

SME Export Track 100

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EXPORTING IS GREAT
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Researched and compiled by **FAST TRACK**

Made in the UK, sold all over Europe

Our fastest-growing small and medium-sized exporters are capitalising on continental opportunities, writes Richard Tyler

Europe is the star for Britain's fastest-growing small exporters, according to research from Fast Track. The second annual Sunday Times Heathrow SME Export Track 100 finds that 80 of the featured small and medium-sized enterprises cite Europe as a main overseas market.

This shows the importance of the trading bloc for British exporters ahead of the European referendum on June 23, as well as the business opportunities that exist on the Continent despite recent sluggish economic growth.

North America is the second most popular market for the fast-growing SMEs, with 71 focusing on the region, followed by 45 that cite Asia as a main market.

By country, the US is a main source of sales for two-thirds of the businesses, followed by Germany (27), Australia (25), France (21) and China (19).

The league table measures average annual international sales growth over the past two years, figures range from 33% for the business in 100th place to 357% for the top-ranked company, Black Swan Data, a developer of analytical software – and there has been a significant rise in the number of companies turning to outside investors to help

fund this growth. Venture capital and private equity firms, as well as business angels, back almost a third of the companies, up from 23 last year. London-based software firm HighQ (No 32), for example, raised \$50m (£35m) in January from investors including Goldman Sachs Private Capital to help expand overseas and diversify from the legal sector into financial services.

Official figures released last week show that in the first quarter of this year the UK's trade deficit was at its highest level since 2008. However, the pace of overseas growth achieved by the companies in the league table is higher than last year – exports increased by an annual average of 84%, up from 73%. Almost a quarter of the 100 companies achieved triple-digit growth, compared with 14 last year. The 100 businesses have increased total sales from £787m to £1.3bn in two years, with most of that down to the £438m rise in international sales.

Some of the companies have been trading for a long time, such as Birmingham-based Webster & Horsfall (No 61), which was founded in 1720 and made the first transatlantic telegraph cable in 1866. It is still owned by the Horsfall family and now works with partners such as Birmingham University to develop its wire technologies for oil and gas, pharmaceutical and automotive industries.

One of the youngest companies is LoveCrafts (No 3), which launched its loveknitting.com website in 2012 and is among those using ecommerce and social media to expand overseas rather than investing in physical shops, offices and factories. The importance of Britain's trade infrastructure to this new generation of exporters is explored below by John Holland-Kaye of Heathrow.

There are 31 manufacturers on the league table alongside 54 services companies and 16 retailers. Fifty-six have head offices in London or the southeast of England, with 12 based in the Midlands, 10 in the northwest and five in Scotland. In total they employ more than 9,000 people, welcoming an extra 3,600 recruits in the past two years. All will be looking to these 100 companies to continue their rapid expansion, irrespective of what the country decides on June 23.



Steve King, left, and Hugo Anos are the co-founders of software firm Black Swan, which analyses vast volumes of data to help companies gain insights into their customers

1 BLACK SWAN DATA

Analytical software developer 357.13%

The growth of social media and the proliferation of smartphones mean our increasingly detailed footprints can be found in every corner of the digital world. Black Swan, based in London, designs algorithms and analytics to capture this information and crunch it with real-world data, such as the weather, for insights that help companies make money.

Steve King, 41, a cognitive science

graduate, saw the opportunity for brands to gain a better understanding of consumers via such analysis. Using the proceeds from the sale of his previous business, he teamed up with Hugo Anos, 34, to start Black Swan in 2011.

His first customer was Disney, for which it predicted ticket sales for new film releases using a range of metrics, including reviews and Twitter activity.

It now has many multinational clients, including Panasonic, which uses its technology on flight entertainment systems to analyse passenger

behaviour. It has also worked with the drug company GSK to identify patterns in flu outbreaks, enabling more targeted online marketing for vitamin tablets.

The firm made its first overseas sales in 2013, recording revenue of £173,000 that year for work with companies such as Pepsi and Vodafone. In 2014 it secured £2m from the private equity firm Blackstone, boosting software teams at its London and Exeter offices, and creating a new outlet in Budapest. This fuelled further expansion and Black Swan now has sales offices in the

US, Canada, South Africa, Singapore and Hong Kong to be near its key customers. Product development, plus an appetite for brands to make better use of consumer data, helped international sales grow by an average of 357% a year, to £3.6m in 2015.

In March it secured £3m from international investors including the Japanese conglomerate Mitsui, to fund further development. It is also testing an app, Dragonfly, that measures how the human eye interacts with images on websites and outdoor advertisements.

2 SHINER

Sports goods distributor 346.00%

This family business began as a builders' merchant in 1936 and now distributes skateboards, sports equipment and clothing across Europe. Shiner, which has its headquarters in Bristol, has secured

distribution agreements to supply Heelys – trainers with a skateboard wheel inserted in the heel – throughout Europe, including to the largest toy and sports retailers in Scandinavia. Under the leadership of managing director Charles Allen, 42, the company expanded its international sales to £10.5m in 2015.

3 LOVECRAFTS

Online craft communities 311.44%

This online community provides everything the crafts enthusiast could desire, from patterns and yarns to knitting news and competitions. Cherry Freeman, 40, Nigel Whiteoak, 43, and Edward Griffith, 41, set up

loveknitting.com in 2012 and launched sister website lovecrochet.com last year. The trio have raised £18m in venture capital, including a £12m round led by Highland Capital Partners last November. A US warehouse and German-language website helped overseas sales grow to £2.8m in 2015.

4 PRIVATEFLY

Online private jet hire 238.78%

A former RAF pilot, Adam Twidell, 43, and his wife, Carol Cork, 43, raised £2m from 10 business angels to start this St Albans firm in 2008. It now has 7,000 private jets on its system and its online price

comparison and booking service is used by celebrity jet-setters, such as the pop stars JLS and Olly Murs. By comparing prices, PrivateFly aims to make hiring a jet quicker and cheaper, and the firm has had booming sales in the US. Exports – which represent total booking value – rose to £4.5m last year.

5 DENIS FERRANTI

Aerospace technology 209.72%

Making motors and generators for hybrid electric helicopters and safety flares for submarines are among this Rangor group's projects. Support from the Wales Economic Growth Fund and from Toyota to improve its

manufacturing processes have helped it to win contracts with civilian and military clients in Australia, Holland and France – and boosted exports to £2.1m last year. It is run by James Ferranti, 33, great-grandson of Sebastian Ziani de Ferranti, a pioneer of electricity transmission systems in the late 1800s.

FAST TRACK

SME Export Track 100 ranks the UK's private small and medium-sized companies with the fastest-growing international sales. It is produced by Fast Track, the Oxford firm that researches Britain's top-performing private companies and organises invitation-only dinners for their owners and directors to network and meet its sponsors.

For full ranking criteria, see page 4

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Official car partner

Clocks away — airport expansion would get exports soaring

A bigger hub airport would be a huge boost for business in Britain, says Heathrow's John Holland-Kaye



IF YOU are supplying high-end maternity clothing to VIP customers all over the world, you need to be able to move fast – responding speedily to demand is vital to success, as Cecile Reinand, 42, founder of the London-based designer Seraphine (No 53), will testify. “We flew out dresses for Princess Victoria of Sweden so they were there in time for her to meet the winners of the Nobel prize last year, and in January we flew outfits to New York for the actress Anne Hathaway,” she said. Reinand – who has expanded Seraphine's exports by an average of 61% a year to £7m

and now employs 67 people at its base in London – is clear that the quality and timeliness of her service, as much as the designs themselves, are crucial to her success.

It is just one example of how many of the companies on this year's SME Export Track 100 rely on Britain's trade infrastructure to expand overseas. Heathrow is Britain's largest port by value of the goods handled. Everything from precious metals and turbot to fresh salmon passes through our departure lounges.

In the passenger cabin, employees of firms such as footwear designer Butterfly

Twists (No 31) travel with designs and samples to meet suppliers and distributors. They rely on us to help them hit crucial deadlines, strike deals and compete with rivals around the world.

We are proud to support this year's SME Export Track 100 – British exporters are integral to our success and our service is vital to theirs. And just as the positive impact of Heathrow, as Britain's hub airport, is felt in all parts of the country, so the economic and social contribution of the featured companies is felt nationwide.

For example, 10 firms are based in the northwest, including Stockport's laser technology developer Laser Quantum (No 97), whose high-value goods need to reach commercial labs and research institutions in Europe, North America and Japan safely and on time. It did not make sense being ‘anywhere else,’ said Emmanuel Eribo, co-founder and chief executive of Butterfly Twists. “Travel is a crucial part



Emmanuel Eribo's company Butterfly Twists is based in west London, to allow easy access to Heathrow

“It's really important for us to be able to get in and out of Heathrow quickly, which is why we are based in west London. It did not make sense being ‘anywhere else,’” said Emmanuel Eribo, co-founder and chief executive of Butterfly Twists. “Travel is a crucial part

of our design work here but make our shoes overseas. There's not a month that goes past where we don't have one of the team flying to and from Hong Kong via Heathrow with designs.” Eribo's attitude reflects that of many companies in the

league table. Despite their modest size, their outlook is global. Emerging markets are vital for almost half the 100, with 19 counting China as a key market for growth. We welcomed the Indonesian airline Garuda to Heathrow last month and its

regular flights to Jakarta now make it much easier for British entrepreneurs to meet demand from one of the world's most populous countries, whose economy grew by 5% last year. The city is just one of over 180 destinations that we serve, in more than 80 countries.

The challenge for Britain is that Garuda had to wait eight years for its landing slot at Heathrow. Despite the demand from British and other international travellers, the airport is in effect operating at full capacity.

Today we have 32 airlines waiting for landing slots to become available – all are missed economic opportunities. We also have 19 routes where demand from British exporters for space on planes leaving Heathrow exceeds supply, including to cities in China and Japan.

In fact, the constraints are most marked on flights to Asia, a region where consumers are expected to spend \$32 trillion a year by 2030. More missed

opportunities. This is why we think the case for investing in a third runway at Heathrow is compelling. It will help open up new markets to British traders, increasing international trade. Without it we will see more routes become constrained for freight as our capacity is squeezed. The entrepreneurs driving the companies on this year's league table do not have. They can see the opportunities for their businesses and are acting on them now. Being fleet of foot means they win orders, retain customers and hire more staff than their overseas rivals.

This success can only be applied and we hope that, in time, we can emulate it. John Holland-Kaye is chief executive of Heathrow

24 POD POINT
Electric vehicle charging developer 93.71%

POD Point designs and develops charging points for electric cars. Since engineer Erik Fairbairn, 39, started the firm in 2009 it has sold more than 20,000 units and last year it agreed a deal to supply a POD Point with every new electric Renault car in Norway. International sales hit £2.5m last year.

25 ALBA POWER
Turbine maintenance services 98.90%

This Aberdeen firm repairs turbines, mainly for the power generation industry. In 2012 it set up a base in Houston, Texas, to service a £5m project. Exports hit £17.3m last year, with future growth expected in South America and Asia. Alba is led by Terry Alderton, 65.

26 TURBINE EFFICIENCY
Turbine maintenance services 97.60%

New products, including monitoring software, have helped this company win business in locations as remote as the Burmese jungle. Its next innovation will be an app to help on-site engineers carry out maintenance. International sales rose to £22.1m last year. Alan Hawkins, 66, started the Doncaster firm in 2001.

27 MIURA SYSTEMS
Payment hardware provider 97.52%

Hardware, decorators and yoga teachers have all early adopters of handheld payment terminals, which use tech developed by High Wycombe-based Miura. Last year it raised £11m from Draper Esprit; distributor agreements with US firms Square, PayPal and NCR helped overseas sales grow to £20.2m. Miura is led by Ian Rutland, 53.

28 MONICA VINADER
Jewellery designer 95.86%

Jewellery designed by this firm in rural Norfolk is the favourite of celebrities, including the Hollywood actress Charlize Theron and the Chinese model Liu Wen. Monica Vinader, 47, started the business in 2007. Last year exports hit £5.3m. Ambitions to become a global brand were boosted in February when Piper Private Equity invested £20m.

29 THE KNOWLEDGE ACADEMY
Training provider 94.83%

Hubband- and wife team Dishaad and Barbara Hohl, 40 and 38 respectively, launched this Bracknell firm in 2009. It now provides to more than 50,000 courses, from finance to fire safety training, and clients include Rolls-Royce and Disney. Overseas sales hit £4.7m last year.

30 AMARA
Home furniture online retailer 93.23%

Ralph Lauren and Missoni are just two of the luxury brands Amara sells online. Started in 2005 by husband- and wife team Andrew and Sam Hood, 48 and 51, the business ships home furnishings from its Essex warehouse to as far afield as Australia and the United Arab Emirates. Exports were £3.7m last year.

31 BUTTERFLY TWISTS
Footwear designer 81.13%

Being forced to wear slippers to a party after losing a bet was the catalyst for brothers Emmanuel and Frank Eribo, 33 and 32 respectively, and friends Mark Quadraghini and Philippe Homys, both 33, to start this footwear firm in 2009. Its pumps, wellies and sandals have proved popular in Japan, the Philippines and Mexico. Exports grew to £4.4m last year.

32 HIGHQ
Cloud collaboration software developer 87.48%

A £35m investment in January led by OnePeak Partners will help this London firm develop its software. It has an R&D operation in India and sells to bank and corporate clients through offices in the US, Europe and Australia. It was started in 2001 by Ajay Patel, 44, and Venay Shah, 43. Exports hit £1.6m last year.

33 TANGLE TEEZER
Hair products supplier 85.17%

This London firm makes almost 800,000 hairbrushes each month and has



Devon company Red Paddle (No 55) is surfing a wave of interest in paddle-boarding, selling equipment and accessories around the world. Its exports reached £4.3m last year

customers in more than 110 countries. Overseas sales hit £18.7m in 2015. Founder Shaun Pulfrey, 54, launched his first blow-styling brush last year.

34 BRANDWATCH
Social media monitoring technology 84.42%

Each day this Brighton business analyses more than 200m pieces of online data to help brands such as Sony Music better understand their customers. Founder Giles Palmer, 47, led a £23m fundraising last October to help expansion in the US. International sales were £8.4m in 2014.

35 PET BRANDS
Pet accessory manufacturer 82.34%

Brazil, Japan and Thailand are key markets for this pet accessories maker, founded by brothers Ravi and Sandeep Sharma, 29 and 31 respectively, in West Yorkshire in 2009. Overseas sales hit £4.1m this year, boosted by a licence to sell branded pet products in Asia.

36 AVECTO
IT security software developer 81.89%

This Manchester firm's software helps banks and defence and technology firms protect themselves from cyber-threats. It was started in 2008 by Mark Austin, 47, and Paul Kenyon, 44, and last year its overseas sales hit £9.6m, boosted by new offices in Frankfurt and Melbourne. Last December Avecto sold a stake to US-based investor JMI Equity, raising £32m.

37 CULT WINES
Wine merchant 80.70%

This London firm manages wine investments for more than 1,700 clients in 60 countries. It was set up in 2007 by Phil Gearing, 59, and his son Tom, 28. Southeast Asia is the company's biggest growth market, helping international sales reach £4.9m in 2015.

38 LINEUP SYSTEMS
Advertising technology developer 80.58%

Lineup's software integrates the booking and invoicing process for advertising across print, online, broadcast and digital media. It was founded via a buyout in 2010 from Metro International by Michael Mendoza, 40, and clients include Gannett, the publisher of USA Today. Exports grew to £3.2m in 2015.

39 LAWTON COMMUNICATIONS
Digital marketing agency 80.24%

This Southampton group markets global brands and specialises in digital marketing campaigns for video games. It has an office in Los Angeles to be near its key customers and last year it opened

a base in Sydney. Group chairman Nick Lawton, 40, son of founder Mike, saw international sales rise to £2.1m in 2014.

40 WILKINSON EYRE
Architect 79.81%

The athlete training centre at the Rio 2016 Olympic Park is one example of this London firm's designs. Overseas sales hit £7.5m last year, thanks to projects in North America, including a two-tower investment in Toronto. It is led by Chris Wilkinson, 70, and Jim Eyre, 57.

41 SPRINGBANK WHISKY
Whisky distillery 79.32%

Chairman Hedley Wright, 85, is the fifth generation to run this family business, established in 1828. It shows its malts at whisky festivals in Europe and has built a strong distributor network in the US and Asia. Exports hit £3.5m last year.

42 CLICK NETHERFIELD
Display case manufacturer 78.61%

Demand for Click Netherfield's display cases helped exports hit £8.8m last year and prompted investment in its West Lothian factory. Customers include the National Museum of African American History and Culture, opening in Washington DC this September. Mike Chaplin, 49, leads the firm.

43 SEVEN TECHNOLOGIES
Security technology developer 75.09%

This Northern Irish group develops hi-tech equipment and software for the security and surveillance sectors. Under founder Jim Hook, 49, international sales hit £12.5m in 2015. In January it opened an office in Abu Dhabi, following strong demand in the Middle East.

44 BLACKROCK PM
Dispute resolution consultancy 71.06%

This London firm helps resolve disputes over construction projects. The changing fortunes of builders in Africa and the Middle East helped exports reach £16.1m in 2015. Funds raised when Duocidin bought a 40% stake last year will be used to open overseas offices. David Barry, 52, leads the company he started in 2009.

45 AGILITAS
IT services provider 69.39%

Shaun Lynn, 39, created Agilintas in 2014 when he bought the IT stock management division of Acal with the help of £6.3m from NVM Private Equity. The firm, based in Nottingham, holds 11,500 items of computer hardware at 19 sites in France and sells to the likes of Fujitsu and Atos. Exports hit an annualised £1.8m last year.

46 CORYTON ADVANCED FUELS
Specialist fuel manufacturer 67.23%

This Essex firm provides specialist fuels for automotive, motorsport and aviation clients in 26 countries, including Japan, India and Morocco. Started in 2010 by scientists Craig Goodfellow, 52, and Diane Lance, 56, it secured undisclosed investment from Lyceum Capital last November to expand in the US and Asia. Exports grew to £6.6m in 2015.

47 CHEMIST 4 U
Online pharmacy 66.22%

Shamir Patel, 40, took his Lancashire pharmacy online in 2011 – prescriptions and vitamins are among the 16,000 items it now dispatches every day. British pharmacists can dispense medicine to anyone registered with an EU doctor and strong demand in Germany and Denmark helped exports hit £4.1m last year.

48 UK GAS TECHNOLOGIES
Specialist engineering contractor 65.31%

Pharma giants including Pfizer and Eli Lilly use this firm – based in Redhill, Surrey – to design and build specialist equipment, such as installing purified-water-generation systems in factories from the Faroe Islands to Bangladesh. Under managing director Andrew Barrett, 58, exports hit £3.3m last year.

49 SIMWORX
Special effects developer 62.02%

A "time tunnel" for a German theme park and a 4D cinema experience in Colombia are two of this West Midlands firm's projects. Advertising and trade shows helped exports hit £4.8m in 2015. Terry Monkton, 46, leads Simworx, which last year sold a stake to BGF for £4.5m.

50 GRENADE
Sports nutrition developer 61.49%

Special forces soldiers and bodybuilders use this company's sports supplements. Husband- and wife team Alan and Juliet Barratt, 39 and 42, started the business in 2009 and it has sold more than 100m weight loss capsules since then. Sales in countries as diverse as Brazil and Iraq helped exports reach £4.4m last year.

51 NMS INTERNATIONAL
Construction consultancy and contractor 61.31%

This Northamptonshire firm is managing £200m of infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa. Recent projects include a £134m contract to design and build seven hospitals in Ghana, which was backed by UK Export Finance. Under co-founder and deputy chairman Frederik Haas, 53, international sales topped £17.2m last year.

52 EQUATOR DESIGN
Foot packaging consultancy 80.87%

Volvo, Disney and US supermarket chains Smart & Final and Roundy's use Equator to design their packaging. Gary Flynn, 53, merged his Manchester firm with a Nottingham agency in 2012, and in 2014 it bought a Dublin business. Overseas sales rose to £9m last year.

53 SERAPHINE
Maternity clothing retailer 80.81%

Seraphine was made famous by the Duchess of Cambridge when she wore one of its dresses in the first official photo of Prince George. Exports grew to £7m last year and founder Cecile Reinand, 42, now plans to open a further 10 shops in the US.

54 SEARCH LABORATORY
Online marketing agency 80.66%

This agency helps companies tap into new markets by improving their rankings on search engines such as China's Baidu or Russia's Yandex. Ian Harris, 47, started the Leeds business in 2005 and since then it has run campaigns in more than 18 countries. An office in New York helped overseas sales reach £2.1m last year.

55 RED PADDLE CO
Watersports equipment designer 58.37%

Riding a wave of paddle-boarding popularity, this Devon-based company sells inflatables, boards and accessories in more than 58 countries. Strong demand in the US and Europe helped exports to reach £4.3m in 2015. Founder Roger Tushingham, 61, and board director John Hibbard, 39, raised £4m from Mobeus Equity Partners last July.

56 XCEED
IT management consultancy 57.00%

Specialising in project-managing the integration of IT systems, this London firm has won high-profile customers including large US banks. Founded by Gary Stewart, 51, in 2003, it now has offices in New York and Dublin. Its international sales rose to £3.2m in 2014.

57 EUROPEAN BRAKING SYSTEMS
Vehicle brakes wholesaler 56.93%

With a subsidiary in China and customers in Russia, the Middle East and Africa, this Manchester business has carved out a niche for high-quality air braking systems for lorries. Engineer Mark Luby, 49, started the firm in 2000 and is now managing director. Overseas sales rose to £9.1m last year, with Australia and New Zealand targeted for future growth.

58 STATESIDE SKATES
Sports goods distributor 58.84%

Amersham-based Stateside Skates designs and distributes skateboards, scooters, roller skates and accessories. Investment in product development, customer service and technology helped its overseas sales – mainly to Scandinavia, Germany and France – increase to £4.2m in 2015. The business is led by founder Roy Coffer, 63.

59 TESTPLANT
Software testing tools developer 58.76%

This London firm's "eggPlant" tool tests mobile and desktop software, including Bloomberg terminals, to help ensure they are robust. Exports hit £5.8m in 2014 and last October it opened an office in Philadelphia. In January founder and chief executive George Mackintosh, 58, sold a majority stake to US investor The Carlyle Group.

60 REPL
IT consultancy 58.57%

Winning custom from American firms as they enter the UK has helped this Warwickshire company grow overseas. It advises on warehouse and workforce management systems, and its customers include Wal-Mart and Microsoft. It has offices in Canada, the US, Singapore and Australia, and international sales reached £2.6m in 2015. Repl is led by Mike Callender, 45.

61 WEBSTER & HORSFALL
Wire and cable manufacturer 58.08%

Founded in 1720, this family firm works with Birmingham University to develop its wire technologies for customers in the pharmaceutical, oil and gas and automotive industries. Led by chairman Charles Horsfall, 60, it lifted overseas sales to £2.4m in 2015, through online marketing and trade shows.

62 HELIPEBS CONTROLS
Hydraulic cylinder manufacturer 55.93%

Contracts secured on the back of trade shows in Singapore and Aberdeen boosted this company's exports to £2.8m last year. Its hydraulic and pneumatic parts have a range of applications and it has customers in Norway, Brazil and Nigeria. Andrew Hopcraft, 42, runs the Gloucester firm.

63 SLDMORE GALLERY
Art gallery 54.96%

Bronze sculpture collectors from all over the world are regulars at this firm's two galleries in Mayfair, central London. Art fairs in Maastricht, Paris and New York helped exports hit £10.8m last year. Founded by Jane Horswell in 1965, the business is now run by her son Edward, 39.

64 SABICHI
Houseware design & retailer 54.28%

From cake stands to coffee tables, this Middlesex company designs and sells more than 900 home appliances and furnishings. Sabichi's popularity in Australia, the Middle East and West Africa helped international sales reach £2.5m in 2014. It was started in 1994 and is run by managing director Tarsam Bagga, 64.

65 SYGNATURE DISCOVERY
Drug researcher 53.83%

This Nottingham company works with research organisations to develop drugs for illnesses such as cancer, respiratory disease and Alzheimer's. Simon Hirst, 52, started Sygnature in 2004 and in January it took a stake in Cheshire-based Peak Proteins. It has customers in America, Germany, Denmark and Australia and overseas sales grew to £5.3m last year.

66 TOMORROW
Designer brands wholesaler 51.82%

Tomorrow gives new fashion brands access to buyers by putting on sample displays at its showrooms in Milan, Paris, New York and London. Overseas sales were £2.5m in 2015. Last November its chief executive Stefano Martinetto, 42, led a management buyout, backed by Three Hills Capital Partners.

& directors of Britain's top private companies

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200

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100

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
TOP TRACK

250

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
TOP TRACK

100

HSBC

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67 FOREST BOARDS
Timber exporter 50.55%
Using regularly pruned pine to produce knot-free timber, this Guildford company sells plywood for panelling to lorry manufacturers in France. Managing director Richard Philpott, 67, started the business in 1983. Timber prices and a favourable exchange rate helped exports grow to £2.2m last year.

68 FLIXMEDIA
Digital marketing platform 50.15%
London-based Flixmedia manages digital content for some of the world's biggest brands such as Google and Microsoft. The firm was founded in 2005 by chief executive Scott Lester, 45. Overseas sales were £6.9m last year.

69 PARALLEL CONSULTING
Recruitment consultancy 48.65%
This London IT recruiting consultancy has followed its customers all over the world, from Germany to Singapore. Next year it plans to expand in the US, opening offices on the east coast. It was founded in 2004 by Steven Went, 52, and Sam Altarafi, 41. International sales were £7.6m in 2014.

70 GLOBAL INFUSION
Events caterer 48.27%
This Buckinghamshire company's chefs have cooked on the Caribbean island of Martinique and in Moscow's Red Square. Catering at corporate and sport events – including the Sochi Winter Olympics – as well as for pop stars on world tours helped overseas sales grow to £9.1m last year. Chief executive Tony Laurenson, 57, started the business in 1984.

71 WOOL OVERS
Knitwear retailer 45.61%
Husband-and-wife team Mark and Clare Shepton, 52 and 46, started selling knitwear at fairs and horse trials in 1989. The online retailer now has eight international websites and overseas sales of £10.5m last year. Last July the West Sussex firm was bought by Langholm Capital for an undisclosed sum.

72 PLEXTEK
Electronics design consultancy 45.11%
This business designs products – from radar technology for South Korea's demilitarised zone to car-tracking devices – for clients such as Sony. Under co-founder and chairman Colin Smithers, 57, exports grew to £7.9m last year. In January its subsidiary Telesa secured £1.3m equity and debt funding from the Environmental Technologies Fund and Silcon Valley Bank.

73 OXFORD PLASTICS
Safety barrier manufacturer 43.89%
Barriers, traffic cones and ground protection mats are among the safety products made by this Oxfordshire firm. Its main overseas markets are Europe and the US, and it exhibits at trade

shows in Düsseldorf and Lyons. Under managing director Chris Whiteley, 58, exports were £3.6m last year.

74 OPEN DESTINATIONS
Travel software developer 43.10%
Tour operators run more than 85m searches on this firm's software each day to make and manage travel reservations. It has customers in 30+ countries, including Australia and South Africa, and a research and development office in Goa. Exports hit £4m last year under chief executive Kevin O'Sullivan, 53.

75 VERMILION
Financial software developer 42.31%
Multilingual software sold through offices in London, Boston and Sydney has helped this firm build relationships with over 50 clients on four continents. Under chief executive Marcus Noble, 56, international sales reached £3.7m last year. In January Vermilion secured a deal to sell its Japanese language software to Nikko Asset Management.

76 DESCO
Engineering consultancy 42.31%
This Sunderland firm helped refurbish the Bank of Qatar's retail branches. Led by Paul Marshall, 54, it secured a £1m loan at the start of this year and plans further expansion in the Middle East. Exports rose to £2.4m in 2015.

77 MIND GYM
Organic learning provider 42.30%
This London firm – founded in 2000 by Octavio Black, 48, and Sebastian Bailey, 41 – blends psychology with marketing to create bite-sized training courses for employees. Starbucks and Microsoft are clients and key markets include the US, United Arab Emirates, India and China. International sales were £11.5m in 2015.

78 ASE GLOBAL
Car dealership consultancy 42.12%
More than 17,000 car dealers worldwide use this company's software to report sales performance to manufacturers, via offices in 12 countries and sales reps in a further 20. Exports of £10.8m in 2014 will be boosted by last August's acquisition of Austrian software business E-Dentilly. The Manchester consultancy is led by Rob Jones, 40.

79 APICAL
Imaging technology developer 41.56%
Apical's technology is used in more than 1bn mobile devices. Booming sales of smartphones lifted turnover – which is all international – to £16.6m last year and it disclosed profits of £8.7m, the highest on the league table. It is run by founder Michael Tusch, 46.

80 GROUP IMD
Video advertising software developer 41.09%
This London company develops software to help the ad industry manage



Global Infusion (No 70) provided catering for the Sochi Winter Olympics, where skeleton racer Lizzy Yarnold won gold for Britain

workload. Exports grew to £8m in 2014. Last July chief executive Simon Cox, 53, led the acquisition of a Shanghai-based video advertiser. Group IMD delisted from AIM in 2011 when it was bought by Virvivan Partners for £34m.

81 SAFEGUARD WORLD INTER'L
Payroll services provider 40.85%
Safeguard World provides payroll and HR services to help companies such as easyJet manage workforces across countries with different tax and insurance regulations. Based in Cheshire and led by Bjorn Reynolds, 40, it has offices in Hungary, India, Mexico and the US. International sales were £5.8m in 2014.

82 BRITISH CORNER SHOP
British food exporter 40.81%
Crumpets are the food British expats miss most, according to this Bristol business, which shipped 17,000 packs overseas last year. Mark Callaghan, 45, started the company in 2004 and its online shop now stocks more than 10,000 items. A new website helped exports grow to £7.1m last year.

83 BLUESOURCE
IT consultancy 40.76%
Hiring a team of IT professionals from a supplier in Dallas gave this firm a head start when it began to expand overseas in 2008. It now has sales reps throughout the US and provides data management services to the likes of Facebook and Asa. Under co-founders Andy Ward, 46, and Andrew McKeever, 42, international sales hit £7.2m last year.

MarketIQ, as well as nominations and extensive desk research.

Incomplete data Some firms file abbreviated accounts, while others may not disclose geographical sales. There may, therefore, be omissions.

Disclaimer Fast Track and its sponsors do not endorse any of the companies in the league table. Some exceptions were made to the qualification criteria.

Sponsors Fast Track's sole source of revenue is from sponsors.

84 BRIAN JAMES TRAILERS
Trailer manufacturer 40.62%
This Northamptonshire business, founded in 1979, builds trailers for World Rally Championship teams and high-end car manufacturers, including Aston Martin and Mercedes-Benz. The joint managing directors of the firm are brothers Derrin and Brandon James, 48 and 49. A sales team in Germany helped boost exports to £6.4m in 2015.

85 MCGAVIGAN
Decorative plastics manufacturer 40.45%
Making decorative plastic parts for cars is the speciality of Glasgow's McGavigan. Its factory in China helped lift sales in the Far East, contributing to exports of £18.8m in 2015. Joint managing directors Steve Mathers, 54, and David Taylor, 52, bought the firm in 2009 and sold a 39% stake to Maven Capital Partners in 2011.

86 CASDON
Toy maker 40.45%
Replica irons and kettles are two of the toys designed by Blackpool-based Casdon. Started in 1946 by Tom Cassidy, it is run by his grandsons Phil, 38, and Peter, 36. The firm's toys are popular in countries such as Japan and Russia, and overseas sales reached £3.1m last year.

87 SFD
Retail interior designer 39.45%
Zara and Banana Republic use SFD to design and supply their retail interiors, mannequins and window displays. Founded as a shopfittings catalogue 18 years ago by brothers Paul and David Brooks, 52 and 48, it has

operations in Shanghai and New York and customers in 44 countries. Exports hit £8.2m in 2015.

88 A-SAFE
Safety barrier manufacturer 37.94%
This Halifax firm's safety barriers are used at airports, car parks and factories in more than 60 countries – including at Volkswagen's new logistics centres in the US and Germany. Brothers and joint managing directors Luke and James Smith, 36 and 38 respectively, oversaw exports of £12.5m last year.

89 MOFILM
Broadcasting advertising agency 36.62%
Film makers enter MOFILM's competitions to produce ads for iconic global brands, including Airbnb and Netflix. It is led by co-founder and chief executive Jeffrey Merrille, 57, and overseas sales soared to £8.5m in 2014. Last year it sold a majority stake to media investor You & Mr Jones.

90 WEATHERBYS
Horse racing 36.56%
Johnny Weatherby, 56, is the seventh generation of his family to run this Wellingborough firm, founded in 1770. Modern innovations include a bloodstock database and an equine DNA testing lab. It produces thoroughbred sales catalogues for auction houses in Germany and Italy. Exports rose to £6.3m in 2014.

91 COSATTO
Pushchair manufacturer 36.30%
Bolton-based Cosatto makes colourful highchairs, car seats and strollers – including one with built-in speakers. Sales to countries such as Spain, Portugal and Iran helped exports reach £4.3m in 2015. Chief executive Andrew Kluge, 53, expects future growth in China.

92 KENT BRUSHES
Brush manufacturer 36.03%
The British heritage of its hair and shaving products has made this company a fashionable brand in countries such as India and Taiwan. Founded in 1777, the Hemel Hempstead business was bought by the Cosby family in 1932. Under chairman Alan Cosby, 67, exports rose to £2m in 2014.

93 SANGLIER
Chemicals packaging manufacturer 35.14%
Howard Marshall, 63, and Nigel Davies, 57, set up this adhesives firm in 2002 after their American employer shut its UK arm. Sanglier has topped sales to Holland, Belgium and Poland, the last helped by employing Polish speakers at its Nottingham headquarters. Overseas revenue reached £2.7m in 2015.

94 SCM WORLD
Specialist training provider 35.00%
London-based SCM World runs training schemes for supply chain professionals and events such as the Leaders Forum, which last year had the former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice as keynote speaker. It is led by co-founder Oliver Sloane, 35, and contracts with Caterpillar and Samsung helped lift overseas sales to £7.7m in 2015.

95 POTTERS POULTRY
Poultry equipment supplier 34.94%
Founded in 1964, this poultry equipment business is now managed by the third generation of the Potter family – Olivia, 39, and Justin, 42. The Rugby firm makes feeders, nests and lighting for chicken farmers in the US, Australia and the Philippines. Exports hit £2.5m in 2015.

96 KIT FOR KIDS
Children's products manufacturer 34.76%
Alphabet cushions in Arabic have helped the Middle East become this Kent firm's fastest-growing overseas market. Its factory in Romania also makes a range of baby care items, such as mattresses and changing mats. Chief executive Jan van der Velde, 52, started Kit for Kids in 1993. Exports grew to £2.3m this year.

97 LASER QUANTUM
Laser technology developer 34.31%
This Stockport firm's lasers are exported to research institutions and commercial laboratories worldwide. The acquisition of two laser companies in Germany and a sales office in California helped exports reach £12.6m in 2014. Chief executive Lawrence Gloster, 47, teamed up with two fellow Manchester University PhD physicists to start the business in 1994.

98 SYNTECTICS SOLUTIONS
Specialist software developer 34.26%
European car manufacturers use this firm's software on their websites to help buyers select colour, upholstery and tyres. The Staffordshire business also develops fraud prevention software for customers in North America. It was started in 1992 by husband-and-wife team Kevin and Carol Shanahan, 67 and 58. Exports grew to £3.9m last year.

99 HEATHERWICK STUDIO
Architect and designer 33.64%
Buddhist temples in Japan and public art on the banks of the Loire all feature in Heatherwick's portfolio. The London firm also redesigned the capital's red bus. Overseas sales rose to £11.5m in 2015 and projects in the US – including the redesign of Google's HQ in Mountain View, California – will boost growth further. Chairman Thomas Heatherwick, 46, started the company in 1994.

100 MICRO SYSTEMS
Medical device manufacturer 33.20%
This Warrington firm makes precision parts for medical devices, including contact lenses and inhalers. Investment in R&D and offices in Austria, Singapore and Puerto Rico helped international sales grow to £5.8m in 2014. Micro Systems was founded in 2003 by managing director Gary Clark, 53, and board director Melanie Robinson, 43.

The rules of engagement

The Sunday Times Heathrow SME Export Track 100 league table ranks Britain's private SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) with the fastest-growing international sales.

Definition SMEs are defined as companies with total sales of £5m to £25m in their latest year.

Criteria International sales had to be at least 20% of total sales in the latest accounts and show a rise from the previous year. In the base year, international sales had to be greater than £150,000. International sales growth was measured by compound annual growth rate over two years. Recruitment and payroll firms were required to achieve gross profits greater than £5m in their latest accounts. **Data collection** Sources include Bureau van Dijk's Fame and Experian's



famecompanyinfo.com

We would like to thank headline sponsor Heathrow, as well as the Exporting is GREAT campaign, for their support. Nominations for next year are welcome at info@fasttrack.co.uk or fasttrack.co.uk

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