

International Track 100 press release



MIDLANDS COMPANY AMONG BRITAIN'S TOP THREE FASTEST-GROWING EXPORTERS

High-tech manufacturer SMS Electronics is one of nine Midlands companies to feature in the latest Sunday Times HSBC International Track 100

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 nine companies in the Midlands compared to eight last year. They have made a significant contribution to the regional economy over the last two years, despite the downturn. During this time they added **785 jobs** and now employ a total of **2,471 people**. Their combined sales are **£588m**, and their international sales have grown by an average of **105%** a year over two years to a total of **£360m**.

Seven of these companies appear on the league table for the first time, including **SMS Electronics**, a high-tech manufacturer based in Nottingham and ranked in the top 3 nationally. The company's manufacturing heritage spans a century, but in 2002 the factory was threatened with closure and so the directors bought the business from Siemens to keep the plant open. Last year the company generated exports of £19m, up 418% a year compared to £700,000 in 2008.

The Midlands is also home to online bookmaker **bet365**, the largest company on the table. It generated £266m in overseas sales last year, an increase of 82% a year relative to 2008.

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 with the fastest-growing international sales in the Midlands

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 [±]	Comment
In top 3	SMS Electronics <i>Electronics manufacturer</i>	Nottingham	418%	18,695	31,007	131	Oct 10	Exports rocketed due to European demand for its video conferencing systems
25	Mr Tyre <i>Tyre retailer</i>	Birmingham	104%	5,112	40,633	166	Dec 09	Supplies spare car parts to Europe, North America and Asia from 24 English depots
40	bet365 <i>Online bookmaker</i>	Stoke-on-Trent	82%	265,536	419,750	1,313	Mar 10	Its website is available in 17 languages, including Greek, Slovakian and Chinese
58 [93]	DCA Design Int'l <i>Product design consultancy</i>	Warwick	68%	7,635	9,568	80	May 10	Provides product design and development consultancy internationally
77	AWC Industries <i>Automotive component maker</i>	Birmingham	60%	21,505	33,740	521	Mar 10	Manufactures components for car makers in Europe, America and Asia
78	Eurokey Recycling <i>Recycler</i>	Leicestershire	59%	†21,477	†22,607	52	Aug 10	Sells raw recycled materials to reprocessors in the Far East

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‡	Comment
83	Miswa Chemicals <i>Chemicals manufacturer</i>	Northampton	56%	9,502	12,932	71	Mar 10	Sells car and home care products to Central and West Africa
93	Guidance <i>Technology services provider</i>	Leicester	52%	6,442	12,542	105	Nov 09	Anticipates most growth in South America and mainland Europe
97 [33]	Challenge Power Transmission <i>Transmission parts maker</i>	Wolverhampton	50%	3,794	5,393	32	Dec 09	New offices in the Czech Republic have boosted sales to eastern Europe

‡ FYE (financial year end) of latest available accounts

† Draft figure

Companies on the league table from other parts of the UK include Cath Kidston, the clothing and accessories retailer known for its bold, floral designs; Flying Music, the producer behind hit shows such as Thriller Live; and Divex, which makes diving equipment for the FBI.

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, where you can access a searchable database of all 100 companies, as well as past league tables.

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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

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