

## **ELECTRONICS DESIGN PROGRAMME:**

### **YEAR 2 ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS KEY DESIGN ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY**

DTI's Electronics Design Programme has announced Phase 2 plans that have been developed on the basis of a successful first year and which address the key concerns of the UK electronics industry.

As well as the anticipated technology issues faced by industry, design project management is considered to be a critical operational issue. Specific concerns in this area include the introduction of new technology and tools and the need to improve the design process in order to meet market demand for product innovation. Other key issues include cost reduction, subcontracting and marketing.

These are the views expressed by senior management participants in DTI's 3-year, £3.6 million **Electronics Design** (ED) campaign, launched last year at Nepcon.

The views are representative of the one in every five UK electronics companies involved in design that have participated in the programme to date. Of ten thousand companies originally contacted, around 2000 have enquired about electronics design topics, attended a management seminar or contacted a Support Centre for assistance.

As an early, positive outcome of the **Electronics Design** initiative, 85% of the 400 decision makers who attended seminars between May and November last year indicated that they had been encouraged to explore improvements to their decision process. Many of the companies they represent have already initiated discussions and projects with Support Centres and with the Programme's independent Business Advisors.

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"Compared to DTI's predecessor programme, *Microelectronics in Business*, companies are seeking more of a holistic approach to new product design," notes Dr. Steve Grainger, Manager of the ED Support Centre at the University of Staffordshire. "We find ourselves working closely with a company over a period of months, covering a range of areas such as product specification, design methodology, training in design tools and helping with the selection of the appropriate technology. TCS (formerly the Teaching Company Scheme) is proving extremely successful in transferring technology, skills and new design methods into the companies we work with."

In addition to the programme's seven independent Business Advisors, each working in association with a Support Centre, **Electronics Design** has created a wider pool of independent experts, whose advice in specialist areas can be called upon on an ad-hoc basis.

### **New Initiatives for 2000**

In response to many of the concerns outlined by industry during the first phase of **Electronics Design**, a number of new initiatives have been launched. The programme of management seminars, workshops and training opportunities has now been considerably extended and offered locally through the Support Centre network. New, comprehensive guides to the "Product Development Process" and "Subcontracting" will be available shortly, as will new web-based information on "Project Management", "Specification Writing", "Design for Test and Manufacture", "Investment Decisions" and "Government Funding and Support Sources".

The **Electronics Design** web site is being further developed to include details of training providers and electronics design training courses offered by Support Centres. The web-based database of suppliers of products and services has been updated and reproduced in a new CD-Rom version, available from Support Centres.

Further information about the programme, local events and guides is available from the DTI Hotline on 020 7215 1909 or at: [www.e-design.org.uk](http://www.e-design.org.uk)

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The DTI's 3-year "Electronics Design" programme was launched in April 1999 and has 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.