



Making prototypes for soft toys

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“By working on this project AAL has demonstrated that, by preparing a wide spectrum of specialists, AAL can cover any product design’s necessities at the time of its commercialisation”

Mara Adina,
Project Manager, Art Academy of Latvia

FAST FACTS

Country or Region:

LATVIA

University:

Art Academy of Latvia (AAL)

Business partners:

- Woolly World Ltd

Area of UBC:

- COMMERCIALISATION

Project start date: February 2012

Project end date: March 2012

Keywords:

- Ecological product;
- Soft toys
- Innovation

PROJECT SUMMARY

This case study is about the Art Academy of Latvia (henceforth – AAL) working together with Woolly World Ltd to produce prototypes of soft toys that could be commercialised. As a result of the cooperation, Woolly World has been commercialising the product and AAL has provided the opportunity for its students to work on real life business problems. Additionally, AAL has proved to its staff the benefits of inter-departmental cooperation.

CASE STUDY IN DETAILS

Project Background and Needs

AAL was approached by Woolly World to produce designs for series of ecological soft toys.

Project Solution

At the outset AAL together with Woolly World set the goals of the cooperation and, based on this, formulated the task that was given to students.

Firstly, students of AAL did the necessary research on soft toys, covering technologies and materials utilised, etc. Then students produced 3D sketches (the whole process was overseen by lecturers). The project partner examined these sketches, commented on them and picked their favourites. After the sketches had been chosen, fashion design students of AAL made patterns from textile materials and made prototypes. The partner, Woolly World, provided feedback on the prototypes and, taking this into mind, the students produced the final product.

Achievements and Impact

As a result of the cooperation the company, Woolly Word, obtained prototypes for three products and Art Academy of Latvia benefitted through students having the opportunity to experience working for a real client. Importantly, within AAL the project showed the benefits of cooperation among different departments of the institution.

Quantifiable Outputs for University

Art Academy of Latvia has gained the following from the cooperation:

Key Objectives:

- to produce a prototype for a three product series;
- to attract more funding for AAL.

Lessons learned:

- Cooperation between students and staff from different departments significantly improves productivity. Additionally, in this way, there is no need to outsource tasks.
- Cooperation with business incubators provides the opportunity to create new and sustainable products.

University profile:

Since its establishment in 1919, the Art Academy of Latvia (AAL) has embodied a national school of art, becoming one of the symbols of Latvia's national and cultural independence. AAL is the only higher education institution for scientific research, art, creativity and culture in Latvia offering a higher education in art on various subject areas at three academic programme education levels.

Currently AAL, which has more than 800 students, offers opportunities for studies of art, audio-visual media, and design and art history in Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts and Doctor on Arts programmes offered by 14 departments arranged in 5 faculties – the Faculty of Visual Arts, Faculty of Visual Plastic Arts, Faculty of Audio-Visual Media, Faculty of Design and Art History Faculty.

1. 18 students have gained practical, real-life experience by working on a commercial product;
2. Extra funding.

Quantifiable Outputs for Partner (s)

From this project, Wooly World, has gained the following:

1. Three prototypes of products that can be commercialised.
2. The products have been sold in Germany, Sweden and Japan.

CHECKLIST OF PREREQUISITES TO SUCCESS

Formal aspects

- Formal practical level Co-operation Agreement is signed between University and Partner(s) which defines particular roles, outputs, reporting mechanisms and other relevant aspects.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are defined for University.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are defined for Partner(s).
- Project partners have agreed on specific deliverables to be produced as a result of the co-operation.
- Project is related to at least one strategic priority of the University.
- Project is related to at least one strategic priority of the Partner(s).

Financial and/or Infrastructure aspects

- Co-operation Partner invests financial resources in the project.
- University invests infrastructure and/or material type (in kind) resources in the project.
- University gains monetary benefits from the project.
- Co-operation Partner gains monetary benefits from the project.
- University gains non-monetary but measurable and verifiable benefits from the project.

Human capital aspects

- University is devoting its human capital, know-how, competence to the mutual cooperation, specifically, academic staff, students, and administrative staff.

Marketing and communication aspects

- Project and/or project results are communicated within

mass media channels.

- Project and/or project results are communicated within social media channels.
- Project and/or project results are presented in trade-shows, conferences, seminars, other marketing events.
- Project and/or project results are communicated within internal marketing and/or communication channels within the University and/or Partner institution.

For More Information

For more information about the case study contact Mara Adina on mara.adina@lma.lv

For more information about the project "FROM BRIDGING TO SUCCEEDING. University and Business Co-operation Through Success Stories." and for more case studies visit www.university-business.net

For more information about the Nordplus Horizontal programme visit www.nordplusonline.org

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