



East Asia...

Innovation gateway

A Cambridge University research project investigating design and innovation in China and Japan



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MET
Overseas
Research
Project

혁신

2006

创新

East Asia...

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Cambridge University manufacturing engineering students undertake an annual overseas research project focused on areas of significance to global manufacturing, presenting honest and challenging findings about current manufacturing trends. This year, the project is investigating design and innovation in China and Japan.

Project objectives

The growth of production facilities in China and East Asia is well recorded. What is less well known is that companies in the region are also developing their design and innovation capabilities, building on their technical manufacturing knowledge. Governments, as well as industry, are investing significantly in innovation in response to a perceived threat of production migrating to other, lower-cost regions of the world. These developments provide interesting opportunities and challenges for western firms with global markets and supply chains. The research project is focusing on the following themes:

Culture and design

Japan and China are at different stages in the development of design and innovation. Each country has its own socio-economic and cultural context. The project will explore the influence of different national cultures on the approach to design. It will investigate how East-Asian designers are meeting the needs of western customers and how firms might best manage internationally distributed design.

Government support

Governments across the region are providing support for design and innovation in different ways. The project will look at each government's aspirations in relation to design, the support they are providing and the impact of their approach on design activities in their country. It will consider the implications of the findings for UK companies.

Links between design and downstream activities

The activities downstream from design include production, sales, distribution, use, service and end-of-life management. The project will investigate how companies consider these activities during the design stage, the links that exist between them and the impact of performing the different activities across various geographical locations.

Implementation

Following several months of Cambridge-based research the team of manufacturing engineering students and staff will make a two-week visit to China (Shenzhen and Hong Kong), and Japan (Nagoya) between 3–14 July, 2006. Using the Institute for Manufacturing's excellent links within the region, the team will visit a selection of multinational companies, research centres and government bodies.

Feedback

The detailed findings of the project will be communicated in two ways:

- A comprehensive written report
- An industrial seminar



Sponsorship opportunities

The cost of the project will be partly covered by the Institute for Manufacturing and partly by external sponsorship.

Sponsors will receive up-to-date information on the design industry in China, Japan and South Korea. Other benefits of sponsorship will include:

- detailed report about the respective countries as centres for innovation and design
- analysis of the region's skills base and resources
- prominent publicity both at home and abroad (see details below)
- privileged access to Cambridge University Manufacturing Engineering students for recruitment purposes

Various levels of sponsorship are available and terms are negotiable. Companies can also choose to support a particular item such as travel expenses or printing costs.

	Main sponsor (£7,500)	Co-sponsor (£5,000)	Corporate sponsor (£2,500)	Individual sponsor (£1,000)
Report 2 copies of the final report	✓	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledgement Project website Publicity material Published report	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publicity Company name and logo on posters Leaflets and project website + homepage link	✓	✓	✓	
Use of company logo Tour T-shirts Front cover of published report Slides and handouts at the programme presentation	✓	✓		
Graduate recruitment Opportunity for Cambridge graduate recruitment drive via posters, email and flyers	✓			
Contact development Social event and presentation to MET students Formation of stronger links with Institute for Manufacturing	✓			

MET

MET (Manufacturing Engineering Tripos) is a unique two-year programme followed by 3rd and 4th year Cambridge engineering students. It covers the full range of manufacturing and management issues including marketing, design, materials, manufacturing systems and human resources, all within a financial and business context. A thorough theoretical basis is combined with the opportunity to put ideas into practice in industry.

MET graduates are much sought-after for demanding jobs, not only in manufacturing industry but also in other branches of engineering, consultancy or commerce. Students are well-placed to start their own companies, having gained a thorough understanding of business and made contact with a large number of companies during the course.

The culmination of MET is the international research project and tour, which is entirely organised by the students. Recent projects have included 'China – a tiger in the supply chain' in 2005; 'Making manufacturing work - a study of strategic responses to international pressures in California, Texas and Mexico' in 2004; and 'Baltic Horizons – the accession to the EU of the Baltic States' in 2003.

Institute for Manufacturing

The Institute for Manufacturing is part of the University of Cambridge Department of Engineering. It has approximately 200 people involved in education, research and industrial services that aim to provide a clear understanding of the challenges facing manufacturing today.

Specialist areas include strategy and performance, international manufacturing, economics and policy, technology management, industrial sustainability, production processes, decision support and automation and control.

Further information

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