

# Case Study

## Unicam (Northern) Limited

31 employees £4m turnover based in Wortley, Leeds



### Sally Salter, Group General Manager

*'MAS has given us access to the expert advice and support we needed. It has enabled us to turn our vision of the future into reality. We have restructured our company and believe we now achieve the best from our creative, sales and manufacturing teams. We have driven down inventory, improved turn-around times and enjoy vastly improved levels of customer satisfaction. We are expanding into Europe and achieving results that we could never have dreamt of previously.'*

### Company Profile

Established in the UK in 1983, the family-owned company is now Europe's leading manufacturer of specialised interactive demonstration products and display units for the retail market. With manufacturing facilities in the UK and the Netherlands, Unicam's products and services include displays for multi-media, audio/visual, home theatre plasma, I-POD, touch screens and interactive kiosks.

Unicam's showroom retail units incorporate mechanical and microprocessor-controlled switching systems that enable customers of electronic goods to compare and contrast different components before making purchasing decisions. Customers include world famous brand owners like Blaupunkt, Sony, Nissan, and Kenwood.

MAS delivered three 10-day projects, delivered over an 18 month period, which Unicam used to address five key business issues. These are:

#### 1. Customisation vs Standardisation

How could Unicam standardise its ranges whilst still offering creative display solutions that reflected specific particular brand requirements?

#### 2. Unique solution vs. economies of scale

How could Unicam achieve economies of scale whilst designing and building units that would fit a wide variety of retail locations?

#### 3. Proven designs for reliability vs. upgrades for new products

How could Unicam enable clients to introduce new items such as iPod, MP3 players and Satellite navigation systems into proven retail designs yet retain reliable performance?

#### 4. Security vs. hands on

How could Unicam design secure retail units to showcase desirable small, high value, consumer products like digital cameras?

#### 5. Creativity vs. bureaucracy

How could Unicam achieve all of the above and continue to offer interesting and creative retail sales platforms?

### Key Achievements

Eliminated a complete cycle through change in approach to prototype through the introduction of advanced animated 3D visuals.

- 8% increase in group turnover; and
- Moved to worldwide sourcing to reduce the risk of using small numbers of local key suppliers.

## Making it Happen

MAS Associate MCCR provided two business advisers to help Unicom deliver the project. Sally Salter, Unicom's General Manager, 'owned' the vision her role was to maintain employee enthusiasm and drive the project forward.

John Lawson engaged all Unicom's staff by encouraging collaborative and creative approaches to problem solving and breaking down traditional inter-department barriers. His role was to support new organisational learning and achieve a culture change across the whole Group.

MAS Advisor Dave Brannock ensured all the company's working practices were revised, fitted together and were properly engineered to enable Unicom to deliver the vision.

Stage one involved staff from all disciplines and departments mapping current internal processes. The capture of customer information was formalised so that information and knowledge previously stored within individuals own memory for the benefit of everyone.

Robust sign-off and evaluation processes were introduced and a new corporate structure devised to enable new, customer facing and sales driven service.

Production processes were re-planned freeing up capacity. A standardised planning and stock control programme was implemented and for the first time, customer-facing teams were actively involved in early stage design and production. All those with knowledge about products, markets, customers, processes, suppliers, materials, 'history' and organisational cultures worked together, making informed decisions and helping ensure Unicom 'got it right first time' for its customers.

## Highlights of Achievements

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## What Unicom People said:

*'I take off my hat to Sally and the MAS Advisors from MCCR. They worked hard and with great enthusiasm and have achieved a hugely impressive result. We are now able to capture and use all the information we have about our clients, their markets and their customers. We deliver products to them at the right price, at the right time that exactly fit their needs.'* **Colin Trickett - CEO**

*'By ensuring we think about all aspects of our client's business at the early design stage, we are able to build and offer them designs which incorporate a facility for product change. I really enjoy visiting my customers now that I know we delight them.'* **Mark Trickett – Sales Manager**

## About MAS

MAS is a national DTI initiative, delivering practical, hands-on manufacturing advice and expertise to help you improve your performance. Delivered by experts with real-life knowledge and experience, MAS has already given advice to hundreds of businesses in Yorkshire & The Humber. Why not see how MAS can help your business?

## For more information

If you feel your business could benefit from MAS, why not complete your details below and fax to us on **0113 368 5261**. You can also contact: [enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk) or visit the website [www.mas-yh.co.uk](http://www.mas-yh.co.uk)

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Name:	Job Title:
Company Name:	Nature of Business:
Address:	
Telephone Number:	Email:

I would like MAS to contact me to discuss (please tick box/es):

- |                                                                   |                                                           |                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands on manufacturing improvement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Product development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous improvement             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical and materials issues           | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing organisational 'change' | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce training and development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lean manufacturing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Process analysis                 |                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing control and factory layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving workforce productivity |                                                             |

- I would like to join the Manufacturing Network and receive a free monthly e-newsletter about funding opportunities and events

Saint Martins House, 210-212 Chapeltown Road, Leeds LS7 4HZ  
Helpline: 08700 111 875, Fax: 0113 368 5261  
Email: [enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk) Website: [www.mas-yh.co.uk](http://www.mas-yh.co.uk)

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