

# Insight from an SME

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## Previous experience

- Up to 2007 – academic at Plymouth University with an increasing involvement in commercial activities (ESA and UK ITTs)
- 2007 went part-time as academic to start ARGANS Ltd with financial / board support from French parent company and Plymouth University
- 2009 went full-time with company / honorary member of University
- 2012 departed to setup Pixalytics Ltd (family business i.e. no external shareholders at this stage)
- 2013 becoming director of a non-space UK subsidiary of an Australian business - also commercially spinning-out R&D activity (portfolio of business activities)

## What can SMEs offer?

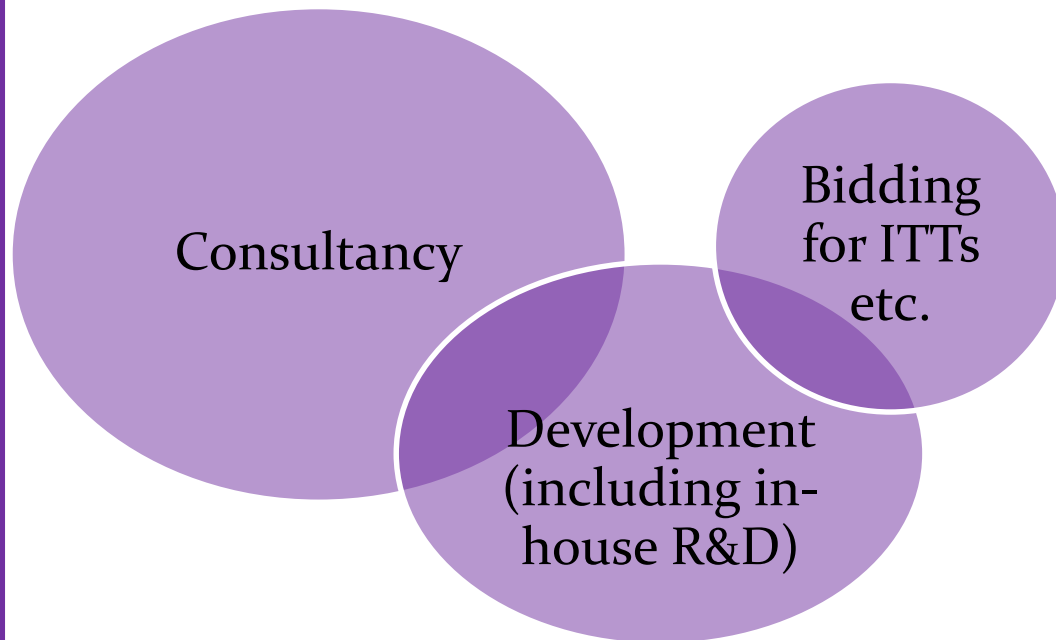
- Specialist knowledge and experience, not always readily available elsewhere
- Commercialisation of unique research that can open or extend markets for existing companies
- Complimentary knowledge and a “go to scientist” who understands and responds on business timescales
- More responsive as a partner because the chain of command for agreement / decisions is often shorter than with larger organisations

## Vision

Pixalytics Ltd believes that scientific research and innovation are vital to the future development of both knowledge and society and wants to be a company that informs, educates, supports and, most importantly, inspires people to become involved in research and innovation.

- **Not restricted to space-based business**
- **Need to balance core business with exciting opportunities that offer opportunistic promotion / publicity**

**Pixalytics is currently focusing on self funding (shareholders loans and retained profits) in the short term:** Consulting comes first and bidding only makes sense when it's strategic / fully funded / not too time consuming. Current government grants are often difficult to utilise because of the financial risk they can cause.



*Gompers and Lerner study (2002, Ubiquity):  
Ninety percent of new entrepreneurial businesses that don't attract venture capital fail within three years.*

So, maybe we'll need to seek venture capital to grow...

## Looking to the future, a continued balancing act...

- Business is growing and so need to balance resources / cash flow management
- Keeping up with the latest developments / self-funding research so can remain as a relevant partner i.e.
  - Need to keep some time free for this activity – don't just look at short term profits
  - Can be difficult to become involved in UK funded academic projects as companies are often expected to contribute funding.
- Balancing different interests when undertaking a portfolio of activities – business, academic and volunteering



**Thanks for your attention**

**Questions / Comments?**