

QuickLink Systems

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case study



advanced electronics sector

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Founder

INVEST
Essex



Essex County Council

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QuickLink Systems innovative educational resources

QuickLink Systems, designs and manufactures a range of ‘Project Tools’, ready-to-use electronics teaching solutions for Design and Technology departments, to support hands-on creative electronics at Key Stages 3/4 and at Engineering Diploma level. The company, which is based at Earls Colne near Colchester in Essex, is working with schools throughout the UK and is now developing plans to meet the increasing levels of interest from countries around the world.

Quinn Gardener, founder of the company, is a former teacher who recognised through his own

experience that electronics was a difficult subject to get across. “A report from OFSTED highlighting the weakness in electronics teaching reflected my own concerns. The solution we have developed is designed to be fun to use and encourages learning through doing. Our Project Tools quickly allow teachers and learners to confidently gain skills and understanding as they progress from a range of starter focused tasks and interactive tutorials to work on more creative open-ended design and make assignments.”

While developing the original product, the company received valuable support from Essex County Council’s Essex Innovation Programme, as Quinn Gardener explains. “Our business mentor helped us to focus on the market, as much as on the product. Our original strategy was to produce core resources for teaching at Key Stage 3, but the mentoring enabled us to analyse market segments in more detail. As a result, we carried out extra development work to tailor the product and generate a step-by-step programme that would suit learners aged 11 to 16.”

Essex has proved a good base for sourcing the electronics components for Project Tools. All the components are available from local suppliers and the company is also able to use the services

of local specialist companies to distribute the products to educational establishments throughout the UK.

‘QuickLink Systems’ original marketing was focused on schools and colleges in Essex and East Anglia. “This is a very innovative area,” according to Quinn Gardener. “There’s a real buzz about technology here and we had positive encouragement from the local education authority.” However, the company found that social networking was spreading the word about Project Tools beyond the local area.

“The growing interest and feedback gave us the confidence to team up with teachers and learners from a local school to exhibit at a major educational event at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham where we were able to demonstrate the products in use to a much wider audience.”

The company is now attracting interest from education authorities around the world. “We have had enquiries from many different countries,” says Quinn Gardener. “The East of England Development Agency is helping us to develop plans for moving into overseas markets, so the future looks good for the company.”



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