

Designing tomorrow's products today

LIVINGSTON BASED company SKF Condition Monitoring Centre is the centre for design, manufacture and support of sophisticated electronic handheld instrumentations within the SKF Group.

SKF CMC Livingston was formerly known as Diagnostic Instruments (DI). DI was a small start up company established in 1987 and one of the earliest companies to base itself in Scotland's 'Silicon Glen'. After having built up an enviable reputation for the design, testing and production of everything from the hardware, software and casings of specialist handheld devices, it was acquired by SKF in 2000.

By combining DI's experience and SKF's global resources, the company was ideally placed to help SMEs with their product realisation. SKF is able to offer a flexible combination of skills and services to suit customers from various backgrounds - eg blue chip companies, universities, backroom inventors - whatever their level of technical or engineering abilities. Rather than the customer having to start from scratch - and reinvent the wheel - they can utilise SKF's existing knowledge, expertise, experience and infrastructure thereby reducing time to market, reducing risk, and of course saving a great deal of time and money.

In recent years, the demand for less invasive patient monitoring devices and increased accuracy



of diagnostic results have become greater and greater in the healthcare sector. Medical devices have become wireless so, for example, patients can leave the hospital bed while still having their vital signs continuously monitored.

Accredited to ISO 13485, and with extensive knowledge in signal acquisition, digital processing, wireless communication and handheld computers, SKF is keen to help Scottish companies with the design and development of medical devices. It has worked closely with a number of healthcare technology companies on various medical devices including a dental product company to produce a remarkable dental caries detector. This was the first dental diagnostic tool to use an AC impedance spectroscopy to compute dental caries, the result of which allows preventative treatment.

Another device which SKF was involved in the development of is the iCEphone, on behalf

of Edinburgh based start-up company, The Medical Phone Ltd. In essence, this device is an innovative 3 panel touch micro notebook. It combines 4 main devices packing everything required into one handy tool. Facilities include the function of a fully featured 3G Touch Phone, a built in GPS receiver, a micro notebook with both handheld and desktop mode and game functions with multiple triggers. Designed initially for the British Military and Medical Emergency Service, the innovative phone also has a first-aid medical software package to take you step by step through what to do, and how to do it, in an emergency. US media nicknamed it the 'Swiss Army Knife of Handsets' at a tradeshow in Las Vegas.

Andrew Mulford, founder and CEO of The Medical Phone Ltd recognised the exact needs and requirements of the British Military and Medical Emergency Service from his long experience in those sectors. When Andrew met SKF at a network event in Glasgow, he was looking for

an industry partner who would understand these requirements and be able to translate them into a technical specification and then a real product. SKF helped The Medical Phone Ltd from the concept to design then all the way through to manufacture. Andrew was delighted. 'SKF is exactly the kind of partner I was looking for. They have a great team with extensive knowledge and experience in managing entire projects. The biggest benefit of working with SKF was that I was totally freed from the development of the product and was able to focus on what I do best, which is to market the product and run the company,' he said.

SKF CMC Livingston also has extensive knowledge and experience in helping customers obtain stringent medical certification such as IEC/UL/EN 60601-1, with CE marking and (should the product be aimed at the US market) with FDA510K. John McGlone, Managing Director said, 'Although we are part of a global organisation now, we were a start-up company ourselves 20 years ago. We understand exactly how overwhelming it can be to take an idea and carry it through all the stages of product development to a point where it reaches the reality. It's true that it takes a lot more than just a good idea to produce a remarkable product, but at SKF Condition Monitoring Centre (Livingston) we're confident that our experience-rich staff can give an inspired brainwave the expertise-backed boost needed to develop the products of the future.'

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