

## Sprinting out of the blocks...

A specialist product and graphic design company, Design for Sport has come to Cornwall.

### Overview

Fowey resident Simon Heap has worked as a product designer for 15 years. Originally based in London, Simon has both in-house and design consultancy experience working for a host of blue chip international clients such as Sony, Eurostar, Lockheed Martin (the world's biggest defence contractor) and Whitbread amongst many others.

Spotting a gap in the market, Simon now focuses on bringing cutting edge design to bear in the international sports business, working on behalf of teams, leagues, sponsors, media partners and PR agencies.

Simon explains "The more I worked on sports related design projects, the more obvious it became that there was a niche to be exploited and a real opportunity for fresh and innovative design and production. Companies are increasingly looking at how to get more from their sponsorship of sport. Design for Sport is a vehicle to help them create something to achieve that goal."

Design for Sport Ltd specialises in three areas: equipment; sponsorship and branding. Simon cites the battle against obesity as an example of where sponsorship can make a real difference to people's lives: "There is an ongoing need for well designed, useful solutions that get people moving. And it is a great way for sponsors to play the good citizen," he says.

### Workforce

Apart from Simon, Design for Sport has two further full time members of staff as well as a non-executive director. Richard Gillis is a leading commentator and analyst of the sports sector. As one of the directors of the company he helps to generate business. Medical adviser Dr Richard Heafield provides input as to the safety and muscular skeletal impact of new products. Jaine Colwill is the company secretary.

The firm has ambitious plans for growth and uses freelancers on individual projects. Simon is very keen to generate work placements and create local jobs and is in talks with Falmouth Arts College to create a brief and take on students to provide first hand business experience.

Simon adds "it's all very well studying design at college or university, but it's essential you understand business, how a business operates and the different challenges you need to overcome in order to be prepared for the future. That is why I am really keen to set up work placements that will provide students with this invaluable experience."



Simon continues, "The ethos of the company is clear - We love sport: playing it, watching it and helping others get involved too. We believe it's one of life's essentials and that great design makes things better. Design for Sport is where these two ideas meet".

Simon's family is from the south west and when the opportunity came to set up his business in the area he didn't hesitate. "Running your own business gives you the freedom to choose your business location and I knew I wanted to set up Design for Sport in a creative environment". He believes that Cornwall has evolved in to one of the UK's fastest growing creative hubs, presenting a more dynamic business environment.

"In a rural area you have to ensure there is talent on hand and as the creative community is thriving, I am confident that my business has great access to the design expertise and skills we need to call upon to meet the demands of our business" he says.

But he also had some insider knowledge. Before moving Design for Sport to Cornwall, he spoke with teaching staff at the Combined Universities of Cornwall Tremough Campus about the design courses and talent pool of would be employees. "I know I have access to good quality freelancers, as well as full time recruits for when we expand."

### Support

On his move to the county Simon has participated with the local business networks. Cornwall Pure Business is assisting with a search for premises and facilitated an introduction to the CUC with regards to linking up with the University courses

### Clients

Design for Sport works with a number of blue chip clients across the spectrum of sport and business. Due to the sensitive nature of design and development our current roster of clients must remain confidential until after the launch period. In addition to teams, franchises and event holders, we work with sponsorship agencies, PR companies, corporate clients and equipment manufacturers.