

YORKSHIRE INNOVATION FUND CASE STUDY:

Principle Healthcare



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The Business...

Established in 2002, Principle Healthcare started life as a sales, marketing and packaging company serving the needs of the healthcare sector. In 2006 the company moved into manufacturing, producing vitamin, mineral and lifestyle food supplements for the consumer market.

Today, with over 170 staff divided between their manufacturing base in Slovakia and their head office in Skipton, North Yorkshire, Principle Healthcare enjoys a **growing reputation for manufacturing effervescent, chewable and film coated food supplements** – a reputation which extends throughout the UK and Internationally.



The Need for Innovation...

For several years, whilst establishing its own manufacturing base, Principle Healthcare followed the activities of European market leaders. In 2013, faced with an increasingly price-sensitive market, the board announced a seismic shift in ambition – to become known as **innovators and leaders in the food supplement market**.

The redefined marketing strategy which followed included a commitment to broaden their **Science Fitness range – a suite of innovative sports products for elite athletes**.

Developing the formulation for a new gel food supplement that was both pleasant tasting and effective proved challenging and in 2014, Principle Healthcare called on the Yorkshire Innovation Fund for expert funded support.

“The Yorkshire Innovation Fund has changed the way we approach projects. I’d say it’s given us a definite competitive edge.”

CLARE CAMPBELL

The Role of the Yorkshire Innovation Fund...

After successfully securing funding via a Small Innovation Project (SIP), Principle Healthcare teamed up with Tony Parsons, Principal Research Fellow and Rod King, Professor of Sport and Exercise Biochemistry, both based at Carnegie – Leeds Beckett University’s renowned Faculty of Sport. Their **painstaking refinement of the gel formulation** resulted in a product that could be produced consistently and might, in future, become part of Principle Healthcare’s range of Science Fitness products.

At the start of 2015, Principle Healthcare was awarded a Research & Development Project (RDP) - a more substantive, longer-term package of innovation support. The RDP funded comprehensive research into the market for a new product to prevent the loss of muscle mass in the elderly. Drawing on expertise from Registered Dietitian Sally Moore, Associate Senior Lecturer Food & Nutrition and Judy Donnelly Professor of Nutrition Education at Leeds Trinity University, this market research **revealed the vital information** needed to ensure a successful product launch.



The Impact...

In recent months, the Science Fitness range has enjoyed significant exposure among elite athletes both in the UK and overseas. Sales are growing, with many users reporting positive changes in their performance. Science Fitness has also attracted endorsements from a growing number of elite athletes and is approved by Informed-Sport, a quality assurance programme for sports nutrition products.

“Through our collaboration with Leeds Carnegie, The Yorkshire Innovation Fund has helped us to develop a gel formulation that could complement existing products and offer a complete sports range for elite athletes – products which will compete strongly with the current market leaders”, says Principle Healthcare’s Group Quality Director, Clare Campbell.

The Future...

With a growing reputation for product development and exposure to a new network of academic specialists in the world of sports performance, the team at Principle has set its sights on long term plans to sell Science Fitness globally via a dedicated website. Meanwhile, work on their supplements to tackle loss of muscle mass continues.

“Thanks to the research carried out by Leeds Trinity University, we have a much better insight into how we will market supplements used to help prevent loss of muscle mass in old age”, says Clare.

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About The Yorkshire Innovation Fund...

The Yorkshire Innovation Fund brings together ten of the region’s higher education institutions to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Yorkshire and Humber region to grow.

Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the fund helps small businesses to develop ideas for new products, services or processes by funding collaborative projects with the region’s universities, drawing on their expertise, specialist equipment or facilities to develop ideas which result in business growth.

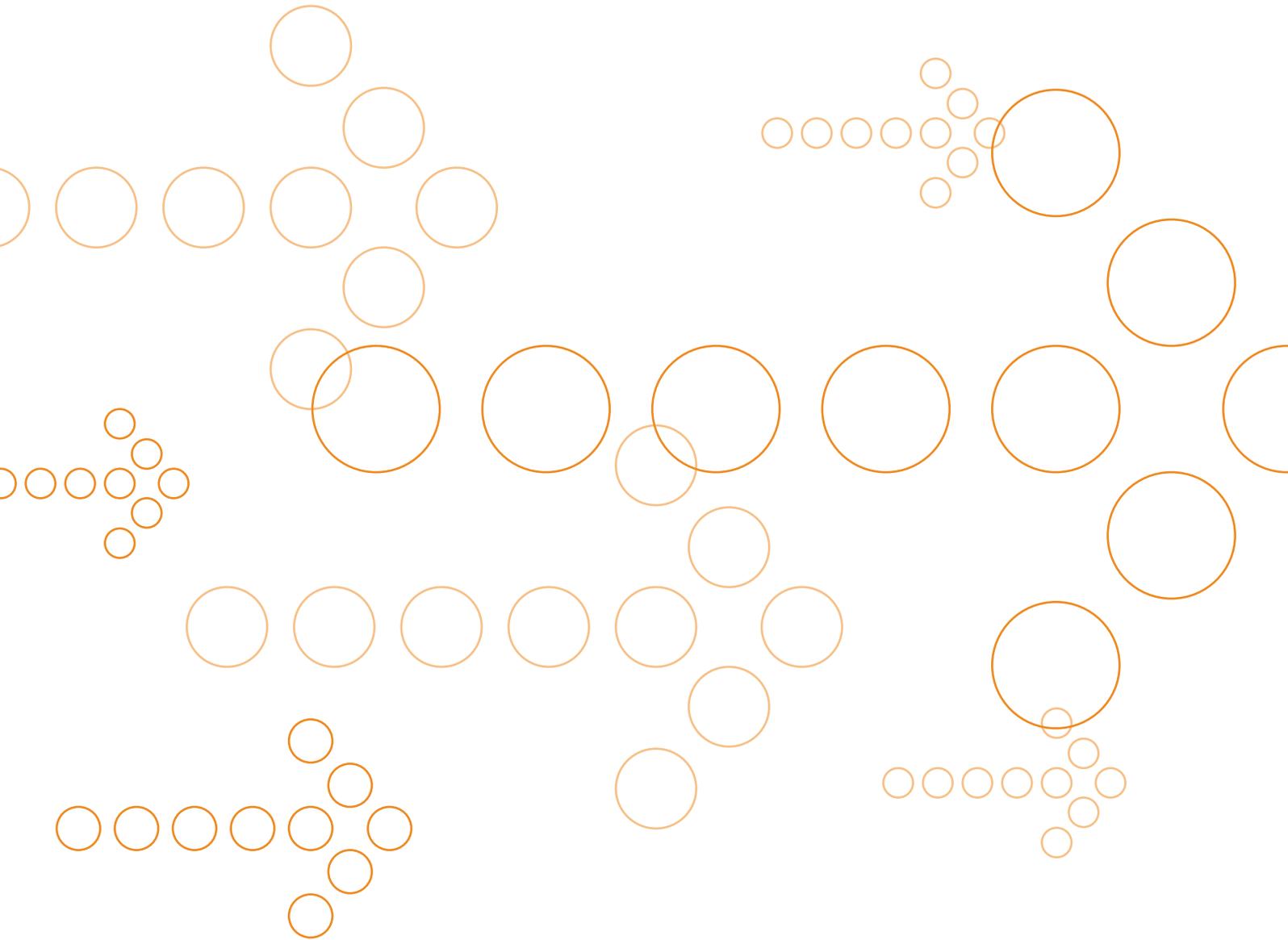
The project has attracted £3.06million of investment from the ERDF as part of Europe’s support for local economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme 2007-13. Partner universities contributed a further £1.87m, bringing the total investment to £4.93m. The project team are based at the University of Bradford.

The delivery partners are: The University of Bradford, The University of Huddersfield, The University of Hull, The University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds College of Music, Leeds Trinity University, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of York, York St John University. The University of Sheffield is a strategic partner.

Yorkshire Innovation Fund

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Funding access to University
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