



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Innovation

Leader Optec

A Welsh fibre-optic cable assembly company is expanding its reach into the US\$23 billion global data storage market, thanks to Welsh Government support and funding



Cable testing underway at Leader Optec

When Paul Desmond and a former colleague were made redundant in 1993, they took a chance and established a fibre-optic termination business in Denbighshire. Initially using borrowed equipment, Desmond has since transformed **Leader Optec** into a 37-staff, multi-million pound firm.

Leader Optec manufactures bespoke and high-grade fibre optic cable assemblies, tailoring their performance, size, colour and labelling to suit the needs of predominantly UK-based customers. Used within ultra-high speed networks, the strands use light rather than electricity to transfer vast amounts of data from server to switch.

In addition to this bespoke UK manufacturing service, the company also imports standard-size configurations to suit applications where budget products are sufficient. The rise of cloud computing and the increased use of the 'internet of things', for smart home and building devices, has seen the birth of vast, third-party data storage centres, which are heavily populated with fibre optic cables. Desmond recognised the need for a compact, space-saving product to hold these cables.

Leader Optec Key Achievements:

- Secured Welsh Government funding to purchase state-of-the-art equipment required to manufacture new 'connector'
- Developed a unique housing and rack solution, manufactured in Wales
- Registered intellectual property rights for the new products under the name LiteLinke
- Transformed Leader Optec into a 37-staff, multi-million pound firm

Leader Optec worked with the Welsh Government's Innovation team to secure funding to purchase state-of-the-art equipment required to manufacture and assemble its new MTP® connector. It went on to develop a unique housing and rack solution for the product, which it could also manufacture in Wales.

The company was also supported to register intellectual property rights for the new products under the name LiteLinke – a brand it had previously developed for a project that never went to market. Looking ahead, with trademarks now firmly in place and equipment to ensure the manufacturing process is efficient and accurate, the company has appointed two distribution partners in the UK, and is expanding into major European markets, including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Spain.

Supporting global businesses, such as Leader Optec that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, is one of the goals of the 2015 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, designed to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

"We have been fortunate to have benefited from Welsh Government support in various forms – from funding through to expertise. Receiving financial support from its innovation team allowed us to purchase equipment that made an almost immediate impact on our efficiency, while the advice on intellectual property was invaluable."

Paul Desmond, Managing Director, Leader Optec.

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To find out more about funding and support
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