

Sun, Sea and Software...

In the spring of 2006, craving a new adventure and sensing the time was right for a change, Thomas and Miriam Gehrman left their Mediterranean life and moved their young family and thriving IT company to Hayle.

Overview

The Gehrman's company, German IT Development Ltd. was established eight years ago in Malta in response to the technical and database needs of a recently established call centre on the island.

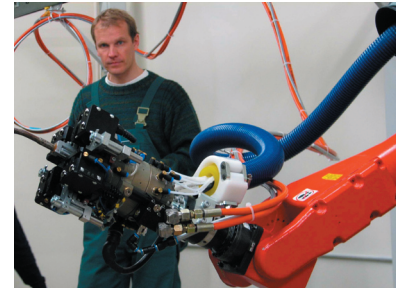
From these beginnings the company went from strength to strength, attracting clients from across the globe. However, whilst they didn't need daily contact with their clients, they increasingly found that transport from Malta to their international client base was beginning to prove problematic. So it was then Thomas and Miriam began to consider the possibility of relocation.

They considered returning to their home country of Germany but following a number of enjoyable family holidays, they found themselves increasingly drawn towards Cornwall. This was further boosted by the expansion plans for Newquay Airport, by the friendliness of the people they met and of course the beautiful environment. For Thomas the possibility of a location where he could base his business, raise his family and indulge his love of water sports was too good to resist.

Thomas has never been worried about locating away from their client base - indeed he sees it as a positive thing, remarking, "Bigger companies have no fear of working with people further away. In fact I have sometimes found I've attracted bigger clients more easily than IT companies based on their doorstep!"

Workforce

German IT Development is working with Truro College to investigate recruiting an apprentice in addition to exploring the possibilities of using more experienced freelancers on ad hoc projects. When asked whether they had any fears for attracting staff with the right skills Thomas responds, "my experience in Malta was that many qualified people are drawn away from the traditional urban centres when they realise that they can still do the same work and enjoy a better environment. The labour market in Cornwall also seems to have benefited from this trend, so I have no worries about attracting people with the right skills."



German IT Development carries out three main activities; industrial programming, bespoke software development and website development, the former making up the majority of their work. As their business is entirely reliant on a fast and secure broadband connection, Thomas has benefited enormously from the IT infrastructure development carried out by actnow, without which he would not have been able to base himself in Cornwall.

Thomas explains "We always intended to keep our international client base so it was vital to ensure that we had broadband access to allow easy communications." But German IT Development don't want to rely solely on their overseas clients.

They are also keen to immerse themselves in the county's business community where they see great benefit in teaming up with other local businesses to provide a wider service to major potential clients. Thomas has already taken steps in this direction collaborating with Richard Quick Design - WSI, a Newquay and Falmouth based design company on a project for Rosehill Lodges (www.rosehilllodges.com).

Clients

Over the last eight years, German IT Development has built up a client base consisting of a number of large international companies, most notably through their industrial programming, including Rolls Royce, BMW, Daimler Chrysler and Renault. In addition, working initially with FC Bayern Munich, they developed screen savers and downloadable content from the team's recent matches. This led to contracts with every club in the German Premier League. Other internationally-branded clients include Audi, Heineken, Becks, Malibu, Havana Club and T-com.