

The region's fastest growing businesses 2017





A decade of ups and downs that have ultimately led to continued growth

Today we're delighted to be able to unveil our tenth Rapid Growth Survey which highlights the fastest growing companies in Sheffield City Region.

When we published our first survey back in 2008, we couldn't have predicted how the next decade would unfold. We were arguably in the midst of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, which would be followed by around six years of recession.

Such a tumultuous period only exacerbates the challenges that come with growing a business, and following a couple of years of recovery, Brexit becomes the latest challenge that we face.

Although there's no denying that leaving the EU will cause some uncertainty in the economy, by their very nature business leaders and entrepreneurs are highly resilient, as well as being good at spotting and capitalising on the opportunities that Brexit is likely to present. As a result, all 10 surveys have demonstrated how successful businesses can continue growing whatever external challenges they might face.

Back in 2008, one of my key observations was the lack of digital and technology businesses in the survey. However, fast-forward 10 years and these companies are certainly well-represented now, with names such as Millgate Connect, Osborne Technologies, Ask4 [Stream Topco] and Ebecs, all included. Indeed, the last two have both become growth survey stalwarts, making several appearances in recent years.

Notwithstanding this, a common theme when talking to businesses and investors in the technology sector remains the relative lack of critical mass of in Sheffield City Region, compared to other areas, such as London, the South East and Cambridge.

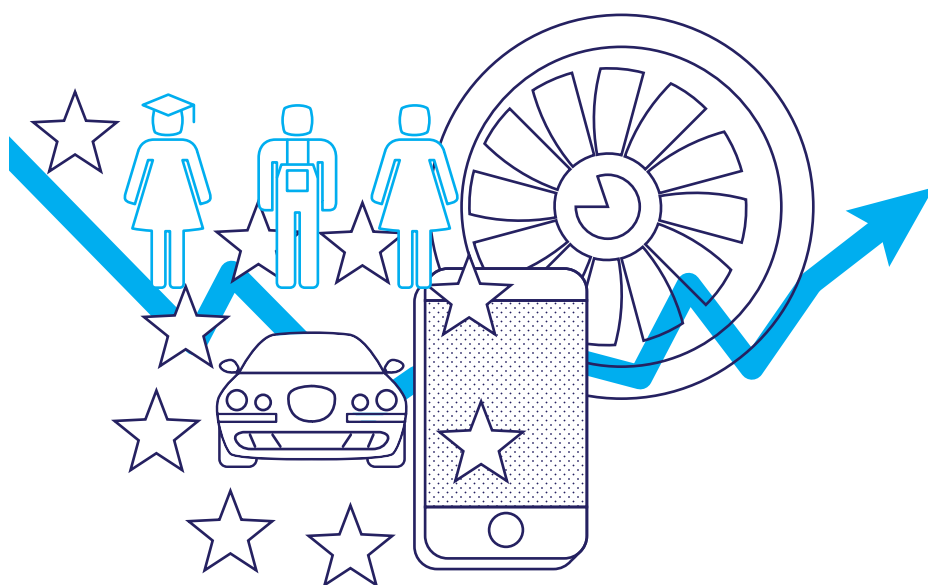
Creating critical mass within an industry sector, supports growing businesses in a number of ways such as creating a ready supply of suitably skilled people and can help gain access to investment funding.

Sheffield City Region already understands how to benefit from this type of sector focus and collaboration, following the success of the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre [AMRC]. This is already bringing new jobs to the region by attracting the likes of Boeing and McLaren to open factories at the site, through its reputation as a knowledge and skills hub.

It therefore probably comes as no surprise that nearly a third of this year's Top 30 businesses are in the manufacturing and engineering sectors. This would also suggest that when it comes to supporting business growth, the underlying message is 'Better Together'.



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Rapid Growth Sur

2017 ranking	2016 ranking	Company name	Location	Latest accounts date	Turnover latest year end £000	Turnover 2 years ago £000	Turnover growth
1	-	Allgas 1	Barnsley	31/12/15	2,668	880	203.2%
2	-	Meter Provida Holdco	Chesterfield	31/03/16	39,572	14,541	172.1%
3	7	Evolution Funding	Chesterfield	31/12/16	60,737	24,388	149.0%
4	5	Orbital Umbrella	Barnsley	31/10/16	28,941	12,184	137.5%
5	-	Dearneside Fabrications	Sheffield	31/03/16	13,604	6,461	110.5%
6	-	Henry Boot	Sheffield	31/12/16	306,806	147,200	108.4%
7	-	Millgate Connect	Sheffield	31/12/16	4,105	2,000	105.2%
8	-	H P Construction	Sheffield	31/03/16	14,231	7,196	97.8%
9	-	Stream Topco	Sheffield	31/10/16	12,966	6,581	97.0%
10	4	Hallam Medical	Sheffield	30/04/16	25,837	13,342	93.7%
11	-	Natural Paving Products (UK)	Doncaster	31/12/15	19,398	10,052	93.0%
12	-	Wordsworth Excavations	Barnsley	30/06/16	12,208	6,519	87.3%
13	11	Mac's transport (Northern)	Barnsley	30/04/16	21,637	11,658	85.6%
14	9	SRS Rail System (Holdings)	Chesterfield	30/04/16	14,883	8,048	84.9%
15	-	Extrudakerb (Maltby Engineering) ¹	Doncaster	31/03/16	19,229	10,488	83.3%
16	-	Teampartner	Worksop	31/12/15	16,510	9,044	82.5%
17	-	Osborne Technologies	Barnsley	31/03/16	5,782	3,256	77.6%
18	29	CMC Chesterfield	Chesterfield	31/12/15	24,636	14,079	75.0%
19	-	Colortronic (U.K.)	Chesterfield	31/12/15	12,704	7,353	72.8%
20	-	Bessacarr Properties	Doncaster	29/02/16	12,378	7,209	71.7%
21	-	Humac Civil Engineering	Doncaster	31/07/16	31,562	18,527	70.4%
22	21	Silkstone Finance ²	Barnsley	31/05/16	31,244	18,363	70.1%
23	3	G & A Transport Services	Sheffield	31/07/16	3,349	1,970	70.0%
24	-	Wilson's Furnishers (Holdings)	Rotherham	30/09/15	13,222	7,934	66.6%
25	17	Ebecs	Chesterfield	31/03/16	33,129	20,922	58.3%
26	-	HGV Direct	Ashbourne	31/12/15	12,663	8,063	57.1%
27	-	Compass Engineering	Barnsley	31/12/15	17,684	11,325	56.2%
28	-	ROY Hatfield	Rotherham	31/10/16	12,139	7,792	55.8%
29	-	Barber of Sheffield (holdings)	Barnsley	30/09/16	12,849	8,339	54.1%
30	-	Titan Developments	Mansfield	31/12/15	10,623	6,930	53.3%

¹ 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

² Turnover and operating profit for the latest year end have been pro-rated on a straight line basis to reflect a 12 month period

Survey 2017 - Top 30

Operating profit latest year end £000	Operating profit 2 years ago £000	Activity	Latest number of employee
321	40	Plumbers	N/D
485	1,442	Sale and distribution of meters and associated metering products	51
6,656	2,119	Financial brokerage and car sales	233
178	168	A labour agency supplying workers to contractors	1,056
2,042	92	Metal fabricators	102
39,482	27,961	Land development, property investment & development & construction	441
102	20	Wireless communications activities	17
1,942	498	General construction and civil engineering	15
302	55	Managed telecommunications services to multi-tenanted buildings	112
1,452	1,511	A primary care recruitment specialist	65
1,508	582	The import and distribution of stone and slate products	30
1,595	671	Site preparation for development and excavation	53
1,459	764	Sale of commercial vehicles and the rental of residential properties	21
2,326	1,094	Provision of specialist services to the railway industry	87
722	1,454	Civil engineering sub-contractors	77
1,273	277	Production and sale of popcorn and confectionery items	102
796	298	The sale, installation and maintenance of computer systems	N/D
167	214	The sale and repair of motorcycles and sale of accessories	107
2,299	950	Manufacturers agents connection plastics industry, and the installation maintenance this machinery	26
1,830	748	Provision of foundation services to the construction industry	69
975	578	Groundworkers and civil engineers	85
5,745	2,186	Manufacture of furniture systems	216
756	403	The provision of haulage services	N/D
999	440	Flooring wholesalers and retailers	67
1,733	370	Hardware consultancy and computer activities	297
262	345	Motor factors	100
2,754	768	Structural engineers	52
1,646	704	Processing and distribution of metals, minerals and solid fuels, recycling of plasterboard	28
2,134	1,232	Medical products	40
1,917	848	Joinery manufactures and interior contractors	31

BHP Rapid Growth Survey 2017: Criteria

Research finalised 18/7/17. 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.

Driving forward a high growth business

As most of the business leaders within our Top 30 survey will confirm, heading up a high growth business is far from straightforward, and it can be laced with potential pitfalls, which often makes it a huge challenge.

Those at the helm have to manage themselves highly effectively, striking a balance between working on the 'here and now' as well as keeping an eye on the horizon, for the sake of the future of the business. A lot of this is about good time management, ensuring that they are working on the business, rather than in the business. It can be easy to spend all day firefighting rather than looking at the bigger picture.

Planning for potential resource requirements is vital. This is particularly true when it comes to recruitment. Factoring in the time it takes to find the right people and ensuring that you are bringing in genuine talent, at the right time, and not just adding to the headcount with more bodies is essential.

It's also important that business leaders understand exactly why and how such growth is occurring. Lots of businesses experience unconscious growth, but by being conscious of it and understanding the reason behind the growth enables you to establish an effective sales process that will continue the success of the business.

Strong cash flow will inevitably play a big role and is critical in any growing business. Having access to high quality, up to date, management information is key to understanding cash flow, as well as when and where additional finance might be required. This information will also help to highlight those instances when increasing sales doesn't equate to increasing profits.

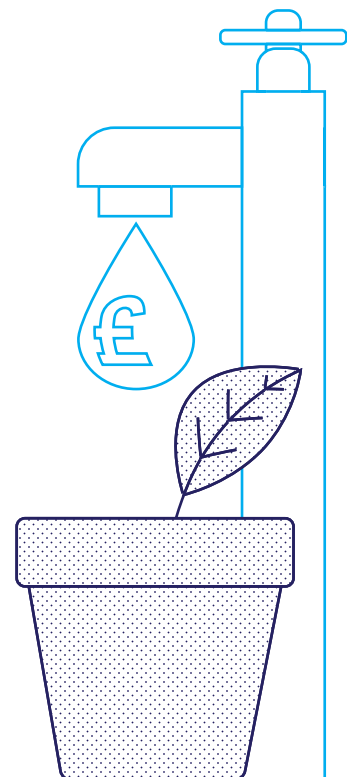
The challenge of cash flow management can be easy to overlook when sales are rising, because it's often only considered an issue in businesses that are in decline. However, the adage that 'cash is king' is particularly true in a fast growing business. Most will have to invest back into the business in order to successfully achieve their growth, and it's not unusual for expanding businesses to Encounter cash flow issues simply because they haven't considered the impact of their growth on their cash flow.

Sometimes this can be down to growing sales too quickly and having to pay suppliers before receiving payment once goods or services are sold, or securing very large orders that might exceed the financial capabilities of the business.

Often there isn't a right or wrong answer to these challenges, but business that arm themselves with solid advice from the outset will have the best chance of achieving rapid growth and reaping the benefits that this can bring.



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In their words

Millgate Connect features at number 7 in the Rapid Growth Survey 2017

How would you describe your business?

Millgate offers IT Services, IT Solutions and Telecoms to over 6000 UK customers and is one of the top 100 VARs [Value Added Resellers] in the UK.

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

Millgate has created a thriving and innovative culture where staff are encouraged and supported to do their best for their customers. This ethos has led to Millgate's continuous growth for the last 21 years, even during economic downturns.

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

The biggest challenge has been maintaining a high standard of customer service during times of rapid growth. We have continued our strive to improve service by achieving an ISO 9001 accreditation, which rigorously tested our business processes, practices and customer service standards.

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

Our aim is to double in size in the next 3 years and our plan to achieve this is by investing in our staff and providing training to enable us to work on bigger, more complex projects, as well as offering more advanced services to our existing customer base.



Hatfield features at number 28 in the Rapid Growth Survey 2017

How would you describe your business?

We are a bulk raw minerals and solid fuel supplier to heavy industry. We focus predominantly on steel, cement and construction product manufacturers. We add value by targeting specific waste streams, developing processes to recover these waste streams and supplying the resulting recovered material as a cost saving, environmentally advantageous supply.

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

We have developed export routes for our goods which have expanded our potential market greatly. Our focus on product and service quality has given larger companies the confidence to depend upon us for sole, dedicated supply of critical raw material and energy supplies.

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

Instabilities in the worldwide commodity prices coupled with volatile exchange rates have made medium to long term planning difficult. The UK Steel industry has been through a period of turmoil which has also made forecasting demand very difficult.

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

Further volatile markets and exchange rates in light of Brexit. We also fear a lack of clarity and enforcement on Environmental legislation is currently favouring 'rogue operators', creating unfair competition.



Sheffield construction firm builds on solid foundations

SHEFFIELD based HP Construction Ltd was set up 11 years ago by two surveyors with 60 years combined contractor experience, and the business has gone from strength to strength ever since.

With turnover growing by 25% from £14.23M to £17.83M in its latest accounts, HP Construction employs ten full time staff and has completed a number of high-profile projects for well-known businesses in the commercial, industrial, motor retail and food retail industries.

Director David Hutchison says: "Richard Powell and I worked together for 13 years for a South Yorkshire building contractor that specialised in motor retail, and we decided that we wanted to go it alone and set up our own business. We launched with just two site managers and an accountant and quickly won contracts with a number of businesses looking for keen pricing and a director level point of contact, and it's that personal service that has set us apart from our competitors. We now have two highly experienced project managers on the team too, but our clients still mainly deal with Richard and I, and that's what many of them like.

"The most recognisable local projects that we have worked on are the Big Yellow Self Storage buildings on Bramall Lane and Penistone Road in Sheffield and the Sheffield Assay Office on Penistone Road, all of these stand out due to their eye-catching design and style. Crucially they were all completed on time and within budget. We have also recently built a number of large-scale units for Wickes and Travis Perkins all over the UK."

In Yorkshire, HP Construction delivered the 150,000 square foot unit at Wakefield Europort for Tri Link, and a 100,000 square feet food store and retail shop

unit for Company Shop in Barnsley, as well as building the 10,000 square feet aseptic manufacturing unit for B Braun in Chapeltown, Sheffield and the testing facility for Bauer Equipment UK in Rotherham.

David adds: "We do a lot of work in Yorkshire and the Midlands, but also throughout the UK, building everything from large commercial and industrial buildings through to car dealerships for Audi, Volvo, Kia, VW, Toyota, Mini and Mazda. High-street food retailers Lidl, Aldi, Tesco Express and the Co-Op are all clients of ours, and we pride ourselves on designing and building mainly steel portal framed buildings all of which are carried out on a design and build basis."

HP Construction has recently won a string of new contracts and has several projects currently on site. The firm is building a new 20,000 square feet unit for Wickes in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, a 20,000 square feet builders merchant storage and retail unit for Hammonds Rutts Investments in Haverhill, Suffolk, and a 29,751 square feet two storey warehouse extension for Abaco Systems in Tove Valley, Northamptonshire.

David says: "Our design and build contracts normally run for between five and ten months and we have recently completed four units totalling 155,000 square feet for tenants Wickes, Travis Perkins, Benchmarx, BSS and Leicester Tissue Company in Leicestershire, for our client Charles Street Buildings Limited. Two other projects that we have also just completed were the Audi terminal building for Vindis Group in Huntingdon

and the fitting out of the 41,000 square feet Kia project in Chiswick which is on the M4 flyover section"

As well as successfully achieving year-on-year growth, HP Construction has built a solid reputation in the marketplace for delivering projects on time and on budget, and has therefore become the go-to contractor for many nationwide businesses looking for quality builds at cost-effective prices.

Finally David says: "I think the amount of repeat business we get from existing clients speaks volumes about what we do, and we are often praised for our attention to detail, director level management and keen pricing. As a result we plan to continue growing organically, whilst keeping overheads low, and doing more of the same – as it has certainly worked so far!"

