

## **SEEDA supports Southampton business through design**

**8 July 2009**

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), with the Design Council, is launching the 2009 South East Designing Demand Immerse (DD Immerse) programme with ten businesses from around the South East.

Discovery Yachts, which is based in Southampton and produces world cruising yachts, is one of ten businesses that have been selected to take part in this year's DD Immerse programme. DD Immerse is part of the £1.6m SEEDA funded Designing Demand programme, which is aimed at small and medium sized businesses and offers strategic design advice to help improve profitability, their place in the market and innovation.

The launch event brought together Discovery Yachts with this year's other selected businesses, which include a provider of hydraulic work platforms, a manufacturer of molded plastics and a heating and ventilation specialist, to discuss how DD Immerse could help their businesses prosper. Previous years have seen companies' bottom lines benefit from new corporate identities, new product lines and improved manufacturing processes.

Senior managers and directors from each company will work with dedicated mentors to analyse their business and future plans to devise a strategic and targeted design solution to support it going forward.

Over the past three years, 450 businesses in the South East have taken part in the Designing Demand programme to gain an understanding of how effective design can positively impact their businesses and to give them cost effective access to senior designers.

Robin Gillum-Webb, SEEDA Head of Design, explained: "SEEDA is delighted to be involved with the Designing Demand programme for the third consecutive year. Businesses in the current economic downturn are increasingly recognising the importance of getting the best design into their products and services. Through this programme we are helping companies access effective design strategies that will help them gain competitive advantage and increase returns – for every £100 spent on design it is estimated that there is a return of £225\*."

Nigel Stuart, Managing Director of Discovery Yachts, added: "The DD Immerse programme will provide the right professional design help which our company needs to remain competitive. It's great to know my regional development agency, SEEDA, can support small businesses during the current economic climate."

**...ENDS...**

## Notes to Editors

\* Source: The Design Council, <http://www.designfactfinder.co.uk/>

- **Background on Designing Demand in the South East:**

Designing Demand was developed by the Design Council and includes three programmes:

- **DD Immerse** - a full strategic design programme targeting established companies by providing high level design input and up to 18 days of mentoring over a 12 – 18 month period.
- **DD Generate** - offers up to five days worth of mentoring from a Design Council Design Associate over a six month period to SME's over 3 years old.
- **DD Innovate** – a structured design mentoring programme targeting very small technology start-ups with the potential for significant growth. Innovate lasts up to 18 months with groups of 6 companies working together as a cohort. SEEDA completed a first Innovate project in May 2008 and is now rolling out a new programme.

Designing Demand is one of the Business Expertise programmes in place under BSSP.

SEEDA was one of the first RDAs to roll-out the Designing Demand Immerse programme in November 2006. Since then the programme has achieved the following outputs:

- 450 SMEs and high growth technology companies have attended strategic design workshops
  - 86 companies have participated in the Innovate and Generate programmes improving sales, profits and market position.
  - 80 designers have attended specialist workshops focused on helping them win new design business from SMEs.
  - 75 business advisors have attended specialist workshops to help them understand the design challenge facing SMEs
  - Successful companies involved in the Designing Demand programme include JS Humidifiers which was featured on Radio 4's 'In Business.'
- **SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency**, is the Government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development of the South East of England – the driving force of the UK's economy. Through supporting businesses, encouraging innovation, developing skills and engaging with public and private partners, we aim to create a successful, sustainable future for the region.
  - **SEEDA's support helped deliver the following** over the period 2005-2008:
    - 17,500 jobs created or safeguarded
    - 32,500 people helped to get work
    - 10,000 businesses created or attracted to region
    - 137,500 businesses assisted
    - £638m investment, 45% levered from private sector
    - 200ha Brownfield land remediated
    - 148,500 people assisted in skills development
  - **For media enquiries**, please contact:  
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