



UKTI helps Echoic Audio make some noise abroad

Fast facts

Company: Echoic Audio

Industry: Creative Industries

Target Market: Spain, Australia

UKTI Service: Passport to Export

www.echoicaudio.com



Through Passport to Export, UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has helped Echoic Audio to develop an international marketing plan, and travel to key industry festivals in Barcelona and Melbourne. This has resulted in several international contracts for the company.

David Johnston and Tom Gilbert have been making music together for years. With David's background in music technology and as a producer for London radio station Kiss FM, and Tom's experience as a BBC researcher and freelance editor, in August 2010 they decided to pool their skills and set up a music and sound design studio.

Today, Echoic Audio is an award winning company that creates music and audio effects for advertising and media campaigns. The studio prides itself on using inventive processes, leading technology and unusual instruments to craft innovative music and sound design for film, animation and digital experiences. The company is small with only three full-time employees, but with

access to freelancers as the need arises. It is based in Bristol in the South West of England, and 90 per cent of its work is based in London and Bristol.

"We started to look at working abroad, simply because there are so many talented agencies overseas," says David, Creative Director at Echoic Audio. "A lot of our work is in the world of advertising and film and these industries are international by nature. We want to work with the very best creative agencies whatever country they're in."

Developing a business plan

Echoic Audio didn't have an international marketing plan or any particular preference for which market to focus on overseas. The company had done one piece of work in Denmark in May 2011, which was to provide sound for an infographic in an online corporate film. This project came about as a result of an introduction from an existing contact. The studio was also approached to compose music for an online advert for a coffee company with Dutch film

and design studio From Form, after they met at the Reasons to be Creative festival in Brighton in September 2013. These experiences showed Echoic how important it is to develop overseas contacts in order to generate international business.

A friend of David's works regularly with UKTI in Bristol and suggested that he get in touch. A UKTI International Trade Adviser (ITA) visited Echoic's studio and suggested that the company join Passport to Export, the UKTI programme that helps businesses to prepare for international markets. This helped Echoic to think strategically and develop SMART (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and timebound) objectives for securing international work. As a result, the company has become more structured, prepared and proactive in its approach. Following the course, David met the ITA again to talk through his international marketing strategy. Meanwhile, Echoic decided to attend OFFF in Barcelona, one of the largest annual digital festivals in Europe to showcase the company.

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David Johnston, Creative Director at Echoic Audio

Using funding from Passport to Export, UKTI was able to offset the costs of the trip.

“OFFF is attended by artists, musicians, filmmakers and designers, so it was the ideal place to make contacts abroad,” says David. “The financial assistance from UKTI towards our travel and accommodation expenses was a real help and made it possible for us to attend. The results have been fantastic. We made several new contacts, many of which have already translated into new projects. In March this year, we worked on a film for Wohner in Germany to promote their services, and did an animation for the opening titles of a TedX conference for production company Kompost in Zurich. We’ve also done work for Tine, a brand of Norwegian milk on their Winter Olympics advert and for Mercedes-Benz.”

International exposure

Echoic was also asked to compose music for and invited to speak at Pausefest, Australia’s largest digital festival, in Melbourne in February 2014. UKTI once again provided a grant towards travel and accommodation costs. The company’s ITA arranged for David to meet a representative from UKTI in Melbourne, to find out more about the local creative industries sector. At this meeting they also discussed the possibility of setting up a satellite studio in Australia.

Attending Pausefest has already started to bring in results. Echoic is providing the soundtrack for an online brand film for a bicycle company with boutique film company, Kintaro Studios, which is based in Melbourne. There are also several more projects in the pipeline.

“In our first two years in business, we had very little international work,” says David. “Since we started working with UKTI, exports now make up ten per cent of our business and this figure is increasing. UKTI’s advice has been very helpful. We are going back to OFFF in

Barcelona in May to further develop the contacts we made last year, and we plan to meet with UKTI there to find out more about doing business in Spain. We are also considering another trip to Australia next Spring, to meet people in the industry. UKTI’s financial help has been incredible and we’re very keen to attend their training events in the future. It’s great that there’s funding, guidance and support available to help small companies like ours to grow internationally.”

The UK and Australia

Australia boasts an outstanding economic track record and offers UK businesses a dynamic yet dependable market in times of economic uncertainty. Australia was the world’s 12th largest economy in 2012 with GDP of US\$1.53 trillion; British exports to Australia were worth nearly £11 billion in that same year and have grown 79 per cent since 2007.

Along with significant opportunities in well-established industry sectors like business and professional services, mining, natural gas, life sciences, ICT and the creative industries, Australia has invested around £26 billion in infrastructure over the past five years, and this is expected to increase. This is creating massive opportunities in sectors like rail, roads, ports, hospitals and construction.

The area’s proximity to the world’s fastest-growing region, the Asia Pacific, and powerhouses like India and China, combined with a number of free trade agreements (FTA) (for example with Singapore, Thailand, the US, Chile and New Zealand), give UK firms a distinct advantage if they are looking for a base from which to launch into Asia.

For further information about business opportunities in Australia go to www.gov.uk/ukti

Helping you to do business abroad

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

Through our Passport to Export programme we offer new and inexperienced exporters:

- Free capability assessments
- Support in visiting potential markets
- Mentoring from a local export professional
- Free action plans
- Customised and subsidised training
- Ongoing support once you’re up and running

UKTI was delighted to support Echoic Audio in its business overseas.



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