

Profit Track 100 regional press release

Thursday 8 April 2021



NINETEEN COMPANIES IN THE SOUTHEAST WIN PLACES ON SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION OF LEAGUE TABLE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING PROFITS STARS

Published this weekend, the 22nd annual **Sunday Times BDO Profit Track 100** league table ranks Britain's private companies with the fastest-growing profits over their last three years – largely before Covid-19 struck.

Nineteen companies headquartered in the **Southeast** have won places on the league table, including **11 new entrants**. These regional stars have grown their operating profits by an average of 52% a year over the last three years to a total of £170m, and together they employ more than 15,100 people.

The region's top-ranked company is new entrant **The Knowledge Academy**, based in Bracknell, Berkshire. It offers 30,000 training courses across 190 countries for customers including Rolls-Royce, the NHS and Oxford University. Profits grew an average of 106% pa to £9.6m in the year to March 2020, placing it fourth in the national listing.

Make-up brand **Revolution Beauty** achieves its second appearance on the league table. The Kent business sells to more than 140 countries and generated international sales of £102m in 2019, representing two thirds of its £152.4m turnover. Profits hit £17.3m that year.

The companies in the Southeast appear alongside well-known British brands based across the UK including **Thatchers Cider**, the Somerset cider-maker, and **Brompton**, the London-based bicycle manufacturer.

Past star alumni include **Dyson**, which featured in 2000 with profits of £24m, and saw these rise to £711m in 2019, and global technology platform **THG**, which ranked No 1 in 2014, with profits of £11m; it floated last year valued at £5.4bn and is now worth £6.5bn.

The Profit Track 100 league table is sponsored by **BDO**, **Santander** and **UBS Wealth Management**, and is compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Stuart Lisle, tax partner at BDO, commented:

“These ambitious, entrepreneurially-spirited businesses punch well above their weight and are vital for the UK economy; they invest and this investment also creates jobs. As the vaccine programme continues to be rolled out and lockdown restrictions are eased, high-growth businesses like these must have adequate support. We are pleased to see the range of business support measures in this year's Budget. Developing and strengthening our innovation-focused economy is crucial and these businesses will play a key role in the UK's wider economic recovery post-pandemic.”

Private companies in the Southeast with the fastest-growing profits – ordered by county then rank

HQ location and county	Rank [2020 rank]	Company Activity	3-year average annual profit growth	Latest profits £m ^	Staff	Year end	Comment
Bracknell Berkshire	4	The Knowledge Academy Training provider	106%	9.6	195	Mar 20	Offers 30,000 courses across 1,000 locations, and counts Google, Tesla and the BBC among its clients
Reading Berkshire	22	CH&Co Group Catering group	77%	†22.8	10,267	Dec 19	Provided catering services to the Nightingale Hospital Harrogate and the Dragon's Heart in Cardiff
Hungerford Berkshire	53	Ticketer Bus ticketing and software	52%	†4.6	79	Aug 19	Its electronic ticketing devices are used by passengers on buses, trams and trains across the UK

HQ location and county	Rank [2020 rank]	Company Activity	3-year average annual profit growth	Latest profits £m ^	Staff	Year end	Comment
High Wycombe Buckinghamshire	60	Sabeti Wain Aerospace <i>Aircraft furnishings manufacturer</i>	48%	5.8	292	Jul 19	Launched a safety hood for airline seats to shield passengers and try to restore confidence in air travel
Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire	65	Kebbell Homes <i>Property developer</i>	47%	10.9	57	Dec 19	After an unexpectedly buoyant 2020, is experiencing soaring demand as stamp duty holiday draws to a close
Wooburn Green Buckinghamshire	88 [38]	Canagan <i>Pet food supplier</i>	39%	*7.0	27	Mar 20	Sells high-end pet food through independent retailers in more than 45 countries
Hailsham East Sussex	71 [13]	Aspen Pumps <i>Pump manufacturer</i>	43%	16.8	210	Dec 19	Private equity firm Inflexion reacquired it in 2019, having previously owned it between 2007 and 2015
Billericay Essex	87	Ground Control <i>Outdoor services provider</i>	39%	14.0	433	Mar 20	Has a fleet of more than 140 vehicles, including 100-plus Teslas
Witham Essex	100	Simarco <i>Logistics services provider</i>	33%	3.3	332	Dec 19	Delivers 250,000 consignments to 40 destinations across Europe every year
Farnborough Hampshire	68 [50]	Exclaimer <i>Email signature software developer</i>	46%	*5.7	127	Sep 20	The royal household is among more than 75 million people in 150 countries using its email signature software
Hartley Wintney Hampshire	76	TMC Pharma <i>Pharmaceutical development services</i>	42%	*3.0	28	Jun 20	Ninety per cent of its clients are based overseas, and it has offices in Ireland and Japan
Borehamwood Hertfordshire	38	Oakfield <i>Meat importer and wholesaler</i>	64%	5.4	53	Dec 19	Distributes lamb from Australasia, beef from South America and cooked poultry from Thailand
Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire	70	Brogan Group <i>Construction access specialists</i>	43%	14.4	625	Dec 19	Opened a Manchester office in January to support its expansion outside of the southeast of England
Dartford Kent	32	Europa Worldwide Group <i>Logistics provider</i>	70%	5.4	925	Dec 19	Opened a new £60 million, 715,000 sq ft warehouse in Corby on time in June 2020 despite the pandemic
Queenborough Kent	45	Revolution Beauty <i>Beauty products retailer</i>	57%	*17.3	205	Dec 19	Collaborated with Warner Brothers last year on a collection inspired by US sitcom Friends
Rochester Kent	52	GPS Marine <i>Marine services provider</i>	53%	5.3	101	Dec 19	Its work moving excavated spoils and cargo for the Thames Tideway tunnel helped boost profits
Abingdon Oxfordshire	74	Smart Garden Products <i>Garden products supplier</i>	43%	5.0	123	Dec 19	Transferred its showroom online so customers can browse its product catalogue virtually
Reigate Surrey	85 [14]	ACC Aviation <i>Aviation services provider</i>	39%	9.1	56	Dec 19	Grew air charter sales by nearly 200 per cent in 2020 despite the pandemic
Crawley West Sussex	80	Pets Corner <i>Pet food and accessories retailer</i>	41%	4.9	949	Sep 19	Has opened five stores and eight pet spas since the start of the pandemic

^ Profits = operating profits before exceptional items

* Supplied by company

† Annualised figure

The national picture

This year's Profit Track 100 achieved, on average, profit growth of 59% a year over three years to a combined total of £931m. Together they employ 59,400 staff, having more than doubled their combined workforce over the period, some as a result of acquisitions.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 27, followed by the southeast (19). There are 17 companies in the northwest and 13 in Yorkshire and the northeast. Of the remainder, ten companies are based in the Midlands, five in Wales, four in Scotland, three in the southwest and two in Northern Ireland.

The full league table is published on 11 April as a six-page supplement with the business section of The Sunday Times, both in print and in the digital edition, and on www.fasttrack.co.uk.

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Notes for editors

Fast Track has published league tables of the UK's top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 24 years. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

League table criteria

Companies had to be registered in the UK and be independent, unquoted and ultimate holding companies. Profit growth is measured by compound annual growth rate over their latest three financial years.

Profits are defined as operating profit (a company's profit before taxation, interest, dividends and exceptional items). Profits have to exceed £3m in the latest available accounts and £500,000 in the base year. Firms have to show a rise in profits from penultimate to latest year.

Shortlisted companies that provided forecasts showing significant profit falls in 2020 or 2021 were disqualified, and others chose not to participate. Some exceptions were made to the qualification criteria.

The research was carried out by Fast Track between October 2020 and March 2021. Most of the companies were interviewed by telephone or video calls by the Fast Track research team.

See website for full qualification criteria: www.fasttrack.co.uk

About our sponsors

BDO

Accountancy and business advisory firm BDO LLP provides integrated advice and solutions to help businesses navigate a changing world.

Our clients are Britain's economic engine – ambitious, entrepreneurially-spirited and high-growth businesses that fuel the economy.

We share our clients' ambitions and their entrepreneurial mind-set. We have the right combination of global reach, integrity and expertise to help them succeed.

BDO LLP operates in 18 offices across the UK, employing 6,000 people offering tax, audit and assurance, and a range of advisory services. BDO LLP is the UK member firm of the BDO international network.

The BDO global network provides business advisory services in 167 countries, with 91,000 people working out of 1,658 offices worldwide. It has revenues of \$10.3bn.



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Santander

Santander is proud to be a main sponsor of Profit Track 100 for the third year running.

During these uncertain times, it's imperative that businesses feel supported and continue to get the help they need to adapt and survive in this rapidly changing world. For that they need the support of people they can trust. At Santander, we're committed to building close and enduring relationships with each of our business customers, so that we understand how we could help you achieve your business ambitions. Every business is different, and every business is being impacted differently and we are focused on understanding the specific impact to your business and offering appropriate support.

We continue to support business locally through our relationship teams and specialists in the UK, and we have a strong international presence thanks to our extensive global network in major markets. So whatever the plan is for your business, whether you've had to adapt it or you continue with the next step for growth, acquisition or to break into an overseas market, we can help you get ahead.



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UBS Wealth Management

UBS Wealth Management is a main sponsor of Profit Track 100 for a 19th year.

UBS provides a complete wealth management service in the UK. We have a long history of working with UK entrepreneurs planning their business, family and investment needs as they approach a liquidity event. Our advisors will help you learn how to protect and grow your hard-earned wealth drawing on the strength of our Global Chief Investment Office. Whether you want to leave money in trust for your children, sort out your pension arrangements or, increasingly, become a philanthropist, we can help you achieve your goals.



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