

STILL WORTH INVESTING IN

A snapshot of Yorkshire business leaders produced by BQ and UBS Wealth Management reveals just how much investment is still going on in the region, even in the downturn

UBS Wealth Management's Yorkshire office has teamed up with BQ Yorkshire magazine to talk to some of the people who help drive the region's economy through business investment. Here, we highlight the Yorkshire Investor Directors, a group of business people who have helped their companies grow by investing in expansion, new premises, new technology and, most importantly, Yorkshire people. The Yorkshire Investor Directors listing is a snapshot of business leaders, each with a story to tell, from retail entrepreneurs to technology to finance. In each case we take a close look not just at what the business does, but how much has been invested in it for future growth as well. Neil King, director at UBS's Yorkshire office, says: "The Yorkshire Investor Directors gives a fantastic insight into some of the people who lead businesses which are making a substantial contribution to Yorkshire's economic landscape. "This is not a definitive list of all of the businesses making a difference in the region – we know from the work we are doing here in Yorkshire that this could take up several issues of BQ magazine. "Some of the directors are leading well-known firms, large and small, while others are hidden gems of the Yorkshire economic picture. What links them all is a willingness to push forward

and make money available to drive their business forward. Today we recognise those people for their contribution to Yorkshire's success." The survey is most topical because UBS Wealth Management, a company which currently looks after assets worth two trillion Swiss francs worldwide, selected Yorkshire to establish its latest UK office due to the strong potential for growth in an area that demonstrates impressive entrepreneurial flair and heritage. The Leeds office, at 1 City Square, is UBS's sixth UK office, following on from London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester and Birmingham. The team at the Yorkshire office have more than 55 years of wealth management experience. They include regional head Andrew Aitken as well as Neil King, Karen Vardy and Claire Kerr. They are aiming to offer holistic and bespoke advice to high net worth families and individuals in the Yorkshire and Humberside region using the full capabilities of UBS global platform. BQ Yorkshire editor Peter Baber says: "Yorkshire's economy cannot thrive without people such as Yorkshire Investor Directors and it is important that we acknowledge the crucial role they play. "The research project UBS has undertaken reflects BQ's desire to promote the excellent work of businesses in Yorkshire." ■

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Omar Bhamji, managing director, CK Foods, Hull.

Activity: Established in 2005, CK Food Processing was founded on the principles of providing added value to an ever-evolving market. Through extensive market research the company found that existing suppliers were not fulfilling client expectations in several key areas. CK Food Processing has worked closely with Europe's major cheese producers to form unique pizza cheese blends which are fully responding to the demands of the pizza cheese industry. Furthermore, the company has developed revolutionary brands which are now highly regarded among the UK's market leaders. Investment: Over £3.5m has been invested in a new purpose-built factory being constructed in Bradford, which is aimed at strategically positioning CK Foods as a provider for local, national and international markets through the provision of creative and technological enhancements in the food processing sector.

Dr Henry Shirman, managing director, MTL Group, Rotherham

Activity: MTL Group is among the fastest-growing contract manufacturing specialists in the metal sector and laser cuts, bends, machines and fabricates steel to customer requirements in the defence, construction, rail and renewable-energy sectors. Its customers include BAE, JCB, Caterpillar, Rheinmetall and others in the offshore wind energy sector. Since a management buyout in 2006, the group's turnover has tripled to over £50m Investment: In February, the group spent £5m relocating its operations to a facility in Rotherham. This will allow further growth and yield significant operational efficiencies. In the last year the group has invested heavily in

offshore wind technology with the development of a new twin head, high definition plasma cutter, a robotic plasma pipe cutter and additional bespoke handling equipment. This has resulted in the group winning its biggest-ever export order. The company has recruited 16 new apprentices this year. In the last six months, headcount has increased by 10% to more than 350. Export turnover has increased rapidly and will increase from 8% of sales last year to 22% of sales this year.

George Baker, managing director, KRL Group, Willerby, East Yorkshire

Activity: KRL Group is a photocopier and print specialist which has adapted from solely providing mechanical services to clients to offering consultancy work aimed at helping customers establish the most cost-effective ways of meeting their print requirements. The company underwent a management buyout in November 2009. Investment: Since the MBO, the company has invested around £80,000 in software and hardware, with developments including the ability to remotely log into clients' IT systems. It has also invested in new staff and training, as well as external consultants to help shape the business to meet future demands. The result of the investments has been improved service to customers, as well as new contracts with businesses including the Hull-based Sewell Group.

Philip Burgan, chairman and chief executive, Maria Mallaband Care Group, Westcourt, Gelderd Road, Leeds

Activity: Maria Mallaband Care Group is one of the UK's largest care home providers with a total of 112 homes across the UK, including 76 luxury homes for private fee payers, as well as a further 36 under the Countrywide Care Homes sub-brand which cater for customers referred through social services channels. Burgan founded the group – named after his grandmother – 15 years ago, following a career running a chain of pharmacies. Initially, he purchased four homes to establish the group, before taking advantage of improved market conditions around 2002 to start the growth of the business to its current size.



Stuart Turner, Founder, Sushi Sushi, Longfields Court, Barnsley

Activity: Sushi Sushi began on a laptop in Stuart Turner's kitchen. It was a small informative blog, with just a few ingredients for sale. Four years later, the business runs from a large warehouse in South Yorkshire and has a team of full-time customer service, warehouse and web employees. Investment: A new website, www.sushitrade.co.uk allows diversification from retail to trade. This has involved recruiting staff and employing an engineering company to manufacture sushi-making machines. The end goal is to sell them to the Japanese market.

Investment: In 2011, Maria Mallaband Care Group bought 35 homes, mainly in the north of England, from Southern Cross. Nine of these are in Yorkshire and the expansion of the group's homes has also boosted staffing in the company's Leeds head office. Taking on the homes from their former operator also secured a total of 2,250 jobs. Burgan has plans to continue his investment to double the size of the Countrywide Care Homes brand. Read more about Philip Burgan on page 64.

Sally Robinson, owner, Amplebosom.com, Old Byland, Helmsley, York

Activity: Founded in 1999, online lingerie retailer Amplebosom.com is a true example of farming business diversification, which now employs seven people, plus founder Sally Robinson. Having already opened the family farm up to bed-and-breakfast guests and as a National Park cafe, farmer's wife Sally spotted a gap in the market, with many independent shops which sold bras closing down. Farm >>