

Project VIA – Valuing Intellectual Assets in Renewables Companies in the Highlands and Islands Company Profile



Currie Brothers is a privately owned business that was established on Orkney over 30 years ago. Taking over from their father, the business is currently run by Andrew Currie and Susan Learmonth, together with a full time contracts manager. Initially the business was set up by their father and his brother from a background of driving heavy machinery and being an expert diver on marine works. Over the years, the business has diversified into all aspects of construction except for house building. Latterly this has taken them into the renewable energy development sector.

Today the company manages and delivers construction engineering projects and hires equipment. The business is amazingly versatile with projects ranging from offshore construction to war time demolition to the construction of a new sports centre on Orkney.

When Currie Brothers joined Project VIA, it was at a time when there was a downturn in business and profitability. There was little focus on the Intellectual Assets (IA) in the company, even though they had been built up using significant human capital over the years. Susan Learmonth worked with the Intellectual Assets Centre (IA Centre) and [Jackie Maguire of Coller IP Management](#) to identify how the improved management of IA could increase turnover and profitability.

Over a period of just 3 months, Susan Learmonth set out to improve the management of Currie Brothers' IA. Improvements have been made across the board and particularly on systems, branding, advertising and sales, by simply obtaining a better understanding of where the value lies within Currie Brothers and setting about to capitalise and protect that value.

Hitherto, Currie Brothers had focused delivery on Orkney, but is now venturing further a field. Currie Brothers has focused on what they are good at, paying heed to the family motto: "We get difficult jobs done – the impossible just takes longer".

Two important new projects have been awarded to Currie Brothers on Shetland which together with an improvement in the market for marine works, will lead to a 30% increase in turnover for 2010, improved profitability and a net creation of 5 new jobs since joining Project Via in January 2010.

Susan's remaining tasks are to launch a new web site to reflect the work which

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she has been undertaking to build up Currie Brothers' brand value and reputation, both in Orkney and throughout Scotland.

Before starting the project, Intellectual Assets is something I have never given any thought to at all, and even when I had done the first benchmark exercise, I still thought that this does not apply to our company.

I guess it was only once I had attended the first master class that it was a bit of a light bulb moment and I thought, well we do this or we could do that, and everything started to fall into place.

One of the most important things that I got from the project was realising the company's self worth, especially when dealing with PQQs. This very much came to fruition when just several days after the Masterclass in this we had to complete a PQQ for one of the biggest contracts we have tried to tender for yet. After several nail biting weeks of waiting it was announced that Currie Brothers were the only local company to meet the criteria and be able to tender for this project, amid much publicity in the local papers. Susan Learmonth, Currie Brothers.