

MAS helps manufacturers compete more effectively



The BERR MAS (Manufacturing Advisory Service) aims to address the practical needs of British SMEs by delivering hands-on advice and assistance from experts in a wide range of manufacturing disciplines. The MAS annual report (published Nov 2008) highlighted that since its inception in 2002 MAS has generated £546m in value added for client firms, it has dealt with over 142,800 technical enquiries from manufacturers, and carried out more than 24,800 free on-site diagnostic reviews.

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MAS aims to provide: support to SMEs through the 10 Regional Centres, give a free one-day on-site diagnostic visit by a MAS manufacturing specialist to review a company's entire manufacturing operation, follow up with up to ten days in-depth consultancy on lean manufacturing techniques, product or process innovations, or design advice for example, and provide best practice activities, training and workshop activities for manufacturers across each region.

MAS PR opportunities

PPMA members are offered the chance to be 'case-studies' in a forthcoming MAS project which seeks to increase awareness of the benefits of automation in UK manufacturing. The project's purpose is to provide MAS representatives with enough knowledge to identify potential automation opportunities when they visit their clients. If you would like to discuss your involvement please contact Mike Wilson:- Mb 07812 766639 E robotics@hotmail.com



East of England Development Agency

Innovation vouchers - Businesses developing new and exciting technologies can now take advantage of specialist consultancy grants available through EEDA. Innovation Vouchers will provide SMEs with up to £3,000 worth of collaboration. Go to www.eeda.org.uk/3572.asp

Grant for Business Investment

Grant for Business Investment (GBI), managed regionally by EEDA, offers grant support for assisting businesses to make investments to set up, expand, diversify and modernise in disadvantaged areas in the East of England. Typically, a grant is offered to support the acquisition of key assets, such as buildings, plant and machinery, and to support the creation of new jobs or to safeguard existing ones. Grants will, on average, cover 10 to 20 per cent of the project's total cost (£10,000 is the minimum grant value). To find out if you are eligible contact the Access to Finance Team on 01223 713900 or email businesssupport@eeda.org.uk

Real help for business now

On 14 January Government launched a package of financial measures to provide help to firms that have short-term working capital constraints or are looking to invest to grow their business. These schemes could help you: **Working Capital Scheme** whereby Government will secure working capital credit lines for medium sized companies, the **Enterprise Finance Guarantee** aims to help smaller firms access working capital or investment finance, and the **Capital for Enterprise Fund** helps businesses raise new long-term finance. www.businesslink.gov.uk/realhelp/finance

ACTIONenergy

From the Carbon Trust

The Carbon Trust web site is full of money saving tips, advice, business opportunities, and can also help you now or in the future when you come to look for new equipment and factory facilities - www.carbontrust.co.uk

Did you know?

- The engineering industry comprises over 70,000 enterprises of varying size. The sector uses around £2.5 billion worth of energy a year and represents around 14% of the total energy consumed by UK industry.
- If you are able to save 18600 kw hours a year by purchasing for example a new machine or heating system for your business, you could qualify for an interest free loan.
- Your customer could qualify for an interest free loan to purchase your machines if they save 18600 kw hours a year against the equipment it replaces.
- You can most likely save money right now by doing very little!

Interest free loan for energy-saving equipment -

The Carbon Trust is offering an interest free loan towards the purchase of energy efficient equipment. The loans are unsecured and interest free, with no arrangement fees and a straightforward application process. Loans can be repaid over a period of up to four years, and many borrowers have found that their energy savings more than cover their repayments says the Carbon Trust. www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy/takingaction/about-loans.htm

Enhanced Capital Allowances - The ECA scheme for energy-saving technologies encourages businesses to invest in energy-saving plant or machinery specified on the Energy Technology List (ETL) which is managed by the Carbon Trust on behalf of Government. The scheme allows businesses to write off the whole cost of the equipment against taxable profits in the year of purchase. This can provide a cash flow boost and an incentive to invest in energy-saving equipment. For more info go to:- www.eca.gov.uk/etl