





# SME INNOVATORS AWARD

WINNER

## OEM Sales & Engineering

Elfab Ltd

Proving that size doesn't matter are the winners of our inaugural SME Innovators Award, Elfab Ltd. As manufacturers of pressure relief systems for both end users and OEMs in a number of industries, ranging from oil & gas to cryogenics, their products can be found in over 70 countries across the globe – all achieved with a team of just 65 people.

Working with large, blue-chip organisations, many items are tailor-made for specific applications. Elfab's technologically advanced factory is also able to deliver large volumes and complex devices to a range of customers.

In a market that sees constantly changing customer and regulatory demands, innovation has to be at the heart of Elfab's operations. The company's response to one recent challenge is what caught the attention of our judges.

The company were asked to create a pressure relief valve for a diesel engine, which relies on highly compressed air to ignite fuel, rather than a spark plug. This part was relatively simple: the company already produced an explosion panel that met the criteria. However, the customer also stipulated that the panel could not let any heat escape during operation. This, as it turned out, was more of a challenge.

Elfab's sales and engineering team sprang into action. A clear plan was put in place, which took into account the cost, resources and staff

development needed to fulfil the product on time and within budget.

A vital part through the entirety of the product's development process was close communication with the customer, who visited Elfab's head office in South Shields to speak about the application in detail. The company even took the bold step to invest in a space-age material called Aerogel, which resulted in a product that was low in density and had excellent thermal conductivity.

After a prolonged period of research and experimentation, including with the thickness of the Aerogel layer, Elfab soon created the perfect product for the customer, who have also seen benefits from Elfab's expert advice in product aftercare.

Due to its design and the company's strong supply chain and manufacturing facilities, Elfab were able to offer the product a whole seven weeks faster than any competitor – an advantage that has seen them win two of the largest explosion panel orders in the company's history, taking business from another company. The development of the explosion panel has seen Elfab offer not just a product, but an end-to-end customer solution.

Evidence that clear communication, good ideas and hard work are no barrier to success, no matter the size of the organisation.

### FINALISTS

**Handrail Creations Ltd**

**Reliability Team,  
PEME**

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

*“Elfab are a small company with a big vision, and their customer-focused approach to this project demonstrates clearly their understanding of how innovation assists with the creation of wealth within the business”*