UK Research Opens the Road to Growth

Innovation underpins the continued success of global-leading multinational Procter & Gamble (P&G). By strengthening its portfolio of consumer products and the processes behind them, scientific breakthroughs sharpen the company’s competitive edge, create jobs and ultimately drive growth and market share. But they simply could not be achieved without a solid platform of world-class research. P&G commits R&D resources in the UK that are at levels significantly higher than the UK’s proportion of P&G’s global business, reflecting what it sees as the UK’s unique research climate where pioneering projects and high-calibre expertise generate insights that benefit both the business and the wider economy.

Since 2006, P&G’s Strategic Partnership with Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has helped it to access crucial expertise in academia and catalysed new upstream work dovetailing with its own nearer-market research. With Innovate UK helping innovations negotiate the ‘valley of death’ between the laboratory and the marketplace, real-world solutions to tough industrial problems and outstanding career opportunities for some of the UK’s brightest scientists are the welcome result.

The UK’s strong position needs to be constantly reinforced through ever smarter investment in priority themes and research tools to partner with business, as other regions learn from and try to emulate UK success.

- P&G has 16 sites across the UK and Ireland
- P&G serves approximately 4.8 billion people around the world with its brands including Always, Ariel, Ambi Pur, Braun, Duracell, Fairy, Febreze, Gillette, Head & Shoulders, Iams, Lenor, Olay, Oral-B, Pampers, Pantene, SK-II and Wella
Effective low-temperature detergents offer huge benefits for the consumer and the environment. Funded through an EPSRC/P&G collaboration, research led by Warwick University has shown that nano-scale carbon pieces help loosen fat from fabrics without hot washing.

Cold water cleaning is also a focus of CEMENT (Centre of Excellence in Methods and New Technologies for Surface Modification and Cleaning), a £14 million Regional Growth Fund initiative involving P&G, Durham University, Peerless Systems and the Centre for Process Innovation (part of Innovate UK’s High Value Manufacturing Catapult). Creating a ‘hotspot’ of academic/private expertise, it will also harness the skills of EPSRC-funded students that it is inspiring in North-East England – binding research and innovation in a lasting partnership.