



trade *yorkshire*



OPPORTUNITY INDIA

ADVICE FROM UKTI'S INDIA EXPERT

FROM BATHS TO BRIDALWEAR:

CASE STUDIES FROM AROUND THE REGION

IBN GOES TO DUBLIN

WELCOME...

WELCOME TO ISSUE 5 OF TRADE YORKSHIRE, THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF UK TRADE AND INVESTMENT.

From Dubai to India, and China to America, this edition of Trade Yorkshire has a genuinely global perspective.

This quarter's selection of case studies celebrates the exporting success of just some of our region's businesses. Whether it's a household name or a brand new enterprise, all the businesses featured in these pages have been guided along the road to effective exporting by UKTI.

The undoubted highlight of this issue is an article by Julian Stretch, UKTI's immensely experienced India adviser. So if you're planning - or even thinking - about doing business on that vast and intriguing sub-continent, Julian's advice is not to be missed.

Thanks as ever to all who have contributed ideas and suggestions - with an especially big thank you to my colleague Tina Shingler.

If you have a story for Trade Yorkshire or an event for our calendar, please get in touch.



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Cover photo: View from the York Eye

GO TO THE IBN - IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!



Above from left: Ian McMillan, UKTI Poet in Residence, Graham Percival, Deputy International Trade Director, UKTI and Brody Sweeney, Founder O'Brien's Sandwich Bars. Below: Brody Sweeney.

Yorkshire businesses travelled to international networking event in Dublin in September.



The British Embassy and the Dublin Chamber of Commerce teamed up with UK Trade and Investment in Yorkshire and the Humber to provide a unique one day networking event at the Guinness Storehouse and Brewery in September.

The International Business Network (IBN) is a UKTI initiative that creates opportunities for businesses from all industries and sectors to mix with each other and share information, ideas and experience that will increase their international business potential.

Business people from fifty companies in Yorkshire and the Humber travelled to meet about eighty companies from Ireland at the Guinness Brewery. The keynote speaker was Brody Sweeney, Founder and Executive Chairman of O'Briens' Irish Sandwich Bars. UKTI's Resident Poet, Barnsley-born Ian McMillan chaired the event with mastery, adding a light hearted and literary element to the whole occasion.

Lorraine Ellison, who manages the IBN on behalf of UKTI said: "The IBN is a successful, practical and enjoyable approach to business networking. Networking is a vital tool for businesses - the old adage "it's not what you know, but who you know" is very relevant particularly when doing business internationally. IBN's success is due mainly to the vibrant environment in which the region's businesses can motivate each other to greater success by sparking off ideas and sharing expertise. Ireland marks the first international IBN and we hope this will encourage new business on both sides of the Irish Sea."

NEWS **FLEX-SEAL COUPLINGS LTD****SOUTH YORKSHIRE COMPANY
SEALS SUCCESS**

Flex-Seal Couplings Ltd design and manufacture high performance pipe connection and repair solutions for the sewerage, drainage and plumbing industry.

Flex-Seal has come a long way since it first set up in Sheffield in 1988 with two staff. Today, the company operates from a custom built production and assembly plant in Wombwell, South Yorkshire and employs more than sixty people in the UK. The company is still growing, having just extended their site to house new products and ensure room for growth over the next five years. In 2002 Flex-Seal became part of the Fernco group of companies based in Michigan, USA, creating a global group that supply the most extensive range of flexible coupling throughout the world.

UK Trade & Investment at South Yorkshire International Trade Centre (SYITC) have been working with the company to help identify further opportunities overseas as well as launch newly developed products into the international market.

Dan Penney, International Sales Director said: "We pride ourselves on being a global company with local market knowledge. So we've commissioned reports from UK Trade & Investment on some of the European markets where we would like to develop business. These reports help to narrow down the field when seeking the right business contacts overseas and they save a lot of time and resources. A recent market report we received on Spain for instance, has helped us identify business there which we are already finalising.

"The International Trade Adviser at SYITC has also pointed us towards Yorkshire Forward funding to help develop new markets such as India and Australia. We already have a team of four based permanently in India and we plan to set up a similar team in Australia."

Innovation is an integral part of the company's success and at present Flex-Seal has several new drainage products at various stages of research and development. The company is committed to launching at least two new major complementary products every year.

Eric Holland, International Trade Adviser at SYITC has been working with the company for some time.

Eric said: "The company is going from strength to strength with its overseas business because of its dedication to the expansion and development of its brand.

"The Targeted Export Support Scheme from Yorkshire Forward made funds available to do research not only on new markets but on the new brands.

"The Overseas Market Introduction Reports the company commissioned are compiled by UKTI staff in the embassies and consulates abroad. This ensures that commissioning companies like Flex-Seal have access to the latest local business knowledge available."

With visits to India and China this year, as well as strategic plans for further expansion across Europe, Flex-Seal's international trade profile seems assured for years to come.

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CHINESE FASHIONISTAS VISIT WEST YORKSHIRE

A group of Chinese fashion journalists travelled across the world to West Yorkshire this summer to see where some of the world's finest - and most expensive textiles are produced.

The reporters from Beijing and Shanghai visited the worsted firm of Moxons at Yew Tree Mills, near Huddersfield. Moxons specialise in the very best quality of wool, cashmere and wool and silk blends aimed at the highest end of the market, and their illustrious clientele range from Elton John to the late Frank Sinatra.

Lorraine Ellison, UKTI's Sector Specialist for textiles, fashion and design said:

"The journalists came to see how these top quality textiles are produced, here in the heart of West Yorkshire.

"Although the UK textile industry now employs only one tenth of the number employed in the early 1950's - mainly due to mechanisation and bulk imports from countries such as China - we have retained our pre-eminent position in the world as producers of the very best quality textiles.

"The UK's reputation for quality and style are second to none, and Bond Street, Jermyn Street and Savile Row continue to thrive as international standards of quality and style.

"The principal markets for our woollen and worsted fabrics are Italy, Japan and the United States - but we are now beginning to have success in emerging markets such as China - so the wheel has come full circle!"

The group completed their visit to the UK with a visit to London's Savile Row - to see Yorkshire's finest cloth being made up into the highest quality suits.



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SHOWCASE **MARSDEN WEIGHING GROUP**

SOUTH YORKSHIRE COMPANY WEIGHS UP THE OVERSEAS MARKET

Marsden Weighing Group in Rotherham manufacture a range of scales used primarily in the healthcare industry - both human and animal!

In 2004 the company felt ready to venture into overseas markets and they went to South Yorkshire International Trade Centre (SYITC) for advice. Here, an International Trade Adviser introduced them to two programmes that quickly put their business on the international map.

With Yorkshire Forward's Targeted Export Support Scheme (TESS), the company were able to finance a sales catalogue in four languages which enabled them to reach, and soon appoint, distributors in Sweden, Holland, Spain and Italy.

At the same time they were made aware of UK Trade & Investment's Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) which provided them with a personalised report on business leads in Holland in Spain.

Richard Black, Finance Director said: "The OMIS reports are compiled locally by UKTI staff based in the embassies and consulates overseas, and we found them extremely well researched and well targeted. It's like having your own business intelligence scout on the ground over there, and well worth the cost - around £800."

The two country reports put the company in touch with 10-15 possible customers in each country and even gauged the degree of interest from them, to save the company valuable time.

He added: "We were amazed that within a week of commissioning

the OMIS reports we had active interest from a Dutch customer and within six weeks we began trading with them."

With a staff of around thirty, most of the manufacturing for the scales is done in Rotherham, while the electronics are made in the Far East.

The company have just applied for more TESS funding to launch a series of new products into their growing overseas markets, and they are planning further OMIS reports to explore business opportunities in other markets.

In just two and half years exports have grown from 6% to 15% of turnover. This is a steady rate of growth which the company hopes to sustain as it looks to penetrate the healthcare markets overseas.

Eric Holland, International Trade Adviser at SYITC who has been assisting the company said:

"I'm happy that we have been able to identify a mix of funding and research that works for the company by combining two excellent programmes from Yorkshire Forward and UK Trade & Investment.

We are keen to support local companies who wish to develop overseas markets for their products and services."



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INTERNATIONAL EMBASSY DELEGATES VISIT LEEDS

Leeds played host to a group of 24 Embassy officials from 18 countries in June. The officials took part in a week long briefing course in the largest ever visit of its kind.

The delegates - who came from as far afield as Russia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Canada - form part of UK Trade & Investment's global network of offices in British embassies overseas. The course was organised by UKTI and the City of London Corporation, and was designed to broaden the delegates' understanding of the UK financial services sector - including law, professional services, business education and PPP initiatives.

Mark Robson, UKTI's Regional International Trade Director said:

"The financial and legal strength of centres like Leeds helps to underpin the UK's world class position in financial services.

"Taking part in a visit to Leeds was an ideal opportunity for the delegates to learn more about our region and what it has to offer. This in turn will help to enhance the services we can offer to businesses when they are seeking to do business abroad, and for overseas enterprises seeking to locate in the UK.

"As well as our international trade advisors in the regions, UKTI has a network of staff in the major countries around the world. We rely on them to keep the channels of information open for British companies wanting market information from abroad and for overseas businesses wanting market information on the UK.

"The commercial staff in our embassies and consulates are the first port of call for many overseas companies looking for potential business opportunities in Yorkshire and the Humber."

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SHOWCASE **CLEARWATER COLLECTIONS**

BRADFORD BATH COMPANY SOAKS UP OVERSEAS ORDERS

Looking for a bit of bath-time luxury? Fancy soaking in the bubbles celebrity style? Clearwater Collections of Bradford make a range of exclusive free-standing baths, from slipper baths with traditional ball and claw feet to streamlined designs with fine wood finishes.

Clearwater Collections was one of the first in the region to benefit from UK Trade & Investment's Passport to Export programme almost four years ago.

UKTI also lent a further helping hand as the company expanded - by sponsoring Managing Director Darren Allison to attend a prestigious business development course in Chicago. This persuaded him that setting up a base in America was the way forward, and so Clearwater Collections have recently set up their own company, Clearwater America, based in Connecticut to handle the volume of orders there more efficiently.

Set up in 1999 with just three people, Clearwater Collections now employs more than 120 staff and has just moved into a new manufacturing and office base to accommodate its ever-expanding business. International sales now account for 16% of its £5.5 million turnover, and has grown more than 24% in the last twelve months.

Darren Allison, Managing Director said: "From day one we knew that our luxury hand-made 'twin-skin' baths would have a major appeal to overseas markets but getting onto the export track can be a slow and expensive business. It can be especially difficult to identify the right contacts. Passport helped us structure our thinking and it gave us some invaluable advice on organising the finances of our international trade activities.

"International trade advisers at the Business Link also alerted us to the West Yorkshire Targeted Export Support (WYTES) funding which has helped us get to overseas exhibitions to showcase our products. Two

years ago it enabled us to exhibit at a trade fair in Dubai for the first time which gave us a foothold in the Middle East that is now paying off significantly. Among other deals, we have just won a contract from a private development company in Dubai for £600,000 with more orders in the offing."

The business development programme Darren attended was run by Kellogg's in Chicago.

He commented: "The course consisted of two weeks of intensive business training followed by a two-week attachment to an American company. This gave me a unique insight into how business is done in the US, and it convinced me that setting up our own office there was the best way forward. Once again we were able to access WYTES funding to help realise this project in the US."

Clearwater believes its investment in development is the key to success. There are currently five full-time development staff working in Bradford who are constantly refining the design and manufacture of Clearwater products.

Melanie Tait is UK Trade & Investment's international trade adviser at West Yorkshire Business Link. Melanie said:

"Identifying the WYTES funding, which is a Yorkshire Forward scheme, has been an integral part of Clearwater Collection's success story. In the latest venture in America, I know that Darren has also had advice and guidance from UK Trade & Investment staff based at the Consulate in Chicago and, of course, here at the Business Link we will continue to support the company in their future overseas projects."



Darren Allison, Managing Director

FEATURE **JULIAN STRETCH OBE****JULIAN STRETCH IS UKTI'S INDIA BUSINESS ADVISOR**

OPPORTUNITY INDIA

India is moving on to the international business agenda of more and more UK companies - and quite rightly too. It is headed to becoming one of the world's most important markets. And one of continental proportions!



Today's India is a far cry from the licensed "raj" that typified it until the early 1990's. It has deregulated, demolished its harsh import licensing regime and as part of a continuing process allows full foreign ownership in a growing number of sectors. It welcomes foreign goods, technology and investment. Its currency - the rupee - has been convertible on trade account for many years. The economy, underpinned by a booming private sector and a rapidly growing consumer class, is growing around the 8% mark.

There is a strong cultural heritage between our two countries and we have much in common - including a love of cricket! English is the language of commerce and our legal systems are substantially the same. Indeed the way we go about our daily work is very similar. We therefore feel very much at home as we visit and do business in India.

And it doesn't stop at just doing business in India. An increasing number of UK companies are finding that the economics of a base or a partnership in India enables them to access third country markets that they might otherwise have eluded them.

But whilst India has changed, it still remains bureaucratic and its infrastructure leaves a lot to be desired - to put it mildly! The environment can be demanding and Indian businessmen are amongst the world's smartest negotiators. It takes time and patience to do business - often longer than the initial forecast. But the rewards can be considerable and remember this is a

market of continental proportions and one that is growing rapidly.

So how do you prepare to do business in India? Well - and much of this is self evident - the first thing to do is to satisfy yourself that there is a market for your product or service. India is one of the most price competitive markets in the world, so try to do some research on competitive local pricing. And will your product stand up to Indian conditions - heat, damp, dust, electrical fluctuations and so? How about your packaging - will it stand up to India's transport conditions? The Indian market place is vast and whilst some parts are growing fast, others are not growing at all. So where in India should you be looking to do business? Who with and why?

There is help in coming to terms with all this all this from UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) where a variety of services are available to help you including market information reports, lists of potential agents, distributors, partners and so on. UKTI also arranges and financially supports trade missions to the big cities of India. These often take in a major industry specific exhibition which can be a great way to make a first visit to this market.

Further details of UKTI services and local contacts are on www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk. The India country pages on that site contain useful summaries of all India's major industrial and commercial sectors. Your local contacts for international trade can be contacted at www.tradeyorkshire.com

First time visitors are often shocked by the contrasts that greet them. The journey from most airports includes sights of abject poverty to immense wealth and amongst the world's most congested roads. India is a country of huge contrasts and nothing can prepare the first time visitor for them.

Plan your visit carefully. And don't forget you will need a visit visa. You can download the application from www.hcilondon.net Try to be sure you are meeting the decision makers in the companies you want to visit - not always as easy as it sounds. Check whether there are any national or local holidays during your visit and be sure to leave enough time between meetings to get from one to the other. Crossing some of India's big cities can literally take hours. Taxis are safe but can and do get lost. Better to ask for a hotel car. There is a wide range of hotel accommodation in India including some of the world's best. The big travel season is October to March and during this time hotels are often fully booked. So book your hotels as soon as you can - and ask the hotel to arrange to meet you at the airport as you arrive. That can save a lot of hassle. Internal air travel is good and plentiful. Overnight trains are fun and show you parts of India you would not otherwise see.

India is a relationship based society. And business is very much about relationships. These take time to build - and to maintain. But they are hugely important. Often it is the quality of the relationship rather than the provisions of agreements that will resolve disagreements or



disputes. So be sure you have the time and capacity for this - and are sending the right people to India with seniority and authority. First meetings may be all about relationship building rather than discussing business. The decision making process can take several meetings and involve several people. And often bureaucracy rears its head to delay and occasionally prevent decisions.

Connections are important too. One of the benefits of going on a UKTI sponsored trade mission is that the British High Commission can often use its connections to get you to see people you might otherwise have to wait ages to see. Connections are the fast track to decision makers.

Entering the Indian market successfully generally takes longer - and therefore costs more - than most companies originally estimate. Surprises and delays seem to pop out of the wood work. So gain and maintain top management commitment to your market entry strategies. It helps to have an Indian "champion" in the board room - all the better if it is the chief executive.

Age and "keeping face" are important factors to remember. Age demands respect and in many companies is part of the hierarchy. Forms of address vary widely from "Sir" and "Madam" through to first names from the very first meeting. Some of India's older companies have a formal style and others, particularly in the newer industries such as IT, are informal in both their style and dress codes. The fear of losing face or the presence of seniors restricts some from contributing to a discussion. The good and much used "no problem" can often mean quite the opposite. Drawing out comment or explanation can sometimes be tough but invariably is worth it. The secret perhaps is always to ask open questions.

Once back from the visit to India stay in touch and follow up. You may well have left India thinking you were the proverbial answer to the maiden's prayer but out of sight is also out of mind. So you will almost certainly have to chase the promised actions.

Above all though, enjoy India.

STARS AND STRIPES FOR MASHAM FIRM

A quintessentially English preserves manufacturer has received a prestigious award from the world's leading retailer of natural and organic foods.

Masham-based Rosebud Preserves has been awarded Artisan status by America's Whole Foods for its rosemary and mint jellies. The award is the culmination of several years' relationship building with American buyers. This was first instigated by UKTI and Business Link York and North Yorkshire in 2001, when Elspeth took part in an international buyers' visit organised on behalf of a group of North Yorkshire food and drink manufacturers.

The visit, jointly funded with UKTI, was a resounding success, and many of the US buyers have continued to deal with Rosebud Preserves over the last five years - a relationship that has culminated in coveted Artisan status for the two Rosebud ranges.

Elspeth Billoft, Rosebud Preserves' managing proprietor, has been running her organic preserves-producing business from converted barns in Healey since 1989 and now employs five staff.

Malcolm Blackwell, UKTI's international trade team leader for York and North Yorkshire said: "Artisan status is awarded in recognition of a commitment to excellence and all-encompassing attention to detail. It is a much sought after accreditation given to small, often family-run enterprises, who make the finest quality foods in small batches using natural, traditional ingredients.

"As well as the prestige that comes with achieving Artisan status, Elspeth's products will be sold in 184 stores across North America. It just goes to show that a rural location holds no bounds."

Rosebud Preserves now exports 20% of its turnover to the USA - a significant percentage for a small preserves manufacturer in rural North Yorkshire, and have recently taken an order for 33,000 jars of mint and rosemary jelly.

Malcolm added: "This is exactly what we hoped the buyers' visits would achieve - putting international buyers in touch with traditional British businesses that would probably never otherwise meet."



Elspeth Billoft with Malcolm Blackwell

For further information visit www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk or www.tradeyorkshire.com

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MAMAS & PAPAS WELCOMES THE WORLD TO ITS DOORS

Since its foundation 25 years ago, Huddersfield-based firm Mamas & Papas have established themselves as the UK's number one nursery brand.



Left to Right:
Olivia Scacchetti,
Richard Faulkner (Deputy
Chief Executive),
Khalid Al Tayer (Al Tayer
Group General Manager),
Lousia Scacchetti,
David Scacchetti,
Amanda Scacchetti

Mamas & Papas currently have 1,100 staff, over 2,500 products and achieved a turnover of over £100 million in 2006. Celebrity fans of the Mamas & Papas brand include footballer's wife Victoria Beckham and fashion designer Stella McCartney.

In the summer of 2006 the family owned business that started life as a small independent nursery care store in 1981 marked another milestone, with the signing of an exclusive franchise agreement with the Dubai based Al Tayer group.

The agreement includes the launching of stores in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman. A total of three stores will be launched in 2006, with an additional nine further launches planned across the region by autumn 2009. All franchise stores will offer a comprehensive range of the affordable luxury nursery products for which Mamas & Papas are renowned.

Mamas & Papas worked with local UK Trade & Investment advisors Simon Bedford and Brian Aungiers to assist the company with obtaining background information on the Middle East markets.

Allen Hill, International Franchise Development Manager, Mamas & Papas Ltd said: "Simon and Brian put us in contact with other UK based franchisors with operations in the Middle East such as Marks & Spencer, Harvey Nichols, Monsoon and Costa Coffee.

"The meetings proved invaluable and helped us to shape the format of our franchise offer. It highlighted a number of Middle East region-specific issues and subtleties that could only be identified from experience of working with the region.

"This enabled us to formulate a strategy to address these issues and subtleties before we encountered them during contract negotiations or during ongoing operations with our franchisee. We are sure that the

insights gained from these meetings will translate into tangible commercial benefits as our business develops.

"The proactive support given by the local representatives of UK Trade & Investment has been first class. The depth and quality of the network of contacts is truly impressive - ranging from overseas embassies to other UK-based retailers with established international franchise businesses."

Simon Bedford added: "UKTI's services have traditionally been aimed at small to medium sized companies who're at the beginning of their road to success and expansion - rather like Mamas & Papas were 25 years ago!

"But now we're beginning to expand our offer to include larger companies as well. Working with a well known brand such as Mamas & Papas as they begin to examine their options prior to expanding overseas has been very fruitful.

"We've been able to assist the company with a range of services and contacts that they haven't accessed before such as the Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) which will put them directly in touch with staff in our overseas offices and provide focused business advice and visit support. There's also the Export Market Research Scheme which can give companies, whatever their size, valuable market information ahead of their decision to commit to an overseas venture. "

Colin Taverner, Franchise Development Manager for Mamas & Papas Ltd said: "Whilst Mamas & Papas' international franchise business is still very much in its infancy, I am sure that the insights into the foreign markets we are targeting provided by the UK Trade and Investment will translate into tangible commercial benefits as our business develops. I would also expect OMIS to form a key element of our research into new markets as we extend the global reach of our international franchise business"

CASE STUDY **GB SOLO**

AWARD-WINNING NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COMPANY TO THE RESCUE!

Scunthorpe based firm GB Solo produce state-of-the-art fire fighting systems which are in demand worldwide.

From countries in the Far East to international cruise liners and Formula One pit crews, GB Solo's ergonomically designed fire management equipment is saving lives and ensuring the safety of thousands around the world.

GB Solo produces a fire fighting and life-support system called Sentry 4. This includes helmets with a built in two-way communications headset, body harnesses, 10-minute escape sets and a communications command console. Earlier this year GB Solo had interest in the system from an Italian customer. The company felt that a translation into Italian of their marketing brochure would help nudge the sale along.

Austen Ward at UK Trade & Investment in Business Link Humber suggested that the company apply for funding under the Targeted Export Support Scheme (TESS) a Yorkshire Forward grant that helps companies penetrate new overseas markets or develop new products for international trade.

Austen said:

"The company already had a healthy overseas trade activity but sometimes a little extra help can make all the difference to clinching a sale in a new market."

"The TESS grant part funded the Italian translation and subsequently GB Solo not only got a substantial sale in Italy but now have another in the pipeline. UK Trade & Investment is now looking to work with the company to develop their existing business overseas and explore new markets."

In 2003 Managing Director, Victoria Brooks, won the regional award for Young Business Woman of the Year and in 2004 the company won the Exporter of the Year Award and also the Business Growth Award for the Humber region.



Contact: Austen Ward on 07717 345572 Email: award@blhumber.co.uk www.gbsolo.com

UKTI TAKES ACADEMICS BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

Seventeen academics from the Universities of York and Leeds went back to the classroom in July to learn about international business - thanks to a specially designed training course provided through UKTI. The academics, whose disciplines range from archaeology to health sciences, all provide advanced training courses for external organisations in addition to their regular university duties.

Nev Breedon, UKTI's sector specialist for Knowledge Transfer, said:

"The university approached us for help in providing a bespoke training course aimed at its highly specialised needs. We were delighted to be able to help in setting up this course. It's the first of its kind in the UK, and we hope it will be a trail blazer for further courses in the future."

Amanda Selvaratnam, the University of York's Continuing Professional Development Manager said:

"Universities today are becoming more business oriented than ever before, and the University of York is no exception. Twenty-two of our academic departments provide specialised training to external clients, and this was an area of unexplored potential for us. We needed to see how the market could be expanded.

"I attended a trade mission to Malaysia to learn more about the international opportunities that might be available to the University in their role as a training provider. It really opened my eyes to an untapped source of potential new markets.

"So we contacted UKTI who have helped to set up this course, and the response has been overwhelming. The course was heavily oversubscribed which shows how great the need is for this type of training."

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NEWS ANITA MASSARELLA

LEEDS BRIDAL DESIGNER UNVEILS OVERSEAS EXPORT PLANS



In a small shop window in North Leeds, framed like exquisite works of art, Anita Massarella's unique bridal gowns combine haute couture with timeless elegance.

Massarella's designs display an unmistakable Italian sense of style with her own brand of Yorkshire flair: open any quality bridal magazine and you are sure to see one of her creations gracing its pages. With the help of UK Trade & Investment, she is now seeking to explore overseas interest in her exclusive haute couture bridal wear.

Anita started out her career as a fashion lecturer but she always preferred designing and sewing to teaching. In 1990 she set up a company to focus on her own exclusively designed collections, using luxurious fabrics to create the sculpted styles that have become her trademark.

Anita said: "I've made it my business to build up a passionate and skilled team here at the showroom in Leeds. From my talented young design assistants to the skilled seamstresses, everyone has a valuable input into each design.

"We're very aware that we're not just making bridal gowns but also trying to make individual dreams come true - and that's quite a responsibility! Knowing you are creating something that's going to be the focal point of your client's 'big day' is always a wonderful challenge."

All the bridal gowns are designed and made on the showroom premises so that Anita can personally oversee every stage of each gown from cutting to final fit. Sourcing the finest fabrics available from France, Italy, India and China is also key to the company's success.

Anita added: "In August I went to a trade exhibition in Dublin where I launched a complete new range of gowns. It's the start of one of my first ventures outside the UK and the whole team is very excited about it."



Lorraine Ellison, UK Trade & Investment's fashion and textile specialist is constantly working to identify and create overseas opportunities for companies across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Lorraine worked with Anita to ensure she got the most out of the exhibition, and also suggested that the company commission an Overseas Market Introduction Report (OMIS) on the bridal wear market in Ireland. Compiled by UK Trade & Investment staff at the embassy in Dublin, the OMIS gives an invaluable insight into opportunities in Ireland for designer bridal wear - as well as indicating some strong business leads to follow.

Lorraine said: "For a small company like Anita's that creates such an exclusive range, looking for fast expansion overseas would be a mistake. The quality and attention to detail that epitomise her gowns would be impossible if she were to grow too quickly, so we want to start the ball rolling very gently.

"Nevertheless, besides Ireland we are also keeping an eye on potential markets further afield. I have recently introduced Anita to Mohammad Al-Bastaki - one of UK Trade & Investment's commercial staff based at the Embassy in Dubai where I believe there may be great market for her evening couture designs."

Meanwhile the company has been limbering up for future overseas business with UK Trade & Investment's Passport to Export programme which helps new exporters prepare the ground for their first international sales.

SHOWCASE **C3S GROUP**

GLASS SAFETY SOLUTIONS SMASH INTO FAR EAST MARKETS

C3S Group based in Elland, West Yorkshire are experts in meeting the safety and security needs of the corporate sector.

This ranges from the production of specialised reinforced glass to fire-resistant and smoke-control systems in the workplace.

UKTI is working with C3S Securiglass as the company expands its international operations.

With a fully staffed marketing office already set up in Hong Kong, the company's latest venture is the opening of a glass-cutting centre in China to supply its customers in the Far East.

Graham Midgley, Chairman, said: "For some time now we have been supplying substantial orders destined for some prestigious projects in the Far East. But we felt we could be doing more to pick up some of the day-to-day business in that market - which would not be cost-effective to pursue from the UK.

"Our plant in China allows us to cut glass to meet more of the routine orders and ship to customers in the Far East in two to three days. That's the same service level that we give to our UK customers.

"With our new capacity we have recently been able to meet large orders involving 2000 square metres of glass, as well as being able to cut and deliver much smaller orders for five and six square metres.

Graham Midgley
C3S Group
Chairman
meets Mr
Guan Yong
Zhang



This is the kind of flexibility that we would not have had without the new plant."

Brian Aungiers, UK Trade & Investment's international trade adviser at West Yorkshire Business Link has been working with C3S for some time. Brian said:

"With our international teams based all over the world we have been able to offer the company added support in their overseas projects in the Far East.

"The UK Trade & Investment teams based in the embassies are able to gather information on the ground for British companies. On this basis they have been able to supply C3S Securiglass with the very latest market reports on a number of countries where they want to develop business."

With the 2008 Olympics in China just around the corner, C3S Securiglass is expecting business in the Far East to grow rapidly - and it is now in the best position to respond effectively.

Contact: Brian Aungiers on 07764 376726 Email: brian.aungiers@blwy.co.uk www.c-3-s.com

HANDY POOLSIDE SAFE MAKING A BIG SPLASH OVERSEAS

Picture the scene: you're lying by the pool and you're browning nicely in the sun. You're ready to take a dip in the water. But what do you do with your wallet and mobile and other valuables?

Grimsby based innovations company, Kool Ideas, has come up with a solution that's so obvious it's positively ingenious. The Bathebuddy™ is a small piece of outdoor furniture that doubles as a personal safe. It keeps your belongings conveniently at hand while you are sunbathing, and lets you stow them safely away when you head off into the pool or the sea.

Ian MacKenzie, Consultant Managing Director for Kool Ideas said: "Recent research has found that increasing numbers of people hate to be parted from their gadgets whilst on holiday, often cramming as much £1,500 worth of valuables in their beach bags to survive a day at the seaside.

"We spotted the gap in the market and spent two years designing the product so that it was as stylish as it was practical. We finally launched the Bathebuddy™ in 2005 at the World Travel Market in London where it got a lot of interest."

The company has already shipped a sizable order to Spain and has more overseas customers knocking on the door. As well as serving a practical purpose, the Bathebuddy™ also provides great advertising

opportunities for big companies who are keen to brand it with their logo.

Never having exported before, Kool Ideas signed up to UK Trade & Investment's Passport programme in 2005. With a combination of training, advice and support to new exporters, it was just what the company needed to launch their exciting new product into the international market.

Austen Ward, International Trade Adviser at Business Link Humber said: "Anyone can see why this company is really going to take off over the next year or so. They had a good idea, but they followed it up with a lot of hard work and research and it's paying off. Doing the Passport programme went some way to preparing them for the international trade activity which is rapidly taking off in all directions"

The company has just returned from the US where the Bathebuddy™ is currently being trialled by a major Florida-based hotel group. Further sales have already been made in Italy, and having recently made an agreement with a large hotel-purchasing group in the United Arab Emirates, the product is soon likely to appear poolside in leading hotels in the Middle East. Negotiations are also currently ongoing with distributors in Malaysia, Tenerife, Cyprus and Malta.



Contact: Austen Ward on 07717 345572 Email: award@blhumber.co.uk www.bathebuddy.com

ADVICE **PASSPORT TO EXPORT****PASSPORT TO SUCCESS**

Passport to Export (P2E) is UKTI's flagship workshop-based training programme. Over the last three years over 500 SMEs in Yorkshire and the Humber have benefited from the advice and guidance on offer.

The package costs £250 including VAT and provides:

- Expert assistance with market research, market entry and marketing materials
- A tailored programme of training to develop export skills within your company
- Help in developing a company diagnostic and action plan
- Up to £3000 of matched funding to help implement your export plan
- Free on-going export advice

Following a recent review, the programme has been revised to take into account the views expressed by past delegates. The two day residential workshop has been modified and will now take place over one day. This should make it more feasible for smaller companies to attend.

The workshops will now lead into a new and expanded programme of masterclasses covering a wide variety of topics from international marketing, working with agents and distributors to advice on doing business with specific countries such as India and the USA.

"P2E was excellent. Well delivered, seamless and professional."

"Thank you for such a great course presented by such knowledgeable speakers."

"This was a complete eye opener to the world of exporting."

"The trainer was absolutely first class. His pace was quick...and his teaching made learning almost effortless. A joy to learn from and I don't say that often."

"The speakers knew their stuff and delivered interesting and stimulating presentations."

*Dates and further details can be found in the forthcoming events diary below.
Contact: Denise Rymer, Passport Co-ordinator on 0113 394 9822*

FORTHCOMING EVENTSTELEPHONE **0113 394 9825**

Greater Richmond Partnership Roundtable
12.00 noon until 2.00pm including buffet lunch
31st October

British-American Business Council
102 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4LT

Meet the team from the Greater Richmond Partnership Inc at an informal working roundtable luncheon aimed at small and medium sized companies who are looking to grow their transatlantic business.

Contact: Debra Crossley
Tel: 0113 244 1423
Email: info@babcyorkshire.org

EU-China Partenariat 2006
9th & 10th November

Chengdu, China

Offers UK companies a good opportunity to meet potential business partners face-to-face. Aims to bring together 515 Chinese and 400 EU businesses.

Contact: Renate Halton
Tel: 0114 201 8888
Email: euchinapartenariat@scci.org.uk

Yorkshire & Humber Mission to Hong Kong and China (Chengdu),
Coinciding with the EU China Partenariat
4th - 13th November

Hong Kong and China (Chengdu)

To coincide with the matchmaking event SCCI will be leading a mission to Hong Kong and Chengdu. A limited number of eligible Yorkshire and Humber companies can benefit from up to £1,000 towards the cost of travel and accommodation.

Contact: Laura Grieve
Tel: 0114 2491283
Email: Laura.Grieve@scci.org.uk

Passport to Export workshop

4th October Courtyard by Marriott, Tong near Bradford

11th October Brooklands Hotel, Barnsley

1st November TBC

22nd November Thorpe Park Hotel, Leeds

6th December The Village Hotel, Hull

One day workshop for new and inexperienced exporters.

Contact: Denise Rymer, UK Trade & Investment
Tel: 0113 3949822
Email: Denise.rymer@uktradeinvest-yh.org.uk

UK Trade & Investment is a government organisation, a partnership between the DTI and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, whose role is to help companies to trade successfully in global markets.

We work with any UK company that wants to trade internationally, but isn't sure how to go about it, or that is already doing so, but believes they could do it better.

Our aim is to provide your business with access to information and opportunities that allow you to make informed decisions about international trade development, and take your business further faster.