



Department for
International Trade

MIDLANDS EXPORT CHAMPIONS 2022/23



INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to introduce the 2022-23 cohort of Midlands Export Champions. They represent companies right across the Midlands, who are dedicated to growing their exports and have made a commitment to inspire other companies to do the same – increasing prosperity and growing GDP by seizing the opportunities offered by trading in a global market.

Our Export Champions represent a range of sectors, and all will be working with the Department for International Trade to complement our services, generously giving their time to motivate and assist other businesses on their export journeys. They are leading by example as they continue to win new international business and reach out to new markets.

[#MidlandsExportChamps](#)

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WEST MIDLANDS EXPORT CHAMPIONS

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WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the Midlands Export Champions cohort of 2022!

This is one of my favourite times of the year, when we greet the new cohort of Export Champions that will be joining a very strong community of your peers, who have pledged their time to give something back and to support Midlands' businesses. They represent the sixth cohort of Export Champions that we have recruited!

The past year has been an interesting one and one where we have started to see the rebound of the economy despite some strong headwinds and these are well known, for example, supply chain pressures, the war in Ukraine, increasing energy costs and the cost of living.

While these are wider issues for Government, we do know that our exports and wider international trade activity make an effective contribution to the economy enabling Government to respond to these challenging economic conditions.

Despite these challenges there has been growth in the number of exports over the past year. Latest official statistics show that UK exports were £666.7bn in the 12 months to the end of June 2022, up £60.2bn (9.9%) in current prices, compared to the previous 12 months. Adjusting for inflation, shows a smaller increase of £10.7bn. [Source: ONS UK Trade June 2022]

And the Department is certainly playing its part. Our Secretary of State and our Export Minister committed to responding to the export challenge and launched the Government's exports strategy entitled Made in the UK Sold to the World in November 2021, at the beginning of the first International Trade Week.



Ian Harrison
Head of Exports
(Midlands), Department
for International Trade

As part of this strategy there was a 12-point plan produced that highlighted that the Department would seek to extend the Export Champions network to ensure more businesses can learn about exporting through peer-to-peer support. We want to celebrate our champions, as we should, and we were pleased that we were able to hold a national celebratory event during the 2022 International Trade Week that ran from the 31st of October to the 4th of November.

The strategy also committed to a new marketing campaign based on the Made in the UK Sold to the World strapline and Export Champions have recently received toolkits so that they amplify the campaign including relating it to their own promotional activities. Our Champions engage in multiple wider networks and help us reach audiences that may otherwise be unavailable.

The last year has also been a significant one of change for the Department, not least because we have brought the International Trade teams (within which the ITAs sit), into the Department in July making for a more rounded export delivery service. Bringing the International Trade Service in-house allows us to retain the commercial expertise built up with our Delivery Partners, connect it to our wider export eco-system within the Department and ensure the consistency and quality of DIT's front-line offer for our customers.

We have held a successful business programme through the Commonwealth Games, are in the process and collaborating with partners on the East Midlands Freeport and are continuing to work closely with local stakeholders like the Combined Authority in West Midlands, Midlands Engine and Local Enterprise Partnerships. We know that through this work we will generate more opportunities for exporters locally and our Export Champions have contributed significantly to spearheading this effort by sharing their thoughts and their export journeys.

MIDLANDS EXPORTS AND INVESTMENT

The Midlands Region is one of the most diverse and dynamic areas in the UK. It is located at the heart of a well-connected transport network, it has close proximity to London, and access to 75% of the UK within two hours. The Midlands is an enviable business location and is home to over 800,000 businesses.

KEY FACTS

- » Includes the cities of Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.
- » 10m+ citizens, with 20-24-year-olds the largest demographic group.
- » Home to 20 universities (including 3 of the UK's top research institutions) supporting a world class science and innovation base.
- » Key logistics hub: Birmingham International airport handles 13m passengers across 140 routes annually, whilst East Midlands airport is the UK's largest cargo handler outside London. Over 45% of British rail freight and 33% of heavy cargo freight goes to, from or through the Midlands.
- » The Region has the fastest improving rail network in Europe and by 2033 will be the hub of the country's new HS2 high speed rail network – expanding capacity and connecting to London in less than 50 minutes.
- » Boasts a rich history and is the birthplace of Shakespeare and is an ideal place to work, study, grow and compete in global markets.

THE MIDLANDS ECONOMY

- » Contributes over £200bn to the UK's GVA each year.
- » 18% of the UK's population works in the Midlands.
- » Home to centres of excellence in transport technologies, advanced manufacturing and engineering, energy and low carbon technology, healthcare, life sciences and translational medicine, and agri-food and drink.

THE EXPORT AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

- » In 2021/22, the Midlands Engine region attracted 217 foreign direct investment projects, which resulted in over 8,000 new jobs being created or safeguarded.
- » In 2021, the Midlands goods exports were £45.5 billion (20% of English total).
- » In 2021, the top five markets for Midlands goods exports were United States, Germany, France, Irish Republic and China.

DIT SUPPORT

- » The Department for International Trade (DIT) Midlands Team is fully behind the programme as we know that growth in the local economy will be created through a combination of inputs including increased inward investment, and through export opportunities for new and existing businesses.

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EAST MIDLANDS EXPORT CHAMPIONS

AET Flood Defence Limited



Fran Corrie
Founder &
Managing Director

AET Flood Defence provide a bespoke mobile flood solution for: Emergency Services; Critical National Infrastructure companies; and Government Resilience/Emergency Response Units. Their core products are aqua-sac® the Patented self-inflating sand bag and the Alteau Flood Barrier.

Fran was born and bred in Sheffield, as an entrepreneur and self-starter Fran invented the aqua-sac® product and holds the UK patent for this ground-breaking sandbag which requires no sand, she strives to influence strategies for rapid deployment of flood defence worldwide.

AET have been exporting for 15 years being supported by DIT all the way. Starting with the internationalisation of the website, supported on trade visits, helped with funding and together building strong relationships around the world as a team.

DIT's input is invaluable and if Fran could give one top tip it is to use your ITA to open doors in the vast network of Embassies around the world and to engage on a personal level. WORK AS A TEAM.

Alumasc Water Management Solutions



Keith Lambourne
MBE MIE
International
Development
Director

Northamptonshire company Alumasc Water Management Solutions (AWMS), part of Alumasc Group, is the first joined-up brand in integrated water management. Alumasc Group – the leading UK supplier of premium building products, systems and solutions – has been promoting the efficient use, retention, recycling and disposal of water for almost 90 years, whilst exporting since the 1950's.

Keith Lambourne MBE is keen to help other companies onto the export ladder and says "When planning to trade internationally, ensure you have adequate resources available not just financially, but also in people, manufacturing capability and time.

Research that your products or services are suited to targeted markets. Be aware that product modifications may be necessary. At least for year one submit a realistic budget based more on development than expected sales and profit whilst producing a medium to long term strategy."

Anpario PLC



Karen Prior
Corporate
Responsibility
Director

Anpario is a UK stock market AIM listed business employing 120 employees. From their Nottinghamshire HQ, Anpario manufactures high performance, natural, specialist feed additives for global agricultural and aquaculture markets.

Karen's role as Corporate Responsibility Director is to oversee regulatory and governance. A major focus currently is on ESG credentials and supporting their standards and global initiatives relating to Planet, People and Promises.

Anpario has evolved over 30 years from the acquisition of three entrepreneurial owner managed businesses, each with significant international presence through distributors. Gradually international subsidiaries have been set up in growth markets selling directly to end users, enabling closer partnerships with customers; ensuring greater control over markets whilst improving margins. Exports represent approximately 90% of sales to more than 70 countries worldwide.

Karen's top tip is 'employ the right team who have the commitment, ambition and flexibility to jump through hoops and stay positive. Persevere, take the hard decisions to stay on track and don't lose focus'.

Badges Limited



Andrew Vear
Managing Director

Badges Ltd trading as "ebadges" is a manufacturer and exporter of badge making machines and badge components. Andrew Vear is the Managing Director and his main focus is on business growth and developing export markets.

When Andrew bought the business in 2007, it had been trading for nearly 30 years and there had been no international sales. In 2011, Badges Ltd started selling to the Netherlands. They are now represented in 14 countries by 9 distributors. They brought machine manufacturing back to the UK from India in 2015. This gave them much greater control of their supply chain and the quality of their products has improved significantly. Since then, their sales have grown by nearly 100% (pre covid) and now 40% of their sales are exports.

Andrew's top tip for new exporters is 'to seek help from DIT and choose a country to start exporting to. You can then refine how this works as you expand to other territories'.

Bambino Mio Limited



Guy Schanschieff
MBE
Founder & Managing Director

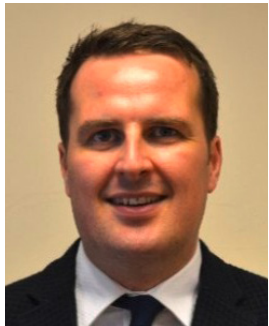
Bambino Mio is home to multi award-winning reusable nappies, baby change-time accessories, swimwear and potty-training essentials which are better for babies, parents and our planet too.

They have grown to become the world's leading reusable nappy brand that provide sustainable baby and toddler products to over 50 countries, sold directly to parents through international eCommerce and via partnerships with retailers, including supermarkets and pharmacies.

Their export journey began in 2002 and a strong export strategy has played a significant role in helping to make reusable nappies mainstream by widening their international reach, especially in the EU which accounts for 70% of sales this year.

Guy's advice is 'go for it!' There will be challenges along the way but exporting opens up a breath of opportunity for your business and your team. Exporting has enabled us to introduce reusables to new markets where they were not previously available or popular'.

Bioguard Hygiene Solutions Limited



Stuart Hay
Managing Director

Bioguard is a privately owned family business that manufactures and distributes a range of independently tested hygiene, cleaning and infection control products. Bioguard's products are primarily used in the healthcare sector but with COVID-19 there has been increasing demand within the consumer market.

They started their export journey in 2006 with help from DIT to develop an export strategy, focused on sales into the Middle East and India. This strategy has taken Bioguard's share of export sales from 10% to 40% of total sales in the last four years. In 2019, they established a wholly owned subsidiary for their operations in India and are now planning local filling and repacking facilities in Saudi Arabia and India to service these markets.

Top tip for new exporters – it is essential to spend time researching and finding the right local partner for your business. Commit to regularly visiting your target markets to build relationships and better understand the intricacies of the local market.

Bradburys Cheese



George Paul
Chairman

Bradburys Cheese, founded in 1884, is Britain's largest family-owned specialist cheese packer, distributor, cheesemaker and importer. A major supplier to the UK's premium retailers, UK food service and international airlines, as well as exporter to over 24 countries. Offering over 200 types of classic and artisan cheese, Bradburys packs, wraps, waxes and assembles their own produce, and understands the needs of clients through their significant UK sales of £70m annually.

George, as Chairman, oversees a highly efficient export team, which includes dedicated account managers and technical support personnel. Bradburys exporting journey began as recently as 2014, and has now reached USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, the Gulf, South-East Asia, as well as Europe. This contribution represents almost 9% of their total turnover.

For those beginning their export journey, Bradburys urge them to have a plan, no matter how simple, what territories?, what potential do they possess?, and most of all, engage the DIT who are a font of information.

Business Link Japan Ltd



Steve Crane
OBE
Chief Executive
Officer

After taking the plunge in Japan in July 2000, Steve had set up Teamstudio Software Japan KK, opened an office in the British Industry Centre, hired a team of 12 local staff, and developed a customer base of 400 Japanese companies.

Steve later established Business Link Japan (BLJ) with the mission of helping other international tech companies to build business in Japan. BLJ has gone on to partner with over 60 companies from Europe and the United States helping secure multi-million pound business in Japan.

His advice to exporters is 'to invest time in visiting the target market and get to know the business landscape, protocol and business contacts. Early stage investment in a complex new market like Japan will pay back dividends for many years to come'.

Steve was awarded an OBE in the 2021 New Year Honours list, as recognition for his work helping UK companies succeed in the Japanese market.

Checkprint Limited



Lynton Buxton
Group Marketing
Manager

Checkprint Limited, suppliers of security print products, including cheques, credits and internal banking documents, together with electronic payment and cheque imaging solutions, has established an enviable relationship with banking institutions around the world.

As a member of the award-winning TALL Group of Companies, including the Queen's Award for Enterprise: International Trade 2018, Checkprint from its accredited secure print facilities in Leicestershire, has developed strong international markets exporting its products worldwide over the last 20 years.

Now building upon its international success and expertise, Checkprint is launching new online platforms to export markets including Certificate E-Verification and Digital Education Tools.

Lynton Buxton, Group Marketing Manager, works alongside the team in the development of these new products and markets. His export advice is 'to research your target audience and countries, making sure to involve your DIT ITA at all stages. Planning is key to your future export success'.

Cite DMS Limited



Dafydd Prichard
Managing Director

Cite, a brand first creative agency, develop fresh perspectives and original ideas that create opportunities for brands and their leaders to shine. Their blend of strategic planning, award-winning creative ideas and technical know-how, drive their success.

Cite export ideas, expertise and innovation. Many of their clients are technology companies based in the Nordic region and work with Cite as they understand how to drive a consistent, brand-first message across every marketing touchpoint and, as a UK based agency, they provide a cultural bridge between Europe and the rest of the world. They began working with these companies in 2015 and through recommendation and networking, their client portfolio in the region has grown substantially.

As one of the company's co-founders, Dafydd is primarily responsible for setting their vision, goals and ensuring that performance and growth stay on track. Dafydd's advice is 'if you work in a service industry, try to identify a unique advantage that UK culture and experience brings'.

Clifton Packaging Group Ltd



Shahid Sheikh
OBE
Director

Shahid Sheikh OBE is the Director of Leicester-based Clifton Packaging Group Ltd, a successful and well-established leader in the innovation and manufacture of flexible packaging for the FMCG Sector.

Highly regarded for both his business and community work, he was awarded with an OBE in 2013 for his services to business and to charities. Shahid has also been awarded the title of 'Entrepreneur of the Year' at both the Leicestershire Business Awards and the World Food Awards, included for the third year running in Leicester's Top 100 Most Influential People and achieved a listing in the Top 100 BAME Leaders in Business.

Shahid's top tips for exporters are 'to study the market area for similar products in those regions before venturing out and take note of any competitors product placings/pricing/strategies. Obtain on the ground advice from local Chambers / DIT and always make sure to check duties, freight costs etc. A clear marketing strategy is also a must'.

CMS Cepcor Limited



James Shelley
Sales Director

CMS Cepcor Limited specialise in the manufacture and sale of spare parts for crushing equipment. Although, considered a fairly niche business, in practice the opportunities exist everywhere that stone is crushed, for aggregate production or for mining. This means they can sell worldwide and currently trade in 130 countries.

The business started in 1989 to supply the domestic market however it quickly became apparent that export would be part of the sales mix. Initially this was a passive sales approach but, in the last 10 years, has shifted to a more proactive sales strategy where the emphasis is on getting out into the export territories to promote sales either direct to end users or through dealers. Export now provides 75% of their turnover.

CMS Cepcor is proud to have received two Queen's Awards for Export and their success has been driven by retaining focus on end user experience. A compelling offer translates through any language or culture.

Concept Smoke Screen Ltd



Matt Gilmartin
Managing Director

Concept Smoke Screen Ltd is a specialist electronic security business. After close to two decades with the business, during which he has secured four international innovation awards, he is occasionally referred to as “Matt, smoke Matt”.

Matt recognised the threat presented to the largely UK focussed company at the time of the financial crisis. His strategy was to explore new markets which proved to be extremely effective, as large opportunities emerged in the Latin American markets. Over the course of the next 5 years, Concept Smoke Screen Ltd transformed itself from a company whose main market was the UK to one exporting multitudes of products around the globe.

Matt provides input to a European Standards working group as the Principal UK expert on security fogging systems. He also plays guitar in a haphazard kind of way and has dragged himself through the rigours of learning a third language.

Courageous Success Limited - #BeYourselfAtWork



Liz Villani
Founder & Chief
Executive Officer

Liz Villani is the founder of #BeYourselfAtWork, a global movement dedicated to creating a new narrative about the way we work. Promoting work as an opportunity for self-discovery, the movement helps people to become their true selves in the workplace. Liz is the creative mind behind the BY@W product iAM, which helps people to define their character and to set out their personal values.

With the help of DIT in 2013, it took five months to clinch their first export sale in Australia. #BeYourselfAtWork then incorporated in the US and from these two locations, along with the UK they now cover all of the time zones, offering global clients iAM development in these countries but also within Europe, Asia and New Zealand.

Liz’s advice is ‘think wider than you are. Being focused and selective on one geography helped us to learn and get it right before exploring others. Choose your sector or geography and see it as a sensible adventure!’

Equidiet (UK) Ltd



Sandra Murphy
Founder & Chief
Executive Officer

Equidiet (UK) Ltd is the only feed company who can safely and effectively balance a horse's body fluids, using 100% natural, whole food fibre nutrition. Their unique patented formulations provide instant hydration to horses before, during and after travelling, at competitions, in clinical situations or whenever horses need to take on fluids naturally. Now you can 'lead a horse to water and you can make it drink!'

Established in 2014, they have been working with DIT since 2015 and participated in several trade missions and exhibitions. They currently export to over 18 countries and approximately 30% of their revenue comes from export sales. They are hoping to increase this figure dramatically in 2022 as they source new markets in North America.

Top tip for new exporters – with the internet, the world is at your fingertips, invest in a world map and place it on the wall in your office. Suddenly the world is a much smaller, more accessible and less daunting place.

Fulkrum Technical Resources Ltd



Owen Gibbons
Commercial
Director

Fulkrum Technical Resources (FTR) provide specialist vendor surveillance and technical manpower services to the global energy industry. FTR works with many of the world's most notable Oil & Gas producers, engineering contractors, and increasingly with developers of renewable energy projects.

Since its inception in 2011, FTR has from the start always derived most of its trade through exporting. In support of its global client-base, they have successfully opened regional hub offices in Houston, Abu Dhabi and Kuala Lumpur. With new opportunities developing in Mozambique and Brazil, Fulkrum will continue to increase their level of exporting.

Commercial Director, Owen Gibbons, would advise new exporters to 'thoroughly research your target market, sound-boarding as many sources as possible to ensure you are comfortable that you have all the required information to develop a plan for success. Also consider the option of onboarding a local sales agent to accelerate development of your client network ahead of formal entry to a new market'.

G4S Monitoring Technologies & Services



Scott Holmes
Business
Development
Director

G4S Monitoring Technologies & Services (G4S MTS), based in Leicester, deliver electronic offender monitoring technology and services to customers world-wide. A market leader with over 25 years' experience in this field, G4S MTS deploys its electronic monitoring solutions to national programmes in over 25 countries.

Scott comments "We began exporting in 2009, firstly in markets closer to home, before expanding globally. We currently provide solutions across all continents, accounting for a significant percentage of our annual turnover.

It's important to invest time and resource in understanding the local culture and their way of doing business. It's vital to build long term overseas relationships, with both Delivery Partners and End Users.

We continue to develop and innovate new applications, including those for Victim Protection, Alcohol and Drug Monitoring, and in many cases tailoring solutions specifically for export demands, and specific cultures".

Hallam Internet Ltd



Julio Taylor
Chief Executive
Officer

Hallam is an award-winning strategic digital agency with offices in Nottingham and London. Since 1999, they have partnered with clients to grow their revenue through integrated digital marketing that is steered by strategy and long-term vision. CEO Julio Taylor provides strategic leadership to develop excellence in full-service digital marketing delivery.

Hallam has worked with international clients for over 10 years, providing services to brands such as the United Nations in the USA, EU and Middle East. International clients have always been part of their business, so their experience has grown over the years, as they have learned to adapt to new markets and help their clients build better brands across borders.

Digital marketing is reducing friction across borders, making it easier than ever to reach customers around the world. But do not be fooled — each country has its own cultural and behavioural trends and requirements, so local knowledge and localisation are key. Simply translating your content is not enough.

Hall-Fast Industrial Supplies Ltd



Malcolm Hall
MBE
Managing Director

Hall-Fast is a Mansfield-based family business which Malcolm started from the bedroom of his home in 2006. They have come a long way since and now supply a range of 200,000 items to a growing customer base of over 45,000 companies in 92 overseas markets.

Hall-Fast's rapid growth has been based on supplying SME's, large manufacturing and wholesale customers worldwide backed with an online based business model, which enables them to keep costs low and pass on huge savings to their customers.

At the height of the 2009 recession when UK markets were depressed, with the guidance of DIT, Malcolm diversified and started to export as he saw this as a huge business opportunity.

Malcolm's top tip for exporters is 'no two overseas markets are the same so it is important to understand the trading terms and documentation requirements for each. DIT and the Chambers are on hand to assist, with this support the opportunities in overseas markets are endless'.

International Energy Products Limited



Emma Parkinson
Owner & Director

International Energy Products is a processor and stockholder of special alloys catering to the oil, gas, energy and petrochemical markets across the globe. Based in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, International Energy Products export to Europe, USA, UAE, China and India. Emma Parkinson, Owner and Director is responsible for the business' establishment and continued growth as well as day to day management.

International Energy Products began exporting in 2019 upon the business' establishment, export accounts for approximately 60% of their overall turnover. Over the first two years of trading, they have seen new territories come on board and are now working with some previously unknown countries.

Emma's top tip is 'don't expect experts to always know what they are doing. People can be very knowledgeable in particular areas; however, exporting is a vast topic, and I would always advise to speak to as many individuals as possible to get their approach and opinion on your scenario before proceeding'.

J-Flex Rubber Products



Samuel Kirk
Managing Director

Retford-based J-Flex Rubber Products manufacture and supply rubber sheetings and components – such as mouldings, extrusions and fabrications – for use in technology-driven markets such as food & drink, automotive, pharmaceutical, rail and energy.

Established in 1984, the business has traded internationally since its foundation, has an office in India and currently exports to over 50 countries. Over 65% of J-Flex' turnover can be attributed to exports, with key distribution partnerships in Australia and Germany contributing to recent growth overseas.

A second-generation family business, Sam was appointed Managing Director in 2018, succeeding his father John, and is responsible for identifying, developing and directing the implementation of business strategy and growth in accordance with the Company's Vision and Plan.

Sam's advice to exporters is 'do your research, have a clear strategy, understand overseas business culture, undertake regular market visits and utilise the support offered by DIT'.

Micro-Fresh® Limited



Byron Dixon
OBE
Founder & Chief
Executive Officer

Micro-Fresh® is a globally recognised antibacterial brand, easily incorporated for innovation conscious businesses, adding value to any product. The multi-award-winning technology is found in over 50 brands e.g. Next, John Lewis, M&S and Clarks Australia. Micro-Fresh® protects against bacteria and odours, keeping products fresher for longer and extending the lifespan of products. They have 7 international offices including China, India, Pakistan, Portugal, Vietnam, Singapore, and South Korea. Antibacterial technology has become a need rather than a must have. Due to this and their product being universal, it has opened a whole lot of new global opportunities. Micro-Fresh® continues being innovative with the vision to create a Micro-Fresh'd world.

CEO and Founder of Micro-Fresh®, Byron Dixon, shares his tip for new exporters: The world is a big place, meet people and embrace cultures. Micro-Fresh® started to export in 2008 and now, 90% of our turnover is from exporting.

Micro-Mesh Engineering Limited



James Underwood
Managing Director

Micro-Mesh Engineering Ltd, a family business founded in 1968, design and manufacture hydraulic and air filters for industrial applications. James joined the company in 1989 and has been Managing Director since 2003, his main responsibility is to oversee the expansion and development of export markets.

The company has increased their exports from 15% in 2010 to over 75% today, supplying to over 40 countries. In 2015 the company set up Micro-Mesh Eng India Pvt Ltd in Hyderabad and have seen this go from strength to strength particularly in the Mining and Power generation sector.

In 2021 Micro-Mesh launched its e-commerce platform, FilterFinder, which enables it to reach a much wider global audience. With its 'Amazon for filters' concept it plans to set up two new offices a year from 2023 with turnover doubling year on year for the next 5 years.

James' top tip is 'persevere and build relationships with your overseas customers and distributors to reap the rewards'.

MoBro's



Keval & Savan Dattani
Co-Founders

Keval and Savan Dattani are a duo of Leicester-based entrepreneurs who co-founded Mo Bro's in 2014. It has since become the UK's leading men's grooming retailer, specialising in beard and moustache care. The brand has become suppliers to major airlines and cruise liners in the duty-free industry and excelled in e-commerce, now exporting to 78 countries since they started their exporting journey 6 years ago.

Fast forward to 2021 they continue to export with over 30% of their turnover being overseas. The brothers have also been featured in national print and broadcast outlets around the world and won investment from the BBC TV show Dragon's Den. Featuring in the Department for International Trade's 'Exporting is Great' campaign in 2018, the brothers are strong supporters of companies that want to take up exporting with their advice being 'to build in a healthy margin in the final cost of your goods, so that you can sell overseas'.

Morningside Pharmaceuticals Ltd



Dr Nik Kotecha
OBE
Founder &
Chairman

Morningside Pharmaceuticals Ltd is a Midlands-based manufacturer, wholesaler and exporter of branded and generic medicines and healthcare products to the UK and international export markets. Since inception, Morningside has exported to over 120 countries globally and has over 240 generic and branded licensed medicines in the UK and EU.

They supply some of the world's largest aid agencies such as UNICEF, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Red Cross. The company also continues to grow into new markets, where product registrations in individual countries offer an opportunity to develop in the private sector.

Dr Nik Kotecha OBE, is the Founder and Chairman of Morningside Pharmaceuticals, which he started from a home garage in 1991. In 2017, he established [The Randal Charitable Foundation](#). Its vision is to directly save lives, help the socially disadvantaged and improve the quality of life for those in need in the UK and around the world with an ambition to save one million lives globally.

Northcore Limited



Rob King
Operations
Director

The Northcore brand grew from foundations laid by the international success of their revolutionary key safe product. The Keypod was designed in the early 2000's and was followed with further development and launch of additional creative, product lines. Since then, Northcore's approach to innovation has seen it evolve into one of Europe's most well-known and respected surf and adventure brands.

With over 160 products in its collection, they sell worldwide through a network of both B2B and D2C channels with 50% of the company's turnover now generated from export sales. Northcore is exporting goods daily using a focused logistics network of express couriers, road, sea and air freight to often exceed the delivery timeframes and expectations of their customers.

Operations Director, Rob King's, advice for potential exporters is 'do your research and gather insight and knowledge through speaking to experts such as DIT. No two markets are the same but the possibilities to grow your business through exporting are endless'.

Paul Smith Ltd



Sanny Dodd
Head of Franchise

Paul Smith is a British fashion brand with a global outlook. What began in a small shop in Nottingham, has grown to 130 shops around the world and trading with 60 countries for ready-to-wear, shoes, accessories, and other lifestyle-related products. In 2020, Paul Smith celebrated 50 years of independent design and continues to expand its global presence.

Sanny Dodd is Head of Franchise at Paul Smith overseeing business in 20 countries encompassing retail, franchise, wholesale, and e-commerce. Most of Sanny's 22-year career in the British fashion industry has been focused on international business development and brand expansion with expertise in the high-end fashion business in Asia, the Middle East, India, and South Africa.

For those beginning their export journey, Sanny advises 'to evaluate whether the services or products your business offer are export-ready; competent, relevant, and compliant and to give priority to key markets to begin with rather than aiming too wide too soon'.

Pertemba



Ravi Karia
Owner & Managing
Director

Pertemba specialise in providing UK brands with access to online marketplaces around the world such as Walmart, Amazon, Otto and Zalando. They offer an end-to-end service for over 50 brands, taking care of all aspects of the transaction from logistics, product listings, returns to customer service, in six languages.

Pertemba started to export in 2010, firstly to Germany and then expanding to over 20 countries from the EU to Japan, Australia and North America. 80% of their revenue is now exports.

Exporting can seem daunting at the beginning; it feels like there are so many things you need to consider and barriers to overcome. Ravi's message to new exporters is 'to persevere because it will be worth it in the end. He recommends writing each obstacle down and then working through these with your trade adviser. There are simple solutions to most, if not all, of the issues and once you start, every subsequent export opportunity gets easier'.

R.E Tricker Ltd



Martin Mason
Managing Director

Founded in 1829, Tricker's is the oldest established shoemaker in Britain and was awarded a Royal Warrant in 1989. All Tricker's footwear is made from start to finish at their Northampton factory and whilst manufacturing processes have changed over time, its craftspeople continue to follow traditional techniques.

Today, with 80% of its production earmarked for the export market, Tricker's is a globally recognised brand, available in 43 different countries and represented in many of the finest international boutiques. In Japan, the brand enjoys a cult following with a market there that equates to a third of its export business, closely followed by Italy and the US.

Managing Director, Martin Mason, says "British products carry a lot of prestige abroad. People love to see the 'Made in the UK' label that represents quality and luxury. You may well find that your product sells much better abroad than it ever has here; why would you risk missing that opportunity?"

Shepherd PR Limited



Jane Shepherd
MBE
Managing Director

Shepherd PR is a public relations consultancy based in the Peak District. Skilled in online and offline communications, they were early pioneers in developing an in-house video production service, along with social media/digital content creation.

Over the years, Shepherd PR has attracted and retained a range of high-profile corporate and industry clients, as well as partnering with several of the UK's most significant trade associations. Their role includes working with Government departments, gaining national, regional and industry-specific media coverage, crisis management and building clients' social media and digital presence.

PR Director, Jane Shepherd, started the business in 1999 after working as a newspaper journalist and RAF media operations officer. In 2015, Shepherd PR expanded into Austria, where it specialises in raising the profile of businesses in the country to UK audiences – particularly in the field of sustainable construction, education and tourism. Within five months, the business had accomplished its target of achieving 5% turnover from international trade.

Stephensons Online Limited



Barry Tong
CEO

Starting with just £10 this company has grown without any loans, investments or overdrafts to over £10 million a year in just 10 years. Stephensons Online (solretail) is one of the top health and beauty Amazon sellers worldwide. They partner with some of the top brands in health and beauty, pet, and homeware to deliver their global strategy.

They work with brands across all aspects of Amazon including Creative, Brand Protection and Digital Marketing. They are not an agency. They partner with brands, buy stock and manage the brands global marketplace strategy.

Stephensons Online began exporting into Germany back in 2012. They now export to over 16 countries including Australia, the USA and Japan, with international trade accounting for 35% of their annual turnover.

Barry's top tip is 'to know and understand each market inside out, not only to understand the regulations for exporting into each market, but in order to meet the needs of the individual consumers'.

TecQuipment Ltd



Bruno Ferreira
Export Sales
Manager

Established in 1958, TecQuipment Ltd is a leading manufacturer of educational equipment for engineering programs, supplying top-tier institutions in more than 100 countries around the world. The products allow students and educators to perform practical experiments to illustrate engineering principles.

TecQuipment began exporting in the 1960s on a small scale. Over the subsequent three decades, the company gradually grew its international sales through identifying growth markets and recruiting an agent network to effectively penetrate these. Over the years the Middle East and 'Asian Tiger' countries have been particularly fruitful and continue to thrive, along with the likes of North America and Europe. Over 80% of their business is from export.

As part of TecQuipment's commercial team, Bruno Ferreira is the Export Sales Manager responsible for the territories of Latin America, Europe and mainland Asia. He has over 10 years of experience in international business development and account management.

Thornbridge Brewery



James Buchanan
Export Manager

Thornbridge Brewery are one of the UK's leading craft breweries, winning numerous international and domestic awards since they began brewing in 2005. Thornbridge Brewery are based in Bakewell, in the heart of the beautiful Peak District and have two brewhouses on the site. They produce a fantastic range of beers and styles to suit all palates. James Buchanan is the Export Manager and oversees all Thornbridge Brewery's international sales operations.

Thornbridge Brewery started their exporting journey in 2010 and their top tip for exporters is that DIT is a great resource to use in getting started, and once you are underway as well. Do not be afraid to jump in and get started in a country, one of the best ways to gain valuable experience and understanding of a market is to be part of it.

TUM TUM



Suzanne Stokes
Managing Director

This family business was established in 2012 in Buxton in the beautiful Peak District. With a background in cutlery design and frustrated at the lack of functionally well-designed cutlery for their daughters, Suzanne set about designing her own and launched it under the brand TUM TUM. Over the years the range has expanded to include tableware, travel and weaning products, all designed specifically to aid independent self-feeding.

Since commencing their export journey in 2012, TUM TUM now export to over 15 different countries.

Managing Director Suzanne's advice to new exporters is "Be tenacious! Do your research. Physically visit the country and understand the cultural differences/local issues. Get to know people as people and build on those relationships. Seek advice from DIT and others, particularly those in the same industry".

Urban Apothecary Limited



Tajinder Banwait
Founder &
Managing Director

Entrepreneur and beauty industry stalwart, Tajinder Banwait, is the founder and creative force behind Urban Apothecary. As both a fragrance 'nose' and artisan, she brings a perfumer-chemist approach to the unusual pairing of botanicals. Her distinctive aromas, a mixture of memories and moods, are curated into truly original scents for the home.

When demand surpassed supply, Tajinder started her own candle factory to produce the award-winning collections. From humble beginnings at the kitchen table in 2011, Tajinder's engaging olfactive brand has evolved quickly, becoming known, loved and showcased through hundreds of UK and international stockists.

Exporting started in 2018 with distributors in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Germany and Switzerland to name but a few. Today exporting accounts for 40% of the company's turnover and is rapidly growing.

Ventola Projects Limited



Mick Ventola
Managing Director

Based in Leicester, Ventola Projects are specialists in electrical installations such as LED lighting, shop fitting, building maintenance and metal/acrylic fabrication, and provide services to a range of businesses, offices, residential projects, outdoor installations and entertainment centres across the globe.

Formed in 1989, this company has been exporting services for over twenty-five years and supplying overseas for the last six years. 70% of their turnover now comes from exporting with completed projects in USA and the Middle East. Over the coming year they are looking at expanding into Mexico, the Caribbean and South America.

Managing Director, Mick Ventola, who has overseen this expansion into the global marketplace says that new exporters should "prepare well, don't mess up and be patient".

Viridian Nutrition



Paul Bridgen
Sales Director

Founded in 1999, Viridian Nutrition is a Northamptonshire-based, family-owned ethical nutritional supplements company with a range of over 250 award-winning food supplements. Their ethical formulas are crafted by expert nutritionists using clinically evidenced research, with therapeutic doses, always fully considered from the seed to the recycling bank.

Viridian's exporting journey began in 1999 into Ireland, supplying their range of food supplements to specialist independent health food stores. The company's next steps were into the Netherlands, again directly to health food stores, and then into South Africa. In the subsequent decades, they have expanded into 27 countries via a network of contracted distributors. As of 2022, 25% of Viridian's business is generated outside the UK and growing in excess of 30% annually with numerous new opportunities being worked upon across the world.

Paul's top tip for new exporters is 'to connect with your local DIT adviser, their advice and support around drawing up contracts is invaluable'.

Warner's Distillery Ltd



Michael Nield
International
Commercial Manager

Life's too short for mediocre gin, so, in 2012, Warner's Distillery decided to save the world from it. It's been hard graft, overhauling the family farm; growing and sourcing all-natural ingredients; pushing themselves to make everything sustainable. But the journey has been worth it, because each bottle of Warner's gin is pure passion, distilled.

Warner's spent the first five years focussing on building a robust brand in the UK, before taking tentative steps into export in 2017.

Having joined Warner's in 2018, Mike Nield is now a member of the leadership team at Warner's Distillery, where he heads up their international department. Over the last four years, Warner's international has grown from 5 to >30 international markets, and from 1% to >20% of company turnover. Mike has spent over 20 years specialising in alcoholic drinks export, working for both SME's and large international brands across the beer, cider and gin categories.

02

WEST MIDLANDS

EXPORT
CHAMPIONS

AceOn Group



Mark Thompson
Co-Founder &
Managing Director

Telford-based battery specialists, AceOn Group, offer bespoke battery pack design and manufacture, battery distribution, residential energy storage, large scale commercial and industrial battery storage, and portable energy storage and generators.

Managing Director, Mark Thompson, has over 30 years' experience in the battery industry and co-founded AceOn in 2010. In April 2012, Mark's invention was a winner of the UKTI Growth for Export when he designed and brought to market the world's first 4-Pin AC Solar Generator with iPod sound system.

AceOn has a long track record of exporting to several countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Their most recent exports were to Portugal and Nigeria and they are currently in discussions with a company in South America.

In terms of top tips for exporting, Mark says "Understanding your market is always key. It's important to also recognise that each country is different and understanding what documents are required and trading terms is essential".

Addfield Environmental Systems Limited



Derek Carr
Managing Director

Addfield Environmental proudly manufacture the most robust, reliable and thermally efficient incinerators and cremators here in the UK and sell to over 130 countries. They started their exporting journey in 2012, with many lessons along the way. Addfield have worn the badge as exporting champions for the past three years and look to share their real-life experience in developing your exporting strategy.

Derek Carr, who joined Addfield in 2011 as General Manager, has also grown like the business and today is the proud Managing Director of this trusted brand. Addfield has an exciting 5 years planned to further cement their business as the world leaders in thermal treatment sector. Derek's top tip for companies looking to export is 'what are you waiting for, speak to your local DIT adviser, generate an action plan and enjoy your journey'.

Addmaster (U.K.) Limited



Paul Morris
MBE
Founder

Paul Morris was the Founder and CEO of Addmaster which he grew from a £5,000 family loan into a world recognised brand for antimicrobial protection. Addmaster are double winners of the Queens Award for Export (and one for innovation) and export over 70% of their products via a network of 16 distributors.

You will find Addmaster antimicrobial products (Biomaster) in hundreds of well know products from Dyson Airblades to Dulux paint to Marks and Spencer bags for life. During the pandemic sales grew by over 70% as they rapidly approved their technology against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

Awarded an MBE in 2021 for his services to Export, Paul sold his business to Polygiene, one of his export clients earlier this year, although he continues to have an active part having now joined the Polygiene PLC board. Paul's top tip for export is 'don't be afraid'.

Arquebus Solutions Limited



Matt Lewis
Director

Arquebus is a specialist company delivering forensic services, equipment, consultancy and training relating to the prevention, investigation and detection of firearms criminality. Made up of six full-time staff, and a cadre of specialist experts, Arquebus has operated in almost 40 countries to date performing vital work to improve national security and stability for its clients on a global basis.

Arquebus was born as a global business, all of their work comes from exporting goods and services overseas. Although a global business, they always have a focus on their British roots with the Union flag forming part of their brand identity.

Matt's advice to new exporters is "find a good local agent to work with. Penetrating a market cold is hard. Local agents have built contacts over many years. These relationships are often built on friendships and previous business."

Astute Graphics Limited



Nicholas van der Walle
Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Astute Graphics are leading innovative experts in designing imaginative tools for vector designers that significantly save time, boost creativity and achieve refined results. They lead the way with cutting-edge design software — bringing back the fun to drawing whilst making it far easier to meet tight deadlines and make on the fly changes.

The Owner, Nicholas van der Walle's, passion is in nurturing an extremely strong and cohesive group of passionate individuals. All colleagues are encouraged to display initiative to make amazing things happen every day. Working closely alongside Nicholas is Camilla Jones, recently appointed Marketing Director having been with the company since 2015. Camilla manages all aspects of the marketing mix for Astute Graphics, currently navigating the world of SaaS, driving demand across social media marketing and e-commerce.

Being an internet-based software developer and retailer, the very first sale in 2006 was an export win. Over the past 15 years, exports have typically accounted for 90% of Astute Graphics' revenue, covering nearly every country around the world. The USA has always been a key market for Astute Graphics, but with the assistance of the DIT, planning and actions are taking place to boost sales to other countries such as Japan.

Top tip for exporters – Always reach out to the DIT for advice first! Research will always be key and can help prove or disprove any initial “gut feelings” about the potential of any country or region. Exports can ensure significantly faster revenue growth but see it as a long-term investment as per any other asset such as machinery, employees or infrastructure.



Camilla Jones
Marketing Director

Aurriigo Limited



Miles Garner
Sales & Marketing
Director

Aurriigo, the autonomous vehicle division of Coventry-headquartered RDM Group, is leading the world when it comes to 'first and last mile' self-driving transport solutions. The company, which employs over 80 people across its UK engineering centre and offices in Australia, Canada and the US, has achieved global recognition for its Auto-Pod, a four-seater autonomous pod that travels up to 60 miles and can reach top speeds of 15mph.

Miles is the Group's Sales and Marketing Director with more than 30 years' experience working within the automotive sector. He's been instrumental in creating an international brand for the business and securing their involvement in some of the world's largest driverless vehicle trials.

Through on the ground support by in country DIT teams, Aurriigo has exported autonomous vehicles to Canada, USA, Australia, Singapore and Norway. Miles' advice to those considering exporting is 'to spend time evaluating the competitor market in the country, contact the DIT team and government backed local invest departments'.

Body Care Brand Development Ltd



Hamzah Islam
Chief Executive
Officer

Body Care Brand Development Ltd (BCBD) launched in 2013 with the aim to manufacture and supply sporting organisations with personal care merchandise. BCBD initially won contracts with small clubs in London but after just a few months successfully acquired contracts with major Premier League Football Teams and National Rugby Teams.

They started their exporting journey in 2015, securing contracts with football clubs in France, Netherlands and Spain. As confidence in exporting grew, BCBD began to carry out research in South East Asia and the Middle East to grow their exporting portfolio.

In 2017, the company carried out a soft launch of their very own brand of Organic Baby Skincare at Arab Health, Dubai. The range is now sold in Taiwan and makes up 70% of sales for the Pombaby Organics Range.

Top tips for exporters – don't be afraid to explore new markets, research the market thoroughly and carry out necessary due diligence on the companies involved.

Burgess & Leigh Ltd



Jim Norman
Managing Director

Burgess & Leigh Ltd make Burleigh pottery in the home of the industry, Stoke-on-Trent. Burleigh is the most iconic and quintessentially British ceramics brand with a global following. The domestic and export customers admire the storied designs, unrivalled provenance and authentic craft skills that make Burleigh highly desirable to own and use.

Jim Norman carries on the export traditions that were established by the business founders, Messrs Burgess & Leigh, in the late 19th century. Jim has recognised that customers are increasingly interested in buying products that have depth and authenticity. Telling Burleigh's stories to a receptive audience has helped establish the brand as the pre-eminent British ceramics brand with a growing export market.

Jim's advice is 'to achieve success in exporting is to clearly identify what makes your products and services different. Where possible leverage this through pricing to generate strong margins'.

C. Brandauer & Co. Ltd



Rowan Crozier
Chief Executive
Officer

Brandauer is one of the largest contract presswork and metal stamping companies in Europe, offering the complete range of services required for the supply of precision stamped metal components: from prototyping, design, and in-house tool production through to high-quality manufacturing and logistics.

They have been stamping since 1862 and their rich heritage was founded on the export of pen nibs to Europe. Today, 85% of Brandauer's current annual sales is exported to over 22 international markets, half of which is direct from its facility in Birmingham.

Brandauer's advice to new exporters is 'to plan, understand and gain as much knowledge of the market you are entering as possible. With knowledge on your side, you can take the plunge into more competitive markets overseas and be successful. It will be vital to display to these markets how you propose to add more value, save them time and money, and importantly, exceed demands on quality, delivery, and customer service'.

CrowdProperty



Mike Bristow
CEO & Co-Founder

[CrowdProperty](#) is the UK's leading specialist property development lending platform – a profitable fintech/propTech lending innovator, transforming the market of property development finance.

Having funded more than £500m of property projects and the development of more than 2,300 homes, CrowdProperty is entirely focused on unlocking the potential of small and medium sized developers across the UK... and now globally. This is just the start of their potential as the disruptive, customer-centric proposition loved by customers, driving a growth trajectory in the UK towards £1bn of lending and further international expansion potential after launching in Australia in 2021.

Mike Bristow, CEO and Co-Founder of CrowdProperty, has a background of 18 years in strategy consultancy advising major corporates and private equity funds on corporate strategy and M&A. Mike spent many years advising private equity owned businesses on international expansion and views it critical to localise the proposition based on local market dynamics in target international markets.

Elite KL Limited



David Brookes
Business
Development
Manager

Elite KL design, assemble, test and supply HVAC systems for rail, off road vehicles, automotive and military applications. They offer products that are reliable, low weight, high efficiency, high performance and environmentally friendly.

They won their first export opportunity around two years ago and now exports make up around 20% of their business for the next two years.

David Brookes' top tip for new exporters is 'to engage the support of both your local and international trade officers and the sector specialists'.

Evtec Automotive Limited



David Roberts
Executive Chair

Evtec is one of the UK's leading examples of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) companies; being the largest employer of disabled people in the UK automotive sector. Increasingly focussed on the electrical vehicle sector, they provide complex assemblies/aftermarket products to the world's leading automotive makers including Jaguar Land Rover, Alpina, Ferrari and Karma.

David is the Executive Chair and drives growth and development. Evtec has annual sales of over £70m, with their direct export sales now accounting for over 25% of all sales from zero in 2014. Of the 75% sales to UK OEMs, the vast majority then become exported vehicles, so their total export content is over 90%.

David's top tips for exporting are 'make exports a key driver of your business strategy and investment and always put yourself in the customers shoes on what they want. Set up your company organisation to be export friendly and make it easy for export customers to do business with you'.

Forensic Pathways



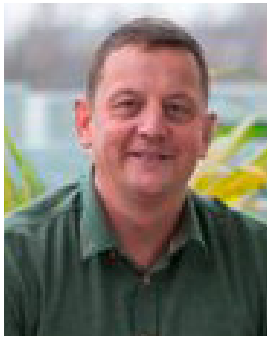
Deborah Leary
OBE
D.Univ, FRSA, Chief
Executive Officer

Forensic Pathways is an international consultancy and technology design company, developing innovative technologies in the criminal and business intelligence field. Throughout its 20-year history it has continually diversified in order to reflect the changing nature of investigation, journeying from innovative crime scene equipment, ballistic analysis, through to innovations in digital forensic technology, and latterly cyber.

As Founder and CEO of Forensic Pathways, Deborah says "I knew we were a 'born global' company. Within two years of incorporation, we were engaged with DIT to identify global partners. With exports making up approximately 45% of the company's turnover, we now export across Europe, the USA, Australia, Africa with an eye on the Middle East and Asia markets".

Deborah's top tip is 'thoroughly research your market to ensure you fit and never take things at face value – research and continually monitor the market and your partnerships'.

GuyKat Solutions Ltd



Guy McEvoy
Chief Executive

GuyKat are a multi-award-winning eLearning agency based in Birmingham with a recently opened sales office in Tampa (US). They work with some of the largest brands on the planet. At their heart they are a people-orientated professional services company. They use technology to help clients transform their learning, training and communication capabilities.

Founded in 2009, GuyKat began international projects in 2011. Since then, most of the company's growth has come from overseas, with more than 70% of revenue now coming from outside the UK. Whilst this is predominantly from the US/EU, in the last three years their training programmes have been deployed in more than 50 countries across five continents. GuyKat were winners of the Queens Award for Enterprise: International Trade 2021.

The JMB Partnership



James Blakemore
Founder & Managing Director

The JMB Partnership is an award-winning B2B sales and marketing agency, specialising in B2B lead generation, sales appointment setting and new market entry. JMB's Founder and Managing Director, James Blakemore, has been critical to the companies export success.

JMB's original business plan was to work with UK organisations helping them diversify their offering and accelerate sales. However, within 6-months of business several overseas clients had approached JMB to support them in penetrating the UK market. It quickly became apparent that there was a need for a low-risk approach to help overseas organisations gain UK traction.

Spurred on by this initial success JMB developed the First-Step package, a suite of services helping international organisations create profitable operations through accelerated sales and in-market support. This approach totally transformed their business model to focus on targeting international clients looking to expand within the UK and Europe. 15 years on, around 80% of our revenue is from export activity alone.

Lucideon Limited



Tim Abbott
Sales Manager

Lucideon create and deliver game-changing Materials Technologies, enabling its clients to develop the products of the future, enhance competitive advantage and market position, supported by world-leading Testing, Analysis & Characterisation laboratories, Materials Research, Development and Consulting. Tim Abbott's role is Sales Manager for Lucideon's global Nuclear, Defence & Space business.

Lucideon has been supporting international markets for many years, with the acquisition of a US based business in 2006. Around 10% of Lucideon turnover is from exporting, with offices in Switzerland and Austria and plans to open sales offices in China, Japan and Korea.

An exporting tip: Consider investing some time to understand differences in both legislation (e.g. taxation) and cultural differences that could impact your ability to successfully navigate new business opportunities.

Mechatherm International Limited



Andrew Riley
Chairman

Based in the industrious Black Country, Mechatherm International Limited is a family-owned business supplying furnaces and associated equipment to the Aluminium Industry. Established in 1973, their expertise has seen them install more than 350 furnaces globally bringing the latest technologies and innovations to create a greener, more circular economy.

Providing such a bespoke service means that around 90% of Mechatherm's sales are for export, this has been essential for market growth.

Having worked for the company for over 40 years, major shareholder and Chairman, Andrew Riley, has overseen the growth of their export trade. They have won the Queens Award for Export three times during his career.

Andrew's top tip for exporting is 'if selling in a foreign currency, ensure that you have "hedged" your currency to make certain you protect your profit margin. Talk to your banks and commercial currency dealers to agree the right policy and get a competitive price'.

OLPRO Ltd



Daniel Walton
Founder &
Managing Director

OLPRO has a reputation for creating exceptional outdoor leisure products for its adventurous customers around the world. They deliver a range of unique and high-quality products that are changing the face of outdoor leisure, including award-winning tents, awnings, outdoor furniture and clothing.

OLPRO started to export right back at the beginning – in 2011. It was always the intention that they would sell internationally and not limit themselves just to the UK. They worked closely with marketplaces and developed their own international online offering. They now have a fully internationalised offering to 25 countries and export makes up 8% of what they do.

For any new exporters there is a great opportunity now to try international markets through marketplaces. Work with companies like Amazon to understand the popularity of your products in other countries and to check competitors. Once you've established good growth look to develop your own route into the market off the back of the work you've done with marketplaces.

Peter's Yard Limited



Matthew Hodgetts
UK & Export
Manager

Born in 2008, from the founder Peter Lundqvist's love of traditional Swedish baking, Peter's Yard has developed a range of award-winning sourdough bakery products, which combines the best of British craft baking, natural ingredients and traditional Swedish recipes and techniques.

UK & Export Manager, Matthew Hodgetts, is solely responsible for the development of their UK wholesale/distribution, Food Service, Travel and Export channels, refining the sales and marketing strategy, budgets, commercial terms and the execution of each of these areas of the business.

Whilst export has historically been a low-priority channel for Peter's Yard, it is becoming an increasingly important area of development and growth for the business and is a fundamental channel in their next three-year strategy. To support this, Matthew brings five years' experience of prior export knowledge and key contacts to Peter's Yard, having previously run his own export consultancy business and through working closely with other premium food and beverage brands to develop international distribution and sales.

Protectapet Ltd



Dr Eve Davies
Founder &
Communications
Director

ProtectaPet is the international leader in cat fencing solutions. The company design, manufacture, retail and install their patented products including, cat fence barriers, cat enclosures and catios.

Their motivation is to enhance pet and owner well-being, with a commitment to protect as many cats from unnecessary danger as possible.

The vision is for ProtectaPet to be a global household name for cat owners, offering the trusted solution designed by the experts for keeping cats safe outdoors. The company's export turnover is a modest 8% of their total now but with European fulfilment from Rotterdam recently set up, their growth strategy centres on recruitment of regionally specific customer services and distributors.

Eve's top tip for exporters is 'to fully utilise the DIT support services and share the expertise of fellow businesses, whatever their sector, to secure useful contacts and insights. Always keep things simple and streamline processes as far as possible'.

Robinson Brothers Limited



Adrian Hanrahan
Managing Director

Founded in 1869, Robinson Brothers is one of the UK's largest independent chemical manufacturers of speciality/fine chemicals and rubber accelerators. The company's expertise in performing challenging chemistries has led them to become a dependable supplier, with 79% of chemicals currently being exported to a diverse range of industries.

The company's success is based upon dynamically responding to challenges in the market. Hence, they have appointed agents and distributors globally, with expertise in chemistry, to provide market insights and to encourage open communication between them and the customer.

Managing Director, Adrian Hanrahan, has many years experience of working within the chemical industry. Adrian says "It is important to follow the markets. When our customer markets moved to Europe, USA and the Far East we had to pursue them in order to stay in business. Being aware of cultural differences (both social and business) is extremely important to be successful in new markets, and this is where Trade Advisers are helpful".

Simworx Limited



Terry Monkton
Chief Executive
Officer

Established in 1997, multiple award-winning Simworx Limited is acknowledged as one of the world's leading suppliers of turnkey media-based attractions to theme parks and visitor attractions worldwide. The company offer their clients a turnkey service including design, manufacturing, installation and after sales support. They have a diverse product portfolio of 13 attractions and have fulfilled over 120 installations worldwide.

Simworx has been exporting since its inception and today 95% of their revenues are generated from export sales. The company has been fortunate to understand potential growth areas and as a result has seen significant sales in the Middle East, South East Asia and China in recent years.

Top tips for new exporters – trade shows in your target markets are a must. Meeting potential buyers face to face will always garner more success than trying to sell remotely. Also, promote the fact you are a “Great British” company – it is a beacon for high quality and safety standards.

The SmartWater Group Limited



Richard Harris
Director of
Technical Services

The SmartWater Group uses proprietary technology-based solutions to deliver risk management services for clients in a range of sectors. They work extensively with law enforcement supporting their work, reducing criminal activity and providing safer communities. SmartWater Group provide monitoring devices linked to their own alarm receiving centres coupled with forensic technology, uniquely chemical signatures which links property to its legal owner.

They began exporting into Europe in 2009, working closely with the French national police force, and entered the US market in 2012. In 2021 the Group developed a dedicated European operation, initially to expand into Germany, Netherlands and Belgium. Exports currently make up approximately 20% of Group turnover with a realistic target of increasing that to 35% by 2026.

Richard is the Director of Technical Services, having joined SmartWater in 2004. His role has encompassed production and logistics, IT and software development, laboratory analysis, research and development, data protection and compliance, all of which support the international commercial operations.

Southco Manufacturing Limited



**Riccardo
Cipriani**
Regional
Distribution
Manager

For over 70 years, Southco has helped the world's most recognised brands create value for their customers with innovative access solutions designed to enhance the touch points of their products in transportation and industrial applications, medical equipment and many more industries. They have 17 manufacturing and stocking locations in nine countries, serving over 100,000 customers in 83 countries. With regional headquarters based out of Worcester, Southco's export journey goes back decades.

Regional Distribution Channel Manager, Riccardo, is responsible for the management, support and promotion of Southco's international distribution channel. Strategically located across the EMEA region, Southco's distribution partners are an integral part of their business model and key to their success.

Riccardo's top tip for new exporters is 'to understand the business environment you're entering, under all aspects. Local distribution partners can accelerate that entry into the new market if they are established and can add value to your product offering. Time well invested here will reward you well'.

StadiArena Solutions Limited



Ian Stokes
Managing Director

StadiArena Solutions Limited provide a turnkey service of consulting, project delivery and licensing of unique and patented intellectual property for multi-purpose sports, leisure and commercial ventures, allowing stadium owners, developers and operators to create a financially viable and sustainable multi-use venue.

StadiArena's export journey started in 2010 with a Public Private Partnership project in India. The following five years were a very steep learning curve, but it gave them invaluable experience for operating in new markets and territories, and currently over 80% of their turnover is from exporting.

Ian Stokes says "The best advice that we could give to potential exporters is to expect numerous visits to your chosen territory and the need to establish a good relationship with a local partner or representative. You may eventually decide to establish your own office, but this is often a large investment at a time when you are still quantifying the market opportunities".

Truede Ltd & www.employin5.com



Zeynep Turudi
Founder &
Managing Director

Coventry-based businesswoman, Zeynep Turudi, founded her company Truede Ltd in her home garage in 2003 and has seen the business grow over the last 19 years, with 5,000 retail spots in the UK alone and exports to 25 countries.

The company boasts a range of luxury confectionery, from handmade Turkish Delight to Roasted Chickpeas snacks – sweet and savoury, with products made from natural ingredients and authentic recipes, some of which date back over 500 years.

Export has been a part of the company's DNA since it was set up, but Zeynep says "The help of DIT has been instrumental in its rapid expansion over recent years. Up to 40% of business has been through exports and export sales have increased by 70-80% year on year. The support she has received from DIT is responsible for 25% of the growth".

Warwick Music Group



Steven Greenall
Chief Executive
Officer

In just five years, Warwick Music Group's team of musicians, entrepreneurs and enthusiasts became world-leaders and the dominant manufacturer of brass instruments created in recyclable ABS plastic. Their innovative approach has radically changed a sector of the music market that has experienced little change for two centuries which was recognised when they received the Queens Award for Enterprise (Innovation) in 2019.

Based in Warwickshire, Warwick Music Group now spans four continents: North America, Europe, Asia and Oceania (Australia). They export to over 50 countries across the world including logistics and distribution operations in the UK, Europe, United States and China. Over 70% of its revenue is export through a series of marketplaces, music distributors and retailers. All its products are certified carbon neutral.

Top tips for exporters – learn everything you can about the export markets you wish to grow. Even with major markets like the United States, Canada, Australia "we're divided by a common language".

Woolcool®



Josie Morris
Managing Director

As a proud UK based pioneer and manufacturer, Woolcool® are continually innovating within the packaging market. Woolcool® utilise natural materials, namely 100% pure wool, in their solutions to insulate and protect temperature sensitive products in shipment. As a market leader across the Food and Pharmaceutical sectors, Woolcool's sustainable packaging solutions are used for the transit of a vast array of products both nationally and internationally.

In 2018, Woolcool® received a Queen's Award for Industry, for Innovation. Woolcool® is also the first UK packaging company of its kind to gain B-Corp status, joining a worldwide community of firms who have pledged to put social and environmental impact on the same level as profitability. Woolcool® began exporting in its very early years, initially shipping to Germany. This has since expanded to include customers from across all areas of Europe, the USA and beyond and are forever expanding their horizons into new markets.

Josie's top tip for exporters is 'do not be afraid to ask for help, especially from organisations like DIT, there are so many people around who want to help. Do not be put off by the perceived extra work export can bring, as it's well worth the return'.



Department for International Trade

The UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

- We are an international economic department, responsible for:
- supporting and encouraging UK businesses to drive sustainable international growth
- ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for international investment
- opening markets, moulding the trade environment with new and existing partners which is free and fair
- using trade and investment to underpin the government's agenda for a Global Britain and its ambitions for prosperity, stability and security worldwide.