

## Spring 2006 Newsletter

Welcome to Orion Innovations' Spring Newsletter which coincides with the launch of our new website (see below). We have continued to grow the business over the last six months and now have three new Associates working with us. We have continued our involvement with both the Carbon Trust and Scottish Enterprise, and have won contracts with a number of new clients including Life-IC and CMR. We have also managed to find time to collate some of our experiences and learning's and are pleased to provide you with a 'Thought Piece' that we hope may provide you with some useful insights that may be of benefit to your organisation....

### Medicine for Growing Pains

As companies grow from small entrepreneurial enterprises into SMEs and beyond they frequently experience periods where they seem to lose their way. Changing the balance of entrepreneurial freedom and institutionalised control systems in many cases stagnates growth or causes a temporary decline in profits, although for some it can destroy the business altogether. The strategic planning may be excellent but the soft factors (for example people!) are often not taken fully into account.

As a rough rule of thumb there are four stages of evolution in any company:

- I. You know the name of everyone else's partner;
- II. You know the name of everyone;
- III. You know the names of most people;
- IV. You don't know the names of most people.

At the transition points individuals often feel dissatisfaction as their working patterns and relationships with colleagues change. In particular, moving from II to III requires a fundamental shift in the level of trust in a team. Typical symptoms are "If I want to get the job done well I have to do it myself" or "I spend all my time putting out fires". The direct consequence of this is also frequently heard: "There simply aren't enough hours in the day". There are two key issues at work here and some relatively simple tools that can help address them.

The first issue is the "triumph of the urgent over the important" and regularly using a prioritisation matrix can help to address this – mapping issues on their relative urgency and importance to help decide and agree which to do first and which to consider not doing at all.

The second is the distribution of responsibility where **RACI** charting is very useful. This technique matches individuals or business functions against tasks to agree and communicate who is **R**esponsible (does the work), **A**ccountable (makes sure the work is done), **C**onsulted (provides input) or **I**nformed (told of the outcome/completion). The key to effective RACI charting is that most of the matrix should be blank – i.e. most people trust their colleagues to get on with what they've been tasked to do.

If you want to know more about these tools and how they could benefit your organisation, please contact us directly and we would be pleased to discuss our approach with you.





### Orion Innovations and E4tech team up to support CMR Fuel Cells

Orion Innovations recently completed a joint project with E4tech for CMR Fuel Cells Ltd, the UK technology developer that listed on AIM in December 2005. The project was part funded by Life-IC, the Energy Technology Business Incubator based in Sheffield. The project's aims were to formulate a product strategy for the notebook market, and to identify opportunities to accelerate development of CMR's novel 'Compact Mixed-Reactant' stack technology. Fresh insights were provided by screening a wide portfolio of potential global market segments, and generating new customer leads. John Halfpenny, CEO comments "Orion Innovations and E4tech's combined expertise in fuel cell markets and technology has provided CMR with valuable help at this exciting time in our company's development".



### New Website Launched

Two years after formation we decided that it was time for a revamp of our website – [www.orioninnovations.co.uk](http://www.orioninnovations.co.uk). We have worked closely with Clarity in the redevelopment of the site, a company well known to us and who has produced sites for other companies with whom we have been involved, including Water Innovate Ltd. The new website gives an updated overview of our services, case studies, CVs of our team and links to some of our key Partners. Please log on and have a look – we would welcome any (constructive!) feedback. Paul Catton at Clarity can be contacted via their own website [www.clarityauthoring.co.uk](http://www.clarityauthoring.co.uk)

### New Faces at Orion Innovations

As the company grows we are looking for experienced, high calibre personnel to join our team of Associates. We have recently been joined by:



**Paul Hamilton** - an experienced consultant and specialist in change management and business strategy with extensive experience on the IT side in new business development, knowledge management/CoPs, IT strategy and rapid web enablement. He has consulted to major global companies and public sector organisations across Western and Eastern Europe, the US, South America and Japan.

Paul has a first degree in Computer Science from Bristol University and an MBA from INSEAD in Fontainebleau and has worked for a number of consultancy firms including A.T. Kearney and Zefer. Paul speaks French, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese and sits on the global Executive Committee of the INSEAD Alumni Association and on the INSEAD Partnership Board.

### Who are we?

Orion Innovations LLP provides specialist strategic and business development support to new ventures, early-phase and growing businesses. We work with organisations across many sectors, but have specific experience in the following sectors: energy; environmental; electronics, and process industries. We help businesses define their critical path in the early stages of development and provide support as they grow by providing pragmatic, hands on resource. This may be in the form of mentoring, interim management support or consultancy as appropriate to your needs.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss how we may assist in the future success of your venture. Noel can be reached on 07836 723940 and Alison on 07816 754614, or email below.