

# International Track 100 press release



## LONDON COMPANIES DOMINATE LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

Published this weekend, the second annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 100** league table ranks Britain's private companies with the fastest-growing international sales.

There are 30 London companies on the table, compared to 38 last year. These companies have defied the downturn and delivered a welcome boost to the UK economy. During this time they added **2,717 jobs** and now employ a total of **5,912 people**. Their combined sales are **£933m**, and their international sales have grown by an average of **95%** a year over two years to a total of **£310m**.

London is home to three of the top five companies on the league table. The highest-ranked company in the region is **Forward Internet Group**, whose international sales have leapt 287% a year from £3m in 2007 to £45m in 2009. Founded in 2004 as an online marketing agency, the company has built up a portfolio of web-based businesses, including uSwitch, which it bought in 2009.

Featuring on the league table for a second year is **Cath Kidston**, the clothing and accessories retailer known for its bold, floral designs. The majority of overseas sales are generated in Japan, where it has eight shops. Private-equity firm TA Associates backed a buyout last year, valuing the company at £100m.

Also based in the Capital is **Flying Music**, the producer behind world-touring hit shows such as *Thriller Live* and *The Rat Pack*, and **The Foundry**, whose visual effects software brings Hollywood blockbusters such as *Avatar* to life.

The league table is sponsored by HSBC and Grant Thornton. It is compiled by Fast Track, the Oxford-based networking events and research company.

### Private companies in London with the fastest-growing international sales

2011 Rank in UK [2010]	Company Activity	Location of HQ	Annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Latest int'l sales (£000)	Latest total sales (£000)	Latest staff	Latest FYE <sup>†</sup>	Comment
2	<b>Forward Internet Group</b> <i>Online marketer</i>	Central London	287%	*45,355	*50,808	46	Dec 09	Says it has registered 1.3m US users for its price comparison technology, 'Invisible Hand'
3	<b>Kelway</b> <i>IT services provider</i>	Central London	249%	19,248	178,140	355	Mar 10	Has an office in Dubai and is planning to expand into South Africa
4	<b>A1 Pharmaceuticals</b> <i>Pharmaceutical product distributor</i>	East London	228%	5,937	26,648	24	Apr 10	Supplies branded surgical dressings, pharmaceuticals and medical devices globally
15	<b>Eden McCallum</b> <i>Management consultancy</i>	Central London	137%	4,184	16,043	26	Jun 10	Works with a network of 400 consultants across six continents
19	<b>Flying Music</b> <i>Music producer and promoter</i>	Central London	113%	5,518	21,557	24	Jul 10	Is behind world-touring musical shows The Rat Pack and Thriller Live
21	<b>Datix</b> <i>Healthcare software developer</i>	Southwest London	109%	†2,999	†8,105	36	Apr 10	Sells to the US, Canada, Europe and Australia and plans subsidiaries in N. America

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27	<b>Garrets International</b> <i>Marine catering agent</i>	Northeast London	102%	24,198	24,198	21	Mar 10	Monitors the food supply to about 640 merchant vessels worldwide
28	<b>Joseph Joseph</b> <i>Household goods maker</i>	Central London	100%	†7,614	†12,255	30	May 10	Sells its products in 65 countries, including Japan where it sells cooking chopsticks
31 [8]	<b>Pharmarama International</b> <i>Clinical trials supplier</i>	Northwest London	95%	13,288	31,638	22	Jul 10	Supplies pharmaceuticals worldwide from offices and warehouses in Britain and America
32	<b>Fever-Tree</b> <i>Mixer drinks manufacturer</i>	Southwest London	94%	†4,276	†6,664	9	Dec 10	Exports to 25 countries, and its main markets are America and Spain
33 [31]	<b>Cath Kidston</b> <i>Lifestyle retailer</i>	Central London	93%	10,398	50,369	383	Mar 10	Has eight shops in Japan, two in Korea and two in Ireland
36	<b>Pharmarama</b> <i>Clinical trials supplier</i>	Northwest London	90%	7,037	7,087	2	Jul 10	Supplies pharmaceuticals to America from offices and a warehouse in Boston
37	<b>Skrill</b> <i>Online payment provider</i>	Central London	90%	32,946	43,021	317	Dec 09	Offers its service in 40 different languages in Europe, America and Asia
42	<b>Imparta</b> <i>Business trainer</i>	Southwest London	81%	2,310	5,249	44	Dec 09	Partners with global training organisations to teach sales and marketing techniques to clients
51	<b>Start Creative</b> <i>Graphic design agency</i>	Central London	73%	4,101	10,222	73	Mar 10	Developed interactive store terminals with help from the University of Freiberg in Germany
54	<b>The Foundry</b> <i>Visual effects software developer</i>	Central London	72%	†11,222	†13,049	70	Dec 10	Licenses its products to film-production studios in Hollywood and Bollywood
55	<b>Citihub</b> <i>IT consultancy</i>	Central London	71%	†4,767	†10,103	90	Dec 10	Claims to provide IT services to seven of the top ten biggest global investment banks
56	<b>M2M</b> <i>PC components distributor</i>	Southeast London	71%	10,286	19,408	10	Dec 09	Trades IT components with companies such as Samsung in America, the Far East and Europe
60	<b>Key Travel</b> <i>Travel agency</i>	Central London	68%	5,664	55,345	139	Sep 09	Has served the travel needs of the global non-profit community for 30 years
70 [14]	<b>Aedas</b> <i>Architectural services provider</i>	Central London	63%	19,196	63,222	609	Dec 09	Designs infrastructure projects in the Middle East
71	<b>Pure Technology</b> <i>Optics wholesaler</i>	Northwest London	63%	4,895	9,777	100	Aug 09	Distributes designer eyewear and ophthalmic lenses to Europe and America
73	<b>Natural Products</b> <i>Giftware designer</i>	West London	61%	†5,128	†12,662	33	May 10	Has boosted its brand overseas by including its website details on every product sold
74 [43]	<b>Interport</b> <i>Pharmaceutical wholesaler</i>	South London	61%	13,751	40,204	47	Mar 10	Sells pharmaceuticals to Swedish pharmacies
82	<b>Selby Jennings</b> <i>Financial sector recruiter</i>	Central London	57%	3,204	7,081	48	Oct 10	Has an iPhone app to help build a global network of recruits
84	<b>The Dune Group</b> <i>Footwear retailer</i>	Central London	56%	15,040	136,409	2,608	Jan 10	Sells affordable luxury footwear through 28 franchises overseas, mainly in the Middle East

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88 [81]	<b>Hudson</b> <i>Fashion footwear designer</i>	Central London	54%	2,373	9,887	17	May 10	Exports its shoes to mainland Europe, America and Asia
89	<b>Corven</b> <i>Management consultancy</i>	Central London	53%	5,749	17,477	46	Dec 09	Has offices in Boston, Chicago and Hong Kong
90	<b>Pole Star Space Applications</b> <i>Maritime communications provider</i>	Central London	53%	8,089	9,402	60	Feb 10	Provides tracking systems to the maritime industry worldwide
91	<b>Sapphire Systems</b> <i>Systems integrator</i>	Central London	52%	1,317	12,979	81	Dec 09	Has opened offices in the US and Mumbai to offer round-the-clock support
95	<b>Beds and Bars</b> <i>Hostel and bar operator</i>	Central London	51%	10,005	24,065	542	Mar 10	Aims to place a hostel and bar in every major European city

‡ FYE (financial year end) of latest available accounts † Draft figure \* Annualised figure

Steve Price, head of the UK commercial banking segment at HSBC, the title sponsor of the league table, commented:

*"It's encouraging to see privately-owned British companies - including many which HSBC has helped to support - develop their international trade. With overseas sales accounting for half of these companies' total sales, the International Track 100 businesses are expanding their horizons and capitalising on the potential that exists in the global market."*

### The national picture

Despite difficult trading conditions, the International Track 100 companies increased their overseas sales by an average of **91%** a year over two years to a total of **£1.6bn**. They employ more than **21,000** staff, having added nearly **6,600** jobs over the same period.

The vast majority of companies sell to mainland Europe (96), making it the most popular overseas market, followed by Asia (68) and North America (66). More than half the companies trade on four or more continents.

The top countries for exports are the US (64 companies), Germany (57) and France (53).

Consumer goods is the largest sector on the league table, with 17 companies, followed by engineering (12) and computers and electronics (11).

Most of the companies are headquartered in London (30), the Southeast (16), the Northeast (14) or the Northwest (13). The remainder breaks down as follows: Midlands (9), Southwest (7), Scotland (5), East (4), Wales (1) and Northern Ireland (1).

The full findings are published in a special eight-page supplement within the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 8 May and on [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk), where you can access a searchable database of all 100 companies, as well as past league tables.

**ENDS**

**WHEN USING THIS INFORMATION PLEASE CREDIT:  
THE SUNDAY TIMES HSBC INTERNATIONAL TRACK 100**

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**Notes for editors**

**Fast Track** has published league tables of top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 14 years, and its invitation-only events provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to network and meet its sponsors. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

**League table criteria**

Companies had to be registered in the UK and be independent, unquoted and ultimate holding companies. They were ranked on their compound annual growth rate in international sales over two years (2007-2009, 2008-2010 or 2009-2011, depending on their latest available accounts). Total sales had to be at least £5m and international sales at least £1m in the latest financial year.

Fast Track conducted phone interviews or face-to-face visits with all 100 companies between January and March 2011.

The research is based on limited available data on international sales. Companies filing abbreviated accounts are not required to disclose a geographical breakdown of sales, while many companies filing full accounts do not make this disclosure because it may be prejudicial to their interests.

**About HSBC**

HSBC is the title sponsor of The Sunday Times HSBC International Track 100 for a second year. It is a principal member of the HSBC Group, one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations, with around 9,500 offices in 83 countries and territories. HSBC Bank offers a full range of business banking solutions, delivered locally, drawing on the unparalleled global network of the HSBC Group.

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