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CUTTING edge designers saved the jobs of a dozen of their colleagues when the firm they worked for went bust.

They set up Shore Design Consultancy Ltd. in December 2003 after Forth Product Design went into liquidation and 21 highly skilled employees were made redundant.

Now the Leith-based consultancy - designers of consumer to industrial products for some of Europe's biggest brand names – is on target for a £1million turnover in their first year.

Founders Nick Foley and James McLusky set up Shore Design within days of Forth going under.

McLusky, a design consultant, said: "When Forth closed, it sent shockwaves through the UK design industry. It was a hugely respected name

"Our clients couldn't believe what had happened. But many of them made it clear that they trusted the designers they were working with, not just the firm they had contracted.

"Nick and I had already been thinking about going out on our own and this gave us the impetus to think bigger than just a three or four-man team.

"Eighty per cent of the designers agreed to join us and soon after Allan McDougall, one of the founding partners of Forth, also became involved, initially in an advisory capacity. Many of our clients have since followed us.

"Now we find ourselves having to quickly manage our growth to fill the demand. As well as saving the original 14 jobs, we have taken on 3 new members of staff."

The partners poured their own cash into the new venture and went without wages for three months as the firm found its feet.

The team - who design the look, engineering and mechanics of products – now have contracts ranging from innovative Scottish entrepreneurs to worldwide corporations.

Foley said: "If a client comes to us with a new idea, they create the core technology. It's our designers and engineers who turn it into the product people actually buy.

"Our team have an average of 10 years experience in the industry and have worked for big names like Sony, NCR, Philips, Hewlett Packard, Flymo and Mitsubishi in the past.

"We've always been a strong team, but what happened at Forth has made us leaner and hungrier. We're pulling together.

"It's also fed our creativity because we feel we have to shine even brighter after coming so close to having nothing."

Shore now has a workforce of 17. The firm, which has a multi-lingual staff, is targeting Scotland, UK and Europe for new opportunities and have already seen a return, capturing several new clients since their inception.

The workers laid off by Forth have only recently received their redundancy payouts.

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