Gatwick Diamond-based Lighthouse Systems Ltd has developed a software product named Shopfloor-Online™, used by manufacturing companies to support manufacturing operations in factories, allowing them to improve performance, quality and traceability.

Besides developing the software, Lighthouse Systems markets, sells, implements and supports the software. “The main activities include building solutions using Shopfloor-Online and commissioning them at the customer’s factory,” explains Tim Barber, European Business Director. “This is run as a project and typically takes from three months to a year.”

Shortlisted for the Gatwick Diamond Business Awards ‘International Business of the Year’ 2012, Lighthouse Systems’ software has been deployed in 35 countries globally. Working across diverse sectors including Food and Beverage, Aerospace and Automotive, Lighthouse Systems counts United Biscuits, Airbus and Toyota among its clients. “Lighthouse has offices in the UK, US and Singapore,” says Tim. “It was essential to have a presence in the three main continents and time zones of Europe, USA and Asia, as the product is used by large multi-national manufacturing companies.” On top of this, the main principles of Lighthouse Systems’ international strategy include employing local people, developing strong ties with customers and seeking out local partners. “For Lighthouse, Gatwick Airport is on our doorstep - with most of our customers abroad and having to send teams to work on-site with customers, the convenience of an airport nearby is a big advantage,” adds Tim.

The company first set up its US office in 2000, with the Asia office in following in 2006. This coupled with recruiting a number of international distributors has helped the company achieve global reach, which has increased year on year.

In February 2011, Lighthouse Systems joined UKTI’s Gateway to Global Growth programme. “We have been working closely with UK Trade & Investment to develop a more targeted and proactive export strategy,” says Tim. “Working with our local Trade Adviser, as well as the overseas teams at various embassies, we are conducting research into potential business and best routes to market. In addition to research, we will be seeking support and advice while we explore opening an office in Brazil.”

Lighthouse Systems has also conducted an Export Communication Review, in conjunction with the British Chambers of Commerce, which has resulted in upgrading the company’s website fit for international use. “Export is fundamental to our short and long term success – 70% of our turnover is export. The big challenge in all markets is promotion to the local market, our primary vehicle for this is our website,” explains Tim.
Rosemary French, Executive Director of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative and member of the Gatwick Diamond Business Awards Judging Panel, outlines the reasons why Lighthouse Systems was shortlisted: “The Gatwick Diamond Initiative encourages businesses to capitalise further and faster on growth through international activity, which is perfectly exemplified by Lighthouse Systems’ success. The judges were particularly impressed by the company’s increased turnover from £1.5 million in 2006 to over £3 million in 2011 and the fact that Lighthouse’s software is currently deployed in 35 countries exemplifies the international focus of their business,” says Rosemary. “Lighthouse has produced an impressive product with a huge versatility that is being well received by major global companies and their innovation is to be commended.”

“We are absolutely delighted that an independent body has evaluated and shortlisted us for this award,” concludes Tim. “We serve large manufacturing companies with factories all over the world - our software solution Shopfloor-Online brings our customers immediate benefits in terms of improved productivity, improved quality, reduced waste, and full traceability. As a company we have to compete on the world stage through innovation and service. Our workforce is highly skilled, flexible, and totally committed to helping our customers – wherever they are located.”

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