Funded by UK Government

Accelerator Case Study

CODEL
A Forbes Marshall Company

CODEL

Sector: Manufacturing **Location:** Derbyshire Dales **Size:** Small **Turnover:** £6m

About the business

CODEL was established in 1982 and is a leading designer and manufacturer of emission monitoring instrumentation. Based in Bakewell, Derbyshire, its advanced systems monitor emissions to the atmosphere, ensuring air quality in road and rail tunnels, supporting plant and rail safety worldwide. It has 44 employees and since 2016 has been part of the Forbes Marshall Group, a global engineering business specialising in energy efficiency and process automation.

Challenges faced

Like many small businesses, CODEL continues to face increasing operational pressures, including rising energy costs, higher staffing expenses and wider UK economic uncertainty. While these factors can limit the pace of domestic expansion, CODEL operates within the global emissions monitoring sector, a market driven by tightening environmental regulations and increasing sustainability commitments worldwide. Recognising that emissions compliance is a global priority, the company made a strategic decision to prioritise export growth as a route to resilience and long-term expansion.

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Solution - Support Given

Through Managing Director, Richard Hallam's involvement in the East Midlands Manufacturing Network (EMMN), CODEL accessed financial and advisory support through the Export Accelerator project, delivered by East Midlands Chamber. This support enabled the company to focus on developing a new market in Southern Africa, specifically South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia. This region has significant concentrations of power generation, cement production and mining facilities aligned to CODEL's core expertise.

With an Export Accelerator grant, CODEL commissioned Newreach Insights, an external company, to undertake a comprehensive market viability study. This included identifying key industry stakeholders, mapping market potential and initiating contact with prospective distribution partners and end users. Over 300 industry contacts were identified, significantly increasing CODEL's brand visibility in the region. From this structured outreach, three strategically positioned South African partners were selected to provide coverage across the wider Southern African territory.

Crucially, Export Accelerator also part-funded an in-market visit, allowing Richard to meet potential partners and end users face-to-face. This accelerated trust-building, strengthened technical discussions and significantly reduced the typical timeline associated with entering a new international market.

Impact - The Difference it's Made

The impact of the project has been substantial. Within weeks of engagement, the initiative generated over £500,000 in quotations, with a number already converting into confirmed purchase orders. The Southern African market now represents a projected opportunity in excess of £3 million over the next five years.

While the financial support was instrumental, the advisory guidance provided through the project, particularly from Chamber Business Adviser, Andy Bunn, was equally valuable. His input helped refine the market-entry strategy, challenge assumptions and maintain momentum throughout the process. For a small business entering a new global territory, having access to experienced, independent support provided both accountability and confidence at critical decision points.

Without the combined financial and strategic support of the Export Accelerator project, this level of progress would not have been achievable within such a compressed timeframe. The project reduced the commercial risk associated with overseas expansion and enabled

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CODEL to adopt a structured, outcome-focused approach. Importantly, it has provided a proven, repeatable model for entering additional global markets in the future.

As a result, CODEL is now positioned for sustained export growth, increased turnover and, in time, further team expansion, demonstrating the tangible and lasting impact of the Export Accelerator project.

A word from the business:

"The Export Accelerator project gave us the confidence and backing to move decisively into a new international market. The support from Andy Bunn and the East Midlands Manufacturing Network was invaluable in accelerating our progress and reducing the risk of overseas expansion. The results in Southern Africa have exceeded expectations and created a clear pathway for further global growth."

Richard Hallam, Managing Director

Accelerator has provided:

- 1 to 1 Advice
- Export Accelerator
- EMMN

Impact to business:

- New International Markets
- Increased Enquiries
- Increased Sales
- Higher Brand Awareness
- Potential Job Creation
- Model for Future Expansion

This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and delivered by East Midlands Chamber.

CLAIRE WARD MAYOR OF THE EAST MIDLANDS | East Midlands Combined County Authority | east midlands chamber