

INTERNATIONAL TRACK 100



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The recession has galvanised UK firms with innovative technology or powerful brands into exploring new markets overseas, says **Nick Britton**

The bold floral designs of Cath Kidston will be familiar to many from Britain's high streets, but less well known is that the company has eight stores in Japan. Similarly, it may come as a surprise that the Oscar-winning visual effects of Avatar were achieved with the help of software from the London-based firm The Foundry.

The threat of British companies losing out to lower-priced, faster-moving foreign competition has not gone away, but a new breed of businesses with global ambition is breaking down national trade boundaries.

This year's Sunday Times HSBC International Track 100 identifies private firms that have at least doubled their non-UK sales over their latest two years of accounts. The average annual growth rate is 91%, while the top-ranked company, SMS Electronics, racked up an annualised sales increase of 418% to £19m in 2010, buoyed by sales of its video-conferencing equipment. Staff numbers at the 100 companies have swelled from 14,000 to 21,000 over two years, partly due to acquisitions.

The reasons for expansion vary. In the consumer-goods sector, which is the best represented in the league table with 17 firms, strong brands are crucial to inter-

FAST TRACK

Now in its second year, International Track 100 is compiled by Fast Track, the Oxford company that researches Britain's top-performing private companies and organises invitation-only networking dinners for their owners and directors. For more information about how this ranking was compiled, see page 2.

national success. Cath Kidston (No 33), for example, is a prized label among teenage girls in Japan and also counts South Korea and the Philippines among its key markets. Similarly, kitchenware maker Joseph Joseph (No 28) has particular appeal in Japan, where it scales down products to fit tiny Tokyo apartments, and the US, where they are supersized to suit American tastes.

Other strong sectors in the league table, compiled by the Oxford research and networking-events company Fast Track, include engineering (12 firms) and computers and electronics (11). Technical expertise and innovation are driving growth for them: for example, RSK (No 29) advises oil-and-gas firms on the environmental effects of laying pipelines, while Ioko (No 20) is behind the technology for the BBC iPlayer and helping the American media giant AT&T to develop a new internet TV service.

But companies do not need a killer brand or a world-beating technology to grow internationally. Sometimes it is enough to provide a simple service well and use the internet to build a global customer base. Chain Reaction Cycles (No 14), which stocks thousands of bikes and accessories in its warehouses near Belfast, and The Book Depository (No 16), which supplies hard-to-find titles and was founded by a former Amazon.com executive, are two examples of this. Respectively, they generate 63% and 75% of their sales outside the UK, compared with an average of 47% across the International Track 100.

It would be a mistake to imply that these firms' success is purely down to their own qualities. External factors have helped to drive sales overseas, such as the weakness of sterling, which plummeted in value against the US dollar from \$2.11 in November 2007 to \$1.36 in January 2009, and declining business in Britain, which prompted many to ramp up their international efforts. In fact, more than a fifth of the firms originally moved overseas because their domestic market was saturated or disappearing.

The recession has had mixed effects on the 100 businesses on the league table. A quarter suffered falling turnover in Britain over the period under review, even as global sales soared. Among those hit by weak consumer spending at home is Really Useful Products (No 47), which makes plastic storage boxes sold at stationery outlets. It broke into America in 2007, and now supplies Staples and Walmart there.



BRITAIN'S PRIVATE FIRMS WITH THE FASTEST GROWING OVERSEAS SALES

In association with



TOP TEN COMPANIES WITH THE BIGGEST EXPORTS

Rank	Name	Activity	International sales, £m
40	Bet365	Online bookmaker	266
5	Byrom	Sporting events manager	126
43	Rebound Electronics	Electronic components broker	54
16	The Book Depository	Online book retailer	52
39	Balmoral Group	Polymer engineer	49
14	Chain Reaction Cycles	Online bike retailer	49
2	Forward Internet Group	Online marketer	45
38	Divex	Diving equipment manufacturer	43
49	JW Galloway	Beef and lamb producer	42
23	Eazyfone	Mobile phone recycler	38

trade are changing. A report from HSBC, referenced in more detail by the bank's Steve Price on page 3, suggests that Europe is still a good place to develop "high-end, value-adding" products, but not such a good place to sell them. While America, Germany and the Netherlands are Britain's top trading partners at present, the fastest-growing are China, United Arab Emirates and India.

Those trends are reflected in the league table, with 34 naming Asian countries as having the most potential, compared with 29 for European nations and 27 for America and Canada. For example, Hydra Mining Tools International (No 67), which makes cutting equipment for coal-mining machines, now wins 26.5% of its sales from China, compared with 2% in 2008.

For many firms, however, America is still the market to crack. Forward Internet Group (No 2), which owns online price-comparison tools uSwitch and Invisible Hand, is considering opening a US office.

Managing director Neil Hutchinson thinks Brazil, Russia, India and China have great potential, but says language is a barrier.

Help is at hand, however. There are two translation companies in the league table, Lingo 24 (No 81) and The Big Word (No 85).

Often, the main hurdle when expanding overseas is red tape, as explained by David Maxwell of Grant Thornton on page 4. The Poker website operator PKR (No 41) had to develop a separate site for French players to comply with stringent gambling regulations in that country. Cultural or language differences, lack of finance and a scarcity of qualified staff were also cited as barriers to international growth.

However, only 3% of the International Track 100 firms found local competitors impeded their expansion. Most have selected markets where their skills are rare and in high demand. With their distinctive products and high-quality services, they point the way towards a more promising future for British companies on the global stage.

Private firms with the fastest growing international sales

Rank 2011	Rank 2010	Company	Activity	Location of HQ	Financial year end	% annual international sales growth	2009-11 international sales, £000s	2007-09 international sales, £000s	2009-11 total sales, £000s	Staff	Founded	Comment	Page
1		SMS Electronics	Electronics manufacturer	Nottingham	Oct 10	417.53%	18,695	698	31,007	131	2002	International sales have rocketed thanks to demand for its video-conferencing systems	3
2		Forward Internet Group	Online marketer	Central London	Dec 09	286.69%	*45,355	3,033	*50,808	46	2004	Says it has registered 1.3m US users for its 'Invisible Hand' price-comparison technology	3
3		Kelway	IT services provider	Central London	Mar 10	249.43%	19,248	1,576	178,140	355	1990	Has an office in Dubai and is planning to expand into South Africa	3
4		A1 Pharmaceuticals	Pharmaceutical product distributor	East London	Apr 10	227.83%	5,937	552	26,648	24	1986	Sells branded surgical dressings, pharmaceuticals and medical devices globally	3
5		Byrom	Sporting events manager	Cheshire	Mar 10	226.33%	126,063	11,838	128,634	223	1991	Provided accommodation, ticketing and IT services for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa	3
6		Arrowedge	Pharmaceutical wholesaler	Bournemouth	Apr 10	221.78%	15,231	1,471	33,688	41	1982	Plans to target sales in South America after attending a trade show	3
7		Intamarque	Food and toiletries distributor	Cheltenham	May 10	206.68%	11,680	1,242	23,594	10	2006	Distributes mixed containers of British products to more than 30 countries	3
8		Redwood Distribution	Textile distributor	Lancashire	Dec 09	197.62%	5,972	674	21,067	130	1993	Supplies soft-furnishing textiles and products to more than 50 countries	3
9		Wilton Group	Offshore services provider	Middlesbrough	Jun 10	186.85%	5,284	642	38,292	227	1994	Helped to repair the largest land-based crane in the world	3
10		Clipper Logistics Group	Warehousing and distribution	Leeds	Apr 10	160.76%	14,408	2,119	143,761	1,815	1992	Has 28 distribution centres around Europe and recently acquired operations in Germany	3
11		Halian	IT services provider	Reading	Oct 09	158.06%	10,156	1,525	14,639	96	1996	Plans to use its Dubai office as a gateway to other Middle Eastern countries	4
12		Veritek Global	Engineering services provider	Eastbourne	Mar 10	156.41%	8,593	1,307	25,284	325	1986	Expanded by acquiring photo-imaging service companies in eight mainland European countries	4
13		MPM Products	Natural pet food producer	Cheshire	Dec 10	152.52%	†3,334	523	†8,710	20	2003	Sells cat and dog food and products to continental Europe and the Far East	4
14		Chain Reaction Cycles	Online bike retailer	County Antrim	Dec 09	143.20%	48,560	8,210	77,409	291	1985	Exports more than doubled in one year to £49m in 2009	4
15		Eden McCallum	Management consultancy	Central London	Jun 10	136.82%	4,184	746	16,043	26	2000	Works with a network of 400 consultants across six continents	4
16	3	The Book Depository	Online book retailer	Gloucester	Jun 10	127.09%	51,831	10,050	69,001	58	2004	Ships free of charge to 101 countries, with its main markets in Canada, Australia and America	4
17	12	Bonds	Steel castings manufacturer	County Durham	Sep 10	126.12%	5,681	1,111	11,933	168	1997	Increased exports to Europe and the Americas and identified new markets in the east	4
18		E-Tech Group	Electrical engineer	Great Yarmouth	Mar 10	116.56%	12,802	2,730	27,349	206	1994	Runs football training schools in the villages near its offices in Ghana	4
19		Flying Music	Music producer and promoter	Central London	Jul 10	112.98%	5,518	1,217	21,557	24	1982	Is behind world-touring musical shows The Rat Pack and Thriller Live	4
20		Ioko	Digital media systems integrator	York	Sep 10	112.75%	†12,058	2,664	†42,705	298	1995	Provides the internet platforms for TV companies in America to offer 'catch-up' viewing	4
21		Datix	Healthcare software developer	Southwest London	Apr 10	109.34%	†2,999	684	†8,105	36	1986	Sells across four continents and plans subsidiaries in America	4
22		Melrob	Chemical distributor	West Sussex	Sep 09	108.22%	6,472	1,493	24,396	30	1995	Has acquired a Japanese distribution company to strengthen its Asian presence	4
23	4	Eazyfone	Mobile phone recycler	Cheshire	Aug 10	107.77%	38,011	8,806	43,462	123	2001	Collects and reconditions mobile phones from European users for sale in Africa and Asia	4
24		MDSL	Cost management consultant	Tunbridge Wells	Dec 09	106.94%	6,186	1,444	8,018	78	1995	Provides cost-management services from offices in Tokyo, Macau and New York	4
25		Mr Tyre	Tyre retailer	Birmingham	Dec 09	103.89%	5,112	1,230	40,633	166	1972	Supplies spare car parts to mainland Europe, North America and Asia from 24 English depots	4
26	25	Elmwood Design	Brand design consultancy	Leeds	Dec 09	103.15%	5,477	1,327	9,359	103	1989	Offers brand design to global companies from offices in America, Singapore and Australia	4
27		Garrets International	Marine catering agent	Northeast London	Mar 10	102.48%	24,198	5,902	24,198	21	1991	Monitors the food supply to about 640 merchant vessels worldwide	4
28		Joseph Joseph	Household goods maker	Central London	May 10	100.11%	†7,614	1,901	†12,255	30	2003	Exports its products to 65 countries, including Japan, where it sells cooking chopsticks	4
29		RSK	Environmental consultancy	Cheshire	Mar 10	99.03%	18,286	4,616	60,698	741	1989	Helps multinational energy companies assess the environmental impact of their projects	4
30		Target Group	Financial software developer	Cardiff	Oct 10	94.62%	†4,280	1,130	†26,071	374	1979	Provides software and outsourcing to financial companies in Europe and Australasia	5
31	8	Pharmarama International	Clinical trials supplier	Northwest London	Jul 10	94.53%	13,288	3,512	31,638	22	1998	Supplies pharmaceuticals worldwide from offices and warehouses in Britain and America	5
32		Fever-Tree	Mixer drinks manufacturer	Southwest London	Dec 10	93.76%	†4,276	1,139	16,664	9	2004	Exports to 25 countries, with a strong presence in America and Spain	5
33	31	Cath Kidston	Lifestyle retailer	Central London	Mar 10	92.98%	10,398	2,792	50,369	383	1993	Has eight shops in Japan, two in South Korea and two in Ireland	5
34		Rainbow Cosmetics	Fragrance wholesaler	Manchester	Dec 10	92.47%	†4,598	1,241	†33,965	54	1990	Exports cosmetic, tanning and bronzing products to Denmark, Sweden and Poland	5
35		Bybox	Delivery systems operator	Oxfordshire	Dec 09	91.86%	3,911	1,062	31,614	229	2000	Delivers direct to more than 25,000 locker boxes across Europe	5
36		Pharmarama	Clinical trials supplier	Northwest London	Jul 10	90.45%	7,037	1,940	7,087	2	2006	Supplies pharmaceuticals to America from offices and a warehouse in Boston, Massachusetts	5
37		Skrill	Online payment provider	Central London	Dec 09	89.81%	32,946	9,145	43,021	317	2001	Offers its service in 40 different languages in Europe, America and Asia	5
38		DiveX	Diving equipment manufacturer	Aberdeen	Nov 09	85.89%	43,279	12,525	79,083	389	1980	Sells deep-sea-diving equipment worldwide	5
39	45	Balmoral Group	Plastics engineer	Aberdeen	Mar 10	81.78%	48,824	14,776	60,564	315	1980	Designs and makes buoyancy aids used in offshore oil work, including in Africa and Brazil	5
40		Bet 365	Online bookmaker	Stoke-on-Trent	Mar 10	81.61%	265,536	*80,504	419,750	1,313	1974	Its website is available in 17 languages, including Greek, Slovak and Chinese	5
41		PKR	3D poker website operator	Channel Islands	Dec 09	81.61%	23,150	7,019	33,031	98	2004	Players from around Europe and Canada can take part in this company's 3D poker games	5
42		Imparta	Business trainer	Southwest London	Dec 09	81.36%	2,310	702	5,249	44	1997	Partners with global training organisations to teach sales-and-marketing techniques to clients	5
43	87	Rebound Electronics	Electronic components broker	Newbury	Dec 10	81.34%	†54,430	16,553	†80,273	219	2003	Trades from offices in 14 countries, including Germany, Poland, India and China	5
44		Danwood Group	Office equipment supplier	Lincoln	Sep 09	80.65%	34,252	10,496	194,072	1,295	1971	Supplies and services office machines in Ireland and Florida	5
45	66	Genuine Solutions	Telecoms product reseller	Surrey	Jan 11	79.00%	†12,337	3,850	†17,802	81	2004	Exports to mainland Europe and Russia, with plans to expand into America this year	5
46		Nationwide Produce	Produce marketer	Lancashire	May 10	78.88%	16,825	*5,258	65,060	64	1975	Recently hired a former Russian farm manager to help target the region	5
47	84	Really Useful Products	Storage box supplier	West Yorkshire	May 10	78.39%	11,635	3,656	21,506	118	1999	Supplies Staples and Walmart in America	5
48		JD Classics	Classic car restorer	Essex	Apr 10	77.23%	6,470	2,060	24,326	28	1987	Races classic cars in Monte Carlo, Laguna Seca and Le Mans	5
49		JW Galloway	Beef and lamb producer	Stirling	Feb 10	74.02%	41,700	13,770	189,274	659	1922	Exports Scotch beef and lamb to France, Belgium and Italy	6
50		Ultimate Products	Homeware designer and sourcer	Manchester	Jul 10	73.16%	22,812	7,608	78,264	231	1997	Has offices in Britain and Belgium and a large showroom in Hong Kong	6
51		Start Creative	Graphic design agency	Central London	Mar 10	72.70%	4,101	1,375	10,222	73	1996	Developed interactive store terminals with help from the University of Freiburg in Germany	6
52		The Professional Darts Corp.	Professional darts promoter	Essex	Jan 10	71.96%	1,584	536	10,324	10	1992	Promotes darts tournaments and sells television coverage around the world	6
53		Global Infusion Group	Events and tours caterer	Buckinghamshire	Dec 10	71.86%	†2,885	977	19,814	84	1991	Provides the catering for world-touring concerts and corporate events	6
54		The Foundry	Visual effects software developer	Central London	Dec 10	71.51%	†11,222	3,815	†13,049	70	1996	Licenses its products to film-production studios in Hollywood and Bollywood	6
55		Citihub	IT consultancy	Central London	Dec 10	71.32%	†4,767	1,624	†10,117	90	1998	Claims to provide IT services to seven of the top ten biggest global investment banks	6
56		M2M	PC components distributor	Southeast London	Dec 09	71.09%	10,286	3,514	19,408	10	1997	Trades IT parts with firms such as Samsung in America, the Far East and mainland Europe	6
57		Rayburn Trading	Toiletries wholesaler	Manchester	Aug 10	68.78%	35,058	12,307	77,657	165	1957	Sells own-brand health-and-beauty and household products worldwide	6
58	93	DCA Design International	Product design consultancy	Warwick	May 10	68.44%	7,635	2,691	9,568	80	1960	Provides product-design and development consultancy internationally	6
59		Mobica	Mobile phone application designer	Cheshire	Dec 09	68.25%	3,315	1,171	6,709	165	2004	Sells to big consumer-electronics and mobile firms in mainland Europe, America and Asia	6
60		Key Travel	Travel agency	Central London	Sep 09	68.05%	5,664	2,006	55,345	139	1980	Has served the global non-profit community for 30 years	6
61		RFL Communications	Telecoms services provider	Wiltshire	Jun 10	67.64%	1,814	645	5,170	45	1996	Constructed the communications network for a Jordanian electricity company	6
62		Micro Nav	Simulation systems developer	Bournemouth	Dec 09	67.56%	†5,559	1,980	†5,777	46	1988	96% of sales are overseas, with key markets being mainland Europe, the Middle East and Asia	6
63		Seafast Logistics	Logistics provider	Suffolk	Mar 10	66.55%	4,452	1,605	21,508	47	2003	Provides logistics to difficult or hostile places such as Iraq and Afghanistan	6
64		Travel Counsellors	Travel agency	Bolton	Oct 10	65.77%	†9,602	3,494	†74,817	221	1994	Has 1,200 travel agents operating in six countries	6
65		Jarvis Group	IT distributor	East Sussex	Mar 10	65.48%	1,495	546	8,916	15	2001	Distributes HP hardware throughout Europe	6
66		London Fancy Box Company	Presentation packaging retailer	Dover	Dec 09	64.94%	10,710	3,937	17,767	337	1894	Packages fine perfumes for the luxury French brands Chanel and Estée Lauder	6
67	44	Hydra Mining Tools Intl	Mining tools producer	South Yorkshire	Jun 10	64.74%	8,701	3,206	11,880	139	2000	International sales have been boosted by its Chinese and American subsidiaries	6
68		Corinthian Marketing	Collectables and toys marketer	High Wycombe	Dec 09	63.52%	3,157	1,181	15,170	23	1985	Claims it has sold 10m figurines of the cartoon character Ben 10 globally since 2008	6
69		Clintec International	Clinical researcher	Glasgow	Dec 09	63.46%	11,372	4,256	11,379	119	1997	Supports pharma companies worldwide to develop medicines against major diseases	6
70	14	Aeads	Architectural services provider	Central London	Dec 09	62.87%	19,196	7,236	63,222	609	2002	Designs infrastructure projects in the Middle East	6
71		Pure Technology	Optics wholesaler	Northwest London	Aug 09	62.51%	4,895	1,853	9,777	100	1993	Distributes designer eyewear and ophthalmic lenses to mainland Europe and America	6
72		Lock Inspection Systems	Metal detector manufacturer	Oldham	Dec 09	61.91%	11,402	*4,349	12,438	120	1949	Expanding further into China, India, Turkey and Indonesia and is planning to target Russia	6
73		Natural Products	Giftware designer	West London	May 10	61.44%	†5,128	1,967	†12,662	33	1992	Has boosted its brand overseas by including its website details on every product sold	6
74	43	Interport	Pharmaceutical wholesaler	South London	Mar 10	61.26%	13,751	5,287	40,204	47	1981	Sells medicines to Swedish pharmacies	6
75		Sheffield Refractories	Refractory material manufacturer	Sheffield	Sep 09	61.00%	2,217	855	5,834	51	1976	Manufactures cement for clients in mainland Europe and Asia	6
76		Stage One Creative Services	Stage set manufacturer	York	Dec 09	60.47%	3,265	1,268	9,037	85	1996	Builds stage sets for events around the world	6
77		AWC Industries	Automotive component maker	Birmingham	Mar 10	59.63%	21,505	8,440	33,740	521	1967	Makes components for car manufacturers in mainland Europe, America and Asia	7
78		Eurokey Recycling	Recycler	Leicestershire	Aug 10	59.45%	†21,477	8,447	†22,607	52	1995	Sells raw recycled materials to reproducers in the Far East	7
79		EA Technology	Energy consultancy	Chester	Mar 10	58.92%	4,589	1,817	13,905	157	1990	Having launched internationally in 2007, the company now does business in 86 countries	7
80		Multiflight	Aviation services provider										

Electronics experts made the right switch

1	SMS ELECTRONICS	
	Electronics manufacturer	417.53%

LEADING the league table this year is a specialist in bespoke electronic contract manufacturing for clients in the industrial, telecoms, consumer, security, medical and leisure sectors. SMS Electronics also offers other services, such as optimising production processes, testing electronic products and debugging prototypes.

The company has a strong manufacturing heritage, spanning more than a century. It was part of Siemens Manufacturing Services, the German engineering conglomerate. However, in the late 1990s the Siemens board decided to rationalise the company, and Mike Harby, who ran its operation in Nottingham, was faced with having to close the factory.

He took a calculated risk and, with

fellow employees Mark Goldby, Christopher Hunt, John Wyles and Robert Bridges, bought the business in 2002 for an undisclosed amount. Each of the five took a 20% stake.

Harby and his team decided to focus on contract manufacturing but made the strategic choice not to move production offshore to reduce labour costs. Instead, SMS differentiated itself by making complex products with high reliability, sometimes in only very small batches — and that decision has proved to be pivotal.

In 2004 the company was contracted by a small British firm to manufacture video-conferencing products. Three years later the client was acquired by a Norwegian teleconferencing business, and the resulting increase in demand for SMS's services not only pushed up sales and profits but also established its reputation on the international stage as a high-quality manufacturer.

Demand for SMS's video-conferencing

systems is the main driver behind its impressive growth in international sales, which have rocketed by 418% a year, from £698,000 in 2008 to £18.7m in 2010. The company's technology has become more popular during the economic downturn because it is a cheaper alternative to travel.

About 60% of the firm's sales are now generated in mainland Europe, where its biggest markets are Norway and France. In contrast, overseas sales accounted for only 3% of turnover in 2008.

SMS manufactures its electronics systems in a 7,000 square metre factory in Nottingham, equivalent in size to two football pitches. The company has reinvested profits to upgrade equipment and to fund research and development to perfect its manufacturing processes. It now has 130 highly skilled employees working on five machine lines, with the capacity to place up to 5m components on a printed circuit board every day.

Its production is not limited to video-conferencing technology — the firm also manufactures smart utility meters (which Harby says are increasingly in demand overseas, particularly in the French gas market), components for telephone-exchange systems and circuit boards for split-screen monitors used by financial traders.

SMS says it manages to retain 90% of its clients, and the company's former owner, Siemens, for whom it provides repair and refurbishment services, is still a big customer.

Harby is optimistic about the future of the business and plans to increase capacity by installing another production line in June at a cost of £1.5m. The new line will be used to support the growing market in the Americas, where Harby expects sales to reach £10m this year.

These plans should help the company's success story to continue in 2011 and beyond.



Man of vision: Mike Harby's gamble to buy a UK division of Siemens paid off

2	FORWARD INTERNET GROUP	
	Online marketer	286.69%

NEIL HUTCHINSON's business began life in 2004 as an online marketing agency for companies wishing to improve their rankings in search-engine results. It has since developed "Invisible Hand" technology, which notifies internet users of cheaper prices on alternative websites and generates commissions for subsequent sales. The London company also runs a collection of e-commerce and price-comparison sites, and it acquired uSwitch in 2009. International sales at the business, which counts Hilton, North

Face and eBay among its clients, increased by 287% a year, from £3m in 2007 to an annualised £45.4m in 2009.

3	KELWAY	
	IT services provider	249.43%

LONDON-BASED Kelway supplies infrastructure hardware to more than 3,000 clients and offers IT services such as consultancy and training. The company was founded in 1990 by chief executive Phil Doye at the age of 21, and in 2006 Core Capital invested £5m for a 25% stake. Kelway has bought five businesses since

2007, including Panacea in 2009, which has an office in Dubai serving the Middle East. This acquisition has helped to boost international sales by 249% a year, from £1.6m in 2008 to £19.2m in 2010.

4	AI PHARMACEUTICALS	
	Pharmaceuticals distributor	227.83%

FROM its offices near London City airport this company supplies pharmaceuticals and medical devices to pharmacies and private hospitals around the world. AI's products include surgical dressings made by Smith & Nephew as well as its British-made own-label range of surgical dressings and oral-medicine syringes. The company's main geographical market is the European Union, but it trades worldwide. The business was founded in 1986 by husband-and-wife team Gary and Carmen Lewis. International sales have risen by 228% a year, from £552,000 in 2008 to £5.9m in 2010.

5	BYROM	
	Sporting events manager	226.33%

BYROM supplies accommodation, IT, ticketing, VIP management, logistics, management consultancy and hospitality to organisers of big sporting events. Customers tend to be large sporting organisations. Fifa is its principal client. Founded by Mexican brothers Jaime and Enrique Byrom in 1991, the Cheshire company has provided

services to the Fifa World Cup, the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup, the Asian Games and other international sports events. Overseas sales have grown 226% a year, from £11.8m in 2008 to £126.1m in 2010, due to the firm's work on the football World Cup in South Africa.

6	ARROWEDGE	
	Pharmaceutical wholesaler	221.78%

HAVING started life as a small chain of high-street pharmacies, this family-run business developed into a wholesaler of pharmaceutical products. Helped by favourable exchange-rate movements, Arrowedge has had a lot of success with exporting to the Continent. The Bournemouth-based firm is aiming to bring a new range of over-the-counter products into Britain and other European Union countries. Overseen by the company's managing director, Ullas Patel, international sales have increased by 222% a year, from £1.5m in 2008 to £15.2m in 2010.

7	INTAMARQUE	
	Food and toiletries seller	206.68%

TWIN brothers Stephen and Richard Short run Intamarque, which distributes a selection of consumer products, such as toiletries and confectionery, to retailers and wholesalers at home and abroad. Founded in 2006, the Cheltenham business has

done particularly well in Asia and the Middle East, where British-branded products such as Dove and Burton's biscuits hold special appeal for many consumers and are big sellers. As a result, the company's overseas revenue has grown by 207% a year, from £1.2m in 2008 to £11.7m in 2010.

8	REDWOOD DISTRIBUTION	
	Textile distributor	197.62%

THIS company specialises in providing technical fabrics for use in hospitals, on public transport and in military equipment. Redwood Distribution's design engineers endeavour to make the fabrics to each client's specification, whether this means they are fireproof, waterproof, or just plain tough. In 2008 the Lancashire business bought the soft-furnishings distributor Edmund Bell, under which brand it now markets a popular range of decorative textiles. The company says it is the biggest distributor of curtain linings in Europe. Overseas sales grew 198% a year, from £674,000 in 2007 to £6m in 2009, under chief executive Brian Atherton.

9	WILTON GROUP	
	Offshore services provider	186.85%

THE Middlesbrough-based Wilton Group provides a range of services, including project management and engineering, to customers in the oil-and-gas industry. Its

clients include BP and Canadian Natural Resources. Increasingly, the engineering company's activities are spread worldwide and its personnel have carried out work in mainland Europe, Africa and the Far East. Two new offices are due to open in Brazil where 36 new drilling rigs will require engineering support. The group's chief executive, Bill Scott, and its construction director, Steve Glenn, started the business in 1994, and in June 2010 Barclays Private Equity invested £16m for a minority stake. International sales have risen by 187% a year, from £642,000 in 2008 to £5.3m in 2010.

10	CLIPPER LOGISTICS GROUP	
	Warehousing and distribution	160.76%

CHAIRMAN Steve Parkin's Leeds-based company provides warehousing, transport, distribution and pricing services for a range of products, including clothing, tobacco, perfumes and alcohol on behalf of retailers such as Tesco, John Lewis and Harvey Nichols. Although the business has been servicing mainland European countries for its clients since 1996, it acquired the Bestaendig Group, a German company that had gone into administration, in 2008. This addition has been central to the development of a logistical, administrative and strategic presence, enabling the group to service markets in Germany, Poland, the Benelux countries, France, Austria and Spain. Mainly as a result of this acquisition, international sales grew by 161% a year, from £2.1m in 2008 to £14.4m in 2010.



Belles of the ball: fans enjoy the 2010 soccer World Cup which used Byrom's services

Grasp opportunities in worldwide trade



Knowledge is power as ambitious companies target the next generation of emerging markets, explains Steve Price of HSBC

AFTER taking on Russia and China, businesses seeking overseas growth are exploring new territories and carving profitable niches in the expanding global trade network.

The companies on this year's International Track 100 have grasped that foreign markets offer a valuable source of fresh sales as our domestic economy falters. The vast majority have been trading abroad for more than four years, and 21% expanded overseas because their market was either saturated or shrinking, according to the league-table research.

Some of these canny firms are even starting to look beyond Europe, America and the Bric countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) to smaller, emerging nations in Asia and Africa. They are also considering how best to exploit their experience and position in the global supply chain to find new revenue streams.

Take Aquaterra Energy, at No 99, which designs bespoke engineering components for the oil-and-gas industry. We are supporting the company as it exports British expertise to emerging regions including West Africa, Azerbaijan, Indonesia and Vietnam. The firm, which generated 85% of its 2009 revenues overseas, has been trading abroad since its launch in 2005 when the domestic market was relatively subdued. International sales at the Norwich business have grown 50% a year, from £7.7m in 2007 to £17.3m in 2009.

HSBC has been able to offer financial support and strategic advice as the company moves into new areas. For example, when Aquaterra tenders for

international contracts, we are able to provide the necessary in-country bid and performance bonds that are sometimes required for deals in the energy sector. We are also on hand to offer regulatory advice on embargos and sanctions in overseas territories.

But for many fast-growing firms, understanding the exact nature of international opportunities remains a challenge. That is why HSBC has published a wide-ranging report that explores how the world is trading today and where opportunities may lie tomorrow. The report, Mapping the World's Trade Connections, highlights the rising stars of international

trade, and the opportunities that arise when developed and emerging markets meet.

Some of the results are surprising. For example, in the 10 years to 2009, Kazakhstan's percentage share of world trade grew even more sharply than that of China or India. More predictably, Britain's exports over the same period showed the biggest growth in China, the United Arab Emirates and India, while British oil and organic chemicals were the products in greatest demand overseas. Domestic companies are improving their global competitiveness in key sectors, including printed publications, alcoholic beverages, pharma-

ceuticals and cosmetics, the report also found.

Of course, many International Track 100 firms have been working to build new markets in fast-growing economies. China, which replaced Japan as the world's second-largest economy earlier this year, is an export destination for 41 companies on the league table. Of the 100 businesses, 27 trade with South American countries, 23 with India and 20 with Russia.

The trading relationships between emerging nations themselves are also strengthening. For example, during the first four months of last year, Brazil's exports to China grew by 237% and its sales to Turkey were up by 188%, according to the HSBC report.

Over the same period, Argentina's trade with China increased by 111% and with Russia by 90%. As these trade links grow, the challenge for British businesses is to consider how they can become part of the chain.

Our report also considers what we have dubbed the European paradox. On one hand, the nations across the Channel are close, culturally familiar and economically similar, and present fewer trade barriers. On the other, opportunities to trade in a relatively saturated and low-growth market are limited.

This year's International Track 100 companies have certainly not written off mainland Europe. An overwhelming 96 trade there today, and 80 chose it as their first overseas destination, according to the league-table research.

In addition, many are using the Continent as a springboard to the rest of the world. Europe's largest companies are world leaders in their sectors and take their suppliers with them as they enter markets across the globe. For example, online payment provider Skril (No 37), formerly known as Moneybookers, has followed its e-commerce clients into new countries where it can process transactions on their behalf in many different currencies.



HSBC is helping Richard and Antony Joseph expand abroad



Knowing the drill: engineering firm Aquaterra Energy is supported by HSBC as it rapidly grows in emerging markets

HSBC is working closely with businesses across the world to help them shape their future success. On this year's league table alone, we are supporting 22 firms, including the household-goods manufacturer Joseph Joseph (No 28), online book retailer The Book Depository (No 16), and translation-services provider The Big Word (No 85).

When Rainbow Cosmetics, the family-owned firm at No 34 on the league table, started banking with us 12 months

ago, overseas sales accounted for only 7% of revenue. Typically, it had been foreign buyers who had approached the business, which sells branded cosmetics and fragrances wholesale, together with its own range of bronzing products called Sunkissed.

Since then, HSBC and UK Trade & Investment have worked with the company to research new markets and draw up a strategy for expansion. For example, when Rainbow Cosmetics studied the

Polish market, it discovered not only that there was strong potential demand for its value fake-tan products but that many consumers were familiar with big British brands, according to managing director Stephen Sharman.

The business has also appointed an export manager to identify overseas distributors and co-ordinate foreign sales, which have grown particularly strongly in Scandinavia. The results are already impressive. Rainbow Cosmetics' interna-

tional sales have grown by 92% a year, from £1.2m in 2008 to £4.6m in 2010.

Trade has already moved beyond imports and exports. Today it embraces international networks, relationships, innovation and creativity. The emerging world is developing its own networks and technological standards — and we ignore these fundamental changes at our peril.

Steve Price, head of HSBC's UK commercial banking segment, was talking to Catherine Wheatley.

11 HALIAN

IT services provider 158.06%

THE banking industry and public-sector bodies in Britain and overseas may use Reading-based Halian to provide them with specialist IT personnel and services. In mainland Europe, the company's big customers include BNP Paribas, the European Investment Bank and the accounting software firm Oracle. According to sales director Jonathon Halpenny, the tough economic climate in Britain has encouraged more of Halian's recruits to seek work opportunities abroad and this has helped the firm's international sales to grow 158% a year, from £1.5m in 2007 to £10.2m in 2009.

12 VERITEK GLOBAL

Engineering services 156.41%

THIS company's expertise is in the servicing of complex imaging equipment. It installs and maintains photo-processing machines in a number of British stores, such as Boots, Asda, Jessops and Tesco. In the past few years the Eastbourne firm has also branched out into healthcare imaging equipment, such as digital radiography systems, and ophthalmic imaging, which is used by opticians to assess the health of patients' eyes. The acquisition of A&O Imaging in 2008 turned the company international, and it now provides services in mainland Europe, North America and Australia. International sales have increased by 156% a year, from £1.3m in 2008 to £8.6m in 2010, under founder and chairman Adrian Teulon.

13 MPM PRODUCTS

Natural pet food producer 152.52%

MAKING and marketing premium cat and dog food and cat litter for independent pet shops and large pet-store chains is the business of Macclesfield-based MPM Products. In Britain, the company counts Sainsbury's and Pets At Home among its customers. The business was founded in 2003 and since 2006 has been exporting to mainland Europe and the Far East. Its chief export markets are Germany, Italy and Hong Kong, but the company is now targeting Russia and China, and also has its eyes on the Americas. Co-directed by Roger Coleman, Roger Wood and Jon Kinsey, the firm's international sales grew 153% a year, from £523,000 in 2008 to £3.3m in 2010.

14 CHAIN REACTION CYCLES

Online bike retailer 143.20%

IN 1985 George and Janice Watson started up a small bicycle shop in the village of Ballynure in Co Antrim. The company grew quickly and in 1999 launched a website, which enabled it to transcend geographical market boundaries. Chain Reaction Cycles now claims to be one of the world's largest online bike stores, stocking 90,000 types of cycles and accessories in its 150,000 sq ft warehouses near Belfast, and selling to enthusiasts all over the world. Thanks to its strong web presence and commitment to deliver non-UK orders within a few days, international sales grew 143% a year, from £8.2m in 2007 to £48.6m in 2009.

15 EDEN McCALLUM

Management consultancy 136.82%

FOUNDED by Dena McCallum and Liann Eden in 2000, this London company provides business advice to clients including Tesco, Lloyds TSB, Danone and GlaxoSmith Kline. Having recently



They do it their way: world-touring shows such as The Rat Pack — Live From Las Vegas have pushed up Flying Music's international sales by 113% a year

moved into larger offices in Amsterdam, the company expects to double its core staff to 60 during the next five years, with its next overseas office planned for either Switzerland or Germany. The business has no managing director, preferring to make decisions by committee, and works with a network of about 400 consultants globally. International sales have grown 137% a year, from £746,000 in 2008 to £4.2m in 2010.

16 THE BOOK DEPOSITORY

Online book retailer 127.09%

EXPORTS contribute 75% of sales at The Book Depository. The online retailer, which ships books to 101 countries postage free, specialises in hard-to-find works, offering 6m titles covering anything from cake decoration to aircraft piston engines. The Gloucester company was founded by Irish entrepreneur Andrew Crawford, who was involved in launching Amazon.com in Britain. Customers can buy in five different currencies, and the company also offers foreign-language titles, which has helped international turnover to increase by 127% a year, from £10.1m in 2008 to £51.8m in 2010.

17 BONDS

Steel castings manufacturer 126.12%

BONDS produces valve, pump and general engineering castings for various industries. Operating from two foundries in the north of England, it specialises in precision steel castings for pump manufacturers and heavy castings of up to 12 tonnes used in equipment produced by large engineering multinationals such as GE and Siemens. Winning new customers across mainland Europe, North and South America, the Middle East and Australasia, Bonds' international sales have been boosted by the weak pound and have grown by 126% a year, from £1.1m in 2008 to £5.7m in 2010.

18 E-TECH GROUP

Electrical engineer 116.56%

THIS company provides electrical engineering services for the oil, gas and marine industries. Its clients include big energy producers such as Shell, BP and British Gas. Eight years ago, the Great Yarmouth-based firm expanded into the luxury super-yacht market, fitting electrical systems for vessels owned by the rich and famous. Export growth has been sustained through establishing E-Tech companies outside Britain, including one in Ghana, where the company runs football training days and provides kit to youngsters in villages near its base there. International sales grew by 117% a year, from £2.7m in 2008 to £12.8m in 2010.

19 FLYING MUSIC

Music producer and promoter 112.98%

IN 1982 Paul Walden started a small music-promotion and publishing company. The business quickly became involved with organising concerts and events in association with local radio stations and promoting touring shows featuring classic artists such as Chuck Berry, The Temptations and The Monkees, whose original members he reunited after 30 years. Later on, the London-based company began producing its own musical shows and is now responsible for world-touring hits such as The Rat Pack — Live from Las Vegas, Dancing in the Streets, and Thriller Live, based on the music of Michael Jackson. International sales have risen by 113% a year, from £1.2m in 2008 to £5.5m in 2010.

20 IOKO

Media systems integrator 112.75%

IOKO helps media and telecoms firms to provide what it terms "over-the-top" services, typically embodied by television catch-up platforms such as BBC iPlayer,

ITV Player and 4oD. Among its current projects, the York firm is working with the American media giant AT&T to develop its new television service, U-Verse, which will use the internet as its main viewing platform. Chief executive Mark Christie expects that "connected devices", such as televisions that access the internet, will be the must-have mod cons of the coming year. Last month the video-technology company Kit Digital acquired Ioko for \$79m (£49m). International revenue rose by 113% a year, from £2.7m in 2008 to £12.1m in 2010.

21 DATIX

Healthcare software 109.34%

FOUNDED in 1986, this Wimbledon company produces software that enables hospitals to monitor and analyse patient safety. Invited by the Canadian province of British Columbia to bid for a tender in 2005, which it won, Datix has subsequently expanded beyond the NHS and British private hospitals to sell to organisations in Canada, America and Australia. Indeed, the company counts the US Department of Defense and the state of South Australia among its clients. Datix is majority-owned by Bowmark Capital following a buyout in 2008, and is led by chief executive Jonathan Hazan. International sales grew by 109% a year, from £684,000 in 2008 to £3m in 2010.

22 MELROB

Chemical distributor 108.22%

THIS West Sussex firm supplies more than 500 manufacturers with chemicals used to make rubber, plastic, adhesives, coatings and resin. The business was founded in 1995 by Ian Melliush and Marie Roberts, initially to supply the contact-lens and medical-device sectors, and now has offices in Britain, Germany, Singapore, China and Japan. Its international sales grew by 108% a year, from £1.5m in 2007 to £6.5m in 2009.

23 EAZYPHONE

Mobile phone recycler 107.77%

EAZYPHONE buys used mobile phones from individuals and businesses in Europe, and reconditions and resells them to wholesalers, retailers, insurance companies and other recyclers in China and Africa. It handles about 1.5m phones a year, with only a very small proportion proving to be beyond repair. The company also offers a white-label recycling service to brands such as Argos and The Telegraph. The rise in value of mobile phones and increasing demand have combined to push up the firm's international sales by 108% a year, from £8.8m in 2008 to £38m in 2010. The company, led by chief executive Herman Spruit, is backed by the private-equity firm Frontiers Capital, which first invested in 2006.

24 MDSL

Cost management consultant 106.94%

MDSL provides software and consultancy to help clients reduce the costs of their telecoms services and data on financial markets. It also helps them with contract negotiation and assists with compliance reporting. The Tunbridge Wells company has offices in New York, Macau and Tokyo to serve its international client base. Customers include large investment banks such as UBS and HSBC as well as multinational organisations such as BP, Nokia, Accenture, Volvo and Estée Lauder. International sales have grown by 107% a year, from £1.4m in 2007 to £6.2m in 2009, under founder and chief executive Ben Mendoza.

25 MR TYRE

Tyre retailer 103.89%

INDEPENDENT and chain garages in Britain, mainland Europe, North America and East Asia are supplied with tyres and

other spare car parts by Mr Tyre, which was established in 1972. The company now has 24 depots in England, including a 100,000 sq ft wholesale centre at its Birmingham headquarters. Founder and chairman Arwyn Williams says that the business benefited from the recession, explaining that instead of purchasing new cars, drivers chose the cheaper option of refurbishing their vehicles. The company's international sales have grown by 104% a year, from £1.2m in 2007 to £5.1m in 2009.

26 ELMWOOD DESIGN

Brand design consultancy 103.15%

ELMWOOD DESIGN helps organisations to build their corporate and product brands. Blue-chip clients include Cable & Wireless, Durex, ANZ Bank, Nestlé, and Kimberly-Clark. Work for Asda in Britain led to a contract with Walmart in America, and the brand consultancy has since opened offices in New York and Chicago. The Leeds-based company also has operations in Australia and Singapore, and will open offices in Hong Kong and Switzerland, allowing it to compete more effectively for global contracts. International sales rose 103% a year, from £1.3m in 2007 to £5.5m in 2009, under chairman Jonathan Sands.

27 GARRETS INTERNATIONAL

Marine catering agent 102.48%

A CONTRACT caterer in the merchant shipping industry, Garrets orders and supplies the food provisions for vessels making voyages worldwide. Managing director Derrick Samms started his career as a catering manager on cargo-carrying ships, and says his Essex-based company encourages healthier menus and the responsible sourcing of food, for example through sustainable fishing practices. International sales grew by 102% a year, from £5.9m in 2008 to £24.2m in 2010.

28 JOSEPH JOSEPH

Household goods maker 100.11%

WITH a keen interest in perfecting both form and function, twin brothers Richard and Antony Joseph started their design company with a single product in 2003. Eight years on, they sell colourful kitchenware in 65 countries, with customers including department stores such as John Lewis in Britain, Bloomingdale's in America and KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens) in Germany. The London business has showcased its products in the Big Brother house, and has benefited from the "stay at home" culture encouraged by both cookery programmes and the recession. International sales grew by 100% a year, from £1.9m in 2008 to £7.6m in 2010.

29 RSK

Environmental consultancy 99.03%

THIS Cheshire company helps its clients in the property and oil-and-gas sectors to assess the environmental impact of their activities. Its services include investigation into land and water contamination as well as surveys on protected species. A recent project involved the relocation of an entire community of water voles from, and then back to, a client's work site. Managing director Alan Ryder is an expert on the environmental effect of pipelines, and the company's international work is largely focused on oil-and-gas projects in the former Soviet Union, North Africa and the Middle East. RSK's international sales have increased by 99% a year, from £4.6m in 2008 to £18.3m in 2010.

Don't fear the barriers on foreign shores



Red tape and culture clashes are still features of overseas trade, but with help they can be overcome, says David Maxwell of Grant Thornton

Increasingly, overseas expansion is part of a company's plans from the outset, and a step that many take very early on. The research shows that half the companies on the Sunday Times HSBC International Track 100 league table sought out opportunities abroad in their first, second or third year.

For these firms there is the excitement of the new as well as the dream of huge growth. But it is easy to underestimate the time, cost and effort involved in taking on new territories. The biggest barrier to overseas expansion among league-table companies is regulation, with 28% finding this a problem, followed by language and cultural differences, at 24%.

There is a lot of frustration with the legal and financial regulations of other countries, but firms in those other countries experience some of the same frustrations with ours. The important thing is to do your homework so you are prepared, and not to assume that the way you do things at home is also the right way everywhere else.

Grant Thornton International circulates people around its member firms throughout

the world because that helps in advising clients on these crucial differences, both technical and cultural. Regulation is a particular problem in emerging economies, where rules change quickly and regions or states within a country often have their own requirements. For instance, India can be a very difficult market, with state-by-state rules and what appears to be a wall of regulation. Our specialist South Asia Group has been helping clients to navigate these issues for 20 years. Without such help, firms can become tied up in red tape, which will deflect management from understanding the market and competing in it successfully.

Operating internationally demands time and a set of skills that is not always available in companies' domestic teams. Where a local presence is required overseas, the selection of good staff from that area and recruiting the right leader is critically important to success. Of the 100 companies on this year's league table, 17 admitted that they had struggled to secure the right people for their overseas operations.

Where the focus is mostly on sales, the classic route is to move from agents and distributors to licensing and franchising models, although the internet is now widely used as a direct channel. The research showed that about a third of the International Track 100 firms had international websites in place, and their use of the internet is becoming more sophisticated. Ancasta Group (No 100) is a good example of a business creating strategic links with other websites to drive its overseas sales.

It is also worth noting that cross-border mergers and acquisitions are no longer just the preserve of large businesses and that the middle market is highly active in this area. Grant Thornton's recent International M&A survey showed that 34% of respondents were planning to grow through overseas acquisition.

Joint-venture arrangements are often used to gain access to foreign market know-how, facilities and contacts. But in emerging areas such as China and India, we are now seeing that local joint-venture partners are increasingly being required to bring more to the



Cutting edge: Hydra Mining's products are in big demand in China, the US and Australia, boosting foreign sales by 65% a year

table in terms of hard capital, rather than just helping to open doors.

Lack of access to finance was cited by 17 companies on the league table as a barrier to

global trade. But the situation is improving. Banks are adopting a more international approach to lending and making it easier for growing companies to manage their

requirements across national boundaries.

Taxation is a common issue for businesses operating globally. For those that build an international vision into their

early thinking there is the opportunity of setting up suitable structures that can flex with the changing needs of the group. There are some very clever and complex ideas in

this area but for most firms tax should be a consequence of creating profits, not the driver and reason for the business.

Many firms on the league table have overcome barriers to expansion because they have a clear competitive edge. Redwood Distribution (No 8), which makes heavy-duty textiles, clearly knew what value they were bringing to overseas markets. They had a high-quality product and sold it as such.

Hydra Mining Tools International (No 67) also has a powerful story. A manufacturer of cutting tools used in coal mines, it came back from receivership and now sells to China and Australia. If you have that kind of dynamism and the right mindset, then there are fantastic opportunities for companies that have exhausted the potential of their home market.

In some respects, it is becoming easier to do business overseas. In China, for example, wider areas of the country are opening up. Grant Thornton's China services team report that they are seeing the nation's second-tier cities — those away from the developed east coast — now offering interesting openings for new entrants.

For dynamic companies that have the ambition and drive, there are boundless opportunities to build up their international trade.

David Maxwell, a partner at Grant Thornton UK LLP, a member firm of Grant Thornton International, was talking to Nick Britton.

30 TARGET GROUP
Financial software developer 94.62%

FOUNDED in Cardiff in 1979, this firm offers business process outsourcing and develops software for retail and investment banks, insurers and finance brokers, enabling them to manage their accounts. Clients include Barclays, Credit Suisse and Santander. Target Group's first overseas market was mainland Europe. It then moved into New Zealand and Australia in 2007 after buying Harlosh, an insurance-software developer, and this has helped to boost international sales by 95% a year, from £1.1m in 2008 to £4.3m in 2010, under executive chairman Grant Hawkins.

31 PHARMARAMA INTL.
Clinical trials supplier 94.53%

PHARMACIST Ben Rabin set up the firm in 1997. Pharmarama International sources and distributes medicines under its Global Batch brand to be used as comparator drugs in clinical trials. Clients include pharmaceutical and biotech firms, which are required to run trials to compare their new drugs with products already on the market. Managing director Rosemary Bensley has overseen expansion into America (see also sister company Pharmarama at No 36) for the London firm, which has branched out into medical-device supply and drug manufacture. Overseas sales have risen 95% a year, from £3.5m in 2008 to £13.3m in 2010.

32 FEVER-TREE
Mixer drinks manufacturer 93.76%

TWO-THIRDS of a drink is often the mixer and yet Charles Rolls and Tim Warrillow noticed a lack of quality tonic to go with premium gin. So in 2005 they produced a mixer to fill this gap and soon moved into the international market. In 2006 venture capitalist London & Lochside invested in the London firm, which now also makes bitter lemon and ginger ale mixers. The London company exports to 25 countries and its foreign sales have risen 94% a year, from £1.1m in 2008 to £4.3m in 2010.

33 CATH KIDSTON
Lifestyle retailer 92.98%

DESCRIBING itself as an international lifestyle brand, Cath Kidston sells a range of homewares, bags and clothing

decorated in its distinctive retro floral designs. Most overseas turnover comes from Japan, where the firm has eight shops. It also has two stores in South Korea, two in Ireland and online shops in Japan and America. There are plans to open more Japanese outlets and expand in Taiwan and Singapore. Cath Kidston founded the business in 1993, and last year TA Associates backed a majority buyout, valuing the firm at £100m. Foreign sales have grown 93% a year, from £2.8m in 2008 to £10.4m in 2010.

34 RAINBOW COSMETICS
Fragrance wholesaler 92.47%

THIS Manchester company, which is family-owned and run, has two divisions. It is a wholesaler of branded fragrances and cosmetics to value retailers, including Bodycare and Argos, and it designs and sells its own range of fake-tan and bronzing products. Working with UK Trade & Investment, it has recently concentrated on developing its exports, which are now particularly strong to Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Australia. Under managing director Stephen Sharman, international sales have grown by 92% a year, from £1.2m in 2008 to £4.6m in 2010.

35 BYBOX
Delivery systems operator 91.86%

STUART MILLER, chief executive of Bybox, co-founded the company with the purchase of a French "left luggage" locker manufacturer. Soon, he had turned the business into a Europe-wide network of electronically operated drop-boxes, enabling the company's international network of drivers to make night-time deliveries to field engineers. Last year the Oxfordshire firm launched the consumer side of its service in partnership with lingerie retailer Figleaves.com, whose customers use the system to avoid the hassle of having to arrange home delivery. International sales have grown 92% a year, from £1.1m in 2007 to £3.9m in 2009.

36 PHARMARAMA
Clinical trials supplier 90.45%

BASED on the success of sister business Pharmarama International, ranked 31 on this league table, chairman Ben Rabin set up this London firm in 2006 to supply pharmaceutical corporations in America

with competitors' drugs for comparative testing in their own clinical trials. By testing alongside existing products, the corporations are able to assess the value of their new product. Working from offices and warehousing in Britain and Boston, Massachusetts, international sales have risen 90% a year, from £1.9m in 2008 to £7m in 2010.

37 SKRILL
Online payment provider 89.81%

THE London-based online payment provider Moneybookers, rebranding itself as Skrill, claims 15m people use its technology. It allows anyone with an email address to send and receive payments online securely and cost-effectively and counts eBay among its clients. The private-equity firm Investcorp took a 51% stake in 2007 when it backed a €105m (£71.5m) buyout, and Skrill plans to float on the London Stock Exchange this year. Growth has come on the back of overseas expansion, with a focus on mainland Europe and a roll-out into America. Led by Skrill's joint chief executives, Martin Ott and Nikolai Riesenkampff, foreign sales grew 90% a year, from £9.1m in 2007 to £32.9m in 2009.

38 DIVEX
Diving equipment maker 85.89%

BASED in Aberdeen, Divex claims to be one of the world's leading suppliers of diving equipment. A key market is the defence industry, and the firm counts among its main clients the Ministry of Defence in Britain, the FBI and the US, Indian and Australian navies. In the commercial arena, its biggest overseas markets are mainland Europe, the Middle East and Far East. Overseen by joint managing directors Douglas Godsman and Derek Clarke, international sales have grown by 86% a year, from £12.5m in 2007 to £43.3m in 2009.

39 BALMORAL GROUP
Plastics engineer 81.78%

THIS company's subsidiary, Balmoral Offshore Engineering, founded in 2006 by James Milne, manufactures buoyancy, insulation and polyurethane products for the offshore oil, defence, subsea communications and oceanographic industries. Subsea buoyancy modules are made to withstand the extremes of



Delivering rapid growth across Europe: Stuart Miller, chief executive of Bybox

deep-water pressure and provide lift to the steel pipes that run between the platform or vessel and the seabed. The Aberdeen-based company has benefited from increasing deep-sea exploration activity, which has driven up its international sales by 82% a year, from £14.8m in 2008 to £48.8m in 2010.

40 BET 365
Online bookmaker 81.61%

THIS online bookmaker attracts betting people from more than 200 countries. Customers can gamble on a wide range of sports and events, including football, biathlon and even BBC viewing figures for the royal wedding. Bet 365 moved into internet betting in 2001 and launched its first foreign-language sites four years later. The company's website is now available in 17 languages, including Russian and Chinese, with Europe and Asia its main markets. The firm is based in Stoke-on-Trent and owned and run by the Coates family. International sales have risen 82% a year, from an annualised £80.5m in 2008 to £265.5m in 2010.

41 PKR
3D poker website operator 81.61%

PKR operates a 3D poker website designed to give players the feeling they are at a real poker table. The firm is the brainchild of Jez San, who set up the games developer Argonaut aged 16. PKR was founded to offer global online gaming but the industry changed just as it launched, and new regulations excluded it from the American market. The firm boasts almost 5m players in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Sweden and Canada. Revenue is generated by charging fees per hand and entry fees to tournaments. International sales rose by 82% a year, from £7m in 2007 to £23.2m in 2009, under Malcolm Graham, chief executive.

42 IMPARTA
Business trainer 81.36%

IMPARTA provides sales, marketing and customer-service training to its clients. Its packages include a mixture of face-to-face workshops, computer-game exercises and role-play, along with coaching and impact assessment. Among its customers are General Electric, O2 and the WPP Group. The London company, led by chief executive Richard Barkey, now offers its services in more than 40 countries and builds partnerships with similar training companies overseas to help establish itself in new territories. International sales grew by 81% a year, from £702,000 in 2007 to £2.3m in 2009.

43 REBOUND ELECTRONICS
Components broker 81.34%

THIS electronic components broker sells parts such as semiconductors to Nokia, Sony, Snell, Siemens and other electrical-equipment manufacturers, traders and distributors. Since the business was founded in 2003 by chief executive Simon Thake and sales director Steve Madley, the Newbury-based firm has opened 20 offices across continental Europe, America and Asia to provide local sales and servicing. The company's international sales now account for more than 65% of turnover. Small acquisitions and replenishing manufacturers' inventories that have been diminished by the downturn have helped overseas sales to grow by 81% a year, from £16.6m in 2008 to £54.4m in 2010.

44 DANWOOD GROUP
Office equipment supplier 80.65%

CELEBRATING its 40th birthday this year, this Lincoln-based company supplies office equipment such as scanners,

printers and copiers to the public and private sectors. Having made some 30 acquisitions over the years, including in Ireland, in 2006 it dipped its toe in the American market by buying a small firm in Florida. This success was followed by a larger acquisition in the Sunshine State last year. Bregal Capital backed a buyout from founder Colin Daniels for £130m in 2008, taking a 30% stake, followed by a further 10% in 2010. International sales have grown by 81% a year, from £10.5m in 2007 to £34.3m in 2009.

45 GENUINE SOLUTIONS
Telecoms products reseller 79.00%

GENUINE SOLUTIONS supplies mobile-phone accessories from manufacturers such as Apple, Samsung and HTC. The Surrey-based company sells to independent retailers in 32 countries. It foresees further growth in Russia and Poland and is also targeting the American market this year. Growth is attributed to trade fairs and a multilingual sales team, as well as the continued buoyancy of the mobile-phone market. International sales have grown 79% a year, from £3.9m in 2009 to £12.3m in 2011, under co-founders Bav Majithia and Christian McBride.

46 NATIONWIDE PRODUCE
Produce marketer 78.88%

THIS Southport-based company has had international success growing, packing and trading fresh produce for distributing throughout Europe. The business, which was founded in 1975 by husband-and-wife team Bernard and Joan O'Malley, claims to supply more than 600 European customers, including retail, food-service and catering businesses. The opening of new overseas branches, including in Northern Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain, has been an important factor in its recent international growth. Future plans include opening offices in Sweden and Russia. International sales have grown by 79% a year, from an annualised £5.3m in 2008 to £16.8m in 2010, under group managing director Tim O'Malley.

47 REALLY USEFUL PRODUCTS
Storage box supplier 78.39%

THE first plastic storage box that Really Useful Products made was designed by managing director Mike Pickles to hold his archive files. The company now produces a range of storage boxes for the home and office as well as plastic filing drawers and desk-top accessories. Winning contracts to supply stationery retailer Staples in Britain led to large contracts with the chain in mainland Europe, and Staples, Office Depot, Office Max and Walmart in America. To meet stateside delivery deadlines, the West Yorkshire company operates a warehouse in Chicago. International sales have risen by 78% a year, from £3.7m in 2008 to £11.6m in 2010.

48 JD CLASSICS
Classic car restorer 77.23%

ESSEX-BASED JD Classics sells and restores classic cars, with a special expertise in Jaguars. Founder Derek Hood restored vintage cars as a hobby before starting the business nearly 25 years ago. The company also races its own JD cars and clients' cars in competitions around the world, including at Silverstone, Monte Carlo, Laguna Seca in California and Le Mans. As buyers are increasingly viewing classic cars as a viable investment, international sales have grown by 77% a year, from £2.1m in 2008 to £6.5m in 2010.



Coming up for air: Divex has been busy increasing international sales of its diving equipment by 86% a year

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49	JW GALLOWAY
Beef and lamb producer	74.02%

CLAIMING to be the biggest meat exporter in Scotland, JW Galloway slaughters and processes beef and lamb using the Scotbeef and Scotlamb brands. The family-owned company, based in Stirling, sells Angus beef and lamb to Sainsbury's and M&S and reckons it is the latter's biggest meat supplier. Supermarket chains in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Italy are also keen buyers, and its tripe products go to Poland and Hong Kong. The firm's acquisition of the Vivers lamb business in 2008 and a new tripe plant have boosted international sales, which have grown by 74% a year, from £13.8m in 2008 to £41.7m in 2010.

50	ULTIMATE PRODUCTS
Homeware designer/sourcer	73.16%

SOURCING and supplying consumer products to large retailers in Britain, mainland Europe, America, South Africa and Australia is the business of this Manchester company. Its products range from cookware and home electronics to luggage and foam mattresses. Retailers including M&S and Tesco as well as Carrefour in France and Walmart in America brand the products themselves or use Ultimate Products' names. The firm has established a large showroom in Hong Kong to market its wares to overseas buyers, helping to boost international sales by 73% a year, from £7.6m in 2008 to £22.8m in 2010. The business was co-founded in 1997 by chief executive Simon Showman and Barry Franks, and is backed by LDC, which invested £25m for a 46% share in 2005.

51	START CREATIVE
Graphic design agency	72.70%

START CREATIVE is a London agency that designs digital interactive displays, such as touchscreens or display walls, used in shops. For example, it worked with Intel to design a virtual footwear wall for Adidas, which projects digital images of each shoe in 360-degree detail. Success in Russia, India and China has helped international sales to grow by 73% a year, from £1.4m in 2008 to £4.1m in 2010, under chief executive Mike Curtis.

52	PROFESSIONAL DARTS CORP.
Professional darts promoter	71.96%

PROMOTING and running darts competitions is the raison d'être of The Professional Darts Corporation, which also sells the broadcasting rights to television companies and betting outfits around the world. One of its main clients is the Sky Sports television channel, where darts audiences top 1m. Other customers include the Dutch television station RTL7 and Fox Sport in Australia. Essex-based PDC split from the British Darts Organisation in 1992 and is chaired by Barry Hearn, the snooker promoter and chairman of Leyton Orient FC, who has expanded the programme of events abroad. The company's overseas sales have been growing by 72% a year, from £536,000 in 2008 to £1.6m in 2010.

53	GLOBAL INFUSION GROUP
Events and tours caterer	71.86%

CATERING services around the world are provided by this company based in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Its signature brand, Eat to the Beat, serves the music, film, television and sports industries, dishing up fresh food on location to touring artists, performers and their production crews. Its corporate-hospitality branch covers a host of big events, such as summer parties and charity runs. Past clients have included The Eagles, Cirque Du Soleil, O2 and Mercedes-Benz. The company has offices in America, the Middle East and Africa. Under chief executive Tony Laurensen, international sales grew by 72% a year, from £977,000 in 2008 to £2.9m in 2010.

54	THE FOUNDRY
Visual effects software	71.51%

FILM production studios worldwide use The Foundry's visual-effects and image-processing software. Clients include Dreamworks and George Lucas's company Industrial Light & Magic in America, Prime Focus in India and Rising Sun in Australia. Its software has created sequences for blockbuster movies such as *Tron*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Avatar*. Chief technology officer Bruno Nicoletti and chief scientist Simon Robinson founded the London company in 1996. The Carlyle Group, an American private-equity firm, acquired a majority stake for an undisclosed sum in March. The Foundry's international sales have increased by 72% a year, from £3.8m in 2008 to £11.2m in 2010.

55	CITIHUB
IT consultancy	71.32%

CITIHUB delivers financial technology services to a host of investment banks around the world. Its niche is electronic trading and it aims to fit out its clients with upgraded computer systems to increase the speed of their transactions. The company, which is based at Canary Wharf in London's Docklands, also offers management consultancy to international clients, with key markets being the Americas and the Middle and Far East, where it also has offices. Under managing director Chris Allison and US managing partner Keith Maitland, international sales have risen by 71% a year, from £1.6m in 2008 to £4.8m in 2010.

56	M2M
PC components distributor	71.09%

LONDON-BASED M2M buys and sells computer components. Its inventory, which consists largely of memory devices, is procured from manufacturers around the world and sold on international sites such as Amazon and Ebuyer. Big-selling items include dram (dynamic random access memory), flash memory and high-end graphic cards for serious computer-game players. Managing director Ged Mitchell says Microsoft's MSN instant-messaging service has proved vital for keeping in contact with its main trading partners and for advertising stock. International sales have grown by 71% a year, from £3.5m in 2007 to £10.3m in 2009.

57	RAYBURN TRADING
Toiletries wholesaler	68.78%

FROM its head office in Manchester, Rayburn Trading, led by managing director Michael Goldman, sells toiletries, cosmetics, confectionery and household goods to the retail, wholesale and commercial sectors. A licensed distributor for leading manufacturers such as Glaxo Smith Kline, Procter & Gamble and Unilever in Britain, it sells its own brand of goods to mainland Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Australasia, although Ireland is the firm's largest export market. Thanks mainly to its internet presence, international sales have grown 69% a year, from £12.3m in 2008 to £35.1m in 2010.

58	DCA DESIGN INTERNATIONAL
Product design consultancy	68.44%

IN 1960 David Carter founded the David Carter Associates (DCA) design and development consultancy. Now led by Robert Woolston, the business operates internationally, with a lot of its work in mainland Europe. The firm's services span a number of sectors, including medical-scientific, consumer, commercial-industrial and transport. Its design work includes an award-winning re-usable insulin-injection pen, a buggy developed for Mamas & Pappas, the baby-products retailer, and respiratory protection equipment for the technology company 3M. DCA has grown its overseas sales by 68% a year, from £2.7m in 2008 to £7.6m in 2010.

59	MOBICA
Mobile phone applications	68.25%

TECHNOLOGY entrepreneurs Nick Stammers and Jon Clayton set up Mobica in 2004 to develop software for most of the main mobile-phone platforms, including iPhone, Blackberry and Android. The Cheshire-based company wanted to target the international marketplace and has since established offices in Poland, Sweden and France. The business also creates social-networking products for handset manufacturers and develops and customises smartphone operating systems. Under managing director Mike Gibbons, international sales have grown by 68% a year, from £1.2m in 2007 to £3.3m in 2009.

60	KEY TRAVEL
Travel agency	68.05%

KEY TRAVEL is a travel-management company that specialises in providing services for not-for-profit organisations such as relief groups, universities and faith groups. The London-based business has arrangements with airlines to buy flexible but reasonably priced plane tickets at short notice, which organisations such as Save the Children, Oxfam and the Red Cross often need. The company has offices in Washington and Brussels as well, offering global procurement for its international clients. Destinations include Africa, the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia where it is establishing partnerships. International sales have grown by 68% a year, from £2m in 2007 to £5.7m in 2009, under chief executive Steve Summers.

61	RFL COMMUNICATIONS
Telecom services provider	67.64%

LED by managing director Peter Clapton, this Wiltshire company designs and installs the communication systems that keep power networks running smoothly. RFL's systems include fibre-optic, radio and digital technology to convey voice and data signals between substations and control centres. The company has supplied systems for national electricity grids in Jordan, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Kenya, Azerbaijan and St Lucia, and, more recently, for some of Britain's offshore wind farms. It also provided the communication infrastructure for the



Making a point: Professional Darts world champion Adrian Lewis. PDC runs contests and sells broadcasting rights at home and abroad

and CD boxes for big players such as Sony, Universal and Warner. Managing director Christopher Lawson believes that the business was somewhat protected from the recession by the fact that "comfort buying" of luxury items diminished very little. International sales grew 65% a year, from £3.9m in 2007 to £10.7m in 2009.

throughout Britain, continental Europe and North America. Selling under the Jai Kudo and JK London brands, the firm generates international sales through a combination of local offices and freelance distributors. Managing director Jamie Holoran says large deals with overseas clients, such as Sam's Club in America (a chain of membership-only retail warehouses owned by Walmart) have helped international sales to grow 63% a year, from £1.9m in 2007 to £4.9m in 2009.



Movie star: The Foundry's visual-effects software created sequences for Avatar

entire metro system in Bucharest. The company's international sales have grown by 68% a year, from £645,000 in 2008 to £1.8m in 2010.

62	MICRO NAV
Simulation systems developer	67.56%

CIVIL and military authorities in Britain and overseas use air-traffic-control simulation systems designed by Micro Nav, which claims to be one of the world's largest independent specialists in this field. The company has recently developed two new simulation training products for airport drivers and aircraft marshallers. Micro Nav exports to 32 countries, with Middle Eastern aviation authorities being big customers. Chief executive Mike Male, who founded the company in 1988 with director Fred Johnson, says the reputation of its flagship simulators at London Heathrow helped to boost international sales, which have grown by 68% a year, from £2m in 2007 to £5.6m in 2009.

63	SEAFAST LOGISTICS
Logistics provider	66.55%

THIS company provides military and commercial logistics in difficult, remote or hostile regions. It has the contract to provide both the British and Dutch armies in Afghanistan with everything from toilet paper to small tanks. Using staff with a military background, Seafast moves products around Iraq, Sudan and the Congo. It also exports Ugandan coffee. It has recently invested in temperature-controlled warehousing in Felixstowe, where it is based, to expand the commercial services it offers. Under co-founder Nicos Chulk and managing director David Halliday, international sales have grown by 67% a year, from £1.6m in 2008 to £4.5m in 2010.

64	TRAVEL COUNSELLORS
Travel agency	65.77%

FOUNDED in 1994 by David Speakman, this family-owned firm provides holiday and corporate travel packages to 450,000 customers a year. Its 1,200 self-employed "travel counsellors" work from home as franchisees, and each attracts a portfolio of clients by offering a concierge-style service to create a personalised package. In 2005, the Bolton company exported its model to Ireland, and since then has moved into the Netherlands, Australia, South Africa and Canada. Under managing director Steve Byrne, international sales grew by 66% a year, from £3.5m in 2008 to £9.6m in 2010.

65	JARVIS GROUP
IT distributor	65.48%

FROM its headquarters in East Sussex, Jarvis Group distributes IT hardware and software throughout Europe. The firm specialises in HP (Hewlett-Packard) hardware and supplies computer resellers. A recent move into software sales, including video editing and products for forensic video analysis, has allowed the company to expand on the Continent and worldwide. Founder Paul Truslove believes a strong euro and new reseller agreements with HP have helped international sales to grow by 65% a year, from £546,000 in 2008 to £1.5m in 2010.

66	LONDON FANCY BOX COMPANY
Presentation packaging	64.94%

WITH a history stretching back to 1894, this company manufactures the box packaging for luxury perfumes by the likes of Chanel and Estée Lauder. The Dover business also works for the entertainment industry, producing DVD

67	HYDRA MINING TOOLS INTL.
Mining tools producer	64.74%

WHEN Gordon and John McShannon, together with John Warren, bought Hydra Mining Tools International out of administration on the collapse of the UK coal industry, they re-invented the business. The Rotherham firm makes cutting heads for coal-extraction machines that minimise dust and risk of explosion. Targeting territories where the market is booming, Hydra opened Chinese and American subsidiaries and sold to Australia where its heads have set world production records and are used in 60% of mines. Customers include mining giants such as BHP Billiton as well as small independent Chinese mines that contribute more than 25% of turnover. International sales have risen 65% a year, from £3.2m in 2008 to £8.7m in 2010.

68	CORINTHIAN MARKETING
Collectables and toys seller	63.52%

INITIALLY specialising in the Prostars football figurines, Corinthian Marketing now produces a wide range of collectable licensed toys. Designed and made in China, toys are sold from the firm's High Wycombe head office to a network of international distributors in mainland Europe, South Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia. Founders Paul and Andrew Speed hold a 49% stake in the business after a management buyout in 2008. Boosted by new products and licensing deals with Cartoon Network and Disney, the firm's international sales have grown by 64% a year, from £1.2m in 2007 to £3.2m in 2009.

69	CLINTEC INTERNATIONAL
Clinical researcher	63.46%

FOUNDED 14 years ago by immunologist and entrepreneur Rabinder Buttar, Clintec International conducts clinical research for pharmaceutical companies worldwide. Much of its work is aimed at developing vaccinations against diseases such as swine flu, malaria and Aids. The Glasgow business also conducts clinical trials for drugs designed to fight rare diseases. Last year it raised £8m from Elephant Capital to fund expansion in India. Its growing presence in emerging markets such as Africa, the Middle East and Latin America has helped international sales to grow by 63% a year, from £4.3m in 2007 to £11.4m in 2009.

70	AEDAS
Architectural services	62.87%

AEDAS provides architecture, interior design and urban design consultancy in mainland Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. It was the Dubai Metro architect, designing 47 railway stations and two rail depots for the first metro system in the United Arab Emirates. Current projects include the Abu Dhabi Investment Council HQ, featuring a façade of honeycomb screens to provide shade for people inside the buildings. The firm is part of the global Aedas network of 39 offices, with the British operation led by chairman Brian Johnson. Its international sales rose by 63% a year, from £7.2m in 2007 to £19.2m in 2009.

71	PURE TECHNOLOGY
Optics wholesaler	62.51%

LONDON-BASED Pure Technology designs, manufactures and supplies glasses and ophthalmic lenses to opticians and eyewear retailers

72	LOCK INSPECTION SYSTEMS
Metal detector maker	61.91%

ORIGINALLY set up in 1949 to clear mines after the second world war, this Oldham firm has extended its reach globally. With the increase in regulation, its metal detectors were employed in the food and pharmaceutical industries to check product safety. It expanded into America and mainland Europe in the 1980s and now aims to grow in China, Turkey and India. Clients include Kellogg's, Pfizer and Pepsi, and its technical support and customer-service facilities in 50 countries help its continued growth. International sales have risen by 62% a year, from an annualised £4.3m in 2007 to £11.4m in 2009.

73	NATURAL PRODUCTS
Giftware designer	61.44%

WHILE working for Next, Michael Sweeney and Jonathan Pooley identified a potential market for designing and manufacturing giftware, stationery and personal-care items such as lip balm. They set up Natural Products in 1992 to plug the gap and their clients include Gap, Topshop and WH Smith, which sell the products under their own branding. In 2006, offices in France and Colorado were opened to develop a European and American export strategy. The business now sells to more than 60 countries and, as a result of successful marketing, international sales have grown by 61% a year, from £2m in 2008 to £5.1m in 2010.

74	INTERPORT
Pharmaceutical wholesaler	61.26%

INTERPORT, a London-based wholesaler of pharmaceuticals, sources its products from European countries for wholesale to distributors and pharmacies in Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Dubai and Angola. Success in Sweden, prior to the denationalisation of the country's pharmacies in 2009, encouraged chairman Harshadrai Patel to expand further. The company now has a call centre in the Philippines purchasing products across Europe. International sales have risen by 61% a year, from £5.3m in 2008 to £13.8m in 2010.

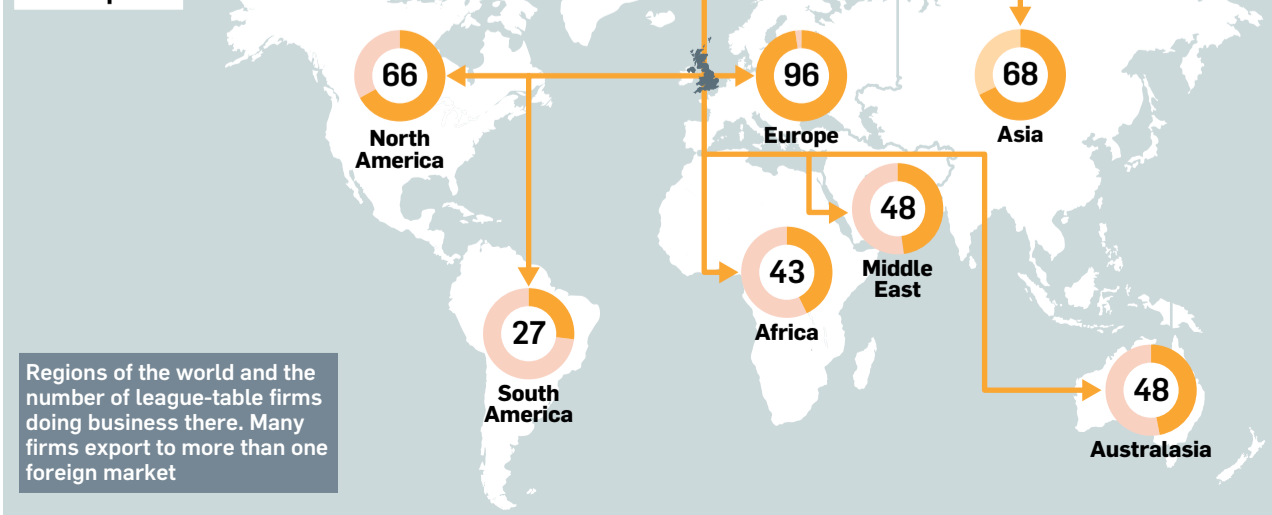
75	SHEFFIELD REFRACTORIES
Refractory material maker	61.00%

MANUFACTURING and installing refractories is the business of this company. Refractories are temperature and chemical-resistant ceramics used to line kilns and furnaces. The Sheffield-headquartered company sells its products to installers in the paper, steel, cement and power industries. Directors Trevor Staton and Julian Gray bought the operation in 2006 and have expanded in mainland Europe, Russia and Southeast Asia. International sales have increased by 61% a year, from £855,000 in 2007 to £2.2m in 2009.

76	STAGE ONE CREATIVE SERV.
Stage set manufacturer	60.47%

BIG events around the world have used stage sets and scenic environments made by Stage One Creative Services. Managed and owned by founders Simon Wood, James Tinsley and Mark Johnson, the firm operates chiefly in Australia and the Middle East and has provided flying equipment and backgrounds for Cirque du Soleil, the Eurovision Song Contest and Olympic Games opening ceremonies. Heavy investment in new technology has helped international sales to grow 60% a year, from £1.3m in 2007 to £3.3m in 2009.

Markets of the International Track 100 companies



77 AWC INDUSTRIES
Motor components maker 59.63%

COMPONENTS for cars, ranging from the wires used in seats to automatic hinges for bonnets and boots, are made by Birmingham-based AWC Industries. Clients include Volkswagen, Audi, Ford, Honda and Jaguar Land Rover. The company, which has factories in Britain and Hungary, produces parts for clients in Europe, America and Asia. Chief executive Allan Cook bought the business in 2003 and since then it has targeted global car manufacturers, a strategy that has helped international sales to increase by 60% a year, from £8.4m in 2008 to £21.5m in 2010.

78 EUROKEY RECYCLING
Recycler 59.45%

BASED in Hinckley, Leicestershire, Eurokey provides waste and recycling services to distributors, manufacturers and supermarkets. Customers include Land Rover and Tesco. The business operates throughout Europe, Africa and Asia, and has facilities in India and Australia. Following an arson attack in 2010, the company has invested in a larger processing plant to enable further expansion. Under founder and managing director John Dhillon, international sales have risen by 59% a year, from £8.4m in 2008 to £21.5m in 2010.

79 EA TECHNOLOGY
Energy consultancy 58.92%

ORIGINALLY a government research centre for the British electricity industry, this Chester company was formed in 1990 after the privatisation of the electricity sector. Today, as an employee-owned business led by chief executive Robert Davis, it provides consultancy services to electricity-network owners and operators, enabling them to operate high-voltage networks more efficiently. With offices in America, the Middle East, China and Australia, the company has grown its international sales by 59% a year, from £1.8m in 2008 to £4.6m in 2010.

80 MULTIFLIGHT
Aviation services provider 58.51%

ENTREPRENEUR and flying enthusiast David Hood, founder of Pace Micro, set up this aviation-services company. Based at Leeds Bradford International airport, Multiflight offers services for corporate clients and individuals flying in and out of its private terminal, including passenger processing, catering, cleaning, aircraft housing and fuel sales. The company buys and sells planes and helicopters, supplies parts, and repairs and services engines. It also offers private executive charter, aircraft management and flight training. Under managing director Steve Borrowdale, international sales have risen 59% a year, from £535,000 in 2007 to £1.3m in 2009.

81 LINGO24
Translation services provider 57.28%

A 24-HOUR translation service is offered by this Edinburgh-based company, which has offices and employees stationed all over the world and is ready to accept briefs at a moment's notice. The firm, founded in 2001, focuses on translation of the written word, with websites, market research, travel and tourism, news wire and press releases constituting the biggest sectors. Under founder and managing director Christian Arno,

international sales at the business have grown by 57% a year, from £1.1m in 2008 to £2.7m in 2010.

82 SELBY JENNINGS
Financial sector recruiter 57.26%

HAVING worked for Sthree recruitment consultancy, Adam Buck founded Selby Jennings in 2004 as an international finance recruitment specialist. The company now claims to have more than 5,000 clients, including Goldman Sachs and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and a database of 150,000 candidates whom it places in America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Headquartered in London, it uses video-conferencing technology and telephone interviews to assess candidates in far-flung parts. Thanks to networking, global advertising and building its web presence, the firm's international sales increased by 57% a year, from £1.3m in 2008 to £3.2m in 2010.

83 MISWA CHEMICALS
Chemicals manufacturer 56.24%

THIS Northampton company makes a range of automotive and home-care products, including brake and clutch fluids, insecticides, air fresheners and wood-care finishes, under the brand names Polygard and Kilit. The business manufactures more than 7m litres of brake fluid a year, which it exports to more than 40 countries. Its main foreign markets are Central and West Africa. Under managing director Swati Patel-Champion, international sales have risen by 56% a year, from £3.9m in 2008 to £9.5m in 2010.

84 THE DUNE GROUP
Footwear retailer 56.08%

THE Dune Group sells affordable luxury footwear through 45 shops and 175 concessions in department stores such as House of Fraser, Selfridges and John Lewis. It also owns stores and concessions in Ireland and mainland Europe as well as franchised stores in the Middle East, Russia and Poland. London-based Dune was founded in 1992 by chairman Daniel Rubin. The group expanded in 2009 when it acquired new concessions and the Bertie, Pied a Terre and Chelsea Cobbler brands. International sales have grown by 56% a year, from an annualised £6.2m in 2008 to £15m in 2010.

85 THE BIG WORD
Translation services provider 55.42%

WHEN somebody who speaks only limited English phones the emergency services in Kansas, the message is interpreted by Larry Gould's company. Similarly, if a Swiss bank requires a press release in 20 languages, The Big Word says it can provide the translations in 45 minutes. Claiming to have 2,500 clients speaking 234 languages across 77 countries, the Leeds-based company has more than 8,000 freelance linguists and uses automated technology to co-ordinate this global operation. With eight offices around the world and particularly strong growth in America and Germany, international sales have risen by 55% a year, from £8m in 2008 to £19.2m in 2010.

86 SEVERN GLOCON
Industrial valve maker 55.23%

IF a business needs high-specification control valves that work in harsh or special conditions on oil-and-gas

platforms and production units, they may well turn to Severn Glocon. Its customers include most of the international oil giants operating in the Middle and Far East and South America as well as big national companies such as Saudi Aramco, Malaysia's Petronas, Qatar Petroleum and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. The Gloucester business manufactures in Britain and India and is also developing a plant in China, which has become a large market for its products. International sales grew 55% a year, from £11.2m in 2007 to £27.1m in 2009 under owner Maurice Critchley.

87 PRICECHECK TOILETRIES
Toiletries wholesaler 54.22%

THIS Sheffield company specialises in toiletries, cosmetics and household goods. Most of its sales, about 80%, are in Britain and Ireland, with the remaining 20% generated in mainland Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The firm sells branded clearance stocks to value retailers and pharmacies. Pricecheck Toiletries was founded in 1978 by the parents of joint managing directors Mark Lythe and Deborah Harrison. A strong performance in mainland Europe has contributed to international sales growth of 54% a year, from £2.2m in 2008 to £5.3m in 2010.

88 HUDSON
Fashion footwear designer 54.19%

WORN by celebrities such as Tinie Tempah, Sienna Miller and Kate Bosworth, Hudson's footwear is aimed at fashion-conscious 25 to 45-year olds. Its brands, Hudson Purified and H, are sold through Office, Schuh, Kurt Geiger and John Lewis as well as the company's website. Hudson has fans across Europe and Asia, and leading department stores such as Bloomingdale's and Saks in America also stock the brand. The shoes and boots are designed in-house and predominantly manufactured in Portugal. The company is now expanding into bags and other accessories. Led by Michael Bunce, international sales have grown by 54% a year, from £998,000 in 2008 to £2.4m in 2010.

89 CORVEN
Management consultancy 53.22%

FOUNDED by Kevan Jones, James Basden and François Austin in 1999, Corven provides strategic business advice to companies in four sectors: oil and gas, utilities, financial services and central government. The firm has offices in London, Boston, Chicago and Hong Kong, and its clients include BP, Shell, Thames Water, National Grid, HSBC and Allianz. For example, Corven says it helped National Grid in America to improve its procurement process, resulting in cost savings of up to \$500m (£300m). The company's international sales have grown by 53% a year, from £2.4m in 2007 to £5.7m in 2009.

90 POLE STAR SPACE APPS.
Maritime communications 53.01%

INCREASING piracy in certain parts of the world is boosting business for Pole Star Space Applications. The London-headquartered company provides an extensive range of commercial marine services, including fleet management and long-range identification and tracking technology. In recent years, sales of its satellite-enabled ship security-alert systems, vessel-tracking and counter-piracy services have been growing rapidly. Pole Star reports that its systems support more than 24,000 vessels across more than 1,200 shipping companies and 38 governments. Led by chief executive David Plumer, the company's international sales have risen by 53% a year, from £3.5m in 2008 to £8.1m in 2010.

91 SAPPHIRE SYSTEMS
Systems integrator 52.22%

LONDON-BASED Sapphire Systems implements and supports business systems software. Managing director Ian Caswell claims that the company has become a top reseller for Sun Systems' financial-accounting software, and a leader in Europe for SAP Business One enterprise resource-planning software. With offices in New York, Los Angeles and Mumbai, the firm can provide global telephone support round the clock. Customers include companies in the oil-and-gas, travel and media sectors. Contracts with foreign-owned financial-services companies in Britain gave the business the expertise in worldwide accounting requirements to expand abroad. Sapphire Systems' international sales have risen 52% a year, from £568,000 in 2007 to £1.3m in 2009.



Waste not, want not: Eurokey's recycling services have boosted overseas revenue by 59% a year to £21.5m

92 COIN CO INTERNATIONAL
Currency exchange provider 51.79%

WHILE working in security for Laker Airways, John Baker was asked to shift a load of foreign coins that had been left at the airport. This laid the foundations for Coin Co International, which buys foreign coins from numerous countries and sources — including charity buckets, shop tills, parking meters and vending machines — and returns them to their respective national banks. Building on the mobility of tourists and business travellers, and on the post-Soviet emergence of new national currencies, this family-owned company has increased its international sales by 52% a year, from £3m in 2007 to £6.8m in 2009.

93 GUIDANCE
Technology services provider 51.70%

AS the ships used in the oil industry are not permitted to tie up to the rigs they service, this company's equipment is crucial in manoeuvring them alongside the platforms and maintaining a stable position. Guidance's smart sensor technology is also used in offender monitoring and robotic factory vehicles, for clients including Rolls-Royce, the French justice ministry and the global security-services company G4S. Overseas sales at the Leicester firm have climbed 52% a year, from £2.8m in 2007 to £6.4m in 2009, under co-founders Malcolm Roberts, John Potter and Russell Miles.

94 MICROGARD
Safety workwear maker 51.38%

THIS Hull business manufactures limited-life protective clothing to safeguard users against hazardous substances ranging from paint and oil to asbestos, viruses and toxic chemicals. Dealing primarily with the petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries, managing director Graham Stonehouse started exporting to mainland Europe in 2004. Microgard now sells its products to more than 40 countries. In 2005 the company opened a 170,000 sq ft manufacturing plant in China. The firm's

international sales have increased by 51% a year, from an annualised £3.9m in 2007 to £9m in 2009.

95 BEDS AND BARS
Hostel and bar operator 51.23%

AIMED at the young traveller market, Beds and Bars operates 16 backpacker hostels around Britain and mainland Europe in tourist hotspots such as Paris, Amsterdam and Prague. Attached to each hostel is the firm's branded Belushi's bar, which transforms into a residents' nightclub in the later hours. Managing director Keith Knowles began the London company with just one such bar in Covent Garden. Future plans include the opening of two new ones in Paris, as well as venues in Barcelona and Rome. International sales have increased 51% a year, from £4.4m in 2008 to £10m in 2010.

96 COPE ALLMAN JAYCARE
Healthcare products supplier 51.22%

COPE ALLMAN JAYCARE makes healthcare packaging for the global pharmaceutical and medical industries. Its products include child-resistant drugs containers, blister packs and other medical disposables for retail giants such as Boots and Unilever and the healthcare brand Seven Seas. Its supply reach covers Europe, North America and Asia. In 2008 Cope Allman managing director John Sidnell led the firm in the acquisition of its main competitor, Jaycare, doubling the size of the business. International sales have risen 51% a year, from £4.2m in 2007 to £9.5m in 2009.

97 CHALLENGE POWER TRANS.
Transmission parts maker 50.14%

JOINT VENTURES have helped this Wolverhampton firm to boost overseas sales. The company makes transmission components, such as gearboxes, in China for distributors and large equipment manufacturers. The business establishes joint ventures in target territories with local firms, which buy into the brand, the quality and supply of reasonably priced

products. To date there are joint ventures in Scandinavia, Germany, the Czech Republic and Ireland, and the company has also developed an online store to support its 12 offices around the world. The firm was founded by Bill Cody, Louis Hopkins and Martin Pope in 1996. International sales have risen 50% a year, from £1.7m in 2007 to £3.8m in 2009.

98 IMPEX PARTS
Automotive parts supplier 50.07%

BY procuring spare Ford car parts directly from the original manufacturer and selling them on to Ford dealers, this Leeds firm can offer factory parts, but at a lower price. Impex has sold its stock in more than 30 countries, with Europe a key market. Under managing director Stephen Burrows, the company's international sales have risen by 50% a year, from £2.6m in 2007 to £5.8m in 2009.

99 AQUATERRA ENERGY
Offshore engineer 49.56%

THIS Norwich-based offshore engineering company serves the oil-and-gas industry. It has more than 85 customers, including BP. Founded in 2005, it exports to more than 25 countries and 85% of its sales are generated overseas. Chairman Mark Boyd previously set up two similar firms and with managing director George Morrison has seen international sales grow 50% a year, from £7.7m in 2007 to £17.3m in 2009.

100 ANCASTA GROUP
Boat retailer 49.53%

NAMED after a Celtic goddess of Roman times, this firm sells new and used boats. Its range of vessels includes sailing yachts, power boats and catamarans, and the company acts as dealer for prestigious boat builders such as Bénéteau, Lagoon and Sealine. Ancasta is run by managing director Nick Griffith, who led a management buyout in 2001. The Southampton company has offices in Majorca and Marseilles, and its overseas sales have grown by 50% a year, from £2.8m in 2008 to £6.3m in 2010.



Meeting point: Beds and Bars' Mosaic House hotel and Belushi's bar in Prague

THE SUNDAY TIMES HSBC INTERNATIONAL TRACK 100

THIS supplement is compiled by Fast Track, Britain's leading networking events and research company that focuses on top-performing private companies and entrepreneurs. Fast Track researches and publishes seven annual league tables with The Sunday Times, ranking Britain's top private companies by growth or size. It runs invitation-only events and dinners for their owners and directors to network

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