

## **ELECTRONICS DESIGN PROGRAMME HELPS RAISE PRODUCTIVITY**

**August, 1999** .Hundreds of UK companies are backing a new DTI initiative aimed at developing design tools and techniques to boost competitiveness.

The DTI's Electronics Design programme was launched in April and has already attracted a growing level of support and participation by UK industry.

The £3.6 million campaign aims to help management understand and introduce low-cost design tools and techniques designed to get the right products to market at the right price and at the right time. The programme offers management seminars, free and independent consultancy, hands-on project design support, training and signposts to UK and European sources of government funding.

DTI Minister for Small Firms and E-commerce, Patricia Hewitt, said:

This programme has been very successful with almost 1500 people responding to the programme promotion and more than 200 people, mostly from small and medium sized firms, attending or registering for a management seminar.

The majority of those who have already attended have shown real interest in investigating new design methods and many intend to start by meeting with one of the programme's eight Support Centres. With five more seminars scheduled for the autumn, we hope to be able to help more companies to evaluate and develop their electronic design needs.

Chandru Ray, Marketing Director of Bilston Sheet Metal Workers Ltd., attended a seminar in May and is now working with Bolton Institute, an Electronics Design Support Centre, to develop an electric heater featuring an electronic thermostat.

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He said:

I recommend the programme to any small business. We've moved from metal bashing to electronics based products. The assistance provided by Electronics Design in evaluating our design methods and tools is proving very helpful in the development of a marketable product.

Alfia Services, of Bristol, is another firm to have benefited from the programme. Richard Beard, Development Manager of the company, which manufactures ticket machines for car parks, said:

This programme has made a real difference to my approach to design. We are looking to incorporate far more functionality and reporting information in our equipment. Attending an Electronics Design seminar and following up with the Bournemouth Support Centre is helping us to introduce new methods that will permit greater flexibility in our hardware design.

Norman Stock, Support Centre Manager at Bournemouth University, is pleased with the response to the programme and reports:

Almost every company we have talked to has recognised the need to improve their design process, and felt that the ED programme had shown them the way forward.

A further five Electronics Design management seminars will be held during the autumn at: Portsmouth (30 September); Heathrow (14 October); Livingston/Edinburgh (21 October); Harrogate (4 November) and Cambridge (24 November). Each session includes a half-day overview on management issues and design techniques, plus an afternoon exhibition and workshop comprising Support Centre, user and industry presentations. A seminar registration form can be downloaded by visiting [www.e-design.org.uk/ED\\_mainfiles/seminars.htm](http://www.e-design.org.uk/ED_mainfiles/seminars.htm) and more information is available via the DTI hotline on 0171 215 1909.

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