

Two recently appointed product managers from Edinburgh-based software products company SeeByte – www.seebyte.com – found themselves working within the US product departments of technology giant SUN Microsystems, thanks to an innovative Channel Marketing project established by partners, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Strathclyde European Partnership under the Innovative Actions Programme.

The managers, Alastair Cormack and Ioseba Tena Ruiz, are amongst the senior management team at Seebyte which was one of three pilot companies selected to go through a gruelling market-readiness programme organised for SE and SEP by technology marketing specialists 2in10 – www.2in10.com.

The Project, which focused on installing Silicon Valley management processes for Product and Channel Management, culminated in a two-week placement for Alastair and Ioseba within SUN's Product Management departments at Santa Clara in California and Austin in Texas. "From not having an understanding of product and channel management/marketing a few months ago, we cannot now imagine how we ever thought it was possible operate without them", said Alastair Cormack, Product Manager, Military Sector, SeeByte Limited. "The Innovative Actions Channel Marketing Project has provided SeeByte with the capability to become a market leading company."

Host company SUN Microsystems is equally clear on the project's benefits, "Most technology companies start with engineering-minded people but the better they are at understanding market problems and having some creative way of solving them, the more likely they are to succeed", **noted Anthony Medeiros, Senior Director, Global Channel Strategy, Sun Microsystems Inc.**

Central to this is identifying the customer who will buy the developed technology and having an appropriate channel in place to service the market.

"It's funny; a channel partner will even push a less technically advanced product if they have a business proposition that is better vis-à-vis the competition: there is example after example after example of a better technology losing out, not because of the product but because the competitors' channel was more powerful than theirs. "

"The 'pilot' channel marketing project is addressing these vital issues and Sun is pleased to have been able to support this programme by hosting SeeByte executives in the US during their training", added **Medeiros**.

For the Scottish product managers, the programme gave intensive exposure to this market aware approach and they learned how leading edge multinationals practice these skills and processes as well as participating in actual product launches. "The placements at Sun enabled us to have one-on-one time with senior product and channel management executives and it's clear that most technology companies in the US have been doing this stuff since their inception. From day one we saw massive benefit in the complete package that the pilot programme provided", added Cormack