

Objective One case study digital infrastructure



Leap Media & Go Jute
30 Duke Street
St Austell
Cornwall PL25 5PQ

tel 01726 68672
fax
email mhocking@leapmedia.co.uk
web www.leapmedia.co.uk
www.gojute.co.uk

The projects in the Digital Infrastructure investment cluster deliver both the roll out of broadband technology and importantly support this with business advice and training to maximise its use for business.

Modern Digital Infrastructure can be used to ensure connectivity across the globe and bring about long term improvements in business competitiveness. Key issues for Cornwall have been access to Broadband, business support to promote e-business as well as training to maximise ICT use for business, all of which have been tackled through this investment cluster.

Leap Media

The successful application of environmentally responsible practises within top quality design and creative services has earned Leap Media a healthy growth and demand increase during its first three years.

In fact Managing Director Matt Hocking recently went on to establish a second company – Go Jute – ethically sourcing natural, biodegradable jute bags from partners in India. This sister company for Leap Media complements their original products and ethos.

St Austell-based Leap Media has received Objective One support via three different projects - initially via Cornwall Pure Business (which supports businesses relocating to Cornwall) and **actnow** (broadband) and latterly via Unlocking Cornish Potential (a project that places graduates with businesses).

Matt, who is Cornish born, is a keen promoter of sustainable practice and his enthusiasm has helped to make Leap Media what it is today. He had earlier worked with clients including Sky, AOL and Lego and spent three years heading the graphics team at the Eden Project. As a result of his contribution all of Eden's internal design projects were sourced from recyclable materials whilst he was there.

He founded Leap in October 2004 as he left Eden Project to move to Wiltshire but he and partner Clare Gardner decided to move the company back to Cornwall. "I decided working in an inspirational and supportive environment was going to be key to making the business a success. Cornwall is the perfect location for our business as we have access to an infinite resource of people, partners and places that complement the work we undertake," he said.



Claire England and Matt Hocking of Leap Media and Go Jute display some of their biodegradable jute bags

Leap Media specialises in award winning sustainable design, marketing and print. The company aim is to provide a design service that will not only make money for the customers but is as environmentally sustainable as possible. For instance signs are made from recyclable paper or card, take away food containers made from bamboo, exhibitions from recycled card, awards from recycled plastics and signage made from yogurt pots to list just a few. And don't think these are mundane designs, they are sexy and innovative, eco-design being creatively pushed all the way.

"It is also about telling the story," explained Matt. "We create dynamic designs and products that work at an economic, environmental and social level for our clients and the environment. And it is not just about using recycled paper it is about going beyond, creating conversations and distinction and telling people the stories about how things are done, for instance reserved table signs made from locally sourced wood from Heligan Gardens."

With no marketing the company has expanded from sole trader status to having six employees and a client base increase of 400% with more than 180 accounts. Clients include Microsoft, Universal Music Jazz, Good Energy (national and leading 100% renewable electricity provider), The National Trust, Devon and Cornwall County Councils, Shreddybed (a growing Bodmin based company that recycles materials for animal bedding), Botanical Gardener (a landscaping company with bases in Cornwall and London), Wrigley, Cornwall Real Nappy Project, Re:source, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and many more.

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Leap Media is also a designated specialist for honey2cornwall, another Objective One project that offers expert advice and investment to hotels and guest houses.

The employees include Claire England who started work for Leap Media in early 2007 under the Unlocking Cornish Potential Scheme (UCP). UCP is a Combined Universities in Cornwall project run by Cornwall College that places graduates with businesses and provides support, including an expert mentor, for up to one year.

“Unlocking Cornish Potential means we can have a member of staff who is appreciated for their talent and worth and another brilliant thing is the mentor so the graduate receives on job training,” said Matt. “Having taken on Claire I estimate we could double our turnover and are now able to take on much bigger projects as we can increase our workload and I can get out more to meet new clients.”

Claire, who was brought up in St Austell, graduated in Graphic Design from Bath Spa University. Before that she completed an art foundation course at Falmouth School of Art (now University College Falmouth - a partner in the Combined Universities in Cornwall). After graduating she worked in London but wanted to return to her Cornish home.

“The UCP scheme meant I could earn enough to be able to work in my home town,” she said. “We also have project plans under the scheme which help me to achieve my goals.”

One of her first projects at Leap was helping to set up Go Jute, designing the website, branding and clients’ requirements for designs on the jute bags that are produced.

Go Jute started relationships with an ethical family business based in Kolkata, India, and Matt and business partner Gary Warren are working towards Fairtrade status for the company. Annual turnover has already risen from zero to six figures.

Leap Media ensures it leads by example, as it is a CarbonZero company, reducing Leap’s carbon output and offsetting any CO2 residue. Leap also only banks ethically with Triodos and the Co-operative, and uses 100% renewable electricity from Good Energy to fuel its studio. As well as having shares in various wind farms, recently Leap Media has been buying locked carbon in endangered areas of the Amazon through Collearth to help offset client projects. Leap is



One of Claire England’s first projects at Leap was to help set up Go Jute

presently working towards BS8555 environmental accreditation awarded by environmental business support consultancy Envision.

Plans to audit themselves on a carbon unit per hour basis will enable Leap Media to assess environmental impacts and also to promote savings for the company and clients. It is hoped that results will then be used as a benchmark across the industry. This is a self initiated audit assessing three years of Leap, to establish whether a company that acts as responsibly and creatively as Leap actually makes a difference.

The information Leap hopes to get following the five week audit (completed by 28/9/07) will inform the level of impact Leap has on the environment and by using recycled paper/materials what the business has saved in terms of trees, landfill, water, energy and CO2. Leap also aims to work out how much CO2 is used per creative hour and then use this in future estimates, showing both design fee and CO2 level. Leap will then offer various offset schemes that don’t involve tree planting, but rather renewable projects and carbon locking. This audit is being done by a second year intern from the Renewables course at Falmouth under the guidance of Envision for a fee set by Leap.

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