

Edinburgh small business benefits from New York trade mission

Small businesses from across the UK took part in an exclusive trade mission to New York to discover how to expand into the US market and get tips on conquering the challenges commonly associated with exporting. The trade mission was part of Santander's SME support programme, Breakthrough.

On 23 March, nine fast-growth businesses headed to the US to spend five days networking with, and learning from, a selection of experienced global business leaders and exporters including representatives from the New York City Mayor's Office, the US Department of Commerce and Stateside Solutions.

Attendees found out how the US marketplace works in terms of its competitive landscape and distribution networks, as well as learning about New York-specific regulations through meetings with the British Consulate, local UK Trade and Investment representatives, international attorneys and representatives from the Government of New York State.

Participants also took part in a session with executives from Sovereign Bank to equip them with a better insight into American banking rules and regulations, and attended an exclusive networking reception at the Deputy Consulate's residence.

All the businesses had a schedule of one-on-one meetings with specialists tailored to their own sector and industry, including premier craft beer distributors and music industry professionals. Discussions with marketing, public relations and events professionals also offered participants suggestions on how they can effectively publicise any expansion into the US.

The companies that attended the event come from a range of industries and are spread across the UK. They are:

- I Like Music – Richmond-based online music business and magazine that specialises in delivering music, physically and digitally, on demand
- Dot Squares – International web design and development company based in West Sussex
- [i4PD](#) – Edinburgh-based product designers for clients in the technology, medical, retail and renewables sectors
- Ilkley Brewery – Multi-award winning craft brewery in the Yorkshire spa-town of Ilkley
- Warrens Bakery – Based in Penzance, Warrens is the oldest commercial bakery in Cornwall
- Cornish Sea Salt – Eco-friendly specialist salt provider based in Helston
- The Yes Yes Company – Petersfield-based producer of the world's first organic, plant-based range of intimacy products
- Chi Drink – Specialist coconut juice drink supplier based in Kensington and Chelsea
- Draycast Foundries – Buckinghamshire-based aluminium and bronze casting supplier for engineering companies worldwide

This is the second mission to the US organised by Santander's Breakthrough programme. The first, in May 2012 took a group of 10 female entrepreneurs to New York and Boston. The trade mission was focussed on developing business contacts and networks to help establish a footprint in the US market, with a number of notable successes for attendees. WEST Beer, a Glasgow based brewery, appointed an importer as well as a New York-based PR agent to help raise its profile; Bag It Don't Bin It, makers of eco-friendly cloth bags, saw sales increase by more than 40 percent boosted by exports; while door manufacturer Urban Front produced a one-off Union Jack door for the British Consul ahead of hiring sales representatives in New York and Toronto.

The Breakthrough trade missions are part of Santander's

Breakthrough programme, which aims to help small businesses unlock their potential. As part of the programme, Santander is also making up to £200 million of growth capital loans available to fast-growth companies looking to invest in and grow their business. In addition to finance, Breakthrough also offers companies access to support and development programmes not typically available to SMEs, such as masterclasses with renowned business leaders to learn first-hand how to boost business growth.

John Williams, Head of Breakthrough at Santander UK, said: - "Santander is committed to supporting businesses at all stages of their lifecycle. Our international presence allows us to share our knowledge and expertise of overseas markets such as the US to help fast-growth businesses unlock their potential and achieve their growth plans. Collaboration is at the heart of the Breakthrough Programme, which aims to transform the entrepreneurial ideas of today into the successful businesses of tomorrow."

Submitted by [David Cohen](#)