



Brick Fabrication KTP

Pontypool based building manufacturer Brick Fabrication has doubled staff numbers and turnover thanks in part to a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Cardiff University.



About the Sponsor

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a UK wide programme helping businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. The KTP programme is managed by Innovate UK.

The programme involves a recent university graduate, or associate, being appointed to work within the business for set period of time. The Associate transfers new knowledge from the university to help the business to innovate and grow.

About the project

In 2013, the company undertook a two-year project fully-funded by the Welsh Government, during which they established a KTP with the engineering department of Cardiff University. The project involved designing special purpose brick cutting machinery, introducing lean manufacturing principles to the business, and connecting computer aided design to automated machines on the shop floor.

According to Mr Alan Davies, the Knowledge Base Partner: "The KTP partnership has provided the company with designs and prototypes for new

brick-cutting machinery and associated equipment together with bespoke software for improving the administration of the manufacturing operation. The software provision has provided a depth of information which has improved both the machining and assembly activities within the company and contributed to the implementation of lean, sustainable and continuous improvement methods".

The company

Brick Fabrication manufactures pre-fabricated building products for the UK house building industry and has supplied many of the country's major house builders for

nearly two decades since its inception in 1997. Brick Fabrication more than doubled its turnover with the KTP contributing £1.25m towards this, and this business growth is driving a new wave of product development and market research at the company.

Mr. John White, Director at Brick Fabrication, said: "Sajith has been an excellent addition to our team, and our KTPs with Cardiff University have been a major contributing factor to the business success we have experienced over the past few years."

The Associate

Following the project's success Brick Fabrication recruited their KTP associate, Mr. Sajith Soman, and started a recruitment drive which will generate an additional 31 new jobs at its Pontypool facility over the next three years.

Mr. Soman, will now be responsible for leading the continuous design and product development improvement activities across the business. He will implement lean manufacturing principles and innovative techniques throughout the production process, improving overall operational efficiency and performance.

Mr. Soman said: "I am delighted to join Brick Fabrication during such an exciting time in the company's growth. I hope to add value to the business by establishing a culture of continuous improvement."

The Academic Partner

Dr. Michael Packianather, the lead academic said: "The KTP project with Brick Fabrication provided an excellent opportunity for researching into and transferring knowledge related to machine design in the context of automation and intelligent operation on the one hand and redefining the manufacturing process with the aid of Flexible Integrated Technology (FIT) manufacturing principles on the other, both of which are necessary technologies for improving capacity and productivity at Brick Fabrication".

Mr. Paul Thomas from Cardiff University said: "Brick Fabrication is an excellent industrial partner to collaborate with and the KTP Associate did a fantastic job to achieve a successful outcome."

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