Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Sep 08, 2015 09:47 BST

Student help sparks growth for electric bike business

Student consultants from Northumbria University, Newcastle, say they are open for business after developing a range of solutions and growth plans for scores of companies across the UK.

The Undergraduate Consultancy Project (UGC) is a pioneering programme run by Newcastle Business School to give students first-hand experience of working with real companies. Launched just a few years ago, the module attracted more than 100 students in its second year and is expanding fast. It has also built a successful track record of working in partnership with local

authorities, SMEs, start-ups and charities.

One business to benefit from the free consultancy is Nottingham-based HSC Scattergoods, one of the UK's leading importers and distributors of quality electric bikes, trikes, bicycles and folding bikes. Like many growing SMEs it was looking for support across a range of opportunities, including branding, e:commerce and website development, strategies to open up new markets and creating a strong customer-focused service.

Hamant Chhaya, owner of HSC Scattergoods, said: "As a business man I can lose foresight, however what the students from Newcastle Business School have done is really made me aware of issues that really matter and need to be addressed, as well as ways I can improve my business in the future. I can honestly say there is not a single section of the student's recommendation presentation that I will not implement in my business. The areas they have covered have given me incredible insight into what can be achieved and I am very grateful to them."

Working on the UGC project replaces the more traditional dissertation for students and carries the same amount of marks for the degree. It allows students to develop collaborative and productive working skills with colleagues, and deliver genuine solutions for real businesses. The clinic-based learning experience also has a clear employability focus.

UGC module leader Kumud Wijayaratna explained: "Practice-based learning is a key focus for us here at Newcastle Business School as we have the hard evidence to show it can not only enhance the study experience but also the students' career prospects and earning potential when they graduate. As one of the first business schools to offer the consultancy model it was certainly a bold move, but the popularity of the programme and the positive feedback from business clients demonstrates the project's success."

For more information regarding Northumbria University's Business courses, visit https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go towww.northumbria.ac.uk

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