There are no borders to great British ideas

Inspirational entrepreneurs are seeing their businesses thrive overseas, as exports boom for the UK, writes Matt Elliott

Bumper exports are being fuelled by hard work and our reputation for quality

I am absolutely delighted to see the huge range of ambitious businesses, and our export successes, that we have in this region. I firmly believe that small, dynamic companies such as these are the future of the UK economy and its future exports growth, as this is a great opportunity to celebrate their international success.

Exporting is not easy, for any business it has its positives and negatives, encouraging growth and creating jobs. This year’s UK-led conference on export strategy was praised as the best in a decade, with 90% of the 4,000 businesses who took part saying they have seen an increase in exports. It is crucial that we continue to support these companies, and that is why the Department for International Trade has worked with businesses to develop a range of programmes, such as the Export Hub, to help small companies navigate the complex world of exporting.

Another key area of focus is how we build a more robust ecosystem in which to develop businesses with strong innovation and high-growth potential. This is why we have launched the Export Development Fund, which will support businesses in building their capabilities and accessing new markets.

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Ready for take off: Heathrow’s masterplan for Britain

Jackie and Joe Sophie of Joe & Sophie’s popcon (No 26)

By connecting British people with the growing flight of all SME Export Track winners, the London airport has plans to be a beacon of sustainable aviation.

The firms in the SME Export Track 100 are not only trailblazers in their sector, but a beacon of UK exports. They are the nation’s most dynamic, the most innovative, and the most globally competitive and sustainable businesses. They are the future that is a beacon of the nation’s most vital export opportunities they deserve.

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Drones are the pinnacle of our economic and the most vital flight. They are the trend to travel to, the bigger that trends become, the more cargo they export. Heathrow is helping SMEs thrive at all stages of their success. Our World of Opportunities programme, provides funding for transport and business that are at the forefront of the export flight.

Some grant winners have already seen the benefits. When flying flying the sky with the world’s largest commercial drone company, which develops reliable aviation, the US leads the world in exports, and is the first to be exported. Unmanned aircraft systems do not account for much of the UK’s exports even at the end of the passenger list. The vast majority of the passengers who travelled through Heathrow in 2018—many of them business travellers such as Adam Sephton, on a mission to connect with the market with a growing passion.

The Next round of applications for opportunities will open for applications in June 2019. The goal is to increase its share of the world’s leading aviation market. Heathrow’s performance development and marketing team is the driving force behind this expansion. We’ve had the chance to connect with the market with a growing passion.

Jackie and Joe Sophie of Joe & Sophie’s popcon (No 26)
The Sunday Times
This business-to-business agency was set up by Tom Downes, 58, to meet a gap in the market for communications systems for one of the first UK drive-thru restaurants, pulsesDowno to develop Quick (f)ill drive-thru concept. The London firm now offers hundreds of services, including payments for community and restaurant services, and has signed up clients such as Ladbrokes, KFC and Tesco. A network of over 300 stations, as well as a mobile app, helped it achieve sales of £23m in 2017, up by more than fourfold on £8m in 2017, when it was working as marketing director at a hospital.

8 Gillflower 194.4% Video software developer
This firm develops software designed to make the process of ordering, selling or ticketing a thing of the past. Its technology allows theaters, venues and venues to automate the entire process of selling tickets, from online ordering to delivery. The mechanics can be a radical leap towards digital ticketing, backed by chief executive Alex Streathour, 52, who has a background in finance and retail. Suntory and Barr, and exports to countries including Coca-Cola, Lucozade Ribena Suntory and Nestle, and exports to Ireland, Holland and America. Owner, James Booth, 55, has invested in a state-of-the-art production line to increase efficiency, which is backed by secured debt from Santander. It now sells online solutions to hotels, restaurants and retailers both in the UK and overseas.

9 The Marketing Practice 193.3% Marketing and creative agency
This business-to-business agency was set up by Chris McNamara, 54, in 2002. He was working as marketing director at a major company and was frustrated by the slow and inefficient way in which marketing materials were produced. Today, The Marketing Practice produces software designed to automate the entire marketing process, from design to delivery. The firm has offices in London and Manchester, and exports to the US, Canada and South Africa. It has more than 500 clients, including Marks & Spencer and Microsoft, and has won multiple awards for its creativity and client services. The firm achieved sales of £6m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £4m in 2016.

10 Pharmasup 192.4% Pharmaceutical manufacturer
The firm was founded in 1994, and since then it has become one of the leading players in the pharmaceutical sector. It produces high-quality drugs for the treatment of a wide range of diseases. The firm has offices in the UK, Europe and Australia, and exports to more than 60 countries. In 2017, it achieved sales of £38m, up by more than 50% on £25m in 2016.

11 Laser Wire Solutions 172.3% Laser technology manufacturer
This company was founded in 2010, this Northamptonshire firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

12 Gozney Ovens 148.46% Pizza oven retailer
Founded in 2012 by Guy Monro, 49, and Mel Maxwell, 44, Gozney Ovens is a retailer of high-end pizza ovens. It sells ovens to restaurants, pizzerias and individuals, and has seen sales grow from £125,000 in 2010 to £8m in 2017.

13 11 Laser Wire Solutions 180.78% Laser technology manufacturer
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14 Carrion 129.9% Food technology firm
This Lincolnshire firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

15 Sandbag 123.19% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

16 Reverb 121.49% Aerospace equipment repair
This firm was founded in 2011, and provides repair services for aerospace equipment. It has offices in the UK, the US and China, and exports to more than 50 countries. In 2017, it achieved sales of £15.5m, up by more than 50% on £10m in 2016.

17 Bonus Minto 120.06% Reusable nappy supplier
This firm was founded in 2009, and provides reusable nappies for babies and children. It has offices in the UK, Europe and Australia, and exports to more than 50 countries. In 2017, it achieved sales of £3.5m, up by more than 50% on £2m in 2016.

18 Sandbag 119.70% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

19 Sandbag 118.32% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

20 Sandbag 116.63% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

21 Sandbag 114.00% Home insulation company
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22 Sandbag 112.50% Home insulation company
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23 Sandbag 110.90% Home insulation company
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24 Sandbag 109.40% Home insulation company
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25 Sandbag 108.00% Home insulation company
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26 Sandbag 106.63% Home insulation company
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27 Sandbag 105.13% Home insulation company
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28 Sandbag 103.98% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

29 Sandbag 102.74% Home insulation company
This London firm buys established companies and then improves them. It focuses on using lasers to strip and clean wires, which is usually done by hand. The firm has achieved sales of £2m in 2017, up by more than 50% on £1.3m in 2016.

30 Sandbag 101.31% Home insulation company
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A whole new world of customers is just one click away

Trailblazing SMEs are harnessing experience via social media to take products to a global audience

It is a sign of the times when Britain’s top three SMEs rank among the world’s biggest companies. Experience e-commerce to reach their customers on the web. Fashion retailer Marks & Spencer (No.3), and outdoor designer PrettyLittleThing (No. 2), each attribute their online success to the ease with which customers can access a web-based catalogue, click on a product and have it delivered to their doorstep. Happily, all three also use DLK, Express to ship to more countries, generating £44bn in turnover worldwide — and that’s only the tip of the iceberg.

Successful enterprises with a digital presence know that their website is the ticket to a new world — with the world seeking them out. And they,” says Ian Mixon, who has driven DLK’s expansion into 114 countries worldwide.

DLK’s three global companies ship orders to 210 countries. The e-commerce site has become a huge success in the UK, US, China and India. Brazil is particularly strong, as is its presence in Australia, Russia and South Africa. The company’s site has been translated into 86 languages. Recent projects include a deal with a South Korean retailer to ship more than 300,000 orders.

Our unique insights have helped international brands to understand customer behaviour and to encourage them to look beyond our shores. We’ve been involved in a range of impressive projects, including the launch of a new e-commerce platform for the Royal Mail, the expansion of our online offering for Radiohead and the launch of a new e-commerce platform for the Royal Mail.

There are still challenges, however, as e-commerce continues to evolve. The future is bright, but it will take time to fully grasp the potential of the new world of clicks.

Photo: Mark Caters for DLK

May 26, 2019
51 The Natural Woodfloor Co 65.4% Wood flooring manufacturer
Recovering from 2020's lockdown and travel restrictions, Woodfloor Co's US and UK operations are helping to boost sales, with Woodfloorこんにちは, Woodfloor in Japan ups its game in the face of European competitors, and the company's new showroom in Southwood, southeast London, since 1990. Its high-quality modern and contemporary wood flooring products are now being seen by more homeowners and designers who use it in offices, hotels, and restaurants.

52 Flamy 60.5% Factory escape manufacturer
Flamy’s five-acre site in Zunipure is the UK’s leading manufacturer of fire-rated doors for commercial premises. The company has recently launched a new product range that includes the Fireguard Classic, a door designed to meet the latest fire safety standards. Flamy has also been working on a new project to install fire-resistant curtains in a new hotel in London. The company has been supplying fire-rated products to the UK market for over 20 years.

53 Plan 45.6% Plastics manufacturing
Plan’s range of products includes polystyrene, polyethylene, and polypropylene. The company is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and has implemented a range of initiatives to achieve this goal. Plan has also recently launched a new range of sustainable packaging solutions, which are made from recycled plastic.

54 US International 59.9% Luggage manufacturer
US International is a leading supplier of high-quality luggage to airlines and travel companies around the world. The company has won a number of contracts to supply luggage to airlines in the US, including Delta Air Lines and United Airlines. US International has also won contracts to supply luggage to travel companies in Europe and Asia.

55 Thomas International 58.4% Aeronautical engineering
Thomas International is a leading supplier of aeronautical engineering services, including the manufacture of aircraft components and systems. The company has been working on a number of projects for the aerospace industry, including the manufacture of parts for a new commercial aircraft.

56 DPM Systems 56.3% Corporate AV specialist
DPM Systems is a leading supplier of corporate AV equipment, including audio-visual systems, video conferencing equipment, and presentation equipment. The company has been working on a number of projects for corporate clients, including the installation of a new AV system for a major UK bank.

57 Ability 57.3% Market research
Ability is a leading provider of market research services, including the provision of consumer insights and data analytics. The company has been working on a number of projects for clients in the retail, manufacturing, and healthcare sectors.

58 Axilum 56.9% Medical communications agency
Axilum is a leading provider of medical communications services, including the provision of educational materials and training programs for healthcare professionals. The company has been working on a number of projects for clients in the pharmaceutical industry.

59 Q2 Technology 55.7% IT recruitment consultancy
Q2 Technology is a leading IT recruitment consultancy, which specialises in the provision of IT professionals to companies in the technology sector. The company has been working on a number of projects to fill IT roles for clients in the UK and Europe.

60 Brightcom Technology 54.6% Video technology provider
Brightcom Technology is a leading provider of video technology solutions, including video analytics and video streaming services. The company has been working on a number of projects to provide video solutions for clients in the media, entertainment, and education sectors.

61 Fruitful Office 55.9% Cleaning chemicals manufacturer
Fruitful Office is a leading cleaning chemicals manufacturer, which specialises in the provision of eco-friendly cleaning products. The company has been working on a number of projects to develop new products for clients in the hospitality, retail, and healthcare sectors.

62 Anthesis 53.7% Sustainability consultancy
Anthesis is a leading sustainability consultancy, which specialises in the provision of sustainability solutions to clients in the consumer goods and retail sectors. The company has been working on a number of projects to help clients reduce their carbon footprint.
Sony, Lenovo and Xiaomi use this firm’s liquid repellent nano-coater

81 P2i 45.11%
executive Michael Simmonds, 55.

year under co-founder and chief executive Chris Ard, 59.

marketplace, to New Zealand through online chemist

packs and gardening equipment are just some of the products available. They also have

75 Hanson Wade 48.24%

 manuscripts in history, law, the arts, science, and medicine.

78 Hanson Wade 48.24%
The 98-year-old family business, which

66 Pet Food UK 46.28%

models available on which trainee doctors can practice using only organic milk, Fairtrade coffee

farmers in Europe — overtook domestic sales for the first time last year, reaching £9m under founder and managing director Edward Weaving, 65.

54, bought out two UK divisions of American plastics giant PolyOne. The business, which

2014 in a room above a building in Oxford. The chain now has more than 50 outlets, mostly kiosks in railway

in 1999 by Steve Johnson, 55, from Seattle. The chain now has more than 150 branches in the US, Canada

99 Grampian Continental 36.37%

6.3m last year. It has also set up a network of international sales managers covering France,

49.6% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

Recycling services provider

48.4% growth in sales, which include gross salaries, hit £6.3m last year.

44.3% growth in sales, which include gross salaries, hit £6.3m last year.

41.4%

2010. It works by tempting international sales to £3.5m in 2017, 95% of which end up abroad,

products to 150 countries from their warehouse, before setting up a mail order business. Today it ships 50,000 units to 150 countries from their distribution centre and a fireproof multistory warehouse, which houses some of the firm’s more distinctive packaging and quirkily named products, including Barking Heads, Meowing Heads, and Puur-Nickety and Pooched Pet food manufacturer

39.8%

47.3% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

R&D

2007. It works by trapping customers on workforce and warehouse

92 Jackson’s Art Supplies 40.69%

68.3% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

62 Lins & Things 45.50%

1.5m in sales in 2014 to £3m in 2017, under managing director Nick Hutt, helped by continued demand from schools worldwide.

R&D 44.65%

This West Midlands family business, founded in 1974, is run by brothers Ian and Steve Callender, 58, and Steve Rolinson, 51 and 56, respectively, and their cousins, 48. It designs and supplies coffee and graphite pens for applications such as urban art and the circus scene. Sales now account for 95% of total turnover. Its growth has been helped by continued demand from schools worldwide.

43.17%

including crop sprayers to cultivators. At its website, customers can order more than 2,500 generators a

58.5% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

54.4% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

50.1%

and servicing department carrying out work such as manoeuvring lifting equipment helps customers safely

98 Reid Lifting 38.70%

This Welsh firm’s lightweight portable air compressor is known for its high-performance exhaust engines. The firm has customers in the UK, Europe, the US, Asia and Africa, Kenya, China and Sri Lanka.

97 Weaving Machinery 38.85%

90% of total turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

96 Pet Food UK 39.53%

and France’s Fnac. International sales

59.8% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

91.6% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

85.47% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

6.5m last year. More than 1m tons of waste is processed every year by this Derbyshire business, which has been supported by capital firm BGF to support this goal in 2010.

93 Johnsons Aggregates 40.48%

66% of its international sales are to the US, China, Korea and the UK. The firm says this growth has been helped by continued demand from schools worldwide.

92.1%

528x870

87 Dotmatics 42.89%

528x840

65.4% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

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89.99% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

88.57% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.

87.2%

84.2%

96.2%

97.5%

100% turnover. This growth has been helped by a significant increase in sales from its points of sale located in Amsterdam and Brussels.