

A2i - March 2019

Why SMEs engaged - from the report

“Seven of those interviewed gave [the fact that the University has appropriate technical/academic expertise] as the main reason for engaging.”

“Three mentioned that they felt that working with the University and having their innovations tested or ‘endorsed’ by the University would be useful, especially when raising finance.”

“Several said that the availability of support free of charge was a factor ... paying for support would [have been] challenging or impossible.”

Workshops:

“[The workshops were] quite worthwhile - how to get a business started [was] really useful.”

“The leadership one hosted by Janet Murray - fantastic. Communication and Messaging [was] also good.”

Impact of support:

“Software use has made an immeasurable difference - would have had to spend the money otherwise so would have delayed other developments.”

“In January we took on new investors and now have the product in the market - would not have achieved this without the support. Really important. Might have done it eventually, but there would have been delays and more cost.”

“It gives us credibility going forward, even with attracting grant funds. Having evidence that the process is going to work in the real world will help us to achieve that. Getting support from people to back your vision is important.”

“It focussed our approach and by tapping into a wealth of academic knowledge it stopped us walking into other areas that had already been exploited.”

“Networking opportunities [have been] really good - in a lab seeing what people are doing is really productive and stimulating to be with smart people working on similar things.”

“Have definitely benefitted from the networking and it’s important that the team enables that to happen.”

Quality of support

“Plastics advice was really good.”

“Technical expertise very good.”

“It was made easy to get the support we needed.”

“The sort of things they are doing are marvellous - it’s just magic so please continue to extend this opportunity to other startups.”

Overall experience

“Clean tech sector [is a] very small but growing market, especially in the UK. We need programmes like this.”

Impact for academics:

- Increases academic expertise and experience through working with businesses
- Opportunities for student project contribute to student employability
- Research has been published as a result of one of the projects (Rabee Shamass, Basalt Technologies - Research paper requested)
- Experience of working with businesses enhances teaching as can refer to examples of live case studies.
- Increased job satisfaction from helping SMEs take a new innovation to market.