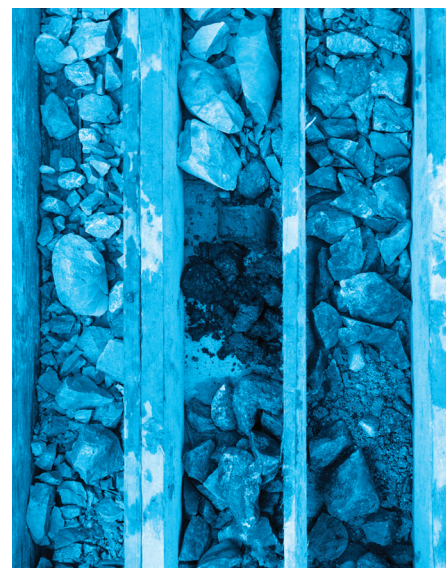


## The region's fastest growing businesses 2015



# Welcome to the 2015 edition of the BHP/Sheffield Star Rapid Growth Survey

From its inception in 2008 the purpose of this survey has been to highlight those businesses within our region whose vision, energy and determination has generated substantial growth. It is therefore particularly noteworthy that this year's survey has seen the highest ever levels of growth.

The average two year sales growth within the 2015 Top 30 was a very impressive 99%. This compares to 73% in 2014 and a low point of 39% in 2011. Undoubtedly this is a reflection of the improved economic environment generating increased business and consumer confidence.

Whilst doubling turnover in two years is without question a fantastic achievement, our experience of working with rapid growth companies highlights that this level of growth generates its own challenges.

Chief amongst these is access to finance. A growing business will typically be increasing its stockholding levels, employing additional staff, investing in plant and machinery and potentially opening new operations. All these activities consume cash and it is therefore vital to ensure that funding lines are in place to support growth.

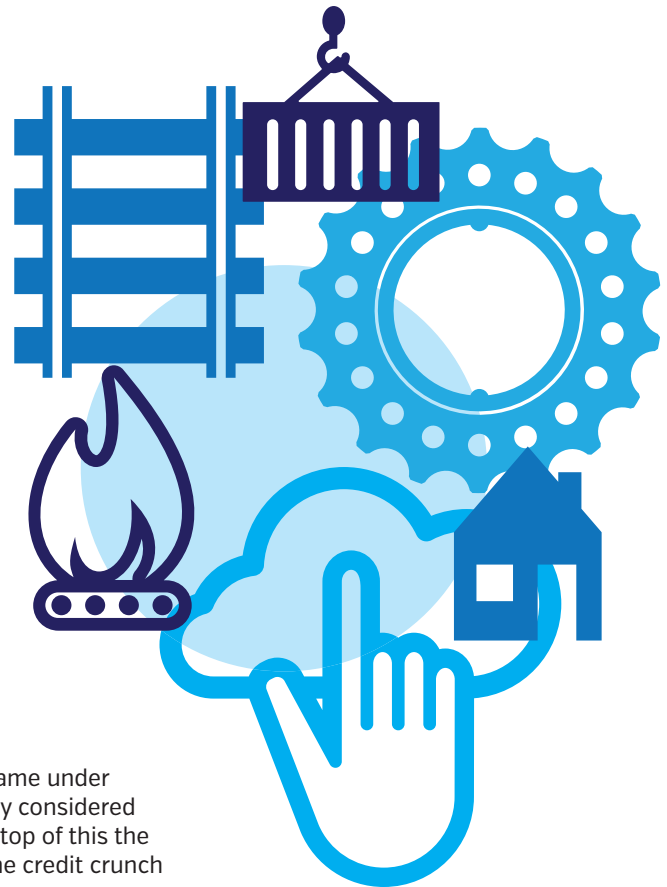
Fortunately there are a wide variety of options open to growing companies. Indeed, it could be argued that our region's businesses have never had it so good when it comes to the choice of funders.

In the downturn and its immediate aftermath, the high street banks came under fire for not lending. Our current experience is however that for properly considered business plans, the banks are indeed "open for business". Overlay on top of this the continued presence in the market of alternative funders born out of the credit crunch and the choice is wide and varied. As ever, it's horses for courses and the key is choosing the right funder for the specific situation.

In last year's survey I sounded a note of caution about risks to the continued recovery and in particular global political uncertainty. These are still present and in recent weeks have been joined by further concerns over China. What our Top 30 has shown however is that in general the conditions for growth have remained positive. With continued access to "growth capital" to help fuel business plans, I am hopeful that next year's results will tell a similarly positive story about our region's fastest growing companies.



**Don Gray**  
[don.gray@bhp.co.uk](mailto:don.gray@bhp.co.uk)





# Confidence is key



When you see the Chancellor on the news visiting a construction site adorned in a hi-vis jacket and hard hat you realise that what often follows is the release of positive economic data. But why does the Chancellor choose to deliver his message in this way?

Coming out of the recession it was clear that the construction industry in the region was badly affected. Firms were unable to finance ongoing projects, office blocks were being completed but remaining empty, there was an exodus of talent and property prices were falling. Confidence to commit to large capital projects and development works was low. However it now appears that this trend is reversing.

Looking back over the past 5 years of Rapid Growth Surveys it can be seen that the roots of the Sheffield City Region lie strongly within the manufacturing and engineering sectors. Each year these two sectors have together consistently made up 20% - 30% of the companies listed in the survey.

Notably, this year the construction sector made up the greatest proportion of the companies in the survey at 27% compared with just 7% 5 years ago, with an influx of new entrants achieving substantial growth. Commercial and residential property development companies such as Strawson Developments and Strata Homes have demonstrated significant growth in turnover owing to stronger plot sales and the conversion of development works.

The increased prominence of these companies in this year's survey is an encouraging sign that businesses and consumers are willing, able and have the confidence to commit to significant capital outlays.

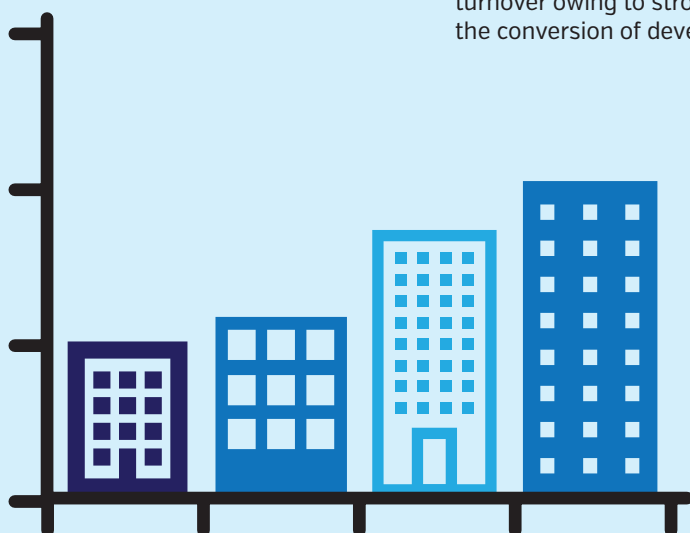
On a more regional level it is also encouraging to see larger scale developments being undertaken such as the Olympic Legacy Park on the former Don Valley site, the iPort at Doncaster and the proposed retail quarter in Sheffield City Centre, all multi-million pound projects set to bring added prosperity and act as catalysts to continuing investment.

Finally, the importance of opportunities and resources to support businesses in the region is evident. The regional growth programme gave 120 private companies the means and confidence to deliver capital development projects. Hopefully we will see local and national support continue to deliver this for businesses.

As you may have picked up on, confidence for me is the "buzz" word and it is exactly the reason the Chancellor delivered his message in this way... confidence is returning to the market and we should be building for the future.



**David Bellamy**  
[david.bellamy@bhp.co.uk](mailto:david.bellamy@bhp.co.uk)



# Rapid growth survey

2015 ranking	2014 ranking	Company name	Location	Latest accounts date	Turnover latest year end £000	Turnover 2 years ago £000	Turnover growth
1	-	Alan Auld Associates	Doncaster	31/03/2014	5,733	1,468	290.5%
2	-	Mattu	Doncaster	31/12/2013	3,817	1,096	248.3%
3	-	Linbrooke Services <sup>1</sup>	Sheffield	30/09/2014	40,737	11,764	246.3%
4	-	Strawson Group Developments	Retford	28/02/2014	7,253	2,413	200.6%
5	-	Strata Homes	Doncaster	31/12/2014	86,738	36,902	135.0%
6	-	Navartis	Doncaster	31/03/2015	24,185	11,097	117.9%
7	-	T R Engineering	Sheffield	30/06/2014	4,020	1,935	107.7%
8	-	Angela Swift Holdings <sup>2</sup>	Barnsley	31/12/2014	6,757	3,314	103.9%
9	-	Transdek U.K.	Doncaster	31/12/2014	7,646	3,821	100.1%
10	-	Ebecs	Chesterfield	31/03/2014	20,922	10,924	91.5%
11	-	Evolution Funding	Chesterfield	31/12/2014	24,388	13,013	87.4%
12	27	Pressure Technologies	Sheffield	30/09/2014	54,015	30,442	77.4%
13	-	Planet X	Rotherham	30/03/2014	20,447	11,610	76.1%
14	-	Management Cubed <sup>1</sup>	Sheffield	31/01/2015	22,511	12,856	75.1%
15	5	BDB Design Build	Sheffield	31/03/2014	24,106	13,792	74.8%
16	-	Powell Engineering UK <sup>1</sup>	Doncaster	31/12/2014	10,515	6,060	73.5%
17	-	Griffingold <sup>2</sup>	Sheffield	31/12/2014	18,965	11,011	72.2%
18	17	X-Cel Superturn (GB)	Sheffield	31/03/2014	23,484	14,099	66.6%
19	-	Jigsaw Foods	Mansfield	31/05/2014	18,497	11,371	62.7%
20	-	Morris & CO. (Handlers)	Doncaster	01/10/2014	17,321	10,744	61.2%
21	21	Osborne Technologies	Barnsley	31/03/2014	3,256	2,022	61.0%
22	-	Chesterfield Poultry	Chesterfield	30/06/2014	72,769	45,269	60.7%
23	-	Dialogue Group	Sheffield	31/07/2014	20,210	12,613	60.2%
24	-	Smith Bros.(Caerconan)Wholesale	Doncaster	31/12/2014	47,905	29,926	60.1%
25	-	Rotherham Healthcare Holdings	Rotherham	31/12/2013	4,328	2,706	60.0%
26	-	Liberty Group Holdings	Sheffield	30/06/2014	8,835	5,535	59.6%
27	-	Company Shop	Barnsley	30/09/2014	31,160	19,765	57.7%
28	-	One Health Group	Sheffield	31/03/2014	11,284	7,185	57.0%
29	-	Rick Bestwick	Chesterfield	31/12/2013	13,646	8,693	57.0%
30	16	A. Cowley & Sons	Worksop	31/03/2014	6,132	3,950	55.2%

<sup>1</sup> Turnover and operating profit for the latest year end have been pro-rated on a straight line basis to reflect a 12 month period

<sup>2</sup> Turnover and operating profit for year ended 2 years ago have been pro-rated on a straight line basis to reflect a 12 month period

# Survey 2015 - Top 30

Operating profit latest year end £000	Operating profit 2 years ago £000	Activity	Latest number of employees
580	301	A group engaged in consultancy and design in the fields of civil mining and geotechnical engineering.	n/d
117	172	Retail service station, food service outlet and general post office.	n/d
3,421	801	A group engaged in a multi disciplined rail and power contractor.	291
1,900	378	A group engaged in property development.	16
9,569	1,345	A group engaged in housebuilding operations.	149
1,404	678	The provision of medium term and permanent engineering staff to third parties.	31
445	135	The manufacture of boilers and heat pumps.	n/d
1,421	1,110	A group engaged in developing a niche market in luxury and innovative care homes.	290
1,131	182	The design and supply of mechanical handling, conveying and lifting equipment to the transport and distribution industries amongst others.	n/d
370	505	A group engaged in hardware consultancy and computer activities.	154
2,119	595	Financial brokerage and car sales.	n/d
5,560	1,760	Design and manufacture of seamless pressure gas cylinders, precision engineered valve components for use in oil/gas industry, air operated high pressure hydraulic pumps and control panels, gas boosters, power packs and test rigs, biogas upgrading products.	245
377	1,305	A group engaged in the sale of bicycles and bicycle parts.	104
618	123	Project construction and cost management.	52
602	530	The design and build of industrial and commercial properties and motor retail developments.	19
1,005	428	Installation of electrical switchgear.	84
1,174	540	A group engaged in upvc window manufacture.	192
3,902	1,896	The manufacture of precision engineering components.	138
918	867	A group engaged in the manufacture and cryogenic freezing of sauces and condiments.	109
734	254	A group engaged in the sale of salvaged and reclaimed materials.	23
298	218	The sale, installation and maintenance of computer systems.	n/d
3,224	1,234	The provision of wholesale halal poultry services.	55
1,229	257	A group engaged in the provision and management of interactive mobile communication services.	55
2,385	1,414	The distribution of electrical materials.	60
1,038	497	A group engaged in the provision of residential care.	174
2,180	1,175	A group engaged in the manufacture, sale and hiring out of site cabins and related equipment.	68
2,107	973	A group engaged in the wholesale and reprocessing of food products.	497
689	432	A group engaged in the provision of management services for group companies.	27
656	372	The wholesale of game and the operation of a cold store.	112
464	239	Timber, concrete and stone merchants.	n/d

## BHP Rapid Growth Survey 2015: Criteria

Research finalised 24/08/2015. To qualify for inclusion in the survey businesses must have:

- traded for at least three years
- shown year on year growth in turnover over the previous three financial years
- recorded a minimum turnover of £2m in the latest financial year
- achieved profitability at operating level for the last three financial years
- filed a set of accounts subsequent to the previous year's survey
- a registered or primary trading address in the Sheffield City Region.

# In their words

## Trianco is a trading name of TR Engineering, featured at number 7 in the Rapid Growth Survey 2015

### How would you describe your business?

Trianco is a successful manufacturer and distributor of heating products which range from renewable offerings such as biomass to more traditional methods of heating - wood-burning stoves, electric to solid fuel and oil.

The company has distributor relationships with carefully selected European companies and enjoys UK exclusivity on a number of products as well as being one of the last British heating product manufacturers.

### What are the main drivers behind the recent growth of your business?

The Government's renewable heat incentive (RHI) for biomass was the main factor in the greatly increased proportion of sales for the business in 2014. The strategy for major customers was to take advantage of claiming the RHI in return for offering consumers a free biomass system and install. The UK Government's target is for 12% of the country's heating energy to be supplied by renewable technologies by 2020. The UK Government forecast that biomass technology will account for over 40% of the heating energy supplied from renewable sources by 2020. This would mean a seven fold increase in total biomass capacity over the next nine years.

### What are the biggest challenges that you have had to overcome to achieve this growth?

Cash flow has been a significant challenge to control over the last 12 months bearing in mind that some customer accounts are 60-90 days. Supplier purchases such as steel had increased to well over 400% during the peak months of 2014. Current purchases for free biomass installs also incorporate a substantial install kit i.e. cylinder, controls and flue system all adding to the purchase ledger.

### What do you anticipate to be the main challenges to continued future growth?

The short term aim of the business is to capitalise on its current market position including significant return on new biomass products by taking advantage of the RHI incentive and supplying free boilers in return for RHI payments. The scheme will create further demand for Trianco products and "add on" revenue opportunities as well as being effectively underwritten by the UK Government. Trianco is aiming to be largest free to fit installer and supplier of Biomass boilers in the UK.

The current business will also have to diversify to encourage new products to the market place and challenge inconsistent trading in normally quiet unseasonal months such as June - August, outdoor living products i.e. barbeques and patio heaters will be offered with a drive towards direct sales via the new website. This new side to the business will operate linear to its core merchant business.



## X-Cel Superturn features at number 18 in the Rapid Growth Survey 2015

### How would you describe your business?

We manufacture precision components and our own range of valves for the oil and gas industries, we operate from two sites in South Yorkshire and two sites in West Yorkshire. We currently employ approximately 160 people and last year we had a turnover of just under £30m.

### What are the main drivers behind the recent growth of your business?

We have invested heavily in new equipment, new processes and in new premises. We are fortunate that the oil and gas equipment industry has been growing rapidly in recent years. We enjoy good relationships with our major customers and we work hard to keep them satisfied.

### What are the biggest challenges that you have had to overcome to achieve this growth?

Finding skilled technical staff is always a challenge, particularly people who have a combination of technical and commercial skills. Also getting all our staff to realise that our customer's expectations increase every year. 70% of our production is directly exported, this brings language and cultural problems.

### What do you anticipate to be the main challenges to continued future growth?

Unfortunately the oil and gas equipment industry is in a dire state, order intake is currently about 35% of a year ago. It is now a case of managing the downsizing of the company rather than growth.



## Company Shop features at number 27 in the Rapid Growth Survey 2015

### How would you describe your business?

Company Shop stops good food going to waste. Founded over 40 years ago, we've grown to be the UK's largest redistributor of surplus food, handling over 30,000 tonnes every year.

### What are the main drivers behind the recent growth of your business?

Our business has always been about providing solutions to the surplus challenges retailers, manufacturers and brands face. In recent years the food industry has really stepped up in the way it is tackling avoidable waste, so that means more stock coming to us. We redistribute this through our network of staff shops and flagship stores to our members at a reduced price, delivering social, environmental and economic value in the process.

### What are the biggest challenges that you have had to overcome to achieve this growth?

We are proud to be a family business. As we grow, we are working hard to ensure that we keep the important family values and ethos that got us here, whilst instilling the structures and disciplines we need to get to the next, exciting level.

### What do you anticipate to be the main challenges to continued future growth?

We realise we are only scratching the surface of the food waste issue in the UK and we want to do even more. To achieve this, we need to continue to expand our reach across the country, build new relationships with people who can open the door to more surplus stock, and of course carry on doing the best by our staff, clients and customers.





# Growing fast

With growth of 117.9% over the last two years, Navartis is one of the fastest growing companies in the region. Managing Director Jim Sloan gives us an insight into the company's success.

Jim Sloan is dynamic. He has a sense of urgency which shows in all he does, so it is no wonder his business is growing quickly.

Jim largely attributes the success of Navartis to its people, "people are our driving force and investing in their training and development is essential to seeing the business grow. Having a clear plan is important, but you need the right people to execute it really well. Director Justyn Faulkner and I set out what we wanted to do in 2006 and the essence of that hasn't really changed."

Having a vision is important, as is knowing how to get there. Jim says he believes "you need to focus on things you can impact on and not to worry about things which are out of your control." He also believes in the importance of learning through the examples of others. He is an avid reader of autobiographies written by business people, citing those by Jack Welch and Howard Schultz as two of his favourites. He also listened closely to other business leaders he knew, noting "if someone's got all of that experience and they've done all these great things, there's got to be something you can take out of that." Not only that, but he watches successful businesses and learns what he can from watching them grow - evaluating their business models and tactics and looking at how he can apply that to Navartis.

Jim notes that consulting professional advisors is important to growing a business, saying "we need them for their expertise. Particularly as we plan to set up overseas operations, which will make tax advice and ensuring our compliance abroad increasingly important. Legal advice is also really important - especially with regard to reviewing commercial contracts and employment law."

Navartis was originally a subsidiary company of Kinetic plc, where Jim began his career in 1999. Jim set the company up with Kinetic's backing and in October last year led a management buy-out. Six months post deal, Navartis' funders told Jim, who was advised by BHP Corporate Finance and hlw Keeble Hawson, that this deal was a benchmark example of how a good deal should go.

So, what next? Jim says "We're expecting to hit £30 million in turnover this coming year and we're aiming to grow it to £50 million over the next three years, so we'll

need to increase our staff levels to make sure we are able to keep up our quality of service. Within the next 8 years, I anticipate hitting the £100 million mark. Part of our strategy is built around our overseas work, and to enhance this we are planning international expansion."

Definitely not a man to rest on his laurels, Jim added "I think in business, it's important to always strive to be the best in your market by working out what real value looks like for your clients and making sure you achieve it."



## Jim Sloan on BHP

**"I would recommend BHP without hesitation. BHP give good, honest advice. They are perfect for us. They have a nice balance of expertise, knowledge and the right approach to communications."**