



CASE STUDY:

Sword

Information management software specialist Sword chose South Wales as the base for a major investment in an R&D centre of excellence and support operation for its group businesses in the UK because of the caliber of the region's workforce.

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Pradeep Banerji, Group CTO, Sword

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As Group CTO Pradeep Banerji says, in the highly competitive world of IT businesses, where the acquisition and development of knowledge is paramount, the last thing a company wants to do is have to constantly find and retrain staff.

A French headquartered company set up in 2000, Sword has grown indigenously and by acquisition to achieve revenues of over 152 million Euros (2006) and a global presence of 35 locations in 20 countries.

The Group's companies specialise in the development, application and support of software solutions in the Governance, Risk and Compliance area. It has proved an attractive area – a niche market with few competitors and high intellectual property value.

Its areas of expertise are wide, from the creating of software which manages risk for insurance companies, to CRM and financial management systems for the oil and gas industry – almost any area of business, in short, where compliance in highly regulated markets is vital.

Sword has a dominant position in the UK insurance market, with 25% of the country's top 50 insurers – including five of the top 10 - using their software solutions.

No stranger to this country, then, Sword still carried out an exhaustive comparative analysis of Scotland, Northern England and India before settling on Cwmbran as the base for its new centre of excellence and support operation.

From its new stronghold on the Llantarnum Business Park, Cwmbran, Sword is building what will eventually be a 200-strong, highly trained workforce whose job is to support around eight business units, mainly UK based.

The Cwmbran operation includes R&D staff, constantly reviewing the software used by clients through benchmarking exercises and by receiving customer feedback, and refining it.



It houses staff who carry out business process functions for clients in the areas of handling claims for Sword's insurance clients and products – business-orientated staff who are trained and managed using methodologies the company has developed.

Consultants also operate from the new base, undertaking a variety of roles for customers including project managers, analysts, testers and developers.

It all adds up to a highly specialised workforce, and according to Pradeep Banerji, availability and suitability of good people was at the heart of their pre-decision research.

"We looked at several other locations across the globe, and went through a major evaluation process for each," he said.

"Cwmbran – compared to the other UK locations – is far better located for proximity to London, and that's important because so many of our key customers are there. It makes travel between us and our customers much easier.

"But the workforce was a dominant reason for us coming here. It's very important to us that we retain staff – you don't want to have to keep retraining. The availability of higher quality staff in Wales was a main factor – it's much better here than elsewhere in the UK."

If you are thinking about basing your operation in the UK, or looking for a trade transaction please get in touch.

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