

Pumping ahead of the competition

World-leading manufacturer of innovative pump technology has used Cornwall as a base for global growth.

Overview

Do the words 'peristaltic pump' make your heart beat faster? They should. Because a peristaltic pump is exactly what your heart is - the safest and most efficient way of moving fluids around a system, perfected by nature over millions of years.

Falmouth-based engineering firm Watson-Marlow Bredel has developed a range of problem-solving pumps based on this natural principle. The exceptional reliability and controllability of its systems mean that they're now used in all kinds of industrial and medical processes, from the heaviest of manufacturing duties to the most precise research tasks.

Workforce

Watson-Marlow Bredel employs 400 people worldwide, 160 of them at its Falmouth headquarters and plant. Managing Director Christopher Gadsden says: "People are the most important thing for our business. And we've never had a problem finding good people with the right skills who are very happy to be here in Cornwall."

Clients

Many of the world's best-known manufacturers have opted for Watson-Marlow Bredel pumps - Sony, Kodak, AstraZeneca, BASF and Nestlé, to name just a few. New applications for the technology are constantly emerging, with recent customer additions including companies involved in DNA testing, food safety and even helicopter manufacturing.

Technology

Marketing Manager Mike Sullivan says: "Around 85 per cent of our products are sold outside the UK, so it's important for us to have the appropriate infrastructure. We realised that to grow our business we needed an innovative IT solution." To achieve this, the company introduced a custom-built content management system to support its global website as well as localised sites in the various countries where it operates. This has enabled staff across the world to



Since relocating to Cornwall in 1968, the company has grown to become the world's largest manufacturer of peristaltic pump technology. With high-tech factories in Holland and Sweden as well as in Falmouth, it supplies equipment to global market leaders in sectors ranging from brewing and cosmetics to waste-treatment and biotechnology.

maintain brand consistency across the company's global operations. The UK site now notches up over a million hits per month, and is much more than just a marketing platform. Sales engineers and distributors can log in to speedily obtain relevant information for potential customers, while the company uses information gleaned online to gain insight into customer needs. As Sullivan says: "The website is a key driver of our business."

Support

Watson-Marlow Bredel was first attracted to Cornwall partly by the availability of business grants, but its MD stresses that its continuing expansion has not depended on this kind of support. Gadsden sees the company's ongoing success story as proof that it's possible for a Cornwall-based business to grow into a major international company with a multi-million-pound turnover - if it has the right products and strategy. As he says: "Our business is in 10 locations around the world, with third-party distributors in another 50 countries. I might have to get up a bit earlier to make a transatlantic flight, but the terrific thing is that when you get back from travelling abroad, you're in Cornwall. And there really is no better place to be."