

New invention could ease winter blues

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A device invented by two Newcastle University graduates could help keep people warm next winter and save on their fuel bills at the same time.

The Radfan is attached to household radiators and helps to spread heat more evenly around the room, meaning the [thermostat](#) can be turned down, shaving [money](#) off heating costs.

Roland Glancy and Simon Barker, post-graduates from Newcastle University came up with the idea for the Radfan in 2010 while suffering one of the coldest winters in recent years.

Roland, [inventor](#) of the Radfan and Managing Director of the company said: “I came up with the idea because my wife was continuously complaining about being cold. Even though the heating was on and the radiators were working. I realised that the heat was not getting spread efficiently.

“At the moment the air around the radiator gets warm, but that doesn’t spread around too well, especially in larger rooms, like your living room.

“The opposite side of the room often stays cold so you have to turn up the heating to get the full benefit and ensure your whole room is warmed. That costs money, especially with gas bills constantly increasing.

“But the device I have developed will ensure the warmer air circulates

around the room, meaning you don't have to have the heating up so high.

“It could save the average household a substantial amount of money, which could be vital for those who live in fuel poverty or anyone keen to reduce their heating bills.”

Tests have shown that the Radfan can increase the temperature in the average living room, this way reducing the annual cost of heating bills.

The business was boosted in its early days when the team won the Santander Business Incubation Award. It then went to win the post-graduate category of the national Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Awards in July last year.

The £20,000 prize helped the team develop the prototype and then get further funding from a venture capital fund, The North East Angel Fund, managed by Rivers Capital Partners in November 2011 to help bring the Radfan to market.

Simon Barker, technical Director of the company, said: “One of the most difficult aspects of starting your own business is feeling alone and staying motivated. The support of Newcastle University enabled us to keep going and helped us develop contacts that we could collaborate with to make the idea work. Winning the Santander competition was another real boost as that really accelerated our efforts to pitch for further investment.”

Nick Keeley, Director of the Careers Service at Newcastle University, said: “It's great to see all the hard work that Roland and Simon have put in is paying off. They've taken full advantage of the support we offer our entrepreneurial students and graduates through our Rise Up scheme, and it has given them a head start to launch Radfan.”

Ana Botin, CEO Santander UK says: “Students at UK universities are bursting with brilliant new ideas that only need a bit of support to materialise into a successful business. At Santander we are delighted that the money of the award gave Radfan that extra push that helped them get the product ready to be launched commercially. We wish these entrepreneurs a business career full of success”

Roland and Simon are convinced that with a good idea, great support to start a new business can be found in the UK. Their advice to all entrepreneurs in the early stages of their projects is to write a business plan and to enter business plan competitions, as it is a great way to get some early cash into the business. A 100% commitment is also essential to see your project succeed.

The team are planning to launch their invention in plenty of time for autumn 2012.

More information: For more information see the [website](#).

Provided by Newcastle University

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