

# The University of Warwick

## Lambert Review of Business-University Collaborations

### ***Warwick - a model of good practice in business-university interaction***

Throughout its forty-year history, the University of Warwick has been characterised by its intimate links with business and industry, establishing an outstanding reputation for creating innovative, long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships. This has been particularly significant in research, to secure sponsorship, facilitate knowledge and technology transfer, and to ensure effective exploitation of research. It has also been a vitally important feature of the University's teaching and learning mission, for example, through the provision of tailored programmes and bespoke short courses to business and industry. Warwick has earned the distinction as the country's leading entrepreneurial university, as a result of how it has been managed historically and the culture that pervades all areas of the institution (Clark, 1998).

We seek here to provide some exemplars of the range of relationships with industry developed at Warwick, which could be drawn from all areas of the institution but we highlight three: Warwick Manufacturing Group's extensive links with the automotive manufacturing sector and Warwick Business School's engagement with its portfolio of key corporate clients.

#### **Warwick Manufacturing Group**

Launched in April 2003, a new £70 million *International Automotive Research Centre*, awarded to Warwick Manufacturing Group, will focus on supporting the manufacture of premium/luxury automotive products - the key sector for the future of UK engineering. The high-value premium products market provides many of the best opportunities for UK manufacturing - particularly so in the UK automotive sector which faces an increasingly competitive global market place. However this sector will only continue to succeed if its supplier base meets the increasingly exacting demands in technology and craftsmanship. The new Centre will put the supply industry at the forefront of its work ensuring that every link in the automotive supply chain has access to the latest technologies and business techniques.

Warwick Manufacturing Group is one of the world's leading automotive R&D groups while at the same time co-ordinating a specialist manufacturing cluster within a 25-30mile radius of the Warwick campus. The scope of this collaboration between the University and its industrial partners represents a very significant development in academic/industry relationships. The new Centre will undertake 20 research projects covering manufacturing, business integration, product research, people and skills management. The projects proposed will involve a range of suppliers drawn from the first tier and below, materials and equipment manufacturers, software houses, trade and professional bodies, and service sector companies.

One of Warwick Manufacturing Group's key partners in the new Centre will be Premier Automotive Group - Ford Motor Company's premium vehicle business group made up of Aston Martin, Jaguar, Land Rover and Volvo. Just as important will be partnerships with a range of Midlands SMEs that supply automotive companies. In total the new Centre will help secure around 50,000 jobs working in automotive engineering - the vast majority of which will be in the Midlands. The funding for the new Centre comes from the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands and the University of Warwick's industrial partners. The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) have also agreed to support the work of this new collaboration with PAG and two new professorial appointments will be established, to be co-funded by PAG, the University and EPSRC.

## **Warwick Business School**

Warwick Business School (WBS) has a long and extensive history of relationships with corporate clients through its interests in continuing and executive education. A strong example is the relationship with Ford Motor Company, for whom the Business School runs a dedicated version of its Distance Learning and Modular MBA programme for Ford Europe. Approximately 25 students, drawn from across the Ford population in Europe study for an MBA whilst still working with the Ford Motor Company - the thesis-based project is also designed to fit the project needs of Ford. WBS is also the business school partner with Ford in its venture at the Centre of Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (CEME) campus at Dagenham, with Loughborough University's Engineering Department. This activity will involve WBS working on additional executive education projects and on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the LDA region.

The Ford example is just one of a series of relationships which include such companies as McKinsey, HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland, TNT, Jones, Lang and Lasalle, KPMG and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. With each of these companies, WBS provides long-term training and relationship-building; however, the nature of such relationships varies from company to company and, in addition, often leads to a long-term research and consulting relationship both with faculty and WBS generally.

Prudential in the UK has developed a very close working relationship with Warwick Business School, through placing their fast-track recruits on the MBA programme, while undertaking planned work experience across Prudential and benefiting from local mentoring. Prudential have highlighted separately in their submission to this Review that this resulted in "rounded and educated individuals who are having an accelerated business experience and are increasingly ready to progress to the highest levels".

At the beginning of 2002, Warwick was chosen by Prudential as their partner for Prudential University - a programme targeting 250 key influencers in their business over a two year period. Highlighted as key factors in selecting Warwick were: the quality of the MBA programme, the on-site residential facility of Radcliffe House, the openness to joint working with a faculty that was part Warwick, part external, part internal, the relevance of the proposal from Warwick and the educational content that would be made available to the company, and the on-line facilities. The programme has taken 190 staff to date, attending campus events, followed up with appropriate assignments, further studies and application of learning. In London, Prudential recently hosted a highly successful lecture evening jointly for WBS alumni and the Prudential University alumni, attended by over 90 people.

A number of support departments across the University work closely with the academic departments to develop and facilitate relationships with business and industry. These include Warwick Ventures, University of Warwick Science Park, Research Support Services, Mercia Institute of Enterprise, Development and Alumni Relations, Communications, International Office, Graduate School, Student Recruitment Office, the Careers Service and the Language Centre. We would highlight one example of Warwick's leading role in technology transfer and business creation activities: the Mercia Spinner initiative.

## **Mercia Spinner**

Co-ordinated by Warwick Ventures and funded by the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands, and the HEFCE Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Merica Spinner has primarily been designed to provide comprehensive support for the exploitation of research from all eight of the individual partner universities in the West Midlands region. To this end the project explores and protects the ideas, then develops them into fully viable commercial opportunities. The main objective of Mercia Spinner is to create 40 spin-off companies by 2010, generated and shared between all eight universities.

The project comprises three strands:

- Employment of specialist business development managers with experience of intellectual property management and new company formation;
- Specialist consultancy from Warwick and Birmingham Universities to other regional universities, less experienced in IP management to develop best practice;
- Pathfinder and Accelerator grants to facilitate company formation and early growth.

The project is now able to offer best practice examples for participant institutions on issues such as value for money on procurement of legal and patenting services, accessing specialist technology evaluations, and has made links into new potential VC sources internationally.

Sarissa Biomedical Ltd has been spun-out of Warwick as a result of this initiative, producing biosensors for brain research and for diagnosis of conditions such as stroke. The Spinner project assisted Sarissa with £15k in small grants for the filing of 3 patents, for market research and for the production of a business plan by a specialist consultancy. With this underpinning, the company was formed, and the plan presented to the Mercia Fund and to Catalyst Biomedica (the venture arm of the Wellcome Trust) both of which have indicated that they are willing to invest £250k. The company has projected sales of £3m per year by 2006.

Warwick is a young institution and has experienced few barriers to successful and innovative relationships with industry, and other sectors. Such barriers may result from higher education's isolation from its key stakeholders but close interactions, particularly with Government and industry, have enabled Warwick to develop a deeply embedded culture of strong customer relations and competitive innovation throughout the institution. It is clear that to stimulate and develop relationships, the University's links with key business and Government agencies, such as, CBI, Institute of Directors, the Regional Development Agencies, as well directly with employers, are critical in establishing unique partnerships and collaborations for the benefit of business, industry and the broader economy. Board level appointments of Warwick personnel to many such bodies, and representatives from agencies, companies and the broader community on Warwick Advisory Boards, groups and committees foster these relationships.

Warwick presents an innovative, multi-dimensional model of how higher education of the highest quality can be intimately integrated into business development and economic growth in local, national and international contexts, demonstrating how a University can be at the heart of:

- technical, business and entrepreneurial skills development;
- advisory, technical and analytical service provision and expert consultancy;
- business cluster formation and expansion;
- major regional economic regeneration;
- company formation, particularly in high technology sectors;
- supply of highly qualified full and part-time staff;
- enhancement of quality of life in the region through, for example, accessible, high quality facilities and venues, arts and cultural events, supported by commercial sponsorship, for example, National Grid/Transco and Peugeot Cars' sponsorship of the Warwick Arts Centre.

For further information and examples of Warwick's interactions with business and industry, please refer to the website at: <http://www.warwick.ac.uk> and the links from [business@warwick](mailto:business@warwick)