



Hardware systems that are effective and reliable enable the company to meet the needs of the most demanding of clients.

EEI help led to a one-week intensive tour of the US by Tony Blake, Chairman of Cambridge Imaging.



## CASE STUDY

# Cambridge Imaging Systems

## Passport delivers export vision for Cambridgeshire company

The electronics media revolution has produced a resource-rich industry with millions of images and hours of material. Cambridge Imaging Systems has successfully taken on the enormous challenge of developing systems to manage and market this data.

There is worldwide demand for such solutions, and this led the company to tap into UK Trade & Investment's Passport to Export programme, delivered by East of England International.

The result has been a significant breakthrough into the North American market for the Willingham-based company. Chairman, Tony Blake, says its involvement in Passport persuaded them exporting was a realistic prospect.

Having originally worked with the Ministry of Defence, with both BBC and ITN as major customers, and having digitised and put British Pathé News on-line, the company realised that it had a good product but it needed to find new markets to sustain growth.

'We felt there would be opportunities outside the UK but weren't quite sure where to start, to be honest,' says Tony Blake. 'So, we began to explore the idea and that led us to Mike O'Malley at East of England International (EEI). His role as Regional International Trade Adviser, specialising in Information and Communication Technologies, made him the ideal starting point.

'Mike encouraged us to register on the UKTI Passport to Export programme and we went through a quick and painless exercise to decide whether our business had the capacity to achieve growth through exporting.

'Through the programme we were able to focus on our product offering for export, identify the best markets and think about ways of maximising the chances of success. We identified North America as our target and I attended a major tradeshow in Las Vegas to get an overview of the market, competition, potential partners and customers. This trip was match-funded.'

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East of England International delivers UK Trade & Investment services and supports regional businesses seeking to win a share of the global market. We also give free and confidential help to overseas-owned companies setting up or expanding in the UK.



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Cambridge Imaging Systems then applied for assistance with market research under the Export Marketing Research Scheme. This led to another intensive trip to the USA – in just one week Tony Blake met with 28 contacts from New York City to Washington DC.

Tony Blake adds: 'Overall, Passport to Export made us focus on if and how we should export, how we should present ourselves, and which markets to target. The programme was easy to access and everyone was helpful and efficient. The knowledge we gained gave us confidence and the support made several processes and decisions much easier. I couldn't recommend it too highly.'

Mike O'Malley, says: 'Tony Blake took a considered and thorough approach to his company's export thrust and developed a plan that made use of a wide range of UKTI's services. To maximise overseas business opportunities, he met delegates on Inward Trade Missions from a diverse range of countries. He also exhibited at UKTI's Technology World 2006 business partnering event where he and colleagues had the opportunity to meet with more than 100 overseas delegates representing all the major markets across the world.'

'As a result, Cambridge Imaging Systems has succeeded in gaining business with a world-player, The News Market in New York, with a contract worth more than £50,000, to provide their Imagen Ingest Suite; and another hardware contract with Hi-Vision in Montreal, Canada worth £35,000.'

The company's family of products provides solutions ranging from digitising and archiving old film stock – often starting with original technology – through to the latest digital off-air recording. Already in the overseas market are **Imagen** and **Alphagate**, while the company feels that there are real possibilities for **BoB** in the USA and for **RECLAIM** among the world's armed forces.

**Imagen** is a media asset management system for digitally recording, archiving and distributing very

large quantities of stills or video. It is delivered as a complete turnkey solution and all its components can be customised to meet individual requirements. An eCommerce gateway allows internet/intranet users to access the archive online.

The **Alphagate** family is a range of solid-state devices that can receive and broadcast digital TV channels, and stream them on to corporate LANs. Users can watch any of the TV channels on the LAN using a small set top box and a TV monitor, or they can watch the TV channels using their desktop computers.

**BoB** (Box of Broadcasts) is an innovative off-air recording facility, which holds entire television programmes in digital file form on hard disk in a rolling archive and allows a range of functions.

**RECLAIM** stands for Remote Equipment for Combining Locally Acquired Images and Metadata. This laptop-based unit has been designed to allow personnel to quickly organise, describe and classify images that have been captured with a digital camera. It can also be integrated with **Imagen** for archiving.

#### KEY FACTS

- Cambridge Imaging Systems provides solutions ranging from digitising and archiving old film stock – often starting with original technology – through to the latest digital off-air recording.
- Major customers for the technology include the Ministry of Defence, BBC and ITN. Imagen was used to digitise and put the British Pathé News archive on line.
- Its system has been taken up by The News Market, a major player in the archiving and distribution of video on both sides of the Atlantic.
- The company has made use of a wide range of UKTI services, delivered by EEI, leading to significant contracts in North America.

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