micron tolerances to fulfil specific customer requirements.

Prior to the business' engagement with the Invest to Grow programme, it was undertaking inspection measurements using traditional manual measuring tools and gauges. This reduced N&R's competitiveness because it limited the scope of supply. It therefore represented a gap in N&R's technical offer.

The competitiveness of the precision engineering market constantly increases as clients demand the highest accuracy, quality and flexibility in production. To remain competitive and to continue its growth, N&R needed to invest in new inspection machinery to meet the increasingly complex and high-tech measurement requirements of its customers.

To fill this technical gap, and meet its customers' need for greater accuracy, N&R made two applications to the Invest to Grow programme. An initial application for the purchase and installation of the CNC CMM machine led to £28,425 funding from the Programme in May 2016, which formed part of an overall project cost of £94,750. Following successful completion of this project in December 2016, N&R made a subsequent application for a new CNC Turning Centre Machine, which led to £24,000 funding from the Programme in January 2017, part of an overall project cost of £80,000.

"We've been able to accept orders that we wouldn't have been able to take on previously. This has resulted in revenue growth and profitability that wouldn't have been delivered without the Invest to Grow funding."

Joe Needham
Managing Director
N&R Needham Co Ltd



The Invest to Grow funding was used to purchase and install both pieces of equipment, as well as providing training for N&R employees.

The Invest to Grow funding enabled N&R to install two new pieces of high-tech equipment. This has to date enabled three new members of staff to be recruited to operate the machines, while it is expected that a further two operatives and a sales coordinator will also soon be recruited. The investment has also increased both the quality and complexity of products which the business is able to produce.

Whilst the initial funding enabled N&R to achieve a step-change in measurement and inspection of its products, it also enabled the company to reassess its tooling offer and expand its production further, hence the second Invest to Grow application for the acquisition and installation of a new CNC Turning Centre machine. Collectively, these technical advancements have expanded N&R's existing customer base and opened up its product offer to new markets and sectors.

"Invest to Grow has definitely enabled us to access new markets and new customers. We now have the technical capacity to operate in sectors that we weren't previously supplying, for example, automotive, oil and gas and packaging."

The experience has also changed the company's attitude to working with the University of Derby.

"Invest to Grow has brought us closer to the University. The engagement with the programme

team has also led us to opportunities to work collaboratively with other colleagues within the University which we are now exploring."

Engagement with Invest to Grow has also enabled N&R to expand its internal research and development (R&D) activities as the company increases both the quality and complexity of products it is able to produce. This includes dealing with new materials, different types of parts, and exploring how they will react to different cutting forces.

N&R is clear that the Invest to Grow programme has supported the company to expand production and enter new

"Without Invest to Grow we would be much weaker from a commercial and skills perspective. We would have been reliant on a shrinking traditional market, whereas we are now able to win work in different areas and we have access to a broader cross-section of the market."