

# Picture this



Right: Stewart Little, director, IRT Surveys.

Entrepreneur Stewart Little knows a fair bit about photographing buildings. He's been invited to take pictures of the White House, Buckingham Palace and the Scottish Parliament – all for a very special purpose.

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**H**is company, IRT Surveys, is a world leader in capturing infrared images which show exactly how and where energy is escaping from a property and working out just what that loss is costing.

The Dundee-based business is going from strength to strength and acknowledges that its use of Mentor Services has been one of the reasons for its success. "For us, it's been the easiest, fastest and most cost effective way of staying up-to-date with employment legislation," says Stewart. "The confidence it's given us, that we've done everything 100% right, is just fantastic." The Company was founded five years ago by Stewart, who is a former architectural technician. He was helping to develop business opportunities for a roof garden company when he realised that infrared technology could be used to determine if flat roofs were wet under the surface.

## specialisation

He also saw the potential for measuring and reporting energy loss in the wake of the 2002 Kyoto protocol on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

"For the first three years, we focused on roofs, but then progressed to walls, and we can now see things like rising damp, condensation, energy loss from windows and problems with missing insulation," he explains.

"We have written our own software which can actually calculate

the cash cost of the carbon dioxide footprint."

The highly specialised service has been used by clients including the US Government over oil giant BP in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan.

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Stewart Little, IRT Surveys

It has been discovered that more than half of newly built properties have large areas of poor or missing insulation. Many types of cavity wall insulation can also degrade with time, and the non-destructive photography technique shows the condition of the whole elevation.

Demand for the service is huge – the Company has grown by 788% in five years – and it is now set to expand further through a UK and worldwide partnering arrangement. "By about 2009," Stewart says, "we should be 10 times the size we are today."

Stewart's bank manager suggested using Mentor Services a year ago. "We saw that we were going to undergo rapid expansion and felt we needed help with advice on employment legislation," adds

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Stewart. "It turned out to be ideal for us as it's a much more cost-effective than hiring our own HR person and having to talk to our lawyers every couple of days. By doing it in this way, it becomes highly efficient."

Stewart says the service has already proved to be worth its weight in gold. "We've recently had to deal with a very difficult staff situation and must have used Mentor every day for four weeks to ensure we were doing the right thing. At the end of the day, Mentor's help was invaluable and it

certainly kept us away from a tribunal situation. We've also got a tremendous relationship with

**"Mentor's help was invaluable and it certainly kept us away from either court or a tribunal."** Stewart Little, IRT Surveys

our individual consultant, who gives us great advice. She's lovely and a tremendous listener."



TAX SERVICE T: 08706 000 829 TEXTPHONE: 0141 248 9847