



▲ Natalia (second left) with member of Cornelius' UK staff and members of the Polish team.

The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) project between the Hertfordshire-based chemical distribution and manufacturing company Cornelius Group plc and Anglia Ruskin University has been awarded the highest grade of 'Outstanding' by the KTP Grading Panel for its achievement in meeting its objectives.

Cornelius is delighted to hear the news. Reportedly, only around 10% of the KTP projects are awarded an Outstanding grade for the delivery of their objectives. The project was aimed at implementing a business development and marketing capability across the business, developing both the existing and new international markets' sales and marketing strategies. As a result of the project, a clear marketing strategy was devised, allowing the company to grow and diversify against the background of the recent recession. Darren Spiby,

Cornelius' Sales Director, said, 'In 2008 the board of directors agreed that there was a need to bring some marketing skills into the organisation to help the business promote itself and its offer, and to develop a market entry plan to help with our Polish business ambitions. Natalia McDonagh, a KTP Associate (and a graduate from Anglia Ruskin University's Business School), joined our business as part of a KTP programme and we have never looked back! Just a few of the great-value creating differences made include an industry-first 'virtual' cosmetics exhibition; a market entry plan for our Polish business, which has identified further expansion opportunities; focused communications to our customers, which not only keep them informed but also inspires them to buy our products; 'voice of the customer' surveys, which have been invaluable in helping us improve our service; and many more. I don't believe it is any coincidence that our sales

KTP project at Cornelius graded as Outstanding

fortunes have improved considerably over the past three years, and I am genuinely excited for the future of our business.'

The project has delivered significant strategic outcomes to the company: long-term business structures were developed and implemented by identifying new revenue streams and researching opportunities to expand the existing offer into new areas, company branding was further strengthened, and a marketing culture as a dynamic organisational capability in the previously sales-led organisation was implemented, leading to a sustainable source of competitive advantage for the company. The project was also crucial for the success of a new business entity – Cornelius operations in Poland. According to the company's Managing Director, David Brown, the Polish subsidiary was established as a solid platform in Central Europe that is viable in its own right, and is capable of supporting future growth in the region. 'The partnership enabled us to leverage our operational capabilities across business groups, perfect the sales support service and achieve significant cost savings through consolidating our supply chain,' Brown said.

Such impressive outcomes were achieved within the relatively short period of 21 months, during the difficult economic climate of global recession, making the partnership's achievements even more significant.

Cornelius' Chairman, Dr Neville Prior, reflected, 'This enhanced capability has allowed even stronger relationships to blossom with principals, and through the aim of working with our customers to grow their business with sustainable, quality-assured products, Cornelius has seen excellent progress. Our market entry plans outside of the UK ensure that Cornelius remains a vibrant and exciting company to work for and to work with.'

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are one of the Technology Strategy Board's flagship UK-wide programmes, enabling businesses from all sectors to improve their competitiveness, productivity and performance. KTPs achieve this by helping businesses to access knowledge, technology or skills from the UK's universities. Many universities and colleges in the UK are recognised worldwide for their often ground-breaking research. Jan Stringer, KTP Regional Adviser, commented, 'I witnessed the exceptional teamwork among the Anglia Ruskin team, Natalia (the Associate) and the Cornelius directors. The outstanding results achieved are a testament to the vision and support of the company, the Associate's hard work and Anglia Ruskin University's expert guidance.'

Simon Daly
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