

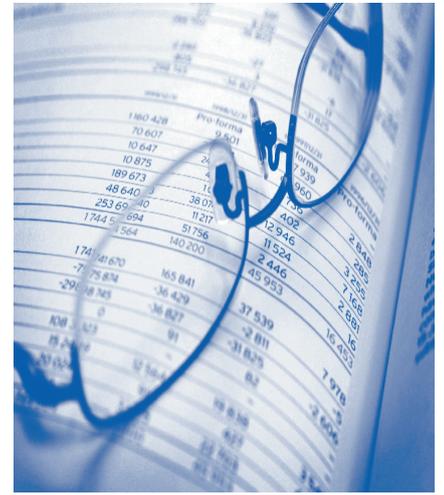


Australian Institute
for Commercialisation

TechFast Client Case Study



Rip Curl



Fast Facts:

- Rip Curl has developed the first ever power heated wet suit - the H Bomb
- Collaboration with a university research facility to test suitable materials for the wet suit
- Four prototypes have been produced in partnership with a range of private companies

The Company

Rip Curl is a brand synonymous with surfing products and culture. Established in 1967 to produce surfboards, the company branched out into wet suit manufacture in 1970 and has never looked back.

Warbrick and Singer, the company's founders, made the decision which changed forever the nature of their fledgling company.

Looking at the essential needs of their fellow surfers in cold-water Victoria, they see that one – a board to ride – is being serviced by too many companies, while the other – a wet suit to keep out the cold – is being serviced by only two, one of whom makes wet suits for divers and has only a marginal commercial interest in surfing.

By today's standards, the original Rip Curl

wet suits were primitive, but they differed from others on the market in that they evolved through interaction with surfers.

The business now sells to every corner of the globe and maintains its headquarters and a wet suit production facility in Torquay, Victoria.

The Opportunity

Rip Curl, in its continuous search to advance wet suit design and manufacture, recently released a heated wet suit called the H Bomb.

Through its TechFast program, the AIC was engaged to assist Rip Curl to find new technologies and advanced materials that would keep the second generation H Bomb at the forefront of wet suit performance and development.



The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is a leading service company helping innovators achieve commercial success. Around Australia, the AIC helps business, research organisations and governments convert their ideas into successful outcomes.

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These advancements would also potentially flow on to Rip Curl's full range of wet suit products.

The AIC worked with Rip Curl to determine the areas of development with which it could best help Rip Curl. This included access to new materials and a university research facility capability of testing to improve the wet suits thermal characteristics and heat retention.

New materials were used to improve the performance of the heating elements. This technology enhancement significantly reduced the heat loss and resulted in lower battery power consumption, allowing the H Bomb to operate longer from its existing power source. This benefit offers considerable cost advantages as the equivalent enlargement of the battery unit to achieve equivalent performance gains would be far more expensive and increase weight.

A research organisation was introduced to Rip Curl in a meeting facilitated by the AIC. The researchers were able to walk away from the meeting with product samples in hand for the evaluation of Nano particles application processes to modify surface characteristics.

The resultant material characteristic improved the heat distribution profile. The research organisation was able to provide proof of concept samples within weeks of the initial engagement.

The AIC also introduced Rip Curl to a number of private companies operating as technology providers in the Automotive, Giftware and Safety products industries in Victoria. These businesses were able to directly transfer their technology and manufacturing capability into an entirely new market of products.

These businesses were identified as having complimentary equipment, technologies and knowledge to achieve the development of a new product feature that the organisation has been seeking to develop for some years.

One of the technology companies was able to produce working prototypes within 4 weeks for testing. This was done using its existing manufacturing process and materials technologies. Further research and development will be carried out in the future as a result of this finding to enhance the product design further using more advanced materials and dedicated manufacturing techniques.

In all Rip Curl was introduced to 5 Victorian manufacturers and 3 research bodies for discussions on potential collaboration opportunities.

The Outcome

Through TechFast, Rip Curl was quickly able to engage and achieve research outcomes with a research organisation.

Rip Curl is also in ongoing discussions to commence a number of other specific research projects to enhance their wet suit product range as a result of this initial contact.

Rip Curl also reviewed product samples offering technology advancement in textiles and polymers from 5 Victorian manufacturers. All were capable of technology integration into the product range in the future and are now either under review or in a testing phase.

Another positive outcome from the AIC's facilitation was the sharing of knowledge with another TechFast client in a different area of sports product design and manufacture. The companies both source similar products and when introduced to each other, were able to share their valuable knowledge and information to improve their networks and access the latest technologies.

www.ripcurl.com.au

If you are interested in finding out more about the AIC's TechFast program please contact:
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