



50 EXHILARATING CASE STUDIES OF UK PRODUCTIVITY IN ACTION

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THE STORY OF British productivity has long made sorry reading. For years, our output per worker has lagged behind that of our economic rivals. In September 2015, the Office for National Statistics reported that it was, shockingly, 20% below the G7 average. No wonder Chancellor George Osborne made productivity his top economic priority as soon as he was re-elected.

But, while the wider economy may be struggling, under the surface there is a thriving group of businesses that are taking productivity to the next level. Through a combination of inventive business structures, unique, innovative products and outstanding management, they're showing the rest of British business how it should be done.

The Pro50 has been created to identify examples of highly productive UK companies. Compiled in partnership with information provider Jordans, we've focused on companies showing a consistent level of profitable growth, and where there is a notable level of output per employee. (See "The Pro50: how we built it", page 39.) Then, through profiles and interviews, we identify some of the management and business factors behind their success.

The wider economy may be struggling, but a thriving group of businesses are taking productivity to the next level

Productivity shows itself in many ways, and we don't claim that this is a definitive list. Instead it's a fascinating series of snapshots of productivity in action. There's a particular spotlight on manufacturing and construction companies (18 of our list); agriculture and farming add a further four. Creative, brand-led and technology companies also feature highly. Carnival Films and TV; Fever-Tree; The Leisure Pass Group; Pitch International and others are all lean teams building sustainable international brands. (For the purposes of this study, and because they often show intrinsically high turnover, we excluded financial, broking, wholesale and similar companies – that's for another day.)

One notable thread running through the Pro50 list is inspirational leadership

and a dedication to management best practice, all while maintaining an entrepreneurial spirit.

Professor John Van Reenen is the director of the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics and Political Science; his research confirms a strong correlation between management and productivity.

"For a long time, economists have ignored management," he says. "But we looked at core management practices... and found a very strong relationship [with productivity]."

There are steps you can take to boost productivity. Van Reenen advocates constantly monitoring performance and continuously improving it via feedback and long- and short-term incentives.

"These management practices are of the kind that lead to more output from what you are already using," he says. "They don't need a lot of money to be spent on new technology or expensive buildings. They're about taking what you've got and using it efficiently.

"In principle, these are things that can be done in almost any company but, in practice, it is harder if people don't have the right skills. You will be asking middle managers to do more, so, if they

haven't got the right skills or are poorly equipped, that makes it much harder."

Flexible working can also be productivity-enhancing. Van Reenen worked on a research project in China that found that letting call-centre employees work from home led to less absenteeism and boosted productivity.

Pro50 companies also excel in using advanced technologies to improve efficiency. G's Fresh and Helix Well Ops have come up with inventions to help solve problems and increase productivity, while Schilling Robotics has improved its manufacturing techniques. But technology is not enough. "It is about using it efficiently," says Van Reenen. "That requires managers and workers to work in new ways. If you don't make these changes, you get very little benefit."

1&1 Internet

You've seen the TV ads, now meet the company. Founded in Germany in 1988 by Ralph Dommermuth, 1&1 is an internet hosting company offering a range of services, such as email solutions and servers, in 10 different countries, including the UK, Germany, Spain and the US. 1&1 also offers an end-to-end website solution, from domain registration through to site design and web hosting.

Abbey Developments

Abbey Developments is a residential housing developer based in the South East. It is currently working on 12 new-build housing development projects around the region. It is a subsidiary of Abbey Plc, which works on residential housing developments in the UK, Ireland and the Czech Republic.

Advanced Elastomer Systems

Advanced Elastomer Systems is a subsidiary of ExxonMobil and specialises in the production of thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs), which are commonly used in household appliances and the automotive sector. Based in Newport, Wales, it can produce more than 50,000 tonnes of TPEs a year.

Aegis Defence Services

Aegis is a private security business founded by a group of entrepreneurs including Lt Col Tim Spicer, former boss of the private military firm Sandline. In 2011, the London-based company won a \$500m contract from the US government to provide security services in Iraq. The Aegis group includes an intelligence-led advisory firm, Aegis Advisory, which gives intelligence to corporates and governments.

4 THE
NUMBER OF
FARMING AND
AGRICULTURE
COMPANIES IN
THE PRO50

ALD Automotive

ALD Automotive is a motor fleet manager and leasing company. In the UK, ALD finances and manages 97,000 vehicles for clients, and offers services from simple financing for individual drivers, all the way to fully outsourced fleet management for large corporates. Its buying power and approach to fleet management mean it can drive down its clients' costs of running a fleet of vehicles.

Amalgamated Racing

Amalgamated Racing provides Turf TV coverage of racing events for UK and Irish bookmakers. It is aired in more than 9,000 betting shops and has exclusive arrangements for 34 of the UK's leading racetracks, including Ascot and Newbury. The company was founded as a test project in April 2007, before a full commercial launch in January 2008. It has renewed its racecourse agreements until 2018.

Anesco

Anesco is an energy-efficiency consultancy that works with local authorities, businesses, housing associations and homeowners to reduce carbon emissions through audits, recommendations, installations and capital funding plans. It has been recognised as the country's fastest-growing private company and one of the top 100 cleantech companies in the world.

11 THE
NUMBER OF
CONSTRUCTION
COMPANIES IN
THE PRO50

BerryWorld

BerryWorld supplies soft fruit to UK retailers through partnerships with growers around the world. The company offers a two-year berry-farm-management training scheme. To improve understanding of the 'BerryWorld ethos', it also offers staff the opportunity to go on secondment to growers and packhouses. Advisers are sent on research visits to both BerryWorld growers and external growers too.

Brisko Scaffolding

Brisko Scaffolding specialises in steel milling and distribution, and is part of the UK's largest steel-distribution centre. The company employs a 'just-in-time' delivery system to maximise productivity and ensure customer deliveries are fulfilled at the exact time the product is needed. This helps the company reduce storage requirements, boosting the productivity of its resources.

BSN Medical Distribution

BSN Medical Distribution is a supplier of casting, bandaging, wound care and compression stockings for the medical profession. The company also provides training for medical practitioners in wound care, compression therapy and fracture management. While the company employs more than 5,000 people internationally, its UK operation is lean, productive and likely to grow.

Carnival Films and TV

Carnival is famous for creating period drama *Downton Abbey*. With a small core UK team, the company demonstrates the exceptional reach and economic value that the creative industries can yield. Managing director Gareth Neame sees his role as marrying the financial firepower of Hollywood with an entrepreneurial spirit. Carnival's global success suggests that he's got the balance right.





Comau UK

Comau UK specialises in automated welding for the motor manufacturing industry using advanced robotics. Since 2007, the company has offered management training through its Project Management Academy, developing both hard and soft project-management skills in its employees. Comau has also developed a *Project and People Management* book and smartphone app.

Company Pictures

Company Pictures is a television production company whose hits include teen drama *Skins*, *Inspector George Gently*, starring Martin Shaw, and *Wild at Heart*, starring Stephen Tompkinson. It has also produced the award-winning *Shameless*, starring David Threlfall, which spawned a US spin-off with William H Macy, and Emmy-nominated *Wolf Hall*, featuring Mark Rylance and Damian Lewis.



Wolf Hall is one of Company Pictures' recent TV successes

Costcutter Supermarkets Group

The Costcutter Supermarkets Group owns Costcutter, the second-largest corner-shop chain in the UK, and also includes Kwiksave and Mace in its list of brands. The business's franchise model allows it to keep costs and headcount down, while still expanding its national reach, demonstrated by the opening of 353 new franchise accounts in 2013.

Crescent Pharmaceuticals

Crescent Pharmaceuticals manufactures cost-efficient generic medications for the UK market and for export. It has licences for more than 100 medicines, with an efficient manufacturing process allowing it to offer the products at an affordable price over the counter and on prescription through the NHS. The global market for generic medicines is estimated to be \$221bn by 2016.

Crest JMT Leather

Crest JMT Leather provides bespoke dyed leathers for use in furnishings and other interior design items through its tannery, located in Vestenanova in northern Italy. The company produces customised leather hides for both commercial and domestic customers, using a lean retail presence focused on the efficient use of e-commerce.

17 THE NUMBER OF PRO50 COMPANIES BASED IN LONDON

CSA Waverley

CSA Waverley was founded in 1983 and delivers IT infrastructure design, implementation and support services for the NHS, local authorities, central government and private-sector organisations. The company has a 10-year staff retention rate of 40%, helping it to offer its customers "the security they need from their long-term partner".

DK Engineering

DK Engineering was founded by husband-and-wife team David and Kate Cottingham, who still run the business. The company restores, sells and repairs Ferraris, as well as providing support crews for race teams. It survived the crash in the price of Ferraris during the 1990s by not over-expanding during the 1980s boom and incorporating increased workloads into existing infrastructure.

7 THE NUMBER OF MANUFACTURERS IN THE PRO50

Fever-Tree

Fever-Tree is a premium mixer drinks company with headquarters in London. It was the first company to sell a premium Indian tonic water when it was launched in 2005. It now has a product range of 10 drinks, including tonic waters, soda waters, ginger beers and lemonade.

Fideliti

Fideliti was established in 2005 to run childcare voucher schemes for clients including councils, police forces, NHS trusts, universities, central government departments and FTSE 100 companies. The company has achieved rapid growth, driven by changing work and social patterns, and was named in the *Sunday Times* Fast Track 100 three years running from 2011 to 2013.

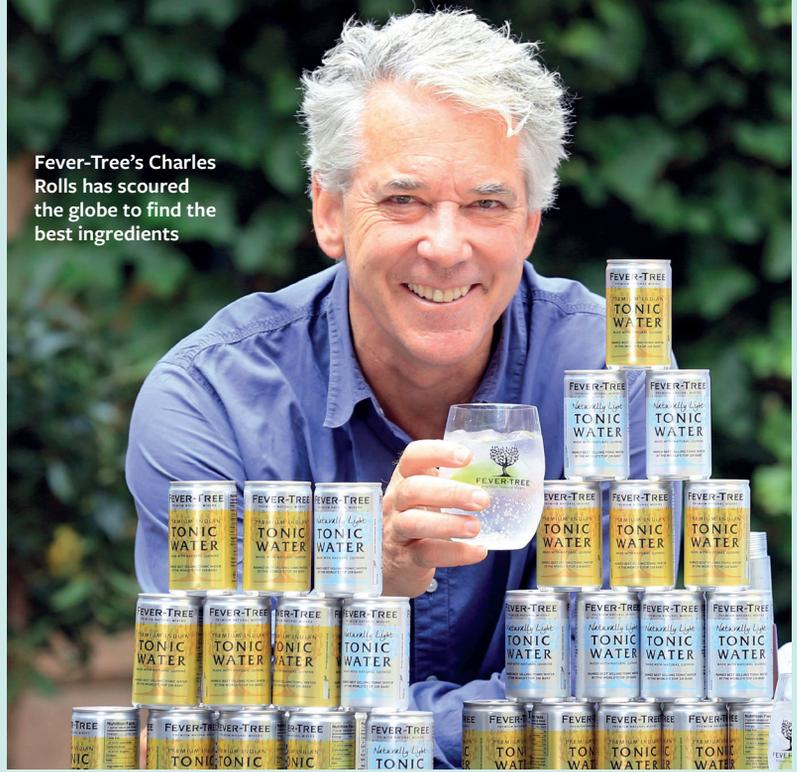
Foundation Developments

Foundation Developments is a concrete frame constructor founded in 1991. The company employs 14 specialist managers, covering contract management, project management and health and safety management, who have professional qualifications including diplomas and NVQs. This helps the company run its projects with fewer delays as a result of accidents or complications.

G's Fresh

G's Fresh is a salad and vegetable grower with farms and production facilities in the UK, Spain, Czech Republic and the US. The company was founded as a celery farm by Guy Shropshire in the 1950s before diversifying, and it remains a family-run business today. The company is a technology leader, with Shropshire inventing the straw planter. In 2014, it received a Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its innovations.

Fever-Tree's Charles Rolls has scoured the globe to find the best ingredients



INTERVIEW

FEVER-TREE

To create the perfect tonic water for British stalwart the G&T, Charles Rolls and Tim Warrillow will stop at nothing

The co-founders of Fever-Tree have stared down the barrel of a gun in the Ivory Coast and been interrogated by child soldiers in Rwanda. But, supported by only 13 employees, the two men have reinvented the mixer drinks market and gone from zero to a £23m global-turnover brand serving more than 50 countries in 10 years, with an IPO via two rounds of private equity thrown into the mix for good measure.

This is full-strength productivity. The secret, says Rolls, is creating a highly outsourced business model. Fever-Tree is in control of the key elements: marketing, sales, quality control and finance. Everything else, where the company is not an expert, is outsourced.

"We knew what the product needed to taste like and what the brand message needed to be, so we stuck to that," he says. "We needed to focus on our core skills. Those didn't include bottling, crop production and manufacturing." These tasks, therefore, are given to trusted partners.

The central cog in the Fever-Tree machine – sourcing the finest ingredients – remains under the watchful eyes of Rolls and Warrillow. It's this that takes them across the world and makes Fever-Tree the first premium Indian tonic water.

When it comes to managing the workforce, Rolls is from the lead-by-example school. The former Plymouth Gin boss has a passion for the drinks industry and values this in his staff.

"Dedication is essential," he says. "You have to be emotionally involved with the product and it is great to see that buzz in the office."

Equally important is ensuring that professionalism is prevalent, while maintaining the company's entrepreneurialism and agility.

"Some people are better suited to management than others, so you have to make sure you select the right people for the role, with the right skills, and then offer them support if necessary," says Rolls.

Staff are encouraged to pursue courses and acquire qualifications, and Rolls is professionalising key areas of the business; for example, he brought in a new CFO this year.

So, what is next for Fever-Tree as it looks to eat away at market leader Schweppes? "The premium mixer market is just starting out, but premium spirits are much older, especially in the US," says Rolls. "There are definitely lots of opportunities out there. It's all about more of the same, but better."



Global Merchandising Services

Global Merchandising Services offers design, product development, manufacturing and sales services in all channels of retail distribution, such as live events, web stores, sponsorships and third-party licensing. Based in London and Los Angeles, the company was founded in 2008 by Barry Drinkwater. Clients include the Rolling Stones, Justin Bieber and One Direction.

Global Traffic Network (GTN) UK Commercial

Global Traffic Network (GTN) UK Commercial provides traffic, travel and entertainment news reports for UK commercial radio stations. GTN UK Commercial was launched in 2007 and serves 250 stations, including Absolute Radio, with a reach of 27.5 million listeners – 79% of all commercial radio listeners in the country.

Helix Well Ops (UK)

Helix Well Ops specialises in responding to deepwater oil spills and plug and abandonment work at the end of the working life of an oil well. The company, based in the heart of Aberdeen's oil industry, uses state-of-the-art technology, including pioneering designs and cutting-edge monohull technology to improve the efficiency of its operations.



ISG Fit Out installs bespoke office interiors that add value to its clients' properties

INTERVIEW

ISG FIT OUT

Competition in the £103bn construction industry is fierce, so firms need to stand out from the crowd and offer something different

ISG Fit Out, the fit-out and engineering arm of ISG plc, is taking a fresh and innovative approach by managing projects from start to finish.

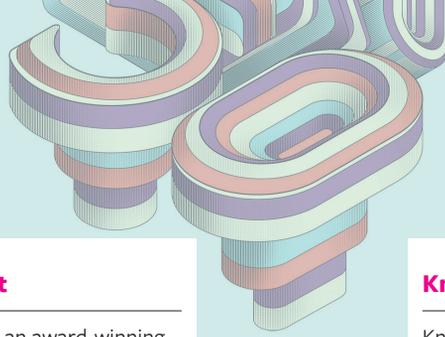
“A lot of the construction industry is geared up to be very traditional. The employer employs designers, project managers and various consultants,” says managing director Paul Cossell. “They then spend a lot of time with the client before engaging the contractors. So, when the contractor is employed, there is little opportunity, time-wise, to add value – it’s all about hitting the end date. Over the past four or five years, we have bolted on expertise, meaning we can move in earlier in the life cycle of a project, enabling us to get started earlier. That gives us the ability to get the project finished quicker, with more cost certainty, and more economically.”

This approach helped ISG win the redevelopment of Bush House in London, the old home of the BBC World Service, turning it into 300,000sq ft of premium office space. ISG was initially invited to tender for the demolition but, by presenting a plan for the full project, which reduced build time by up to 12 months, it won the whole tender, saving the client £9m and allowing earlier rent collection.

This style of project management has allowed ISG to enter new sectors, such as pharmaceuticals.

People, and people development, are central to ISG's performance. “Our success boils down to the type of people in our business,” says Cossell. “They have the attitude of being innovative, forward-thinking and offering things that we can back up and deliver.” ISG Fit Out has a flat management structure that enables staff to take ownership of their work. “We employ people who want responsibility and empowerment,” says Cossell. “We expect them to be decision-makers for the business. I encourage people to make mistakes – it sounds odd, but it shows they’re taking responsibility and making decisions.”

New recruits are enrolled in the company's Academy. “The training is about the importance of clarity of roles and responsibility, holding people to account and dealing with difficult people,” says Cossell. “We use external trainers who act as ‘cultural generals’. There is an emphasis on soft skills and we have different levels of training for future leaders, right up to senior leaders.” ISG also trains supply chain partners and customers.



Ian Mosey (Livestock)

Ian Mosey started creating his own animal feed in 1999, to drive down the costs of feeding the animals on his farm. The high-tech mill was a success, and he soon started selling his animal feed to other farmers in the area. The company now supplies feed for pigs, cattle, game, poultry, sheep and horses across the North East.

ISG Fit Out

ISG Fit Out is an award-winning office interiors company that works across the UK, Europe, Middle East and Asia. Projects range from the bespoke fit-out of an entire building, through to applying the finishing touches to a single room. ISG Fit Out includes ISG's engineering business, which specialises in building data centres.

Knight Developments

Knight Developments was founded in 1972 as part of The Knight Group, and designs and builds UK housing developments. It has won a number of awards, including the 'Best New Starter Home' award from *What House* magazine and the 'Heritage and Conservation' award from Epping Forest District Council.

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Marbank Construction

Marbank Construction is a 'design and build' company working on projects ranging from around £1m to more than £10m. It has completed more than 200 builds nationwide, together worth at least £400m. Marbank uses its technical expertise and broad experience to produce designs that reduce costs while simultaneously adding value to the project.

Meridian Salmon Farms

Meridian Salmon was acquired by Cooke Aquaculture, North America's biggest fish-farming company, in a £122.5m deal in 2014. The Shetland-based company is one of the region's largest salmon farmers. Announcing the deal, Cooke Aquaculture chief executive Glenn Cooke said: "Meridian is a cost-effective producer with a dedicated management team and employee base."

Meter Provida

Meter Provida is an energy metering specialist supplying smart gas, water and electricity meters. This is a fast-expanding market enabled by new technology. In 2009, Meter Provida partnered with DHL, and today the logistics giant handles all the company's warehouse, logistics and inventory management operations – a clever collaborative move that doubtless keeps the firm's productivity high.

8 THE NUMBER OF PROSO COMPANIES BASED IN NORTH ENGLAND

Midgard

Midgard is a construction contractor specialising in the construction of residential apartment buildings. Midgard prides itself on employing specialist in-house staff rather than sub-contractors. Midgard also owns all its own equipment, reducing the need to hire in tools and plant equipment.

MPB Structures

MPB Structures is a concrete frame construction company whose service range includes earthworks, drainage, substructure reinforced concrete works, civil engineering and railway infrastructure. The company was founded in 1987 by Michael Boyle and has since worked for clients including the London Underground.

3 THE NUMBER OF PROSO COMPANIES BASED IN SCOTLAND

Multiple Marketing

Multiple Marketing is the company behind the Sunmagic drinks brand, which produces smoothies and juices for children, using 100% fruit juice. In July this year, the company also released the Hydra sub-brand of still and fizzy juice drinks. The management is doing a great job in building a series of new drinks brands, an area in which the UK is traditionally strong.



MV Kelly

Birmingham-based MV Kelly is a groundwork and infrastructure construction company working on £10,000 to £10m projects. MV Kelly tends to replace equipment on a three-year cycle, and buys new equipment on an as-needed basis, so it doesn't have to rely on external plant hire. This helps ensure equipment is well maintained, and reduces project delays due to faulty equipment.

Newssolutions

Part of publishing giant News UK, printing and distribution company Newssolutions has invested more than £650m in three purpose-built printing centres through the News UK group. This means it can print 1.6 million newspapers an hour. Its client list includes famous names such as *Time Out* and *The Jewish Chronicle*.

INTERVIEW See right

Novelis UK

Novelis specialises in rolled aluminium products in sectors such as beverage cans, automobiles, architecture and consumer electronics. It is the world's largest recycler of aluminium, with a goal to make 80% of its products from recycled materials. This helps it to reduce the energy, water and landfill costs of the company, adding value to its products and boosting productivity.

News UK's printing centres produce up to 1.6 million newspapers every hour



INTERVIEW

NEWSSOLUTIONS

In a world of shrinking print sales and dwindling advertising revenues, newspaper publishers face tough times when it comes to increasing revenues and profit

Newssolutions, part of Rupert Murdoch's media giant News UK, has turned the tough newspaper market into a lucrative opportunity.

As circulation of News UK titles such as *The Sun* and *The Times* fell, capacity at print and distribution hubs rose, so Newssolutions was set up to sell capacity to regional papers and publishing houses.

As well as print and distribution, Newssolutions offers consultancy on cutting costs and new ways of thinking for traditional publishing companies.

"We are well-versed in helping to take cost out of a business," says Tracey Hart, commercial director, operations. "As much as we have assets to sell, we also have a lot of knowledge and experience. A lot of the regional titles are heavy in headcount and the size of their business, and they have seen bigger declines than the nationals... There are savings to be made if we all travel together."

Key to the success of the consulting side, Hart says, is the core team that goes out to potential and existing clients and helps to solve problems. And staff training and development is central to this.

Bespoke training sessions are used to boost individual performance and enhance overall productivity. Training is delivered via two external consultants, who act as executive coaches and provide one-to-one, rather than group, training.

"It is two hours of selfish training," says Hart. "Group training can be quite generic, but this is absolutely focused on you and tailored to your needs. It is intense and exhausting but, if you want to get a return, it is very useful for your personal development."

Newssolutions sits as part of News UK, but it's lean and agile, with Hart leading by example. "It's important to stay aware of the day-to-day work your team is doing, and experience their ups and downs with them," she says. "It is also preferable to be cautious about the number of direct reports you have, so that you can maintain a good relationship with each individual. Every member of the team needs to understand the importance of their contribution to the bigger picture."



Paradigm Secure Communications

Paradigm Secure Communications provides military satellite communications to the UK Armed Forces, as well as to other governments and organisations. While it is 100% owned by the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company, it is a great example of ultra-high-tech being developed in the UK.

Pitch International LLP

Pitch International handles sports media rights and sponsorship, as well as event organisation, coverage and film and image production. Britain is at the centre of global sports, and leveraging brands such as the Premier League and Wimbledon will provide a long-term economic boon. The company has Chelsea FC and the England rugby union team on its client list, among many others.

Priority Pass

Priority Pass sells membership packages that provide access to 700 airport lounges around the world, making it the planet's largest independent airport lounge programme. It has been doing this for the past 20 years. In addition to selling passes to private customers, Priority Pass also sells direct to businesses so they can offer lounge access to customers and employees.

Rooff

Rooff is a London-based construction company whose origins stretch back more than 100 years as a family-run business. The company has a flat organisational structure, allowing management and staff to work efficiently. Managing director Mark Horn says: "Strong family ties and excellent leadership have engendered extraordinary levels of commitment from clients, colleagues and, above all, staff."

Schilling Robotics

Schilling Robotics is part of global manufacturing giant FMC Technologies, which was formed in 1884 when inventor John Bean developed a new spray pump for Californian orchards. Schilling Robotics itself makes and maintains underwater robots and manipulator arms. A modular approach to design means manufacture is streamlined, efficient and highly repeatable, boosting the firm's productivity.



Seajacks UK

Seajacks UK operates self-propelled jack-up vessels that enable the transport, installation and modification of offshore energy outfits across the North Sea. It has completed more than 300 offshore wind turbine installations. With huge investment due in the east coast offshore industry, the firm is well placed for growth. It owns and operates five of the world's most advanced self-propelled jack-up vessels.



Subsea 7 International Contracting

Subsea 7 is a fabricator of underwater robots for the oil and gas industry, and also provides offshore engineering support for drilling sites. Staff development is key to its drive for increased productivity. The company offers career development programmes in management and engineering management through its Academy 7 training initiative.

T&W Civil Engineering

Northampton-based T&W Civil Engineering is a groundwork company that builds foundations for housing and retail developments. T&W also completes other infrastructure work, including drainage systems, road building and paving. T&W has completed projects for some of the biggest developers in the UK, including Barratt Homes, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon.

The Macallan Distillers

Scotch whisky exports totalled £3.95bn in 2014 and, with 115 distilleries jostling for a share, a strong brand can go a long way. With The Macallan, parent company Edrington Group has a winning formula. Founded in 1824, it is one of the oldest Scottish distilleries and prides itself on quality. To build on that strength, it employs brand ambassadors to train staff and host tutored nosings and tastings.

United Asphalt (Theale)

United Asphalt sells road-surfacing products for use in highway construction, road maintenance and commercial, industrial and domestic applications across the South East. The company prides itself on the accessibility of its staff, and publishes contact details for all its senior management members on its website, so customers can contact them directly.

The Leisure Pass Group

Tourism technology specialist The Leisure Pass Group sells city passes that offer discounted entrance to tourist attractions. It's a great example of a small, technology-led business taking its innovation global. The company was founded in 1998 and launched The London Pass a year later. It now offers, or is in a technology partnership with, city passes for 19 different locations across Europe, Asia and North America.

Togher Construction

Togher is a specialist concrete frame construction company in the South East. The company offers training in both management and health and safety to help ensure that projects are run on time, on budget and to the highest safety standards. Togher uses a directly employed labour force, in-house formwork systems and fully certified plant equipment, so it has control of the whole project, reducing delays.

Yara UK

Yara UK began developing and supplying plant nutrient products in 1843. The firm specialises in production and distribution of nitrogen fertilisers and was bought by Norsk Hydro in 1982. It uses 'just-in-time' manufacturing processes, and has distribution centres across the UK to minimise long-distance haulage. It also uses technology such as remote sensors and apps to ensure products have the right mix of nutrients.

THE PRO50: HOW WE BUILT IT

Measuring productivity is a subtle art. To create the Pro50 list, we worked with leading information provider Jordans. We defined productivity as "the effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input". Our aim was to highlight a group of UK companies that can act as role models for productive business endeavour.

1. To establish a base list of sustainable, creditworthy UK companies, Jordans analysed UK-registered companies, and stipulated that they must have minimum net assets and credit scores.
2. We only included active, UK-registered, quoted and unquoted companies (not charities or not-for-profits). To ensure broad comparability of audited accounts, turnover was required to be between £6m and £1bn. Companies had to file employee numbers in their accounts.
3. Companies must have been profitable (latest-year pre-tax profits) and growing (showing growth in revenues in each of the previous three years' audited accounts).
4. We excluded companies in certain sectors – such as wholesale, import-export, broking, trading, investment management, energy and travel agencies – where a high turnover is a function of that business activity.
5. We then looked at the ratio of latest-year turnover to employee numbers (companies must have more than 10 employees).
6. Finally, the *Professional Manager* editorial team conducted desk research to exclude, for example, sales or administrative offices of overseas-owned companies and companies whose business activities were unclear. We also looked for clear evidence in company accounts and websites of innovation and value-adding business activity. Judgment was required here.

While we are confident that this first-year Pro50 fairly identifies highly productive UK companies, we also know that the methodology may need to evolve. If readers have any comments on our methodology or suggestions for improvement, please email matthew.rock@thinkpublishing.co.uk. Special thanks go to Jenny Savage and Martin Casey at Jordans for their expertise in compiling the list.