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# REVEALED: GIANTS OF GROWTH

Britain ranks second in Europe's league table of booming companies, behind Germany. **Simon Evans** reveals the fastest growing firms in Europe and the UK

**T**HE technology boom at the turn of the century may have turned to bust but six years on, and IT companies dominate the league tables of Europe's 500 fastest-growing companies, *CityA.M.* can reveal.

Germany has the largest number of companies in the league table, compiled by *Market500.EU* magazine, aimed at the senior management of high-growth companies.

Germany boasts 105 of those listed, despite the country's reputation for slow growth, inflexible unions and stifling bureaucracy.

Britain ranks second, accounting for 65 on the list. However, none of these is in the top 10, with Hampshire-based cleaning group Integrated Cleaning Management the highest-placed firm in 11th spot.

Third-placed France — which like Germany has not exactly covered itself in entrepreneurial glory in the last few decades — has 55 representatives.

Overall, companies from Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Spain account for nearly two thirds of Europe's fastest emerging companies but the survey reveals that smaller countries have produced some of the best performers in the European league.

Iceland has two of its companies in the top 10 and Ireland also has two in the top 25: consultancy group CPL and airline company Ryanair. Cash continues to flow into

central and eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the liberalisation of trade in the region. Former communist countries contribute 50 to the list.

To qualify for a ranking, companies had to

be based in Europe — either the EU or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) region.

Public and private companies feature in the list but they have to have been created before 2003. They must not have had more than 5,000 employees in 2002, and not fewer than 50 in 2005. Growth in the survey is measured in terms of turnover and the number of full-time employees a company has.

The rankings are compiled by *Market500.EU*, supported by computer software giant Microsoft and Big Four accountant **KPMG**, and the final league table is created using analysis over a three-year period.

## RAISING CASH

In terms of financing, four of the survey's top five companies are listed, and 121 companies out of the 500 are in the public domain. Of the listed firms, 31 per cent raised their cash on Euronext.

Alternext, launched in Paris in 2005 but was rolled out in Amsterdam last month — could further bolster Euronext's place at the top of the tree if it can build on its promising start. The London Stock Exchange is in second place, having raised funding for 23 firms.



## BRITAIN'S NO.1 INTEGRATED CLEANING MANAGEMENT

CLEANING certainly isn't the most glamorous of jobs but for the founders of Hampshire-based Integrated Cleaning Management (ICM) it has proved to be an increasingly profitable business to be in.

At 11th place in this year's

Europe 500 survey of the continent's fastest growing firms, ICM is Britain's highest ranked firm.

With more than 1,500 employees, the group — the brainchild of Paul Rafferty and Coral Brodie — provides daily cleaning services to the likes of Woolworths and

Lloyds TSB. With the market ever more competitive, the group has proved to be one of the most flexible in the arena.

Figings from Companies House show that ICM posted a turnover of £26.3m for the year to the end of 2005 — up from £17.5m.

## THE TOP TEN FASTEST GROWING COMPANIES IN EUROPE

COMPANY	COMPANY HEADQUARTERS	BUSINESS SECTOR	TURNOVER IN 2002 (EUROS)
Gameloft	France	IT, manufacturing	3,000,000
Avion	Iceland	Transport, logistics	212,641,542
Assystem	France	IT, communications	148,293,000
CPL Resources	Ireland	Consulting	27,798,000
Spreadshirt	Germany	Retail	60,000
EVN	Austria	Energy, mining, utilities	1,113,900,000
Kogun	Iceland	IT, communications	11,572,680
Webhelp	France	IT, communications	2,657,339
Groupe Open	France	IT services	207,000,000
Pharmexx	Germany	Consulting, management services	34,378,000

## THE TOP TEN FASTEST GROWING BRITISH COMPANIES

COMPANY	POSITION IN TOP 500	BUSINESS SECTOR	TURNOVER IN 2002 (EUROS)
Integrated Cleaning	11th	Support services	12,227,458
Intec Telecom Systems	15th	IT, communications	72,678,896
Mears	18th	Support services	120,942,680
Caffe Nero	23rd	Tourism, leisure	60,318,248
BCW	27th	Financial services	18,678,815
International Power	33rd	Energy, mining, utilities	1,728,408,680
RPS	36th	Consulting	160,440,416
Inspes	39th	Manufacturing	11,449,320
Sophos	42nd	IT, communications	48,349,515
Holroyd Howe	51st	Support services	14,191,803



'To qualify for a ranking, companies had to be based in Europe and growth is measured in terms of turnover and the number of staff'

## SIX OF THE BEST

Clockwise from top left:  
Power producer  
**International Power**,  
in at 33.

Britain's mobile phone  
recycling company  
**Fonebak**, in at No. 56.

Energy company **EVN**,  
in at No6, for Austria.

French IT company  
**Gameloft**, the No1.

**Caffe Nero**, the British  
coffee chain, at 23.  
Picture: REX

Ireland's no-frills airline  
**Ryanair**, at 21  
Picture: REUTERS

The figures, released  
here for the first time,  
were compiled by  
**Market500.EU**  
magazine