

# International Track 200

## Awards dinner press release



Wednesday 20 September 2017

### BRITAIN'S MID-MARKET EXPORT STARS HONOURED

The owners and directors of Britain's 200 fastest-growing mid-market private exporters were recognised yesterday (19 September) at the 8th annual *Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200* awards ceremony, held at The Dorchester in London.

The **International Track 200** league table ranks the UK's mid-market private companies with the fastest-growing overseas sales. The companies increased their international sales over their latest two years by an average of 47% a year to a total of **£7.6bn**. Staff numbers rose by 26,000 over the same period to 97,000.

The 300 guests at the dinner included founders and senior directors from 134 companies, such as **Baxters, Rapha, Foster + Partners, Mountain Warehouse** and **Tangle Teezer**.

Guests were welcomed by **Amanda Murphy**, head of commercial banking, **HSBC UK**. She said:

*"I'd like to congratulate all of this year's 200 successful companies. You are all super examples of how the UK's mid-size businesses are making waves on the world stage. Your stories are an inspiration – to people dreaming about starting a business, to those exporting for the very first time, to established businesses and to all of us at HSBC. We wish you continued growth and success."*

Guests heard from **Julian Metcalfe**, founder of **itsu** and co-founder of **Pret A Manger**, who was interviewed by **Iain Dey**, business editor of **The Sunday Times**; and **Andy Rubin**, chairman of Pentland Brands and executive director of **Pentland Group** (see next page).

#### International Track 200 awards

The **excellence in emerging markets award**, sponsored by **HSBC**, was presented by Jane Galvin, head of corporate banking, UK, to chief operating officer Jonathan Golby and chief technology officer Chris Pugh of **Peak Scientific**. The company makes gas generators for research labs on every continent and has 20 offices worldwide, with major operations in China and India. Its exports rose 19% a year over two years to £40m in 2016.

The **excellence in services award**, sponsored by **HSBC**, was presented by Dan Howlett, head of large corporates, UK & regional client coverage Europe, to general counsel & chief risk officer Will Bloomer, of **Hyperion Insurance**. Hyperion is the world's largest employee-owned insurance group and has made more than 30 acquisitions in the past four years. Its international sales grew 56% a year over two years to £361m in 2016.

The **excellence in ecommerce award**, sponsored by **DHL Express**, was presented by Neil Kuschel, VP sales, UK, to ecommerce director Nicolas Pickaerts and global content director Kate Blythe of **Matchesfashion.com**. The online fashion retailer exports 450 designer brands to 176 countries, and recently sold a majority stake to Apax for a reported £800m. Its exports hit £148m in 2017, up 60% a year over two years.

The **emerging international brand award**, sponsored by **The Sunday Times**, was presented by business editor Iain Dey to chairman Nick Evans and chief financial officer Emilio Foa of **Rapha**. The retailer is building a premium, global cycling brand and runs clubs on four continents. Last month, it sold a majority stake to the Walmart heirs for a reported £200m. Its overseas sales rose 33% over two years to £48m in 2017.

Finally, the **fastest-growing company award**, also sponsored by **HSBC**, was presented by Amanda Murphy to founder and chief executive Bob James and finance director Steven Ades of **AerFin**. This Welsh aviation engineer has

spent more than £65m in the past three years on aircraft parts, which it then recycles and sells or leases to customers such as Lufthansa and Philippine Airlines. It has grown international sales 664% a year over two years to £53m in 2016.

Profiles and financial information for each of the winning companies are available on the Fast Track website: [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk).

### Guest speeches

**Iain Dey**, business editor of The Sunday Times, interviewed **Julian Metcalfe**, founder of healthy food business **itsu** and co-founder of sandwich shop chain **Pret A Manger**. Julian urged more British businesses to take the leap and trade overseas: "It's so easy to stick at home. But go out there, be brave. Of course it's frightening and expensive and difficult, but international expansion is a remarkable opportunity," he said.

After dinner, the guests heard from **Andy Rubin**, chairman of Pentland Brands and executive director of **Pentland Group**, which is an International Track 200 alumnus. Its sports and fashion brands include Berghaus, Canterbury, Ellesse and Speedo. He spoke about the need to strike the right relationships when expanding a business overseas. "Like hiring key employees, selecting a business partner in a country is the most important business decision that we make. Get it right and growth follows; get it wrong and it takes time to unwind the situation," he said.

### ENDS

### WHEN USING THIS INFORMATION, PLEASE CREDIT IN FULL: THE SUNDAY TIMES HSBC INTERNATIONAL TRACK 200

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### Notes for editors

**Fast Track** has published national league tables of top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 20 years. Its invitation-only dinners provide a valuable opportunity for entrepreneurs to network and meet its sponsors. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

### About the league table

The eighth annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200** league table was published on 11 June 2017. It is compiled by **Fast Track**, the UK's leading research and networking events company focusing on top-performing private companies and entrepreneurs. Past International Track 200 starts range from drinks maker Fever-Tree and travel search engine Skyscanner to high-street retailers Cath Kidston and Specsavers.

In addition to title sponsor HSBC, the league table is sponsored by **DHL Express**.

**League table criteria:** Companies had to be registered in the UK and be independent, unquoted and ultimate holding companies. They are ranked according to the compound annual growth (CAGR) in their international sales over the latest two financial years.

Total sales had to be at least £25m and international sales at least £1m in the latest financial year. Companies with sales of less than £25m are covered by our sister SME Export Track 100 league table.

The research was carried out by Fast Track principally between January and May 2017. Data on international sales can be limited. Companies filing abbreviated accounts are not required to disclose any geographical breakdown of sales, while firms that file full accounts can choose to not disclose a geographical breakdown of sales if it is prejudicial to their interests.

No parties endorse, guarantee or recommend investment in any of the companies.

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HSBC has sponsored the International Track 200 for all eight years, and has been sponsoring Fast Track's league tables for 14 years.

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