



InnovationXchange™ creates valuable connections for Rail and Engineering companies

Commercial Opportunities

- IXC Intermediaries working within two clients in the UK and in Australasia identified and brokered a commercial development valued at over £60m. It involved an area of novel technology in which both were working and which required partnering to bring to successful exploitation but which was in an area in which neither was publicly engaged.

At the time neither party was prepared to identify their respective interests in this technology, they had not reacted to overtures which had been tried unsuccessfully over the previous 9 months. However, IXC Intermediaries, working within both companies, managed to set up a connection within 6 weeks which is progressing to a formal collaboration deal.

- A specialist UK-based transport/engineering consultancy used the IXC Intermediary service to identify and establish potential commercial partners for some of their in-house capabilities. A number of new connections were quickly established. In two cases these were with European companies which were already well known to the client, but their specific opportunities to collaborate had not been identified previously. Significant long term financial benefits for both organisations are now anticipated from these additional collaborations.


- A Government Department client of IXC sought new options for addressing a safety issue with a long history of intractable complexity and resistance to resolution. IXC introduced a researcher involved in network sensor communications systems under development for global implementation in another sector. The parties have now applied for funding of a three year £0.5m research proposal exploring pathways to adapting and proving the technology in the specific context of the Government requirement which, if implemented, will be a world-leading development with applicability to similar contexts around the globe.


- An IXC Intermediary assisting an international specialist engineering consultancy identified that a novel composite structural material being developed for transportation applications could be used within medical devices and prosthetics and created a connection which enabled the client to create a new business stream.


Research Opportunities


- A multinational engineering corporation was looking to acquire new technologies and engage in joint R&D with national firms and research institutes. They briefed the InnovationXchange and within three months IXC Intermediaries® had made:

- 195 direct enquiries and identified
- 14 potential opportunities, prior to bringing the multinational member together with the short-listed small to medium enterprises and start-ups.


-  IXC brokered collaboration between a research institute and a regional transport operator aimed at improving training quality, speed and assessment for new and existing public-transport-vehicle maintenance staff. The transport operator gained rapid access to researchers with deep capabilities in the development of haptics and virtual and augmented reality for applied industrial client requirements, which was unknown to the organization and which have generated considerable financial and operational benefits.


-  IXC has brokered some very positive connections between a rail operator and a department of university to assist in the evaluation of crowd behavior and flow management to take advantage of novel imaging techniques to assist in station design and train scheduling.


-  A transport operator sought third-party endorsement of a key infrastructure proposal aimed at improving driver training through use of advanced simulator techniques. IXC identified and coordinated an introduction to relevant experts at a leading national institute addressing transport safety and associated technical and anthropomorphic factors. A report was commissioned supporting the operator's proposal, by drawing on papers, data and case studies from similar contexts internationally, and qualifying the operational advantages, including improved safety, that could be anticipated to result. The report provided key evidence for the operator to seek its client's investment in the simulator capability.


-  An IXC client had a great opportunity to commercialise a new product developed by a Cooperative Research Centre, but needed to find international partners for product development and market testing. Within weeks of being retained by the company, the InnovationXchange, through its international networks, has been able to identify potential partners and begin negotiations in two countries.


New technology applications


-  An IXC client involved in specialist coatings (principally for arduous aerospace applications) had developed unique technology which their Intermediary considered could match the needs of a rail engineering client, for which the client had been searching for over a year. Whilst initial perceptions were that the different standards and requirements of the aerospace and rail industries made it unlikely that a cross-sector solution was feasible, the product has been taken up and deployed, providing both parties with considerable commercial advantage.


-  The developer of a technology considered to have potential value in rail infrastructure sought expert guidance on technical constraints, market fit and size. IXC identified relevant experts and coordinated introductions not accessible by the client. The outcome and subsequent evaluations established the fundamental barriers that would prevent the technology to the application, saving the technology developer effort, resource and time on exploring an application that would be unattainable. A quick "no" yielded substantial savings of development effort potentially wasted without access to timely, key information.

 An Intermediary met with a research group and was shown the capabilities of their various technologies in creating state-of-the-art LCD displays. Within a week, the Intermediary walked into the office of an SME client and was shown a prototype of a LCD display that required significant development. An instant connection resulted. In the words of the Intermediary “when this process works, it feels like there is almost no effort required. You can tell the good ones because they just fall at your feet.” These connections result because the Intermediary has access to multiple clients who all want the Intermediary to think externally about new ways of solving problems and using capabilities. Neither client would have found the other party through standard business development methods.

 IXC Intermediary working within a process engineering equipment specialist was given access to novel technology for corrosion resistance. This was considered to have much wider applications in other industry sectors and the Intermediary was able to tap its extensive network to identify suitable connections. As a result substantial new collaborative commercial developments are being rapidly realised in rail and petrochemical applications amongst others.

 IXC was asked to assist a client with product development problems in establishing efficient sampling and testing routines linked to a new specialist engineering product. IXC proposed potential solutions to solve this problem, identified an academic at a client university with experience in the technology and arranged a non-confidential meeting between the parties. During the discussion the academic suggested a solution that neither IXC nor the client had considered. The client commenced research on the solution and is confident that it will solve the product development issue. The client knows the university, the academic had heard of the company, but without the direct involvement of IXC the client wouldn't have known that a certain part of the procedure was a solvable problem and would never have contacted the academic. The outcome will save the client investment and significantly reduce the time of the product development process.

 An IXC Intermediary working with a specialist transport engineering client was asked to find novel imaging and prediction methods for assessing vibration effects within composite structures. The Intermediary identified some associated IP held by a company involved in a completely unrelated industry which he felt could be applied to solve these needs. Following a very positive initial assessment, both parties are expecting considerable collaborative developments, which neither would have identified without IXC's involvement in bringing them together.

 In the quest to find specific solutions and novel technologies for an automotive client associated with issues including visioning, hybridisation and data transfer, the resident IXC Intermediary has identified a number of parallel developments in which collaborative exploitation/research has been brokered with other commercial organisations across aerospace, rail and power distribution sectors. This has accelerated the rate of commercialisation and enabled some developmental costs to be shared, making the projects inherently less risky.