

International Track 100 press release



COMPANIES IN THE NORTHWEST WIN A PLACE AMONG 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 13 companies in the Northwest compared to ten 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 **534 jobs** and now employ a total of **2,414 people**. Their combined sales are **£625m**, and their international sales have grown by an average of **104%** a year over two years to a total of **£300m**.

Cheshire business **Byrom** takes the top spot in the Northwest. Its international sales climbed to £126m in 2010, compared to £12m in 2008. The company provides ticketing, IT and accommodation services for sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, which boosted turnover last year.

Three Manchester companies feature in the league table, including **Ultimate Products**. This business sources and designs household goods for more than 450 retailers, including Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Walmart. The company sells across five continents and exports reached £23m in 2010, up 73% a year compared 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 in the Northwest 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 [‡]	Comment
5	Byrom <i>Sporting events manager</i>	Cheadle, Cheshire	226%	126,063	128,634	223	Mar 10	Supplied accommodation, ticketing and IT services for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa
8	Redwood Distribution <i>Textile distributor</i>	Skelmersdale, Lancashire	198%	5,972	21,067	130	Dec 09	Supplies soft furnishing textiles and products to more than 50 international markets
13	MPM Products <i>Natural pet food producer</i>	Macclesfield, Cheshire	153%	†3,334	†8,710	20	Dec 10	Sells cat and dog food and products to Europe and the Far East
23 [4]	Eazyfone <i>Mobile phone recycler</i>	Macclesfield, Cheshire	108%	38,011	43,462	123	Aug 10	Collects and reconditions mobile phones from European users for sale in Africa and Asia
29	RSK <i>Environmental consultancy</i>	Helsby, Cheshire	99%	18,286	60,698	741	Mar 10	Helps multinational energy companies assess their environmental impact
34	Rainbow Cosmetics <i>Fragrance wholesaler</i>	Manchester	92%	†4,598	†33,965	54	Dec 10	Exports cosmetic, tanning and bronzing products to Denmark, Sweden and Poland
46	Nationwide Produce <i>Produce marketer</i>	Merseyside	79%	16,825	65,060	64	May 10	Recently hired a former Russian farm manager to help target that market
50	Ultimate Products <i>Homeware designer and sourcer</i>	Manchester	73%	22,812	78,264	231	Jul 10	Has offices in Britain and Belgium and a large showroom in Hong Kong

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
57	Rayburn Trading <i>Toiletries wholesaler</i>	Manchester	69%	35,058	77,657	165	Aug 10	Sells own-brand health & beauty and household products worldwide
59	Mobica <i>Mobile phone application designer</i>	Wilmslow, Cheshire	68%	3,315	6,709	165	Dec 09	Sells to major consumer electronics and mobile companies in Europe, N. America and Asia
64	Travel Counsellors <i>Travel agency</i>	Bolton	66%	†9,602	†74,817	221	Oct 10	Has 1,200 travel agents operating across six countries
72	Lock Inspection Systems <i>Metal detector manufacturer</i>	Oldham	62%	11,402	12,438	120	Dec 09	Expanding further into China, India, Turkey and Indonesia and is planning to target Russia
79	EA Technology <i>Energy consultancy</i>	Chester	59%	4,589	13,905	157	Mar 10	Having launched internationally in 2007, the company now does business in 86 countries

‡ 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.

ENDS

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

For further information please contact:

Nick Britton, head of research and editorial, Fast Track, 01865 297 014, nick.britton@fasttrack.co.uk

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.

www.hsbc.co.uk

About Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a leading business and financial adviser with offices in 28 locations nationwide. It is a member firm within Grant Thornton International Ltd, one of the world's leading international organisations of independently owned and managed accounting and consulting firms. Clients of member and correspondent firms can access the knowledge and experience of more than 2,500 partners in over 100 countries and consistently receive a distinctive, high quality and personalised service wherever they choose to do business.

www.grant-thornton.co.uk