



SEE DESIGN

Sharing Experience
on Design Support
for SMEs

Case Study of Good Design Support Practice

This case study is a snapshot of activities taking place during the lifespan of the SEEdesign project from 2005 to 2007. For updated information please contact the organisations directly.

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UK

Trend Style & Colour Event

Design Wales

There are numerous ways to help companies with their product development process. In this field there is not a correct or an incorrect way, but different experiences from which we can learn. The Winnovate Programme is one of these inspiring sources for the practice of design support. This programme has been encouraging small businesses in West Wales and South East Ireland to use design to realise their ideas and be more innovative.

The programme started in March 2002 in South Wales and now runs twice a year in March and October, delivering the trends for specific seasons (normally forecasting three seasons ahead). This enables companies to prepare and design effectively for their individual market niche.

Design Wales (DW) in conjunction with the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) have initiated a bi-annual trend prediction programme. This sets out to publicise style, colour and trend information to Welsh design businesses and give them access to up-to-date information relevant to their sector. The information provided is not aimed at specific companies but the group as a whole and comprises images, evocative colours and descriptive text. Armed with this, clients can then go away and with a confidence generated by an understanding of the key themes, apply them to their own product lines and target markets.

Lucy Richardson the Fashion and Textile Design Advisor organises each event and with the support of Malin Flynn Graphics design advisor, the seasonal overview publication is developed in-house. Currently DW are using Promostyl to deliver the presentations, previous events have seen predictions companies

such as The Mix, Kjeer Global, De-cipher all deliver presentations who are all internationally recognised prediction agencies. DW also promotes the event and sends invites to all sectors of the design industry in Wales. Such events are very useful not just because small businesses gain access to the expertise of a prediction and trend company, but because they represent important networking opportunities. After the event companies are free to access any books from the library free of charge on a 5-day loan basis. Alternatively DW will arrange a trend consultation deciphering trends with the client and helping companies to understand how to use the books.

The attraction of the colour and trend prediction programme revolves around such elements as the profile (and hence credibility) of the speakers involved and providing the event free of charge. Both are a powerful incentive for attendance. DW funds the events and the Welsh Development Agency funds the prediction library. The five annual events cost roughly £40k, the library and the DW trend publication is available to all attendees. The event is an expensive project to mount and the partnership for raising funds to buy trend books and to afford Promostyl's consultancy is crucial. As well as the colour and trend prediction programme DW also operates other sector-specific programmes as



the CAD Network and Food events. One of the eight Design Wales advisors is a specialist in Fashion and Textiles and functions as the co-ordinator of the event.

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