BRACE’S BAKERY LTD
NEW APPROACH TO NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO PROFIT GROWTH

ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY
FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (FMCG) COMPANY, BRACE’S BAKERY LTD, BASED IN CRUMLIN, IS A LEADING MANUFACTURER OF AMBIENT PRODUCTS. IN AFFILIATION WITH KNOWLEDGE BASE PARTNER, THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF, THE AIM OF THIS KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP (KTP) WAS TO DEVELOP A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ENCOMPASSING THE FULL LIFE CYCLE OF THE PRODUCT FROM CONCEPT TO LAUNCH.

ABOUT THE SPONSOR
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES CONSISTS OF 60 MEMBERS ELECTED THROUGHOUT WALES. THE ASSEMBLY HAS DELEGATED MANY OF ITS POWERS TO THE FIRST MINISTER, WHO LEADS THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT.

THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR ALL ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN DEVOLVED TO WALES.

FAST FACTS
- New discipline delivered identifying market gaps
- £1 million investment in equipment to develop new product categories
- £200,000 incremental sales
- £140,000 incremental profits before tax
- Associate appointed in managerial position at Company

The Company

“UWIC were instrumental in the training and development for our newly launched plant. Professional mannerism at academic level was adapted to our industry’s conditions and delivered with clarity and professionalism. This is not the first time UWIC have been used within our business and we are already talking to the business schools and other functions at the university, to develop our business strategies in line with our business vision.”

Scott Richardson, Sales & Marketing Director, Brace’s Bakery Ltd
Family owned business, Brace’s Bakery Ltd has been in operation since 1980, manufacturing ambient food products including a range of bread products, fruit loaves and buns. Brace employs over 200 people in manufacturing, engineering, sales and distribution roles. In Wales, Brace’s supply its products to all the major multiples and independent stores, taking the brand to over 2000 stores across South Wales, as well as successfully trading in South West England with listings in Tesco, Spar, Safeway, Sainsbury’s, Kwiksave, Somerfield, Wm Morrison, Iceland and Asda. The company records a £17m turnover.

ABOUT THE PROJECT
The aim of this KTP was to introduce a structured approach to new product development encompassing the full product life cycle from product concept to launch.

BENEFITS
The programme led to the purchase and commissioning of a new £1 million processing plant which optimised the efficiency performance for the original product range. The increased capacity allowed the programme to develop a new range of products at the university baking technology department and major retailers on a national basis have now accepted this range of products.

The introduction of a structured approach to new product development has helped to significantly reduce packaging waste as legal data printed on the pack is now originated at the correct point on the process development plan. Savings derived from this initiative are worth £20,000-30,000 per year.

A narrative software programme designed by the company and the Knowledge Base Partner allows the company to “scientifically” assess “gaps” in the baking sector, which allows for constructive new product development.

RESULTS
The partnership has delivered a new discipline within the company, which can identify market gaps and opportunities. This in turn has led to a £1 million investment in equipment to develop new product categories. Specifically, the KTP has delivered incremental sales to the company of £200,000 and profits before tax of £140,000. The KTP initiative and innovations derived from the partnership have also positioned the company more competitively, in facilitating a unique and commercially advantageous method of manufacturing and new product development.

The Academic Partner

This KTP was delivered in partnership with Knowledge Base Partner, the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff’s School of Applied Science. Lead academic appointed was Mr R. Newberry.

BENEFITS
The KTP has enabled a range of course materials to be developed; this includes Year three BSc (Hons) in Food Science, which has benefited from several case studies and practical sessions as a result of this KTP project.

The University has also gained first hand experience in the commissioning of industrial plant, project management skills and exposure to a FMCG business together with the inherent demands of major retailers.

Conference presentations have been developed on aspects of product efficiency (New Orleans 2003) and benchmarking of the company partner against UKAS accredited technical systems has formed an important basis for a new PhD.

The Associate

The Associate appointed in this KTP was Yvonne McMeel.

BENEFITS
The Associate developed project management training and management skills as a result of this KTP project. Yvonne has been exposed to GAP analysis techniques, which includes her role in developing unique computer software for market analysis of specific food products. She has also been responsible for the successful launch of products in the past two years.

RESULTS
As a result of the KTP, Yvonne has achieved an NVQ level four in Management, and has been appointed in a management position within the company.