

Top Track 250

Awards event press release



Tues 17 Nov 2020

BRITAIN'S LEADING MID-MARKET PRIVATE COMPANIES HONOURED

The senior directors running Britain's 250 leading mid-market private companies with the biggest sales were recognised today (17th Nov) at the 16th annual *Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250* virtual awards event.

The 240 guests at the interactive virtual event included founders and senior directors from companies such as **Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate, Busy Bees, EG Group, END, Lush, Sushi Daily** and **The White Company**.

Carl Sizer, head of regions at **PwC**, our title sponsor, welcomed guests and praised them for their hard work and determination in the face of the Covid-19 crisis:

"There is no doubt that 2020 has been incredibly tough but that makes it all the more important to celebrate success. I've been inspired to see how businesses have responded to the pandemic with real ingenuity and resilience," he said.

Encouragingly, 92% of guests polled were very confident (38%) or confident (54%) about their company's prospects over the next 12 months.

The annual **Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250** awards event brings together the senior directors of the UK's leading mid-market private companies with the biggest sales. Pre-Covid-19, they grew their combined sales by 17% to £59.6bn, and operating profits by 25% to £5.1bn, in their last financial year.

Keynote speeches:

Guests heard from two leading entrepreneurs who shared their insights on responding to the pandemic.

- **Lord Karan Bilimoria**, president of the **Confederation of British Industry**, and founder & chairman of **Cobra Beer**. He told guests: *"A time of crisis is when you can come up with opportunities. Now is the time to look at long-term things like climate change, where there are huge opportunities with employment and investment for the planet. We've got to take the long-term view, as well as surviving now."*
- **Jo Malone**, founder and chief executive of **VetPartners**, one of Europe's largest veterinary chains, with more than 450 clinics. It has featured twice on Top Track 250, with sales up 33% to £349m and operating profits up 29% to £45.2m in the year to June 2020. She said: *"Covid has been an epic time for us, and we're much stronger on the other side. We've definitely learned that there are lots of different ways to communicate, and that's been key to getting us through."*

Both speakers joined **John Collingridge**, deputy business editor of **The Sunday Times**, to take questions from guests. After the Q&A, guests participated in small virtual breakout discussion groups on the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic, and also in 1:1 video networking.

No 1 company award

The number one company award was presented by business editor Oliver Shah to chairman and chief executive Vincent Clancy of **Turner & Townsend**. The construction consultancy grew sales 16% to £744.3m and operating profits 29% to £87.1m in the year to April. It is headquartered in Leeds and owned by its 93 partners worldwide.

Breakout discussion session

Humphrey Cobbold, chief executive of Top Track 250 alumnus **PureGym**, led a breakout discussion session after the awards on whether Covid-19 can be an accelerator for positive change. The gym group has featured on Top Track 250 for the last five consecutive years, with sales up 12% to £255m in 2019, and ebitda up 63% to £125m.

He told guests: *"I'm not a believer that we can leap forward from a position of instability and uncertainty. From a business point of view we are focusing very hard on stepping back and resetting our foundation in as many ways as possible as we get through the crisis."*

ENDS

WHEN USING THIS INFORMATION, PLEASE CREDIT IN FULL:

SUNDAY TIMES PwC TOP TRACK 250

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Notes for editors

Fast Track has published national league tables of the UK's top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 24 years. Its invitation-only awards events provide a valuable opportunity for entrepreneur to network and meet its sponsors. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

About the league table & awards

The 16th annual **Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250** league table was published on 27 September 2020. The Covid-19 edition highlighted the important contribution that mid-market private companies have made to the UK during the pandemic, from developing Covid-19 testing kits to supporting local communities.

The league table is compiled by **Fast Track**, the UK's leading research and networking events company focusing on top-performing private companies. The research was carried out between April and August 2020.

In addition to title sponsor **PwC**, the league table has main sponsorship from **Lloyds Bank. Trowers and Hamlins** is an awards event sponsor.

League table criteria: *Top Track 250 ranks the UK's private mid-market growth companies with the biggest sales – the next tier down from our Top Track 100 ranking of the biggest private companies. Companies are required to have operating margins that exceed 2%. Sales in the latest year must have grown by 5% or more for companies with the highest sales, graduated to 10% or more for those with lower sales; or profit growth must have been more 5% or more.*

About our sponsors

PwC

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 157 countries with more than 276,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. In the UK, we work with 16,000 private businesses – of all shapes and sizes – to help them achieve their potential.

No matter where you are on your business journey, for us, your success is personal. From managing risk, to creating value and building the right culture, at PwC we're dedicated to understanding what matters most to you and establishing trusted long-term relationships.

PwC is title sponsor of Top Track 250 for the first time this year, having previously been a main sponsor in 2008 and 2009.

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A sustainable and responsible approach to doing business is integral to everything we do. Commercial Banking provides comprehensive financial services to over 1 million businesses of all sizes. Maintaining a network of relationship teams across the UK, we deliver the mix of local understanding and global expertise necessary to provide long-term support to our clients. We help businesses manage their risk, achieve liquidity and support their growth ambitions.

Lloyds Bank is a main sponsor of Top Track 250 for a fifth year.

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Trowers & Hamlins are passionate about helping businesses operate, grow and succeed.

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Trowers & Hamlins is an awards event sponsor of Top Track 250 for a fourth year.

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