

# Case study: **3T RPD Limited**

## Background

3T RPD Ltd has been in business for 8 years and is based at New Greenham Park, Newbury. We are the largest provider of prototype parts using Selective Laser Sintering (SLS) and Direct Metal Laser Sintering (DMLS) technologies in the UK.

The machines and processes that we use are extremely high-tech, using lasers and powder to build up 3-dimensional models layer by layer, rather like a 3D printer. This technology enables us to make unusual shapes and complex geometries, and the materials used such as Nylon and Cobalt Chrome, mean that the parts are extremely strong and functional.

This means that our customers can test their latest products before going ahead with full production, for example we made a prototype of a lawn mower which then had the engine and blades put in it, and it was tested on real grass. This proved the design so that when manufacture went ahead, everything worked properly so that it could be safely sold to the public.

This technology can be used for a wide range of industries including Aerospace, Automotive, Medical, Architectural and Electrical. We can make prototypes of just about anything, ie. vacuum cleaners, surgical instruments, kettles, smoke alarms, toys, and engine components for cars or aeroplanes.

## Growth of the business

The company has grown from being set up by just a couple of people, to having 25 members of staff today. We moved into new purpose-built premises in September 2006 and have grown by over 50% in the last 6 months alone!

We are the market leader because we ensure we have excellent quality in our product and provide superior customer service. Much of our recent growth is attributable to gaining new customers in new industry sectors, and we are constantly working to share our knowledge and expertise with people who were previously unaware of SLS and DMLS technology.

## Facts:

**Founded:**

1999

**Legal form:**

Limited Ccompany

**Product/service:**

Rapid prototyping in plastic and metal

**Annual turnover:**

£2.5 million

**No of employees:**

25 full time staff



## The investment

We are currently the largest provider of plastic and metal prototypes in the UK. Our aim is to be the European leaders within the next 5 years, increasing in size by 4 times what we are now. One area in which we can gain a considerable amount of new business in Europe is with architectural companies.

The UK architectural sector currently makes up 30% of our income, and artists, designers and architects have now accepted SLS as a means of producing models of new building projects, works of art, sculptures and structures. This has taken a lot of hard work over the last few years, and we now need to spread this knowledge overseas!

Continues

## Case study: **3T RPD Limited - continued**

### **The investment**

We have already spent approx. £5,000 on a new part of our website dedicated to architecture. However, in order to generate visitors to our website, we need to advertise our services and publicise our website address.

An investment of £50,000 would enable us to undertake an extensive advertising campaign with architectural magazines with a distribution throughout France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and beyond. The cost of a full page advert in one magazine can be anywhere between £3,000-£5,000, and there would also be options to appear on their websites, but this would be at an additional cost. This investment would enable us to generate a very high profile campaign through both printed and online media, throughout Europe.

The downside to this investment is that we don't generate any new enquiries or business as a result of the advertising campaign. We would need to ensure that we targeted the readers of the magazines in the right way, so as to give us the maximum opportunity to catch their attention and generate their interest, and ultimately, acquire them as new customers!

The upside would therefore be an increase in new business from European Architectural companies, and this would be very easy to monitor as we currently have none in this sector. We currently do work for 8 UK architectural companies giving us 30% of our income, so if we gained just 3 or 4 similar companies in Europe, this would bring our architectural business up to 50% of our overall income.