

EDUCATION

# Prince launches university's £55m new business school

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THE University of the West of England's flagship £55 million business building has been opened by Prince Andrew, Duke of York.

His Royal Highness received a guided tour of facilities at Bristol Business School, at the university's Frenchay campus, before unveiling a commemorative plaque marking the formal opening.

Offering a new approach to business and law education to benefit students and businesses in the region, the building opened to students and staff in 2017 and represents the biggest capital investment of UWE Bristol's 2020 building programme. Features include two showcase law courts, a city trading room, a business advice clinic, an incubator for Team Entrepreneurship students, flexible learning spaces and an external business engagement hub.

On his tour of the business school, the Duke met students and staff from the Business Advice Clinic, where undergraduates work with mentors from industry to offer pro-bono support to small enterprises, and the Team Entrepreneurship Hub, the home of a degree course dedicated to giving students the practical experience to launch and run their own ventures.

The Duke was also shown the school's Bloomberg Trading Room and a "technology enhanced active learning" space during the visit.

Professor Steve West, Vice-Chancellor at UWE Bristol, said: "We were proud to show the Duke that not only is Bristol Business School a striking modern building with state-of-the-art facilities but what goes on inside is equally impressive.

"Students are using the hugely expanded provision of technology enhanced active learning for greater co-creation and student-led problem solving, while a growing number of businesses are being welcomed through the doors to collaborate with staff and our ever-more entrepreneurial students.

"It is this abundance of strong



Prince Andrew, Duke of York, is given a tour of UWE's new business school at its Frenchay campus



relationships with industry that sets UWE Bristol's approach to business apart, with close collaboration ensuring the skills our graduates leave with are always relevant to employers' rapidly evolving needs."

Addressing guests at the opening, the Duke said: "It's a pleasure to be able to open and celebrate a building such as this.

"A building lives because of what goes on inside it and judging from what I've seen on my tour, the vibrancy of the staff and students working here is making this building sing to a very wonderful note.

"I wish Bristol Business School, and the whole university, every good fortune in creating the sorts of young people we are going to need in the new environment we'll find ourselves in during the next two to five years.

"These are going to be very challenging times but we need to create a breed of young people who are enterprising, entrepreneurial and ambitious.

"If we can do that we can, and will, succeed.

"So good luck, I wish you every success."

England, West of England has a below average level of reward and a relatively low rate of output.

"It is a stumbling place where, despite substantial attention from central government in reorienting its economy to the modern world, the benefits of growth are yet to translate to the local population.

"With strong foundations, the challenges of the industrial strategy is to deliver inclusive growth and shift upwards on reward."

AIRPORT FOOD

BRISTOL Airport is searching for potential partners to tender for a series of food and drink outlets.

The tenders cover categories including dining, fast food, coffee/bread units, and "grab and go". The airport is the ninth largest in the UK and the fifth largest outside of London. In 2017, over eight million passengers used the airport, and planning approvals are in place for 10 million a year.

Having invested more than £160 million in new infrastructure and facilities since 2010, Bristol Airport is well positioned to serve passengers across the South West, and also provides a gateway to the region for international visitors.

Kate Ridgers, head of commercial development at Bristol Airport, said: "We are inviting businesses to provide a complementary blend of dining and drinking opportunities at Bristol Airport.

"The preferred partners are likely to be well-known, experienced UK, international or local brands and operating in high turnover locations.

"Meeting the needs and culinary preferences of customers in a relaxed, welcoming and innovative environment, with customer service and value for money at the core is key.

"With the expiry of the existing agreement in autumn 2018, we are looking for key business partners to provide a first class food and beverage experience to our passengers."

Expressions of interest for the concession are required in writing by Friday, April 6.

Interested parties should contact [fbtender@bristolairport.com](mailto:fbtender@bristolairport.com) for further information.

SOCIAL VALUE

CONSTRUCTION services contractor ISG, which has an office in Bristol, has teamed up with technology company Social Profit Calculator.

This sees ISG become one of the first UK contractors to provide customers with "accurate and quantifiable" measurements for their projects' impacts. Social Profit Calculator uses socio-economic data sets and advanced analytics to place a financial value on social initiatives, enabling data-driven conversations about outcomes for individual projects.

Dr Vicky Hutchinson, ISG's national frameworks social responsibility manager, said: "Social value is becoming an increasingly important element of procurement decisions, especially in the public-sector arena. We can maximise the social impact of capital investment by bringing greater rigour to the process of planning and measuring social value, resulting in better informed decision making and greater benefit to our local communities and regional economies."

Mark Bolger, CEO for Social Profit Calculator, said: "Our partnership with ISG brings the most advanced and all-encompassing solution to market."

EXPORTS

# British food exporter goes from strength to strength

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AWARD-winning British Corner Shop, the leading independent online supermarket, has seen its business go from strength to strength following a "transformational" 12 months.

The company, based in Yate, sells Great British food brands to customers all over the world, many of them expats who are craving a taste of home.

Last year the company, which employs 55 people, made the move into its new, 30,000 square foot distribution hub near Bristol.

From there it delivers to 138 countries across all continents, selling its products through leading edge e-commerce platforms that provide B2C retail and B2B wholesale/bulk sales services.

Turnover at British Corner Shop, which holds the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its outstanding export performance, rose 25 per cent year on year, according to its most recent trading figures.

This performance was underpinned by a number of factors, including the signing of a strategic partnership with Waitrose, an agreement which sees the high-end retailer's own-brand food products offered to British Corner Shop's customers worldwide.

Managing director Mark Callaghan said: "Even by our own high standards the last 12 months have been an exceptional, transformational even, time for our business.

"In purely financial terms, we saw worldwide turnover increase by no less than a quarter, fuelled in a large part by our significant investment in the latest e-commerce tools combined with a relentless focus on providing outstanding service to



Mark Callaghan, British Corner Shop's managing director Pic: Dan Regan

make our customer experience better than ever, helping our push into new markets worldwide wherever there is a taste for British food brands."

Peter Howarth, technical and marketing director, said: "Whilst we naturally retain a strong customer base in Europe, especially in Italy, Spain and Germany, the past few years, and 2017 and into 2018 in particular, have seen incredible growth in demand for our products and services within the US and China.

"These markets not only have well-established and growing expat communities but, crucially, domestic markets with a growing taste for British brands - a perfect combination for our business."

Mark continued: "Whilst our core business is providing UK brands to customers overseas, we also recently launched our own branded products, including items for the beauty and lifestyle sector.

"The last 12 months also saw us make the long-awaited move into our

new premises, a lovely, modern 30,000 square foot warehouse with additional office space in Yate."

Of the five million-plus British expats, British Corner Shop estimates it has achieved three to four per cent market penetration, with more than 150,000 customers across the globe.

Peter added: "With the leading edge online e-retail platforms we have in place, bolstered by tremendous recent growth, we are looking to take even more market share in the coming months and years."

## CALL FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY TO MEET GROWTH EXPECTATIONS

SME manufacturers in the South West must unlock their hidden potential if sales and profit growth are to meet expectations, according to the latest South West Manufacturing Barometer.

The quarterly survey, which is conducted by SWMAS (part of Exelin Group), found that 75 per cent of respondents anticipate an increase in sales in the next six months - the highest figure recorded for the region since Q3 2013 and higher than the national figure of 72 per cent.

In a further indication of South West business leaders' confidence in the sector, 65 per cent of respondents said they were expecting increased profits over the next six months.

However, as only 46 per cent of the region's manufacturers actually experienced growth in profits in the

second half of 2017, the gap between anticipated sales growth and actual recent increases in profits continues to raise questions about productivity, and the ability of manufacturers to meet their own growth targets.

Encouragingly, 58 per cent of manufacturers indicated in the survey that they aimed to deliver against their growth targets by investing in machinery and premises; that is a rise of 15 per cent on the last South West Barometer report (Q2).

Furthermore, over half (53 per cent) of respondents said they planned to recruit new staff. While this figure is 12 per cent higher than in Q2 2017, it may not be quite in step with an-

icipated sales growth. This suggests that improving productivity through the existing workforce and facilities remains the key focus.

Around 70 per cent are confident that productivity is regained at a strategic level, and championed by business leaders. But around 40 per cent of South West manufacturers indicated they would like to achieve better, and sustainable, productivity improvements, pointing to the need to have resource in place, involving engagement with staff, and share learning in order to deliver and sustain change.

Simon Howes, *inset*, chief executive of Exelin Group, said: "Confidence

levels are riding high in the South West's manufacturing sector despite market uncertainties, demonstrating the strength and resilience of the region's SME manufacturers.

"But the latest Barometer demonstrates there is a definite gap between many manufacturers' expectations about future performance and their ability to deliver the productivity gains required to drive sales and profit growth.

"While many South West manufacturers have successfully embedded productivity good practice at a strategic level and leadership and management level, there remains a stumbling block when delivering lasting productivity improvements. Manufacturers have to look harder at how they engage their workforce to unlock their hidden potential."

'INCREDIBLE YEAR'

THE Bristol office of national property development and construction firm Henry Boot has seen headcount double in the past year, as the firm announces increased turnover and profits.

According to its latest financial results, the company saw turnover increase 33 per cent to £408m, with profits before tax up 40 per cent to £55m.

Julian Painter, director at Henry Boot Developments and head of the Bristol office, said: "2017 has been an incredible year for our business - our Bristol office doubled its headcount following the growth of our interests in the region, which has seen us secure a number of significant regeneration projects underlining the strength of reputation we have built in the South West."

Chief executive officer John Sutcliffe said: "2017 delivered a record financial performance, primarily due to development schemes being delivered more quickly than we initially anticipated.

"As a result, profit before tax and earnings per share increased by 40 per cent and 49 per cent respectively, and we were able to more than replenish our portfolio of future opportunities during the year.

"Notwithstanding any potential impact from the decision to leave the EU, our business model and strategic aims remain unchanged, and 2018 has started well across all our business streams."

Chairman Jamie Boot said: "We have made a good start to the 2018 financial year, having already concluded a number of land sales.

"In addition, we have a strong pipeline of construction work, commercial development projects and strategic land sites working through the marketing process, on which to capitalise through the year."

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## WORKERS DON'T FEEL THEIR HARD GRAFT PAYS OFF FINANCIALLY, EVEN IF BUSINESS IS BOOMING

A REPORT published by think-tank Localis warns West of England's economy is "stumbling" ahead of the UK's forthcoming departure from the European Union.

The report finds that despite workers in West of England LEP area being some of the worst rewarded in England, the West of England remains one of England's most productive areas

The report includes national polling on people's attitudes towards

the economy. For respondents from the South West:

- 53 percent feel little to no personal financial benefit when the national economy is growing
- 48 percent feel little to no personal financial benefit when their employer does well financially
- 47 percent think they are paid less than their work is worth
- 34 percent think their colleagues are paid less than their work is worth

- 39 percent think people in work generally are paid less than their work is worth
- 61 percent do not think they are fairly rewarded for hard work by their employer
- 39 percent do not think their job is making a meaningful contribution to the world
- 26 percent do not find their job personally fulfilling

Jack Airey, head of research at Localis said: "Compared to the rest of