

Encsite case study: Bloc Digital

In the space of four years, immersive technology firm Bloc Digital has driven a rapid expansion, acquiring two new companies and more than doubling its workforce to 51. Guidance, funding and talent from the University of Derby have played an integral part in Bloc's success.

Founded 20 years ago, initially to create 3D visualisations of aircraft engines for Rolls-Royce, Bloc Digital is now one of the UK's leading immersive digital technology studios, delivering cutting-edge digital visualisation.

Director and Founder Keith Cox explains when the turning point came: "We have always had an eye on the future. We were doing well and had big plans for an in-house R&D project. Then a meeting in 2016 with a member of the University's B2B team opened up opportunities to advice and funding.

"I didn't even know this support existed! It had a huge impact, enabling us to accelerate our R&D and fuelling our strong market position and growth."



Today, there's a team of 51 at Bloc Digital, providing specialised services including immersive technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality, web and app development, 3D modelling and animation, and also brand identity. There's been growth in the client base with a number of global clients including Siemens, Jaguar Land Rover, Shell, GSK and the NHS.

Since that initial meeting in 2016, Bloc have forged a close relationship with the university. "The University of Derby has been a key partner in our growth," says Keith. "We proudly seek, attract, appoint and develop the top talent from within and outside of the region and the university has played its part.

"We have employed 15 graduates, hosted six students for their 'year in industry', and provided placements for a masters student and PhD students. The University of Derby is our first port-of-call for new talent and to explore funding opportunities."

The Encsite team have been a main point of contact throughout, providing general business support, advice and signposting. Several employees from Bloc have attended Encsite-run workshops and Encsite put them in touch with an expert in the Business School who helped the firm to further develop HR policies for the growing team.

“Because we’ve grown organically and at speed, we have had to constantly adapt our infrastructure and systems in place for that number of staff” says Keith. “We needed different ways of working and the person from the Business School had great insights — for example, by suggesting we set up tri-annual reviews for employees. We appreciated that guidance and have implemented it.”

Encsite is a partnership between the University of Derby and Aston University, which is funded by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership's European Regional Development Fund allocation. Encsite offers funding and support to small-to-medium sized enterprises in the aerospace, rail and automotive supply chain.

For more information about Encsite, visit the [University of Derby website](#).

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