



**European project MediaTrans –
Stimulating trans-national RTD co-operation between SMEs and research actors
in Europe and India in the media sector
by identifying future and emerging technology needs in SMEs**

Case Study for Innovation Workshops in Germany

In the course of the MediaTrans project, one of the project's innovation workshops carried out by Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum (SEZ) took place at a small enterprise in the media sector, situated in the region Baden-Württemberg (Germany). The firm is active in advertisement and the design/planning of web appearances and has currently 10 members of staff.

Prior to the actual workshop, telephone contact had been established in order for the workshop to be suitably adjusted to the company. The details about the company learned in this call helped the workshop leaders to design the workshop according to the specific needs of the company.

As a first step, when carrying out the innovation workshop at the company's premises, the mission and vision of the company were assembled and specified. This step helped both the persons carrying out the workshop as well as the members of staff of the company participating in the workshop to focus on the main objective of the company. As a next step, the main products and services of the firm were classified within the Boston Consulting Group portfolio and arranged within the four areas "question marks", "cash cows", "rising stars" and "poor dogs" according to their current and future importance for the company. Following this, the listed products/services were compared with the afore gathered mission and vision of the company. Also, the future challenges for the company were discussed and compared with the listed main services and products. These three steps helped in identifying the central activities of the company. In the case of the German enterprise, the comparison showed that most products could be placed within the sectors "stars" and "cash cows". This being a positive result, it did nonetheless reveal the absence of "rising stars" – promising future oriented products. The following SWOT analysis made visible the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the company.

Comparing the findings of these analyses, the workshop participants were able to identify the company's most important products/services and revealed that the most promising future development could be seen within the area of semantic web. These findings were gathered and displayed in the company specific roadmap that gathered the findings of the first workshop and showed the recommended future development and fields of action for the company:

Project results	Technologies to be developed/expected and cooperations to be started	Programme name	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Short term technology needs (up to 2 years)								
1 Improved service for printing on demand	CGI: Software for fast image processing to enlarge the service for printing on demand. The company should be searching for an agreement with a company already active in this field to adapt existing products to their specific needs.	Enterprise Europe Network Next steps: Filling in a Technologie Request Profile and publishing it via BBS.		→				
2 Enhanced b2c communication	Further development of the already existing software (developed in-house): Online interfaces for enhanced communication and optimised workflow for b2c (i.e. facilitate the upload, manipulation and print of digital pictures). The company should be looking for a short term collaboration with a software developing company.	Innovation voucher for micro and small enterprises in Baden-Wuerttemberg Next steps: Signposting to the Ministry of Economics in Baden-Wuerttemberg Provided contact details of the ministry and send a short abstract of the idea. Provide the application form.		→	→			
Long term technology needs (up to 5 years)								
3 Improved printing process	RFID technologies for printing companies. Problem addressed is the traceability of print products during the printing process for detailed information on costs in each step of the print process. In general the company is very interested in the field of RFID technologies and solutions provided by the technology.	Knowledge transfer or joint projects with research actors in the RFID field. First step is to identify a researcher who may already have contacts with printing companies.				→		
5 Diversification of the printing know-how to other branches, i.e. health	The company has an outstanding know how in printing processes since 20 years. This know-how may be transferred to other branches. Therefore also new printing technology/materials need to be developed: Digital printing on other materials than paper e.g. for medical or fuel cell production processes.	Framework Programme of the EC / Eurostars: Cooperation with research actors and industry in the field of health/medicine. Joint application possible. Next step: Searching for possible cooperation partners from research centres. Identification of future calls.					→	

After the general analysis of the products/services within the first workshop, the second workshop helped to focus on the identified topics. SEZ was accompanied by an expert for semantic web, who could explain the most important features and developments as well as future technological developments to the company. Together, some specific areas were identified towards which the company should develop in the future and where there are obvious technological demands that can not be solved on its own.

After having identified the research needs, the company realized that no specific project idea could be developed, as the needs and objectives of the company that were discovered during the innovation workshop were too diverse and various in order to develop one specific field of interest. Also, the company did not feel fit enough to coordinate a European project on their own – due to a lack of experience as well as to the difficulty to concentrate at one specific point of action. It was therefore agreed that SEZ should do an active European wide search of possible research and development projects still looking for project partners where the company could participate. SEZ presented several possible project ideas to the SME, all fitting in the afore distinguished areas of interest, that would allow the company to gain access to the required technologies. The company did then decide to participate in one particularly interesting project.

The workshop helped to analyse the current situation of the company, to identify promising future fields of action and to reveal missing technological needs and a way to solve them. It did thereby actively support the company to be prepared for the future and for the demands to come. This could not have been realised without external help.