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PRESS RELEASE

Obelisk awarded Innovate UK funding to support remote working across economy

Obelisk Support – which is celebrating 10 years of pioneering remote working in the legal profession – has won almost £50,000 of funding from **Innovate UK**, the UK's innovation agency, to help SMEs of all types manage the dramatic shift to remote working caused by Covid-19.

The award comes from a **£40m government competition** which encourages innovation in response to the global disruption caused by Covid-19. The maximum award is £50,000. The agency received 20,000 applications, the largest number ever, which led it to double the amount of funding originally allocated from £20m to £40m.

The competition's aim is to support businesses to focus on emerging or increasing needs of society and industries during and following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Obelisk's plan is to develop the capabilities of the mature system it has built to manage a distributed workforce of over 2,000 lawyers with variable levels of flexibility in terms of location and hours.

At the end of the six-month project, it will deliver a remote-working productivity tool that can help businesses manage an entire workforce that is working in a blended office/ home model in what it believes to be a rising technology vertical focused on office technology (OffTech). Though many businesses have been forced into this due to coronavirus, few had the processes or tools in place to do so effectively for the long term.

The tool will allow businesses to have an overview of the skills, availability and workload of staff so that they can match incoming work to the right people, and then track the progress and time spent on completing the task. This ensures the business can leverage all available skills and time efficiently.

The tool will build on the two platforms Obelisk has created:

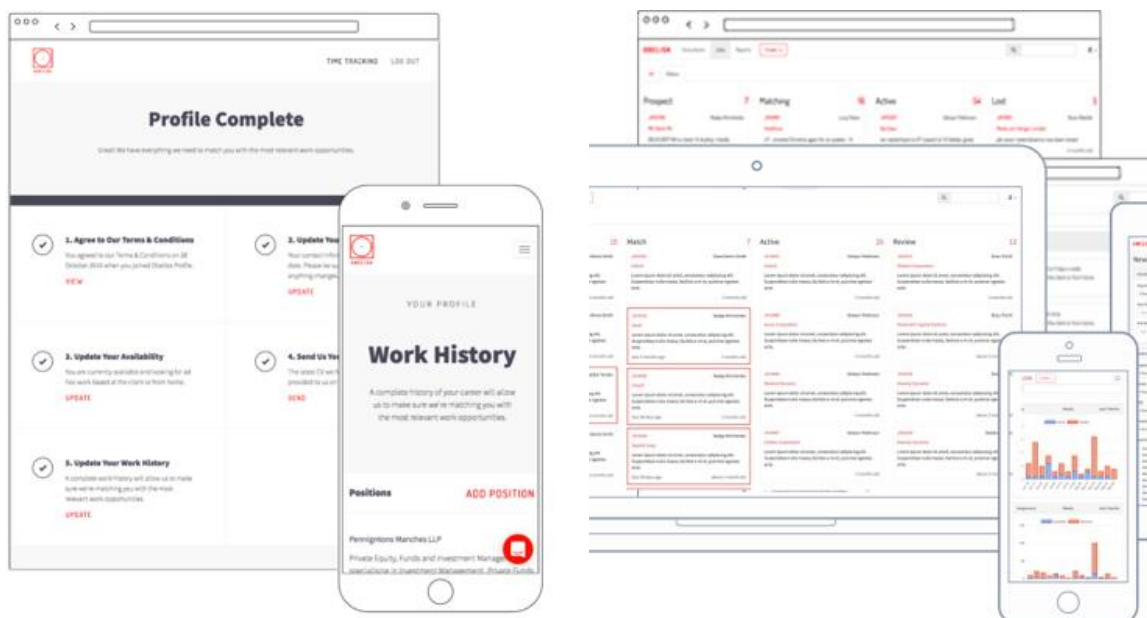
- **Buzz**, which allows administrators to manage and match workers and tasks according to availability and patterns of flexible work, alongside time logging and invoicing; and

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- **Profile**, a worker-facing web/mobile app, through which they manage their contact information, preferences, availability, background, work offers and time logging.



Obelisk CEO Dana Denis-Smith says: “While there has been a lot of talk about Zoom, Microsoft Teams and the like because of Covid-19, the challenge of scaling up remote working presents a fundamental challenge to businesses: the need to define, organise, schedule, negotiate and track work being done by a team. Trust and transparency are key ingredients to ensuring that a blended workforce that works on and off site is productive and engaged. Understanding this balance has been at the heart of how Obelisk has worked and scaled for the past decade.

“In an office setting, this is often done by informal discussions or in small face-to-face meetings. Attempting to replicate this model remotely is difficult and many businesses will often revert to ad hoc solutions, such as shared spreadsheets and endless email threads, which lack the control and insight to be truly effective.

“But effectively and efficiently managing a remote workforce has been fundamental to Obelisk’s business from day one and the dedicated platforms we have developed are now ready to be scaled up and applied across SMEs – and not just the legal or professional sector.

“**Research shows** that employees are keen to maintain some, if not all elements of home working, so business will need to be ready to manage this new way of working.”

Dana adds: “It is particularly appropriate that this award has been made in the month we celebrate our 10th anniversary. Our success shows that, if remote working can be embraced

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and managed by a deeply traditional profession such as the law, then it should hold no fears for other businesses.”

Ends

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About Obelisk Support:

Obelisk Support is an award-winning legal business bringing significant change to how lawyers work.

Under the leadership of CEO, Dana Denis-Smith, Obelisk has built a talent pool of over 1,000 skilled and highly experienced legal professionals whose life demands no longer fit the traditional working model.

Obelisk can help in-house teams drive change by:

- Providing access to remote and flexible legal services, delivered by highly-experienced lawyers
- Designing, advising on and resourcing tailored “Returners” programmes
- Consulting with teams to understand and evolve their workplace culture.

For more information visit <https://obelisksupport.com/>

About Innovate UK:

Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas.

We connect businesses to the partners, customers and investors that can help them turn ideas into commercially successful products and services and business growth. We fund business and research collaborations to accelerate innovation and drive business investment into R&D. Our support is available to businesses across all economic sectors, value chains and UK regions.

Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation.

For more information visit www.innovateuk.ukri.org



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