



Australian Institute
for Commercialisation



Case Study: Russell Mineral Equipment



The Company

Russell Mineral Equipment Pty Ltd (RME) is a specialist mining equipment technology company with its design and manufacturing facilities based in Toowoomba, Queensland. RME has won a host of technology and export awards including Australian Exporter of the Year – Regional in 2001 and again in 2007.

The Opportunity

In 2001 RME donated \$200,000 to a local university expecting better collaboration with the university and ultimately commercial outcomes from the partnership. As a highly innovative and successful business committing four percent of their total income to R&D activity, RME thought it worthwhile to assist the university to retain one of their gifted academics through the donation and to increase their access to the university's advanced computer modelling capability.

Unfortunately RME saw no direct increase in collaboration between themselves, or any other business and the University.

At the same time, RME's approach to collaborate with another national research organisation was declined. That research organisation stated they feared losing annual funding from a foreign multi-national who might see such collaboration as competitive to theirs.

Whilst RME were disappointed by the above experiences they realised that research sector collaboration was important to their business innovation strategy and were still determined to successfully collaborate with relevant research organisations.

Fast Facts

- TechFast facilitated a three party collaborative research project
- Successful commercialisation of technology underway
- RME won Australian Regional Exporter of the Year in 2007



The Australian Institute for Commercialisation (AIC) is a leading service organisation 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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“Australia must do better in creating the right environment and connecting mechanisms between SMEs and universities to meet this critical challenge. The TechFast service is great at bridging this divide.”
John Russell, Russell Mineral Equipment.

TechFast Assistance

After these experiences, RME were introduced to the AIC's TechFast program, an intermediary service specialising in facilitating collaborations between SMEs and research organisations and other innovative organisations. The service assisted RME to explore various technology commercialisation and collaboration opportunities with multiple research organisations and businesses across Australia.

With TechFast facilitation assistance RME were able to re-establish a new and more satisfactory collaborative relationship with their original university partner. This included accessing the unspent portion of their donation to win an ARC Linkage grant with the university. It was also identified that the new project needed additional expertise from the Julius Kruttschnitt Minerals Research Centre (JKMRC).

With TechFast facilitation services again assisting, a three party collaborative project was established and commenced.

RME Managing Director John Russell said TechFast was “the perfect adaptor plate between academia and industry that also showed RME what it should do to better engage”. He went on to comment that importantly the TechFast Manager also revealed shortfalls on RME's side as well as those from the research organisations, and kept both sides moving to meet milestones, despite distractions.

The Outcomes

The collaborative project is now nearing the end of three years of R&D with some promising results.

In addition, through the above collaboration the JKMRRC recognised RME's extensive commercialisation experience and capability and so approached RME to assist them to take another new JKMRRC technology to the market. The first units of this technology will soon be delivered to customers by RME, and sales of more than one million dollars have already been secured through this additional collaboration.



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