

## Knowledge Contact - Matching academics with SMEs to create growth

### Exchange of best practise

Danish project about matching academics with SMEs is seeking partners for exchange of best practise. In a longer perspective this may lead to an application for EU funding, but at the moment the idea is only to find relevant partners to visit on a study trip.

### Background

Danish research show<sup>1</sup> that micro enterprises (max. 50 employees) gain significant innovation drive when they employ an academic, and that they are 2-3 times as likely to develop new products or services as micro enterprises which do not employ academics. Micro enterprises which employed their first academic in the period of 1995 to 2001 have grown twice as fast in employees as micro enterprises who did not have any academics or already had employed academics.

Yet only 10% of today's Danish micro enterprises have hired academics<sup>2</sup>. Of course it is not just a question of getting any academic employed at any SME. There has to be a match between academic skill and enterprise growth potential. Academics and enterprises with no academics employed often have very distinct mindsets, and there is also a big lack of practical knowledge about salaries, working methods and skills, which makes the right match difficult.

### The project

Knowledge Contact is a European funded project on how to create the match between academics and SMEs in order to make them grow faster. The Region of Central Denmark is working together with Aarhus University - Institute of Business and Technology ([AU-IBT](#)) and the local business councils to match academics with smaller enterprises who are often not aware of the growth potential in employing an academic.

The project aims to:

- Increase the percentage of SMEs who hire academics.
- Support cooperation, networking and partnerships between enterprises and educational and research institutions in regional business areas of growth.
- Secure better cooperation between the enterprises in rural areas and educational and research institutions in the region.

Activities include meetings with SMEs to discuss the growth potential in hiring academics as well as the possibilities for working with students in higher education. To make academics understand the mindset of enterprises and how to seek job opportunities in private companies Career Workshops are being made and a Career Campus has been set up with enterprises and university teachers associated.

### Contact

If you are interested in exchange of best practice with people involved in this project, please contact: Finn Porsgaard on [finnp@hih.au.dk](mailto:finnp@hih.au.dk) before the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2009.

Project website: <http://www.videnskontakt.dk/>

*Unfortunately the project website and the scientific documentation are only available in Danish.*

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<sup>1</sup> Rambøll Management (2004) "Højtuddannedes værdi for små og mellemstore virksomheder"  
[http://www.ruc.dk/upload/application/pdf/8d911042/HojtuddannedesVaerdi\\_Sammenfatning.pdf](http://www.ruc.dk/upload/application/pdf/8d911042/HojtuddannedesVaerdi_Sammenfatning.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Rådet for Teknologi og Innovation (2006) "InnovationDanmark 2007-2010"  
<http://fist.dk/publikationer/2007/innovation-danmark-2007-2010/innovation-danmark-2007-2010.pdf>