



Apr 22, 2013 00:00 BST

## Northumbria designers unlock commercial potential

Northumbria University Designers have combined cutting-edge research and design to create innovative fundraising initiatives for a Newcastle museum.

Academics and postgraduate students worked in collaboration with Discovery Museum to develop design systems that could increase donations from visitors to the museum.

The designs created include an interactive model of Newcastle's Millennium Bridge that swings into life when enough coins have been dropped inside;

another concept is aimed at young collectors, inviting visitors to buy and collect badges linked to exhibits in the museum.

The collaborative project involved MA Design and MA Design Management students and academic experts in Design, Business and Innovation, working with Discovery Museum to develop viable business solutions.

All 13 design solutions for Discovery Museum were unveiled at a networking event 'Unlocking the Commercial Potential of Cultural Organisations' in April. The event was aimed at showcasing the ways that businesses and cultural organisations can benefit from the creativity, research and expertise available within the University's Design postgraduate hub.

Senior Lecturer in Design Management, Irini Pitsaki, is the principle investigator of the project and the creator of the Cultural Product Design Framework – a research-based set of design-thinking principles and a branding tool – which has been employed by the students in the development of their creative solutions.

She said: "In the current economic climate there has never been a greater need for cultural organisations to apply creative thinking towards their fundraising. Working in collaboration with Discovery Museum, Postgraduate Designers and staff at Northumbria University have turned research, business ideas and designs into inspiring solutions that could generate an increase in visitors' donations.

"This showcase event was an opportunity for businesses and cultural organisations to find out about the product development, branding, communication and strategy knowledge assets that Northumbria can provide for innovation. We offer the combined expertise of design and business academics, as well as up to 80 MA students with professional and industry experience, to develop innovative business solutions."

All projects have been informed by Irini Pitsaki's Cultural Product Design Framework which incorporates design and branding principles into cultural experiences and services. Cultural products – defined as anything produced by cultural organisations, such as an exhibition, book series, event or performance – are created to offer people additional benefits from visiting an art gallery or museum, reading a book or attending an event.

The Framework has already been tested in different cultural industries and has supported research across Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, which now underpins the Discovery Museum case study.

Irini Pitsaki's paper, 'Managing Design for Successful Cultural Products and Brands', focuses on her most recent work with Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. It will be presented at the international conference on Arts and Cultural Management AIMAC 2013 at the University of Andes in June, and will be published in her new book, Cultural Brands Management.

For more information about what Northumbria expertise can offer to cultural organisations, contact Dr Irini Pitsaki at [Irini.pitsaki@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:Irini.pitsaki@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 to [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



**Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436



**Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



**James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)