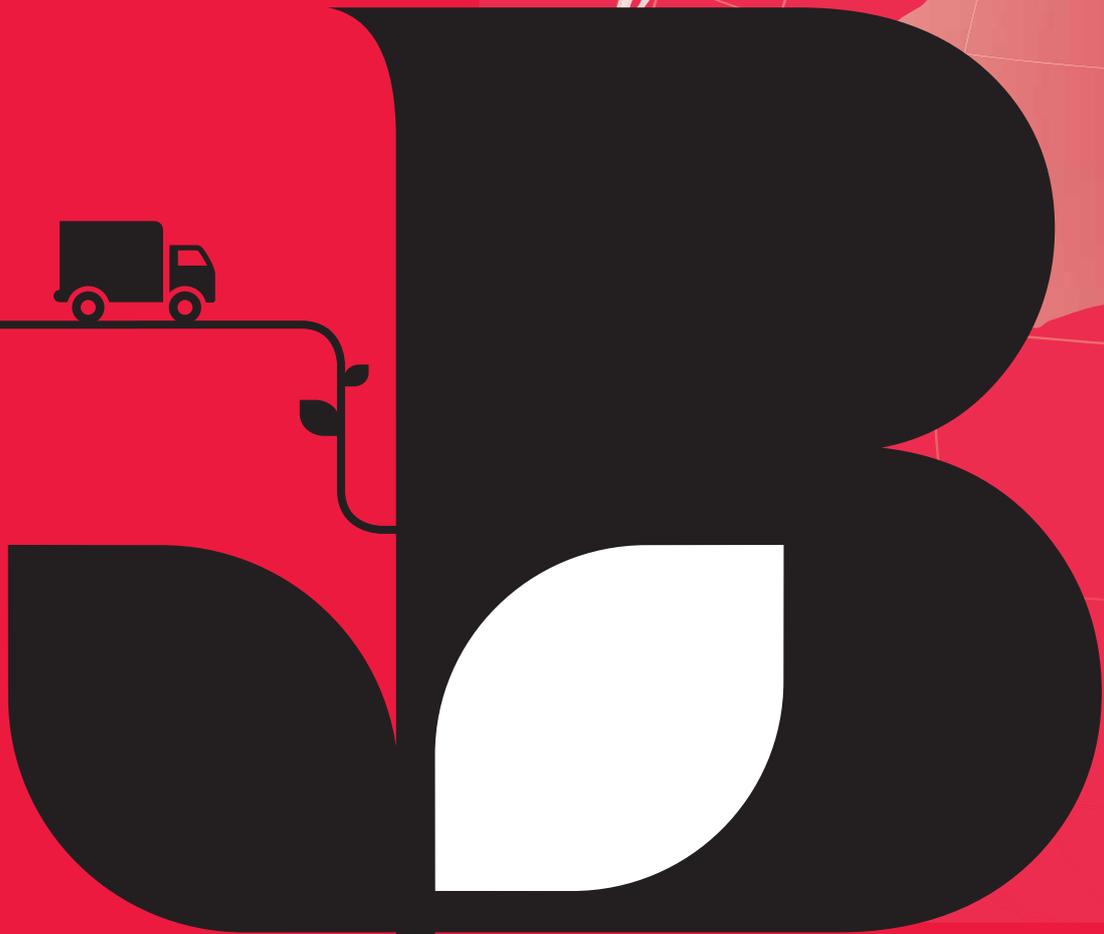


EXPORTING IS GOOD FOR BRITAIN: CHAMBER MEMBERS DISCUSS EXPORTS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER



British
Chambers of
Commerce



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ON 2 MAY 2013, THE BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (BCC) BROUGHT TOGETHER A DIVERSE GROUP OF CHAMBER MEMBERS - INCLUDING EXPORTERS OF ALL SIZES, AND FROM ALL PARTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM - TO MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER DAVID CAMERON TO DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES TRADING ACROSS THE GLOBE.

Over the course of a constructive meeting, these 'real economy' businesses - from an upstart Kent tea-blender to the Northern Ireland company building new buses for London and cities worldwide - explained the challenges facing small- and medium-sized companies seeking to break into new markets. Crucially, they also set out a range of well-received ways that the government could do even more to help existing and potential exporters.

Ministers and the BCC agree that improving Britain's trade performance is crucial. Long-term growth will rely significantly on diversifying and restructuring our economy towards exports, and achieving a positive balance in our trade with the rest of the world. Business investment and exports will be central to the story of future growth, and we must do more together to expose increasing numbers of small- and medium-sized

businesses to the opportunities of global trade.

Accredited Chambers of Commerce are Britain's export hubs. Chambers of Commerce are the premier source of private sector, business-to-business, support for international trade and export. They work with government agencies, such as UKTI, to ensure companies get the best possible advice and help. And it's working. Amongst Chamber members, 22% were exporting in 2011, 32% in 2012, and 39% in 2013.

This 'scrapbook' brings together the experiences of the businesses who came to Downing Street on 2 May. It gives a snapshot of some of the challenges facing exporters when trying to expand their business's share of exports or enter new markets. It is our hope that their wisdom and experiences can help shape government policy decisions - and ensure that UK companies see success after success in growth markets everywhere.



BLENDS FOR FRIENDS

ALEX PROBYN, OWNER AND MASTER TEA BLENDER

Member of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Blends for Friends is a personalised tea blending business that creates custom teas for individuals and corporate clients.

Blends for Friends exports worldwide and has exported to Europe, the US, South America, Asia, Australasia and Africa.

How can exporters be better supported?

Blends for Friends currently exports small amounts to a large number of countries. However as a small business, it is finding the transition from small quantities to large quantities difficult due to various bureaucratic barriers placed upon the company in the countries of destination - particularly as the firm is a food business. Blends for Friends does not have the resources in-house to allocate the required time and effort to overcome these bureaucratic issues and the business therefore relies heavily on external sources of support.

Alex says that his local accredited Chamber of Commerce (Kent Invicta) is excellent in terms of the paperwork required to dispatch his goods. As the business looks to expand its exports, Blends for Friends needs advice for every country the business is looking to export to. For small businesses such as Blends for Friends who are looking to break into new markets, there appear to be plenty of organisations willing to help (at a cost), but it is difficult to ascertain what help is appropriate or indeed adequate. In short, Alex believes that there does not appear to be a one-stop-shop that provides all the information in a clear and concise manner that is useful. As a result of this, there have been times when Blends for Friends has turned business away as the effort involved would not make it worthwhile pursuing.





BSA MACHINE TOOLS LTD

STEVE BRITTAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BSA MACHINE TOOLS LTD AND PRESIDENT, BIRMINGHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GROUP

Member of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Group

BSA Machine Tools manufactures CNC Lathes, Flexible Manufacturing Systems, Single-spindle and Multi-spindle Automatic lathes.

BSA Machine Tools exports globally, with machines currently being built for export to China, Mexico, Pakistan and the US.

How can exporters be better supported?

Steve's experience has taught him that export of advanced engineering requires access to finance for working capital that is not normally necessary for the domestic market. Approaching a mainstream bank usually results in company facilities being re-priced, restructured or refused – so drastically improving access to finance for businesses would help aid exports. Steve also feels that regulation needs to be reduced and simplified for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through either exemptions and/or thresholds to relieve the regulatory burden on smaller firms – as bigger companies have the resource to accommodate large amounts of regulation more easily.



COS GROUP

JAMES EMERY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, COS GROUP, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, SKOGSTAD UK AND PRESIDENT OF SOUTH WALES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Member of South Wales Chamber of Commerce

COS Group is a supplier of business products, stationery, printing, office furniture and refurbishments, merchandising and promotional gifts. Skogstad UK supplies quality ski and outdoor clothing to retailers and end consumers.

Skogstad UK exports to Europe, North America and Australia.

How can exporters be better supported?

James would like to see UK products and brands created from within the UK through the introduction of a long-term entrepreneurship programme – which should start at an early age. James would also like to see assistance with and encouragement for stronger succession planning to avoid UK brands and products being sold to foreign-owned businesses. This will help to keep wealth in the UK, and protect jobs via UK ownership.





FLÄKT WOODS LTD

ALLAN HURDLE, MANAGING DIRECTOR
Member of Essex Chambers of Commerce

Fläkt Woods is a leading global supplier of energy-efficient air solutions operating in both the air climate for buildings and air movement for the infrastructure and industry markets.

Fläkt Woods exports to more than 40 countries worldwide including countries in Europe, Australasia and Asia.

How can exporters be better supported?

Allan's experience has shown him that every business looking to export has different requirements. It is important that government and private sector support is tailored towards the needs of each business, with suitable customers and contacts identified in potential export markets.



FLUID TRANSFER INTERNATIONAL LTD

JOHN LITTLE, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Member of Business West

Fluid Transfer International is a leading global manufacturer of aviation, marine and ground refuelling equipment and systems to commercial and defence markets. The company focuses on vehicle, ship and fixed-base system design solutions, in addition to marketing a range of fluid-related products and components.

Fluid Transfer's export strength has been in the Middle East and in the Far East. More recently Fluid Transfer has exported to Ukraine, Kazakhstan and won business in Australia, Philippines and Pakistan.

How can exporters be better supported?

For John, changing the UKTI and European definition of an SME to enable companies such as Fluid Transfer, who are part of a larger holding group, to be eligible for UKTI support as an SME would be beneficial. Fluid Transfer is currently excluded from some of the trade programmes and grant support for SMEs, and is classified as a large enterprise, support for which is focused on very large firms such as BAE and Rolls Royce – and which is inappropriate for Fluid Transfer. John would also like to see export incentives such as a tax credit on export revenues.





i-EDUCATION

MICHAEL WILKINSON, DIRECTOR
Member of Doncaster Chamber of Commerce

i-education is an educational technology business, specialising in games-based approaches to learning and assessment.

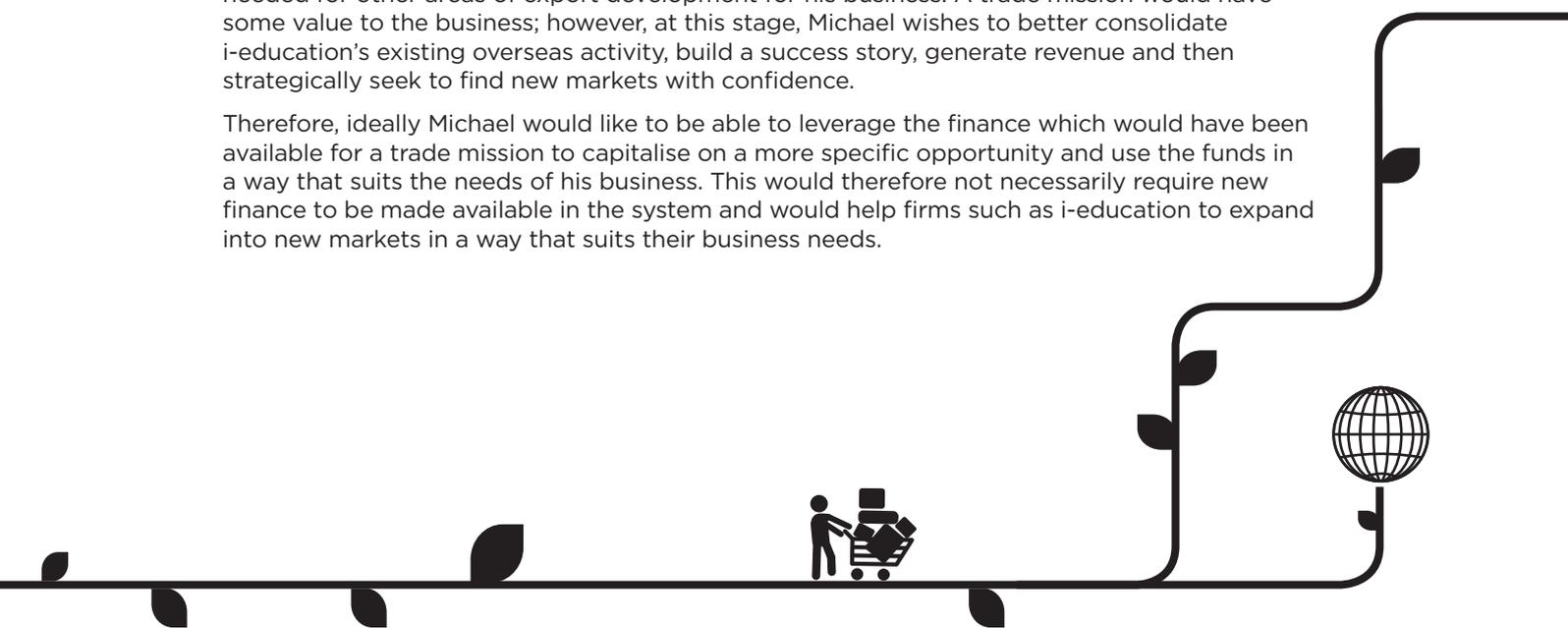
i-education is currently exporting to South East Asia.

How can exporters be better supported?

There are limited resources available to support UK companies exporting. Understanding that there will always be resource limits, Michael would like to see some autonomy as to how a company can utilise support and resources available from government.

For example, Michael can quite easily access finance to support a trade mission to multiple territories in South East Asia, however he would not find it as easy to access the finance needed for other areas of export development for his business. A trade mission would have some value to the business; however, at this stage, Michael wishes to better consolidate i-education's existing overseas activity, build a success story, generate revenue and then strategically seek to find new markets with confidence.

Therefore, ideally Michael would like to be able to leverage the finance which would have been available for a trade mission to capitalise on a more specific opportunity and use the funds in a way that suits the needs of his business. This would therefore not necessarily require new finance to be made available in the system and would help firms such as i-education to expand into new markets in a way that suits their business needs.



KINLOCH ANDERSON LTD

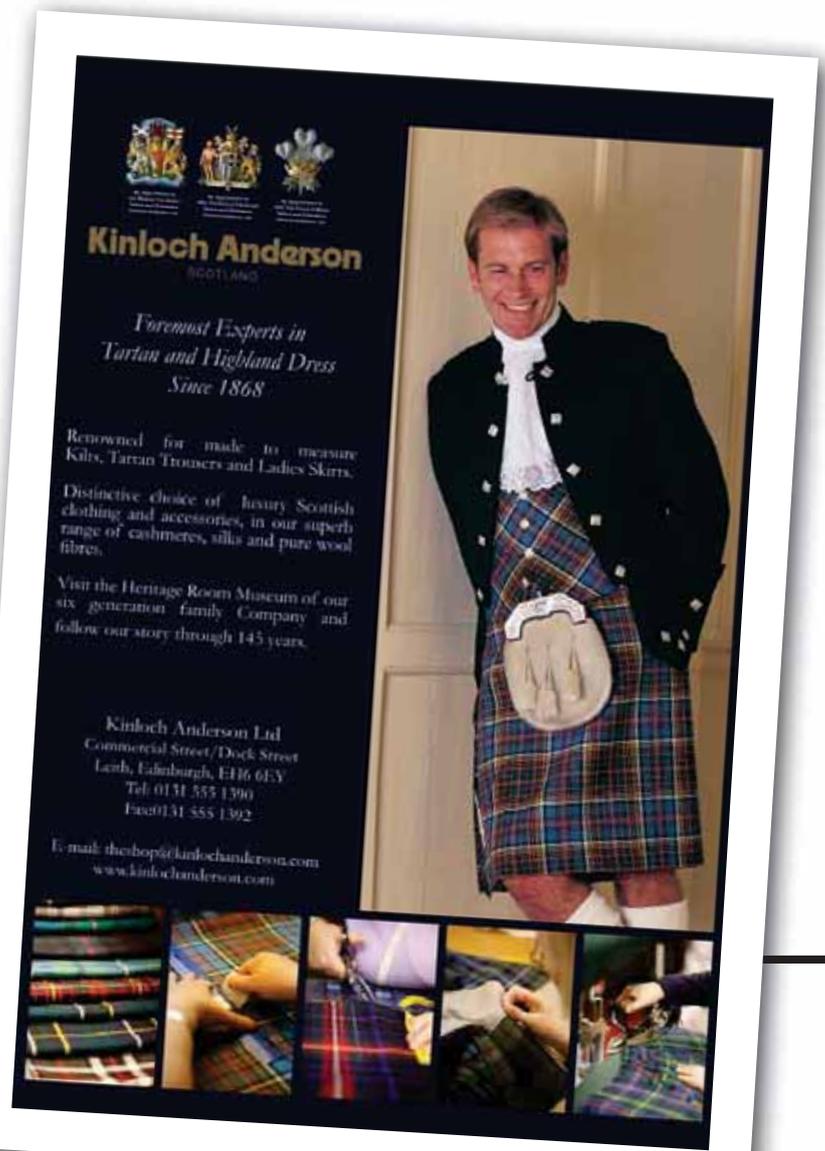
DEIRDRE KINLOCH ANDERSON, SENIOR DIRECTOR
Member of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

Kinloch Anderson produces high quality clothing and accessories specialising in tartan and tweed, for retail, wholesale, corporate identity and brand development.

Kinloch Anderson exports to North America, Europe, Russia, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and China.

How can exporters be better supported?

Deirdre would like to see the government help to create commercial facilities overseas, such as a meeting place for UK companies to meet potential customers or suppliers; office facilities with an address for Fedex, postal delivery and internet services. Translation services, local knowledge for legal assistance, Trade Mark registrations, intellectual property issues and support to obtain a working visa (not just a tourist visa) would also be beneficial for firms looking to export.





NACHURAL GROUP

NINDER JOHAL, CEO OF NACHURAL GROUP AND VICE PRESIDENT, BLACK COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Member of Black Country Chamber of Commerce

Nachural Group works in music and event production and the manufacturing of loudspeakers.

Nachural Group exports to Europe and the US.

How can exporters be better supported?

Ninder would like to see an increase in the amount of support available to companies for export development. For example, Ninder suggests that firms could be given a lump sum of £25,000 for export development and pay this back in tax. This would help to ease the cashflow challenge that many would-be exporters face when trying to expand into new markets.

If companies did not increase their profits through exports as a result of the £25,000, they would be required to pay it back in full. This scheme would emphasise an increase in jobs, increase in profits and therefore, an increase in tax revenue. Ninder proposes piloting this scheme with 10 companies initially to assess the attractiveness and merit of the proposal.



OCTINK

WILL TYLER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Member of London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Octink is a distributor of perimeter and protection products to the construction industry.

Octink currently exports to Europe and is looking to expand its exports to the Middle East.

How can exporters be better supported?

The Prime Minister should look to leading a trade mission that is specific to SMEs. This would send a strong message that exporting is not just for the larger players.

Will also thinks that an Olympic legacy 'roadshow' like that started by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, would be an excellent opportunity to capitalise on the goodwill still evident in many target export markets. The recent trade mission to Qatar organised by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry is as a case study of the potential that such an effort could unleash.





PENNINE HEALTHCARE

LIZ FOTHERGILL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Member of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce

Pennine Healthcare manufactures single use medical and surgical devices for operating theatre and intensive care use.

Pennine Healthcare exports to 60 countries worldwide with a focus on Europe, Middle East and Australasia.

How can exporters be better supported?

Liz believes that we must raise the profile and aspiration of SME exporters and potential exporters by offering demand-led grants to explore new markets. Organising industry-specific groups of current exporters to work with new and potential SME exporters to raise confidence, share practical experience and contacts, and prevent duplications of market entry research would also help smaller companies looking to enter new markets.



REALISE FUTURES CIC

SARAH SHARLOTT, CEO

Member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Realise Futures provides employment, training, advice and skills to help people furthest from the labour market get back into work and learning.

Realise Futures distributes recycled plastic public space furniture across the UK and is now looking to export into Europe and beyond.

How can exporters be better supported?

For Sarah, access to patient capital and finance is crucial, as is support from UKTI in understanding in more detail the very specific and individual needs of SMEs.





SOLAREUROPA GROUP

DAVID HAWKINS, CEO

Member of Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce

Solareuropa provides solar and renewable energy solutions for the domestic market, and provides free solar photovoltaics to members of Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce with viable commercial roof space.

Solareuropa is currently developing a large-scale solar power plant in Turkey and has projects in the pipeline in Romania, Chile, Brazil, India and a number of countries in Africa.

How can exporters be better supported?

David would like the government to provide continuing international support to enable firms such as Solareuropa to increase their global presence. Government support, particularly through UK embassies, UKTI and UK Export Finance, is needed for UK firms such as Solareuropa to compete with international firms – as our competitors sometimes receive far more government support from their home countries than UK businesses do.



SONIFEX LTD

MARCUS BROOKE, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Member of Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce

Sonifex is a manufacturer of audio and video equipment for radio and TV studios.

Sonifex exports to over 60 countries worldwide with current success in Germany, the Middle East and China.

How can exporters be better supported?

Marcus would like to see a review of the requirements for government trade missions, as he feels that the trade mission process seems to be a little out of touch with modern business practices. For Marcus, trade missions can be untimely - there is not usually a trade mission available to coincide with a country that Sonifex is trying to sell into or an advertised trade mission is not related to Sonifex's industry. Businesses such as Sonifex often need some financial support for follow-up visits, as well as initial visits, which the trade mission system does not currently support. Sonifex would also like to see an opening up of the availability of grants available for exporters, and a reduction of the limitations placed on companies to access them.





WRIGHTS GROUP

**MARK NODDER, GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR OF
WRIGHTS GROUP AND PRESIDENT OF NORTHERN
IRELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Member of Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce

Wrightbus is a leading designer and manufacturer of public transport vehicles. The company has an internationally recognised pedigree in product innovation and has led the way in electric bus technology.

Wrightbus exports its vehicles to South East Asia, Europe and North America.

How can exporters be better supported?

Northern Ireland Chamber is committed to inspiring more businesses to export, with members that are experienced exporters currently providing direct support to others. The introduction of a major and long-term export scheme would stimulate new exporters. An employment subsidy for those recruiting staff to develop international trade would also help. Marcus knows that opportunities do exist for local businesses and believes that flexible support such as export vouchers, would go a long way to supporting SMEs.



ACCREDITED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

1. Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
2. Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
3. Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
4. Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce
5. Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Group
6. Black Country Chamber of Commerce
7. Bradford Chamber of Commerce and Industry
8. Business West
9. Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce
10. Cornwall Chamber of Commerce
11. Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
12. Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and Industry
13. DNCC (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce)
14. Doncaster Chamber of Commerce
15. Dorset Chamber of Commerce & Industry
16. East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
17. Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
18. Essex Chambers of Commerce
19. Fife Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd
20. Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
21. Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
22. Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
23. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
24. Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
25. Hull & Humber Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping
26. Inverness Chamber of Commerce
27. Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry



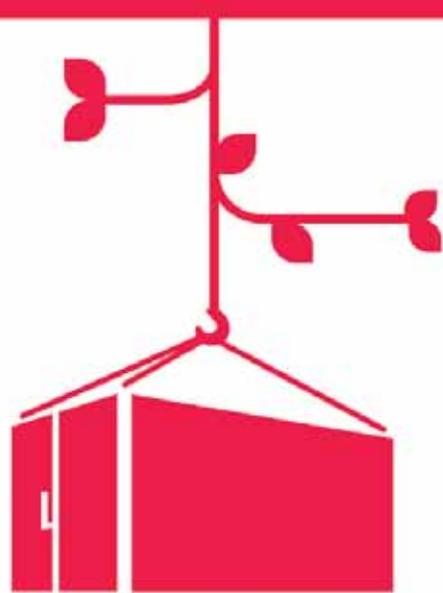
Ninder Johal, CEO of Nachural Group and Vice President, Black Country Chamber of Commerce and the Prime Minister David Cameron at Number 10.



James Emery, Managing Director, COS Group and Michael Wilkinson, Director of i-education meet with the Prime Minister David Cameron at Number 10.

- 28.** Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce
- 29.** Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- 30.** Leeds, York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
- 31.** Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
- 32.** Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce
- 33.** Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
- 34.** London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 35.** Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
- 36.** Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- 37.** North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
- 38.** North East Chamber of Commerce
- 39.** North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- 40.** Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce
- 41.** Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce
- 42.** Plymouth Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- 43.** Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce
- 44.** Sheffield Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- 45.** Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise
- 46.** Somerset Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ltd
- 47.** South Wales Chamber of Commerce
- 48.** St Helens Chamber
- 49.** Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- 50.** Surrey Chambers of Commerce
- 51.** Sussex Enterprise
- 52.** Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
- 53.** West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce





**I DON'T SEE
BORDERS I SEE
OPPORTUNITIES.
AS A CHAMBER
MEMBER I'M WELL
CONNECTED.**

IF IT'S NEW CUSTOMERS YOU'RE AFTER OR THE RIGHT ADVICE TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS GROWING, BELONGING TO YOUR LOCAL ACCREDITED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEANS YOU ARE ALWAYS WELL CONNECTED.

VISIT WWW.BRITISHCHAMBERS.ORG.UK/YOUR-CHAMBER TO SEE HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS.

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