

# TDP Ltd: How a Digital Internship Transformed Data Strategy

## Case study



TDP Ltd, a Derbyshire-based manufacturer of 100% recycled outdoor furniture, operates in both B2C and B2B markets, supplying the hospitality, education, and healthcare sectors. With a strong commitment to sustainability, the company had recently upgraded its CRM system through the Made Smarter East Midlands Programme. However, despite having access to granular operational data, TDP lacked the internal expertise to turn this information into actionable insights. To bridge this gap, TDP engaged with the Made Smarter Digital Internship Programme, bringing in Troy a Computer Science PhD student, as a Data Analyst Intern. Troy completed the internship part time around his studies fulfilling 250 hours over a 13 week period.

### Why the Internship Was Needed

The company's goal was clear, become a data-driven organisation. TDP wanted to use its newly available data to improve demand planning, reduce lead times from seven weeks to three and minimise waste. Additionally, the business aimed to refine marketing strategies by analysing customer behaviour and regional sales performance. These ambitions required advanced data analysis and visualisation skills. The internship offered an innovative solution to this challenge.



### Project Scope and Objectives

The internship was structured around five key objectives. First, Troy was tasked with extracting, cleaning, and analysing customer and sales data to produce meaningful reports. Second, he needed to identify patterns and correlations that could inform operational decisions and support lead time reduction. Third, Troy was responsible for creating dashboards and visualisations to make data accessible to the wider team. Then, he had to develop a comprehensive guide to ensure that the tools he built could be used and maintained after the internship ended. Finally, the project explored automation opportunities to streamline data collection and reporting processes.

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#### Execution and Achievements

From the outset, Troy demonstrated strong technical and analytical skills. He successfully extracted and cleaned CRM data, producing reports that highlighted customer trends and regional performance. Building on this foundation, he developed a live dashboard integrated with SQL, enabling real-time visualisation of key metrics. One of his most impactful contributions was the creation of a forecasting feature using machine learning models,

which allowed TDP to predict revenue growth and product demand with greater accuracy.

Troy also invested time in documenting his work and creating a "how-to" guide, ensuring that the company could sustain and scale these tools beyond the internship. His ability to apply advanced mathematical theory to practical business problems was particularly valuable in developing accurate forecasting models.

#### Impact on the Business

The outcomes of the internship were transformative. TDP reduced lead times from seven weeks to approximately three weeks, significantly improving operational efficiency. Waste was minimised through better demand planning, and marketing strategies were enhanced with insights into product margins and regional sales trends. The dashboards and forecasting tools developed by Troy laid the foundation for a data-driven culture within the company, enabling informed decision-making across departments.

The project provided Troy with a rewarding experience, allowing him to apply theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting and see the tangible impact of his work.



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#### Reflections and Key Takeaways

Both TDP and Troy viewed the internship as highly successful. The Commercial Director, Kym emphasised the trust she had in Troy's ability to work independently and deliver results without close supervision. Troy described the experience as extremely beneficial, noting that it strengthened his technical skills and adaptability.

This case study illustrates the power of digital internships in driving innovation for SMEs. By leveraging external talent, businesses can access specialised skills, achieve measurable improvements, and build internal capabilities, all while providing valuable learning opportunities for emerging professionals.

***"In summary, this project has been a resounding success, and it's clear that we couldn't have achieved these milestones without the dedication and hard work of Troy. Troy has truly been fantastic to work with, and this internship has proven to be an invaluable asset to our team. Thank you all for the support of the Made Smarter Programme." - Kym, TDP Ltd***

***"I found the internship extremely useful. It was great to see the impact it had in the business. I found it extremely rewarding and enjoyable." - Troy, Intern***

