



Company: Optical Filters, Thame

Jobs Created/Safeguarded: 80

Turnover/Growth: 200% in past 4 years, 100% over next 2 years

Expansion: UK and US manufacturing facility, R&D

Staff Trained and Developed: Two thirds of workforce (BIT NVQ) including all senior managers

Services Taken Up through Business Link: MAS, PERA, SEEDA High Growth Business Coaching Programme, Oxford Innovation

Customer comment: "Business Link is really tuned in to our needs and future plans. They bring to our attention high quality programmes and opportunities, delivered by their many partners."

Optical Filters bucks the trend with plans to expand

Thame based Optical Filters has become a world leader in the design and manufacture of specialist glass and screens. Applications include avionics, marine, public information displays, defence and test & measurement equipment. Over the past four years they have achieved a growth rate of two hundred per cent and look set for another profitable year.

Optical Filters was established in 1988 and have since expanded their manufacturing sites in Thame and the US and invested in research and development to maintain their leading edge. They employ around eighty staff over both locations.

Nicola Dent, CEO at Optical Filters comments: "Our continuous investment in R&D is vital to our success in what is a very high growth market. Our products are very unique and are always focused on the customers needs also."

With their technical expertise and strong R&D resource, they have succeeded in designing our products into a wide variety of both commercial and defence projects throughout the world.

"We always need to be one step ahead of the game and this can only be achieved if our products, people and processes are better than the competitions."

When it comes to their people, a staggering two thirds of the Optical Filters workforce has an NVQ in Business Improvement Techniques (BIT), the recognised manufacturing qualification which encourages a company culture that is focused on the benefits of continuous improvement, as well as ensuring a safer, more organised workplace.

“BIT is just one of the many learning opportunities we have accessed through Business Link. They linked us up with the Manufacturing Advisory Service and PERA who deliver the actual training. They also signposted us to a Leadership Grant to enhance senior management development

“Business Link has also introduced us to a High Growth Business Coaching Programme with SEEDA and a Leadership for Global Competitiveness programme delivered by Oxford Innovation which our entire senior management team is currently benefiting from.” The SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) programme provides the structured delivery of intensive business coaching and assistance for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with the potential to grow to circa £10M turnover per annum.

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Nicola concludes: “We will continue to attack our market and are investing in further R&D, training and additional business improvement techniques to support that growth. We have plans to double our turnover in the next two years and are likely to be expanding our manufacturing facility in Thame as well as improving our channel distribution overseas. ”

Visit www.opticalfilters.co.uk or contact Business Link on 0845 600 9 006 for business advice and support.

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Notes to Editors

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