

FINAL EVALUATION & IMPACT REPORT

Completed by The Insight Works



Digital Innovation for Manufacturing ^(DI4M)

“We’ve spent over 150 years in the industry. We know it well; however, we are looking to the future and need to use digital to continue to be innovative and competitive. WMG have the know-how in smart factories, and we got support that I wouldn’t have got anywhere else.”

Daniel Robinson
Head of Finance
Operations & I.T, Gordon Ellis & Co

Launched in August 2018, Digital Innovation for Manufacturing (DI4M) has been a 5 year, £10m programme supporting digital innovation in manufacturing SMEs through short knowledge exchange projects, events, collaborative research, and the provision of leading-edge workspace, equipment, and expertise.

Led by WMG’s SME Group at the University of Warwick, it was funded by the WMG centre High Value Manufacturing Catapult and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It has been delivered across Coventry and Warwickshire, Greater Birmingham and Solihull, the Black Country, South East Midlands, Leicester and Leicestershire, and Worcestershire.

Value for Money

Value for money is exceptional when compared to established benchmarks.

The total public cost per Enterprise Supported is £14,387. Less than half the Regeneris¹, benchmark of £34,000.

Increased employment is at a public cost of £7,764 per job – a tenth of the Regeneris benchmark mean of £71,000.



Engagement and Legacy

The evaluation found that the project reversed key market failures around innovation and digitalisation in the region’s manufacturing SMEs. DI4M has boosted the region’s R&D capacity and capability. It has supported businesses to be more ‘innovation active’. **Beneficiaries have adopted new digital approaches and seen major productivity and efficiency gains of on average 77%.**

DI4M will leave a significant legacy for the businesses it has supported. It has created a platform to build bigger and better projects in the future. Importantly, it has established digital as a springboard to Net Zero.

The link between digital, decarbonisation and productivity has become clearer through DI4M, and has resulted in the establishment of follow on projects such as The Net Zero Innovation Network, a regional programme bringing sustainability into manufacturing and The Business Aid Energy Toolkit (BEAT) helping manufacturers navigate higher energy costs and to increase energy efficiency.

92% of respondents felt the support had changed the behaviour of the business.

Project Delivery

Industrial partners told our independent evaluators that the WMG SME group has been a highly effective delivery team, with strong project management and administration capabilities, including in ERDF disciplines. Management processes have been strong and focussed on minimising the burden on business where possible. The decision to recruit industry experts has been pivotal in delivering not only exceptionally high-quality support, but in building the credibility of the group to work with business.

It has broken down the barriers that exist between business and academia and has provided a platform for future University collaborations and commercial activity with SMEs.

89% of businesses said the support had increased the likelihood of collaborating with the University of Warwick in the future.



Impact

The results reported in the independent review of DI4M:

374
Manufacturing Businesses Digitalised
like the project with Billingham Bags to implement a collaborative robot.

51
New Products taken to market
including wall climbing robot HausBots, Ultra-speed 3D printer CONSTRUCT3D and the Pashley electric cargo trike ALECS.

2659
Jobs Safeguarded

224
New Innovative Processes developed,
bringing advantages in terms of flexibility, productivity or cost saving to businesses including Listertube, WH Tildesley Ltd and Sarginsons Industries Ltd.

660
Jobs Created

204
Companies gone on to undertake further R&D
with the University.

Equates to
£220m
of GVA (Gross Value Add) in the Midlands economy
that wouldn’t have existed without the support.
That’s £22 for every £1 invested.

¹ England ERDF Project 2014-20: Output Unit Costs and Definitions



"The DI4M programme has been an important anchor for Midlands SME businesses through a period of unprecedented challenge and disruption. The programme has been a constant effective enabler for introducing new ideas, new technology to boost productivity as well as acting as a springboard to Net Zero and business energy efficiency."

Dr Mark Swift,
Director of SME Engagement, WMG

CATAPULT
High Value Manufacturing



**MIDLANDS
ENGINE**

"The SME team at WMG are from a very well-established academic institution but they are incredibly commercial about the advice that they give, which is second to none in my experience across the West Midlands."

Nat Macaulay
Managing Director
JCM Fine Joinery



"Circular manufacturing is an essential step in the journey to Net Zero and the work carried out by WMG was the first part of what has become the primary focus of Sarginsons' strategy - to be the first foundry in the world to have a totally circular supply chain."

Mark Nunan
Director
Sarginsons Industries Ltd

"Working with WMG has given Pashley the opportunity to take advantage of skills, expertise and facilities which we would never otherwise have had access to."

Adrian Williams
Managing Director
Pashley Cycles



To discuss the findings of this evaluation report further or to find out more about the work WMG does with SMEs, please contact us via:

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