

Case Study

Business start-ups: Assuria Ltd



Key Facts

- Assuria Ltd is an IT security software developer, providing automated compliance and information assurance solutions to protect corporate and customer information assets from the threat of corruption, theft, abuse and poor controls, especially from 'Insiders'.
- As a start-up business Assuria required a flexible tenancy agreement.
- The Science and Technology Centre (STC) and the Reading Enterprise Centre, located on the University of Reading campus, offer prime opportunities for entrepreneurial companies to develop and grow.
- The STC comprises approximately 3,000 square metres of lettable space, divided between office and laboratory space, and offers an excellent environment for companies in the chemical, biological or environmental sectors who seek R&D facilities.
- Business advice was provided by the Enterprise Hub - now called South East Business Innovation and Growth.
- Assuria have been based at the STC for four years and have benefitted from the flexibility and price of the leasing terms as well as interaction with both other SMEs and students.

The Client

Assuria Ltd is a UK based IT security software developer, providing automated compliance and information assurance solutions to major organisations in more than 60 countries. Its solutions help to protect corporate and customer information assets from the threat of corruption, theft, and abuse - especially from 'Insiders'. Government, Defence, Financial Services and other commercial organisations around the world use Assuria solutions to maintain control over their IT configurations and to satisfy operational, regulatory and data security requirements.

Background information

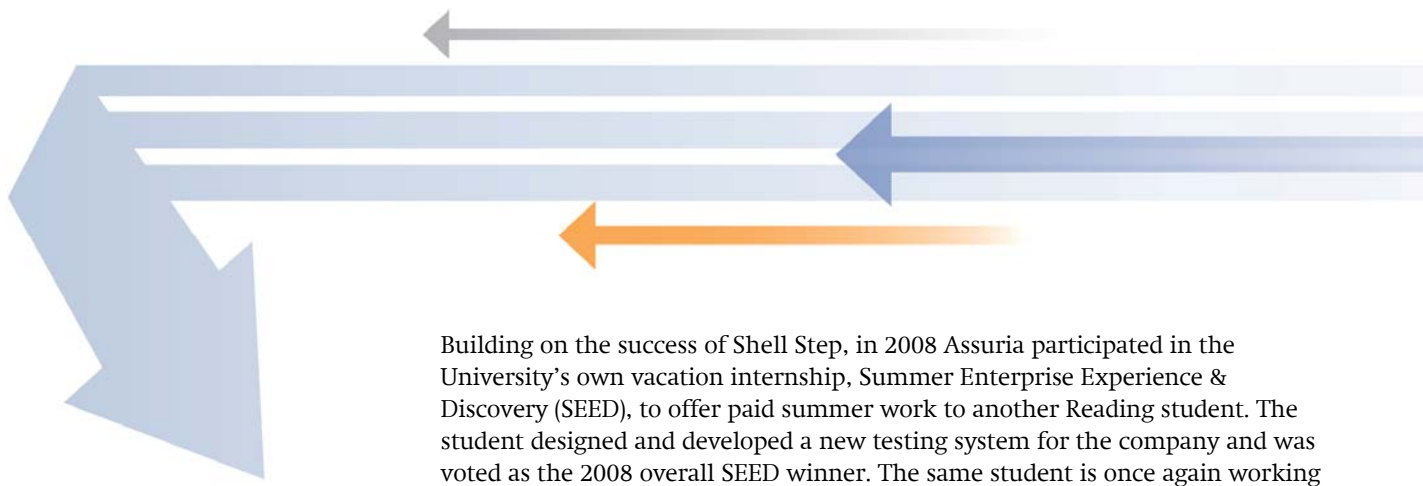
After visiting business advisors at the Enterprise Hub (EH) * and Reading Enterprise Centre (REC) at the University of Reading in mid 2004, the directors of Assuria remembered its benefits when considering commercial premises for their new company.

The recent start-up company had been looking for premises with flexible terms in contrast to the usual commercial properties on offer. Assuria was attracted to the REC in terms of its flexibility which meant that it could sign a 'tenancy at will' agreement. Starting with just one room Assuria could expand and grow as and when necessary.

After a couple of years Assuria required more space and moved from the Reading Enterprise Centre (REC) to the Science and Technology Centre (STC), still within the University of Reading campus. The interaction and shared sense of community with other SMEs at the REC and the STC was a key attraction for Assuria. The company even benefitted from the skills of an employee from a fellow tenant company for a short period.

Interactions with the University

In the summer of 2006 Assuria participated in the Shell Step Programme, a student placement scheme. Assuria benefitted from two successful projects with students from the University of Reading. One of these was selected as a runner up in the regional final of the Shell Step programme awards.



Building on the success of Shell Step, in 2008 Assuria participated in the University's own vacation internship, Summer Enterprise Experience & Discovery (SEED), to offer paid summer work to another Reading student. The student designed and developed a new testing system for the company and was voted as the 2008 overall SEED winner. The same student is once again working with Assuria (summer 2009). Assuria has also set final year projects for students within Systems Engineering, and utilised the University website when advertising vacancies.

Assuria are currently in discussions with several academics at the University about possible research projects.

Benefits to the Client

The STC, EH and REC offer prime opportunities for entrepreneurial companies to develop and grow.

The flexibility of their leasing terms ensure that tenants have the ability to expand and grow the business on site.

Access to University of Reading students through placement schemes has provided Assuria with a young, talented and enthusiastic work force.

Support from the EH, access to other business support mechanisms and synergy of working with other tenant companies all assisted Assuria in the early challenging years as a start-up company.

Additional Business Support

Business Support is available to companies locating at the University through South East Business Innovation and Growth; a Regional Development Agency sponsored initiative which offers comprehensive practical support to innovative businesses that have the potential and the ambition to develop into high-growth enterprises. They offer business planning and support, mentoring, high growth coaching and advice and support on investor readiness and access to finance. www.innovationgrowth.co.uk/thamesvalley

* recently relaunched as South East Business Innovation and Growth (SEBIG)

University of Reading

The University of Reading is a world-class research-intensive university covering a broad spectrum of disciplines across the Life and Physical Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences and Henley Business School. Areas of particular strength include: Climate Systems Science, Preventative and Therapeutic Health Sciences, Sustainable Construction and Environments and Computational Science and Informatics.

The University works with businesses providing support for research and development, as well as access to expertise and equipment to solve business challenges. To find out how you can access the leading minds at the University of Reading please contact our Knowledge Transfer Centre.



'Attractions of the Enterprise Hub include its flexibility; there was also someone you could go and talk to and ask: "How do we do this?", "How do we do that?" ; and there was a community of tenants, mostly new businesses, that was great for exchanging information and experiences.'

Nick Connor
Director, Assuria Ltd