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Business lands biggest order to date following Northumbria partnership

A Northumberland business has landed the largest contract in its history following a successful partnership project with Northumbria University which led to the creation of a new type of ink.

Hexham-based global ink supplier [Multichem](#) is now producing 20% more ink each month after large orders were placed for its new permanent ink, which passes strict environmental and child safety regulations.

The product was created thanks to support and advice from academics at

Northumbria as part of a [Knowledge Transfer Partnership](#) (KTP), which sees businesses teaming up with academic institutions to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills.

The successful two-year KTP saw academics from Northumbria's department of applied science, led by [Professor Justin Perry](#), working with chemistry researcher [Dr Tom Winstanley](#) and the team at Multichem to develop the PP200 ink.

Despite only being launched this month the new product is already having a major impact, resulting in the company winning new contracts in Latin America and Asia which will see the amount of ink produced by Multichem each month rise by 20%.

Following the completion of the KTP Dr Winstanley (who was a postdoctoral Knowledge Transfer Partnership associate employed by Northumbria University during the project) has been appointed as product development manager at Multichem.

Speaking about the project he said: "Working within Northumbria's Applied Sciences department allowed me to really advance my understanding of inks.

"This understanding, along with the in-house expertise of Multichem's Lab team, led to the creation of PP200, our new permanent ink; which has resulted in Multichem's biggest single order in the company's history.

"Indeed the sales which are predicted for 2017 are already exceeding our sales projections for five years' time, which is an incredible achievement."

In addition to the new ink, other products were also created during the KTP, including a bespoke ink additive, created using renewably sourced materials, which is expected to prove popular amongst pen manufacturers across the globe, with prospective customers in Latin America already undertaking production trials.

Multichem managing director Michael Nelson said the impact of the KTP on the business had exceeded their expectations. He said: "The knowledge transfer from this KTP has enabled us to position Multichem as a leading

supplier of sophisticated and environmentally friendly ink products.

“Thanks to this project we have significantly improved our in-house product development process which is now based on science-led, quantitative, robust, well-documented procedures using analytical chemistry, product performance and manufacturing considerations, and commercial insights.”

Professor Perry, a Professor of Chemistry in Northumbria University's Department of Applied Sciences, said: “Working with Tom and Multichem has been very interesting and a really good example of university science helping a company create new, successful products.”

Funding of £94,000, approximately two-thirds of the project's total cost, was provided by Innovate UK – the government agency which oversees KTP projects across the UK. It has since awarded the Northumbria and Multichem KTP a rating of ‘outstanding’, recognising the project's achievements and lasting impact.

If your business is working on a project that would benefit from a new way of thinking, a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Northumbria University could be the solution. Find out more by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/business-services/develop-your-business/knowledge-transfer-partnerships/

[View embedded content here](#)

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