

Universal Design targets Asia with Melbourne office

By Gina Lovett

Universal Design Studio is to expand its reach in the pan-Pacific market with the opening of an office in Melbourne, Australia, this week.

Director of Australia Mark Simpson, who will be recruiting additional team members over the coming months, is to take the helm.

London-based director Dan Higgott, who joined Universal Design Studio last October, explains that Simpson is back working with Universal following his first stint with the consultancy in London a couple of years ago.

The untapped potential of the Australian design sector makes it an attractive choice to expand into, according to Higgott.

'Australia is a somewhat under-exploited market, with real opportunity for us to improve the quality and offer



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of design available,' he says.

'The plans for a Melbourne office began last year, when a couple of the directors went out to talk to potential clients, and since then, they have been trying to establish the brand, looking at opportunities to expand,' Higgott adds.

Universal Design Studio will be working with clients primarily in the retail and

leisure sector, though at this stage it is too early to reveal names, he says.

'The secondary benefit for us being in Australia is that it gives us the potential to work more in the Pacific market, with clients in Japan and China, although I have to stress we won't transfer operations out there. It just gives us more flexibility,' Higgott explains.