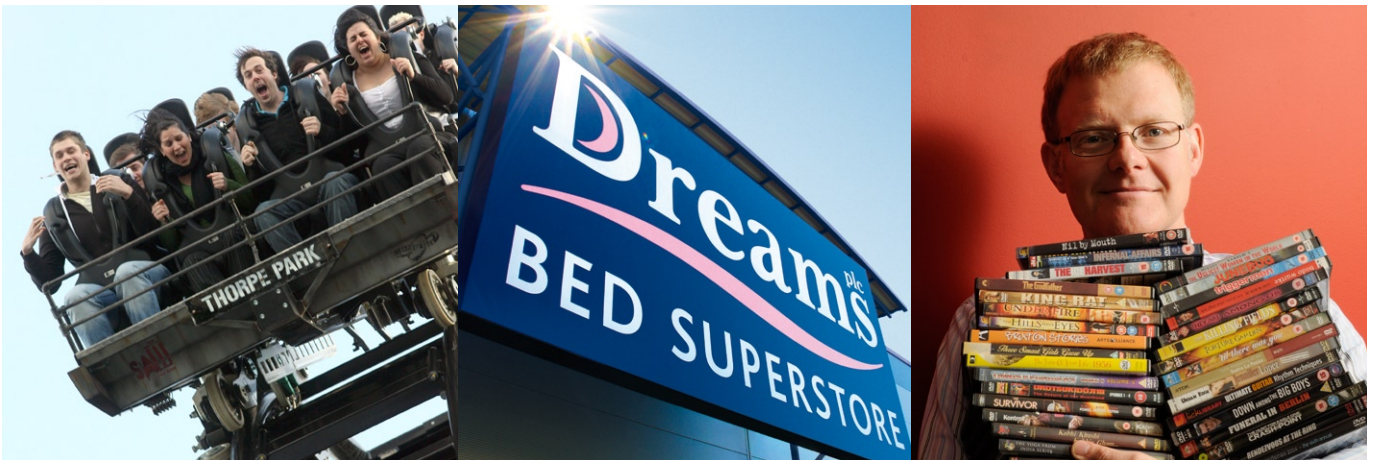


Research Report 2010

Britain's 100 private equity-backed companies with the fastest-growing profits



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Reservoir Group (No 8), backed by SCF Partners, appear for a third consecutive year

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth year of **The Sunday Times Deloitte Buyout Track 100**, which ranks Britain's 100 private equity-backed companies with the fastest-growing profits (EBITDA[‡]) over the last two years. **Deloitte** is the title sponsor of the league table and main sponsors are **Lloyds TSB Corporate Markets** and **UBS Wealth Management**.

The Buyout Track 100 is the only league table of its kind in Britain, ranking private equity-backed companies, rather than private equity deals at entry or exit.

This year there are 68 new entrants to the league table as compared to 49 on last year's table.

The top company this year is Moneybookers, with an average growth rate of 177% a year. This Investcorp-backed company is one of Europe's largest online fund transfer services and enables anyone with an email address to send and receive payments securely online.

The companies in the Buyout Track 100 have profits ranging from £3m to £50m. Businesses with profits greater than £50m are listed separately in the '10 Biggest' league table on page 17.

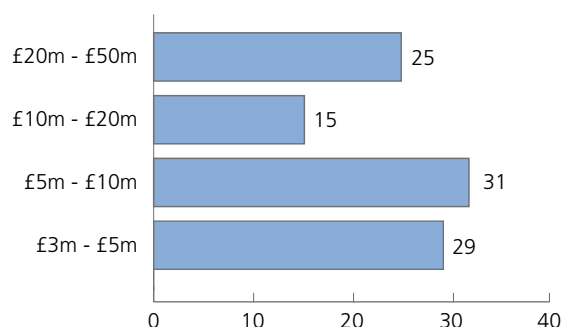
Top 10 Buyout Track 100 companies

Rank	Company Activity	HQ location	FYE	% annual profit growth over 2 yrs	Latest profit £000	Main shareholders
1	Moneybookers Online payment provider	Central London	Dec 08	177.44	13,914	Investcorp (51%), founders and management (49%)
2	Callcredit Information Group Credit risk evaluator	Leeds	Dec 08	173.40	9,934	Vitruvian Partners (majority), management (minority)
3	LOVEFILM.com Online DVD rental	West London	Dec 08	145.67	8,755	Private equity consortium (50%), Amazon (32%), founders and business angels (15%), management (3%)
4	Amco Group Infrastructure and drilling contractor	Barnsley	Dec 08	133.37	*20,945	Endless LLP (53%), management (47%)
5	University Partnerships Programme University accommodation provider	Central London	Aug 09	126.77	†131,754	Barclays European Infrastructure (100%)
6	Pulse Staffing Healthcare recruiter	Hertfordshire	Dec 08	123.00	6,559	HgCapital (74%), Fidelity Special Situations (10%), management (16%)
7	Kew Green Hotels Hotel operator	West London	Aug 08	105.54	10,551	Moorfield Group (25%), Lloyds Banking Group (20%), management (55%)
8	Reservoir Group Oilfield services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	103.17	†20,389	SCF Partners (69%), management (31%)
9	TSC Foods Chilled food manufacturer	Scunthorpe	Dec 08	97.93	4,513	Key Capital Partners (>50%), management (<50%)
10	Wireless Infrastructure Group Wireless tower operator	Lanarkshire	Dec 08	92.45	10,019	Royal Bank of Scotland (45%), Penta Capital (20%), management (35%)

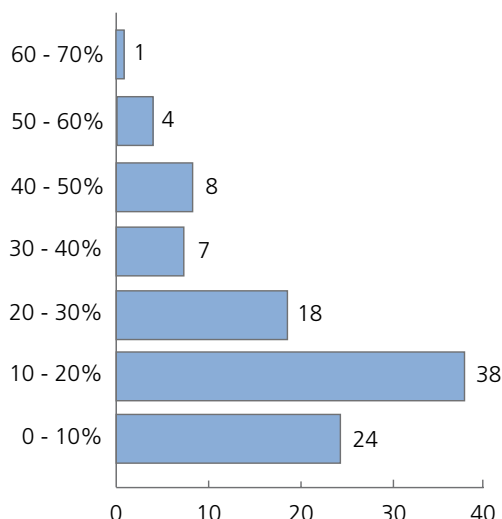
* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

‡ EBITDA is defined as operating profit + depreciation + amortisation

EBITDA on main table

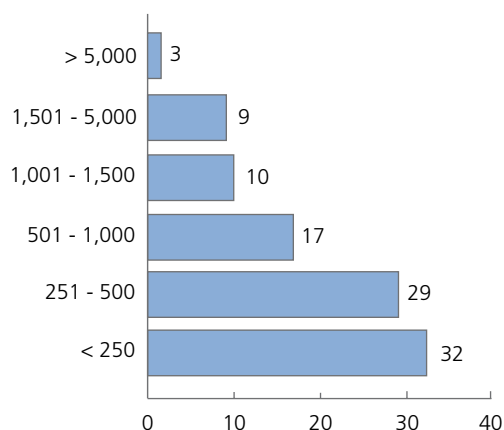


EBITDA margins on main table



Number of employees

Number of companies in each range of number of employees in latest financial year



KEY STATISTICS

Growth in profits

- Buyout Track 100 companies, on average, increased their EBITDA 57% a year over the last two years.
- The combined EBITDA of the 100 companies totalled £1.3bn in the latest financial year, having grown from £567m two years ago.
- EBITDA for the 100 companies ranges from £3m for rubber products manufacturer Icon Polymer Group (No 58, backed by LDC) to an annualised £46.3m for pharmaceutical logistics company Marken (No 38, backed by Apax Partners).
- 40 companies had an EBITDA greater than £10m.
- Acquisitions have contributed significantly to the EBITDA growth of many businesses. Of the Buyout Track 100 and 10 Biggest companies, up to 10 are explicitly part of private equity-driven buy-and-build strategies. At least a further 25 have grown profits significantly by buying other businesses.

Margins

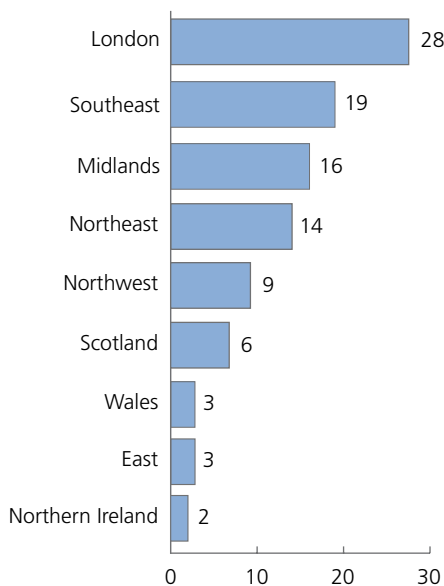
- The average EBITDA margin of the 100 companies is 20%.
- Five companies have EBITDA margins greater than 50%. The company with the highest margin is Wireless Infrastructure Group (No 10, backed by RBS and Penta Capital), with margins of 64%. WIG operates wireless masts that provide mobile phone and broadband signals.
- Margins have been squeezed due to difficult trading conditions, with a third of companies showing a drop in their operating profit margins in their latest financial year.
- A further third of the companies increased operating profit margins by less than 2% in the last year.

Job creation

- The 100 companies employ a total of 86,527 staff.
- Together, the 100 companies created 25,505 jobs during the last two years, although in some cases staff joined as part of an acquisition.
- 39 of the companies employ more than 500 staff.
- The largest employer is testing services provider Inspicio (No 19, backed by 3i), with over 8,000 employees operating in more than 130 countries.

Regional

Number of companies in each region



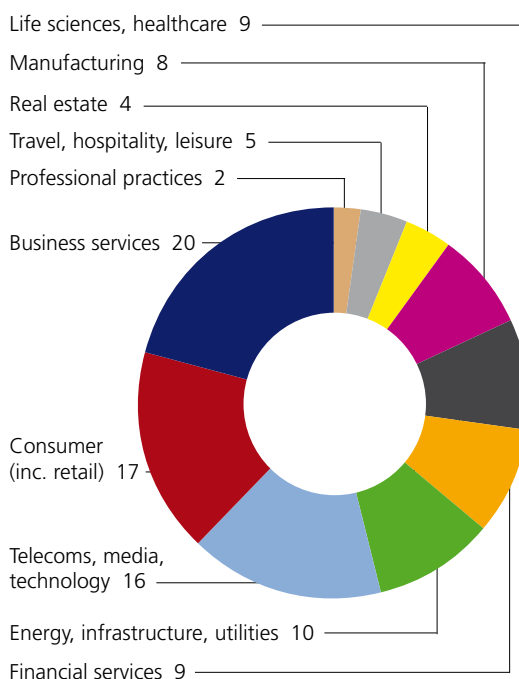
Regional breakdown

The regional breakdown is broadly similar to last year's table, with the most companies based in London and the South East.

- 28 companies are headquartered in London (more than any other region) compared with 30 last year.
- 19 companies on the table are based in Southeast, with the Midlands not far behind with 16 companies.
- 23 firms are headquartered in the North of England, (14 in the Northeast and 9 in the Northwest).
- 6 companies are based in Scotland with 3 in Wales.
- 2 companies are based in Northern Ireland, up from none last year.

Industry

Number of companies in each industry



Industry breakdown

Business services is the most common industry with 20 companies in this category. These include recruiters Alexander Mann Solutions (No 68, backed by Graphite Capital), Red Commerce (No 80, backed by Inflexion Private Equity) and Pulse Staffing (No 6, backed by HgCapital).

Despite the current economic climate, consumer-facing retailers are also well represented, with a total of 17 companies on the table. This category includes baby product manufacturer Mayborn (No 45, backed by 3i), which operates the Tommee Tippee brand, and discount supermarket Frozen Value (No 36, backed by 3i).

TMT (technology, media and telecoms) accounts for 16 companies, including 2e2 (No 86, backed by Duke Street Capital) and Precise Media Group (No 70, backed by Phoenix Equity Partners), which are both appearing on Buyout Track 100 for the third consecutive year.

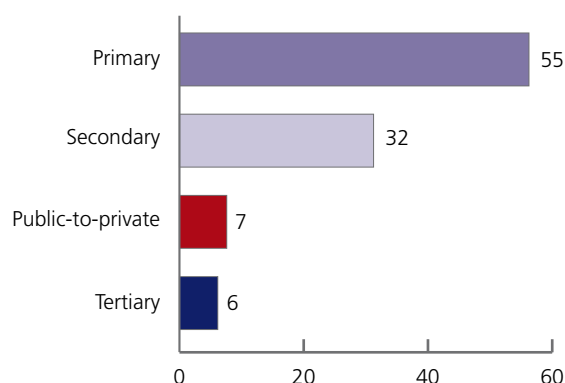
Private equity house

The 18 private equity houses with two or more investee companies on league table

Private equity house	No of investee companies
LDC	10
Inflexion Private Equity	5
3i	4
Gresham	4
HgCapital	4
CBPE Capital	3
Charterhouse	3
Exponent	3
RJD Partners	3
Apax Partners	2
August Private Equity	2
Barclays Private Equity	2
Dunedin	2
Englefield	2
Investcorp	2
NVM	2
Phoenix Private Equity	2
Vitruvian Partners	2

Deal type

Number of companies



Private equity house breakdown

LDC, the private equity arm of Lloyds Banking Group, has 10 portfolio companies on Buyout Track 100 this year; Inflexion Private Equity comes in second with 5.

LDC's portfolio companies are on the smaller side for Buyout Track 100. The average EBITDA for LDC's investments is £7m, compared with £13m for the table overall. Examples of companies backed by LDC include fake tan supplier St Tropez (No 77) and beverage company InterContinental Brands (No 65), which manufactures the Vodka brand, amongst others.

Inflexion Private Equity backs trendy clothing brand Jack Wills (No 22) and newly private FDM Group (No 74), which provides IT services.

Deal type breakdown

Buyouts are segmented by type. Primary buyouts refer to deals where the acquired firm has been bought for the first time from a trade seller or the company's founder. Secondary and tertiary deals transfer ownership from one private equity house to another. Public-to-private deals occur when companies delist from the stock exchange.

Primary deals account for 55 of the qualifying companies. Included in these are 6 so-called BIMBO (buy-in, management buyout) deals, in which incoming managers invest as part of the buyout. Secondary deals account for 32. Tertiary deals are far less common, with only 6 featuring on the table this year.

There were 7 public-to-private deals including Northern Irish natural gas supplier Kellen Group (No 61), which was taken private by Terra Firma in 2004 as part of a £450m deal.

Exits since last year

None of the companies featured on last year's Buyout Track 100 floated this year. There were just three exits, compared to ten last year. HitecVision Private Equity exited its investment in Noble Denton, via a trade sale to Germanischer Lloyd. Candover sold its majority stake in Wood Mackenzie to Charterhouse for £553m. LDC partially exited its investment in National Accident Helpline, selling half of its 60% stake to Inflexion Private Equity.



IRIS Software (No 94), backed by Hellman & Friedman and HgCapital, appears for a fourth consecutive year

Companies on consecutive league tables since 2007

Twelve companies have made at least three consecutive appearances on the Buyout Track 100 league table. Six of these have featured four times in a row.

Rank 2007	Rank 2008	Rank 2009	Rank 2010	Company Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2 yrs	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
43	88	58	16	Moody International Technical services provider	West Sussex	Dec 08	82.92	41,193	12,311	249,232	4,796	Investcorp (75%), management (25%)
27	41	17	53	QHotels Hotel operator	Leeds	Dec 08	46.45	37,415	17,446	130,186	1,930	Alchemy Partners (87%), management (13%)
68	61	63	67	Castlebeck Specialist healthcare provider	Darlington	Dec 08	40.72	26,663	13,464	75,331	1,678	Lydian Capital Partners (80%), management (20%)
12	19	67	69	Wood Mackenzie Energy research consultancy	Edinburgh	Dec 08	38.81	38,718	20,094	96,636	621	Charterhouse (77%), management and staff (23%)
63	21	16	94	IRIS Software Business software developer	Berkshire	Apr 09	30.83	41,142	24,038	119,204	1,330	Hellman & Friedman (majority), HgCapital (minority), management (minority)
5	42	41	98	AFI-Uplift Construction equipment supplier	Wakefield	Dec 08	29.33	13,872	8,294	32,367	263	Barclays Private Equity (40%), management (60%)
	1	44	8	Reservoir Group Oilfield services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	103.17	†20,389	4,939	†42,981	210	SCF Partners (69%), management (31%)
	55	7	42	London City Airport Airport operator	East London	Dec 08	51.04	40,870	17,915	79,671	385	Global Infrastructure Partners (75%), Highstar (25%)
	74	75	60	Energy Cranes Offshore services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	43.54	*18,699	9,076	*152,087	1,353	CBPE Capital (70%), management (30%)
	46	19	70	Precise Media Group Media intelligence provider	Central London	Sep 08	38.22	7,482	3,916	26,080	367	Phoenix Equity Partners (67%), management (33%)
	24	55	86	2e2 IT services provider	Newbury	Dec 08	32.90	23,462	13,284	204,948	1,323	Duke Street Capital (58%), Bank of Scotland Corporate (11%), management and staff (31%)
	54	92	96	National Accident Helpline Legal services marketing agency	Northamptonshire	Dec 08	30.33	7,219	*4,250	26,781	49	LDC (30%), Inflexion Private Equity (30%), management (40%)

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

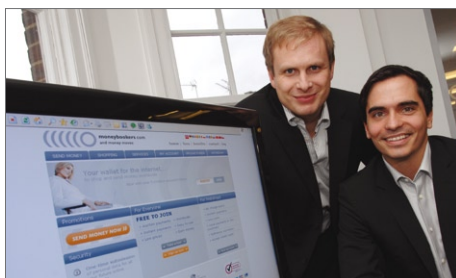
KEY THEMES

This year's Buyout Track 100 highlights some of Britain's top performing private equity-backed businesses at a time when the whole economy, including the private equity industry, has been facing considerable difficulties.

However, it is important to note that 61 of the companies on the league table have latest financial year ends dating back to 2008, before the full effects of the recession.

Key themes emerging include:

- **Well-known brands:** household names featuring in the league table include LOVEFILM.com, Jack Wills and Coffee Nation.
- **Counter-cyclical and recession-proof businesses:** many of the companies on the league table are in counter-cyclical or recession-proof sectors, such as debt collection and value discounting.
- **Growth through acquisition:** in difficult market conditions, much of the growth on the league table is attributable to acquisition.
- **Deal activity:** a reduction in deal activity meant that only 10 companies on the league table had buyouts in the last year, compared with 26 on the 2009 Buyout Track 100.
- **Exit timescales:** private equity houses appear to be taking longer to exit their investments. There are 20 companies on the league table that have been backed by one investor for at least six years.



Nikolai Riesenkauff and Martin Ort, joint CEOs of Moneybookers (No 1), backed by Investcorp

SELECTED COMPANY PROFILES

In the following pages we profile examples of companies that demonstrate some of the key trends from this year's league table.

Well-known brands

The Buyout Track 100 features many household names, such as preppie clothing brand Jack Wills (No 22, backed by Inflexion) and Dreams (No 82, backed by Exponent). The No 1 company, Moneybookers, provides online payment services and is backed by Investcorp.

1	Moneybookers Online payment provider		Main shareholders: Investcorp (51%), founders and management (49%)
	Location	Central London	Moneybookers has created technology that enables anyone with an e-mail address to send and receive payments securely online. The London firm claims that more than 10.5m people use its service and that 60,000 internet merchants, including eBay and Thomas Cook, offer it as a payment option. The private equity house Investcorp backed a £72m buyout in 2007 for a 51% stake in a move that was led by joint chief executives Martin Ott and Nikolai Riesenkauff. Profits have grown 177% a year from £1.8m in 2006 to £13.9m in 2008.
	Latest fin. year	Dec 08	
	CAGR [§]	177.44%	
	Latest year profit	£13.9m	
	Base year profit	£1.8m	
	Latest sales	£27.4m	
	Employees	232	
3	LOVEFILM.com Online DVD rental		Main shareholders: Private equity consortium (50%), Amazon (32%), founders and business angels (15%), management (3%)
	Location	West London	Lovefilm says it rents out 4m DVDs a month to 1m subscribers in Britain and Europe. It also provides branded DVD rental for the likes of Tesco, the Guardian, and Odeon cinemas, and has developed a digital on-demand service. In 2008 chief executive Simon Calver rounded off eleven acquisitions by buying Amazon's European DVD rental business in a deal that gave Amazon a 32% stake in the London firm. A consortium, including DFJ Esprit, Index Ventures and Balderton Capital and previous owners Arts Alliance Media, owns a further 50%. Profits have grown 146% a year from an annualised £1.5m in 2006 to £8.8m in 2008.
	Latest fin. year	Dec 08	
	CAGR [§]	145.67%	
	Latest year profit	£8.8m	
	Base year profit	*£1.5m	
	Latest sales	£73.1m	
	Employees	346	
22	Jack Wills Clothing retailer		Main shareholders: Inflexion Private Equity (27%), management (73%)
	Location	NW London	This casual, upmarket clothes brand was founded in 1999 in Salcombe, Devon. Now headquartered in London, Jack Wills' preppy range is sold in affluent university towns, seaside resorts as well as London. In 2008 the company launched Aubin & Wills, targeting older customers and is now eyeing the American and Asian markets. It relies exclusively on viral marketing. Inflexion Private Equity bought a minority stake in 2007; founder Peter Williams retains a controlling stake. Profits have grown 73% a year from £2.6m in 2007 to £7.7m in 2009.
	Latest fin. year	Jan 09	
	CAGR [§]	72.88%	
	Latest year profit	£7.7m	
	Base year profit	£2.6m	
	Latest sales	£41.8m	
	Employees	1,130	

§ compound annual growth rate in profits * annualised figure



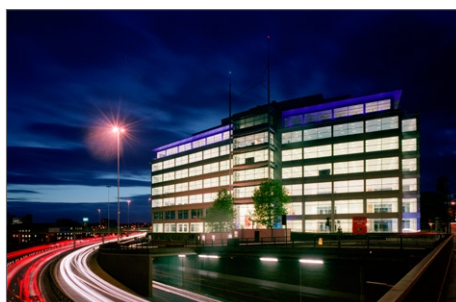
Kettle Foods (No 76) are backed by Lion Capital

Well-known brands (cont.)

Other well-known names in the league table include online DVD rental business LOVEFILM.com (No 3), backed by a private equity consortium comprising DFJ Esprit, Index Ventures, Balderton Capital and Arts Alliance Media. Food and drink companies in the listing include Coffee Nation (No 73, backed by Milestone Capital) and Kettle Foods (No 76, owned by Lion Capital), which makes Kettle Chips.

42	London City Airport Airport operator	Main shareholders: Global Infrastructure Partners (75%), Highstar (25%)	
	<div>Location</div> <div>Latest fin. year</div> <div>CAGR[§]</div> <div>Latest year profit</div> <div>Base year profit</div> <div>Latest sales</div> <div>Employees</div>	<div>East London</div> <div>Dec 08</div> <div>51.04%</div> <div>£40.9m</div> <div>£17.9m</div> <div>£79.7m</div> <div>385</div>	Eleven airlines fly to 32 European cities from London City Airport, and British Airways recently started business-only flights to New York. Global Infrastructure Partners, which also owns Gatwick, bought half the company in 2006, increasing its shareholding to 100% in 2008, buying out AIG. It has since sold 25% to Highstar Capital. The company is refurbishing, improving aircraft parking stands, its departure lounges and security. Boosted by a rise in passenger numbers, profits have grown 51% a year from £17.9m in 2006 to £40.9m in 2008.
73	Coffee Nation Self-service coffee operator	Main shareholders: Milestone Capital Partners (68%), Investec (12%), management (20%)	
	<div>Location</div> <div>Latest fin. year</div> <div>CAGR[§]</div> <div>Latest year profit</div> <div>Base year profit</div> <div>Latest sales</div> <div>Employees</div>	<div>High Wycombe</div> <div>Mar 09</div> <div>37.27%</div> <div>†£3.0m</div> <div>£1.6m</div> <div>†£20.1m</div> <div>59</div>	Coffee Nation reckons it is Britain's third largest coffee seller behind Starbucks and Costa Coffee. It operates around 800 self-service machines selling 'gourmet coffee-to-go' at motorway service stations, petrol forecourts and convenience stores. Customers include Welcome Break, Somerfield, Esso and Moto. The High Wycombe company, led by chief executive Scott Martin and finance director Simon Vardigans, is looking to expand into airports, universities and offices. Milestone Capital Partners backed a £25m secondary buyout from Primary Capital in March 2008 and profits have grown 37% a year from £1.6m in 2007 to £3m in 2009.
76	Kettle Foods Crisp manufacturer	Main shareholders: Lion Capital (100%)	
	<div>Location</div> <div>Latest fin. year</div> <div>CAGR[§]</div> <div>Latest year profit</div> <div>Base year profit</div> <div>Latest sales</div> <div>Employees</div>	<div>Norwich</div> <div>Sep 08</div> <div>35.86%</div> <div>£12.7m</div> <div>£6.9m</div> <div>£59.0m</div> <div>371</div>	Betting on the British appetite for crisps, Cameron Healy, founder of Kettle Foods in America, brought posh snack brand, Kettle Chips, to England in 1988, setting up in Norfolk close to its potato supply. Kettle is now one of the biggest snack brands in Britain. In 2006 Lion Capital bought both the American and the British company for £170m. It runs the companies separately, and is reportedly looking to sell both. Profits have grown 36% a year from £6.9m in 2006 to £12.7m in 2008 under chief executive Jeremy Bradley.

§ compound annual growth rate in profits † unaudited accounts



The Leeds headquarters of Callcredit Information Group (No 2, backed by Vitruvian Partners)

Counter-cyclical and recession-proof businesses

Well represented on the league table are companies operating in counter-cyclical or recession-proof sectors. This includes discount retailers Poundland (No 92, backed by Advent International) and Frozen Value (No 36, backed by 3i), which have actively benefited from the downturn. As have suppliers to the public sector, which have thus far been relatively insulated from it, such as kitchen manufacturer Rixonway (No 63) and care provider Lifeways Community Care (No 32), both of which are backed by August Equity Partners.

2	Callcredit Information Group Credit risk evaluator		Main shareholders: Vitruvian Partners (majority), management (minority)
	Location	Leeds	This Leeds company provides credit check and identity verification services to corporate clients. It also provides an indebtedness service, which flags consumers that are taking on unaffordable levels of debt. Callcredit Information Group was part of Skipton Building Society until December 2009, when Vitruvian Partners bought a majority stake in the business, for an undisclosed sum. Chief executive John McAndrew and his team grew profits 173% a year from £1.3m in 2006 to £9.9m in 2008.
	Latest fin. year	Dec 08	
	CAGR [§]	173.40%	
	Latest year profit	£9.9m	
	Base year profit	£1.3m	
	Latest sales	£49.3m	
	Employees	640	
78	Lowell Group Loan recovery agency		Main shareholders: Exponent Private Equity (81%), management (19%)
	Location	Leeds	Lowell Group buys delinquent consumer debt from banks, credit-card issuers and telecoms providers, and then recovers it. The Leeds firm focuses primarily on debts of around £1,000. Exponent backed a secondary buyout from Cabot Square Capital in 2008 for a reported £200m. As part of the deal, Lowell arranged a £100m line of credit, secured until 2011, which has allowed it to continue buying debt during a time when access to capital has been a challenge for competitors. This has helped profits grow 34% a year from £13.4m in 2007 to £24.2m in 2009, under chief executive James Cornell.
	Latest fin. year	Aug 09	
	CAGR [§]	34.46%	
	Latest year profit	†£24.2m	
	Base year profit	£13.4m	
	Latest sales	†£46.9m	
	Employees	369	
92	Poundland Discount retailer		Main shareholders: Advent International (78%), David Dodd (12), management (10%)
	Location	West Midlands	Calling itself Europe's biggest single price retailer, Poundland has found the current economic climate good for business. Shoppers from all socioeconomic classes now come to buy anything from stationery to nappies, from washing-up liquid to reading glasses. Every one of more than 3,000 items sold in its 250 shops costs £1, including over 800 major brand products. The company was founded by Dave Dodd and Stephen Smith in 1990 and Advent International took a majority stake in 2002 for £49m. Under chief executive Jim McCarthy profits have risen 31% a year from £11.7m in 2007 to £20m in 2009.
	Latest fin. year	Mar 09	
	CAGR [§]	31.04%	
	Latest year profit	£20.0m	
	Base year profit	£11.7m	
	Latest sales	£396.2m	
	Employees	5,474	

§ compound annual growth rate in profits * annualised figure † unaudited accounts



Steven Joseph, chairman of Tangerine Confectionery (No 47, backed by Close Growth Capital)

Growth through acquisition

Companies growing through acquisition feature heavily on this year's table. Some have bought smaller competitors, such as National Fostering Agency (No 66, backed by Sovereign Capital Partners), which purchased three foster-care providers in 2009. Others, such as Loewy Group (No 52, backed by Veronis Suhler Stevenson and ABRY Partners) are on buy-and-build strategies, trading under a number of brands but sharing back-office functions.

13	Giles Insurance Insurance broker	Main shareholders: Charterhouse (65%), Chris Giles (20%), other management (15%)
	Location: Central London Latest fin. year: Aug 09 CAGR [§] : 90.39% Latest year profit: £22.8m Base year profit: £6.3m Latest sales: £72.1m Employees: 993	Pursuing an aggressive buy-and-build strategy, Giles Insurance has acquired 22 competitors in the last two years and now has 44 regional offices. The London company places insurance policies worth more than £300m in premiums for individuals and corporate clients, from taxi drivers to large manufacturers. In 2008 Charterhouse Capital Partners backed a £185m secondary buyout from Gresham, taking a 65% stake and making available up to £500m to fund the spending spree. Profits have risen 95% a year from £6.3m in 2007 to £23.8m in 2009 under chief executive Chris Giles, whose father founded the company.
47	Tangerine Confectionery Confectionery manufacturer	Main shareholders: Close Growth Capital (41%), management (40%), Appleby Trust (13%), Toms Gruppen (6%)
	Location: Blackpool Latest fin. year: Dec 08 CAGR [§] : 49.80% Latest year profit: £7.9m Base year profit: £3.5m Latest sales: £131.0m Employees: 1,235	Following its acquisition of Cadbury's Monkhill Confectionery in 2008 for £56m, Tangerine Confectionery reckons it is Britain's largest sugar confectionery maker. About half the Blackpool company's turnover comes from making products for the major supermarkets. The other half comes from its own brands, including traditional favourites Barratt's Sherbet Fountains and Butterkist popcorn. Chairman Steven Joseph and managing director Chris Marshall led the buy-in management buyout from Toms Gruppen in January 2006, backed by Close Growth Capital, which invested an undisclosed sum. Profits have increased 50% a year from £3.5m in 2006 to £7.9m in 2008.
66	National Fostering Agency Foster care agency	Main shareholders: Sovereign Capital (50%), Edwina Beech (21%), Michael Lovett (21%), other staff (8%)
	Location: West London Latest fin. year: Mar 09 CAGR [§] : 41.65% Latest year profit: †£7.9m Base year profit: £3.9m Latest sales: †£47.9m Employees: 189	This West London company says it is now the second largest independent fostering agency in Britain. Founded in 1995 and led by chief executive Iain Anderson, the business is backed by Sovereign Capital Partners which invested an undisclosed sum in 2006. In 2009 the group acquired three regional fostering agencies, expanding its geographical reach. The group now has a network of 13 offices and arranges foster care for more than 1,600 children. Profits have climbed 42% a year from £3.9m in 2007 to £7.9m in 2009.

§ compound annual growth rate in profits † unaudited accounts



Wood Mackenzie (No 69, backed by Charterhouse)

Deal activity

2009 has been widely reported as one of the slowest on record for the private equity industry. According to the Centre for Management Buyout Research (CMBOR), there were only 117 deals of any size completed in the UK, the fewest in 25 years. There was an upturn in the final quarter, including the year's biggest British deal – Apax Partners' £975m tertiary buyout of pharmaceutical logistics provider Marken, which makes it onto the league table at No 38. A total of 10 companies on the league table were the subject of buyouts during 2009, including FDM (No 74), which was taken private by Inflexion in November, and Wood Mackenzie (No 69), which was bought from Candover by Charterhouse for £553m in June.

38	Marken Pharmaceutical logistics provider	Main shareholders: Apax Partners (67%), management (33%)
	Location West London Latest fin. year Dec 08 CAGR [§] 53.96% Latest year profit *£46.3m Base year profit *£19.5m Latest sales *£103.2m Employees 325	Marken is a global logistics company, providing services exclusively to the biopharmaceutical industry. It transports biological samples, vaccines and clinical trial material around the world, expediting any regulatory issues. In December, Apax Partners bought Intermediate Capital Group's majority stake, in the biggest British private equity deal of 2009. Under chief executive and managing director Bruce Craig, profits have grown 54% a year from an annualised £19.5m in 2006 to an annualised £46.3m in 2008.
69	Wood Mackenzie Energy research consultancy	Main shareholders: Charterhouse (77%), management and staff (23%)
	Location Edinburgh Latest fin. year Dec 08 CAGR [§] 38.81% Latest year profit £38.7m Base year profit £20.1m Latest sales £96.6m Employees 621	Some of the world's biggest energy, metals and mining companies come to Wood Mackenzie for market research, strategic analysis and commercial advice. Known for its energy research, the Edinburgh company's diversification into metals and mining was supported by the acquisition of coal mining experts Hill & Associates and Barlow Jonker in 2007 and metals mining consultancy Brook Hunt in 2008. In June 2009 Charterhouse backed a £553m tertiary buyout from Candover taking a 67% stake. Profits have grown 39% a year from £20.1m in 2006 to £38.7m in 2008 under the leadership of chief executive Stephen Halliday.
74	FDM Group IT services provider	Main shareholders: Inflexion, management
	Location Brighton Latest fin. year Dec 08 CAGR [§] 37.04% Latest year profit £5.3m Base year profit £2.8m Latest sales £52.2m Employees 363	FDM provides IT services to customers like The AA, BSkyB and Citigroup, to see them through technical challenges like commissioning a new website, systems testing or upgrading a database. After five months of takeover talks, the Inflexion-backed management team, led by chief executive Rod Flavell, agreed to take the Brighton company private in December 2009, for an undisclosed sum. Profits grew 37% a year from £2.8m in 2006 to £5.3m in 2008.

§ compound annual growth rate in profits * annualised figure



Fullwood (No 15, is backed by 3i)

Exit timescales

Private equity houses typically aim to retain ownership of investments for three to five years. However, there are 20 companies on this year's league table that have been in the hands of one investor for at least six years. Dairy equipment manufacturer Fullwood (No 15) has been in 3i's portfolio since the 1960s, while HgCapital has backed recruiter Pulse Staffing (No 6) since 1999.

15	Fullwood Dairy equipment manufacturer	Main shareholders: 3i (20%), family and management (80%)
	Location Shropshire Latest fin. year Dec 08 CAGR [§] 86.98% Latest year profit £6.8m Base year profit £2.0m Latest sales £75.6m Employees 617	Founded as a London pharmacy in 1785, R.J. Fullwood & Bland now has fourteen subsidiaries in eight countries. The Shropshire group has interests in industries as diverse as cryogenic freezing, pharmaceuticals and brewing but its principal activity is the manufacture and supply of farm equipment for milking sheep, goats, cows, buffalo and camels. 3i took a minority stake in the 1960s, which it still retains. Under chairman and chief executive Richard Lancaster, profits grew 87% from £2m in 2006 to £6.8m in 2008.
36	Frozen Value Value food retailer	Main shareholders: 3i (40%), management (60%)
	Location Barnsley Latest fin. year Jan 09 CAGR [§] 54.62% Latest year profit £3.1m Base year profit £1.3m Latest sales £47.8m Employees 761	Frozen Value, which trades as Jack Fulton, has been a successful frozen food retailer for more than 40 years. Trading from 86 shops throughout Yorkshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Humberside, the company offers a comprehensive range of premium branded frozen food, supplemented with a range of branded dry grocery and chilled products and a varying range of highly discounted products bought in one-off 'parcels'. Under the £11m buy-in management buyout team, backed by 3i since 1997 and headed by managing director Kevin Gunter, profits have grown 55% a year from £1.3m in 2007 to £3.1m in 2009.
41	Weldex Crane hirer	Main shareholders: NVM Private Equity (30%), McGilvray family (70%)
	Location Inverness Latest fin. year Nov 08 CAGR [§] 51.86% Latest year profit £12.6m Base year profit £5.5m Latest sales £27.5m Employees 116	Based in Inverness, this crane-hire company currently has 28 cranes working to build the Olympic stadium in London. Weldex was established in 1979 by Dougie McGilvray and it now claims to be Britain's largest crawler crane hire company. From two locations around Britain, the firm offers 110 cranes, up to 1,350 tonnes capacity, and it also provides operators and service engineers. NVM Private Equity backed a £1.3m primary buyout in 1996 but the McGilvray family retains a majority stake. Profits have risen 52% a year from £5.5m in 2006 to £12.6m in 2008.

§ compound annual growth rate in profits

2010 BUYOUT TRACK 100 LEAGUE TABLE

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2-yr	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
1		Moneybookers Online payment provider	Central London	Dec 08	177.44	13,914	1,808	27,358	232	Investcorp (51%), founders and management (49%)
2		Callcredit Information Group Credit risk evaluator	Leeds	Dec 08	173.40	9,934	1,329	49,345	640	Vitruvian Partners (majority), management (minority)
3		LOVEFILM.com Online DVD rental	West London	Dec 08	145.67	8,755	*1,451	73,073	346	Private equity consortium (50%), Amazon (32%), founders and business angels (15%), management (3%)
4		Amco Group Infrastructure and drilling contractor	Barnsley	Dec 08	133.37	*20,945	3,846	*106,882	781	Endless LLP (53%), management (47%)
5		University Partnerships Programme University accommodation provider	Central London	Aug 09	126.77	†31,754	6,175	†67,796	338	Barclays European Infrastructure (100%)
6		Pulse Staffing Healthcare recruiter	Hertfordshire	Dec 08	123.00	6,559	1,319	137,775	327	HgCapital (74%), Fidelity Special Situations (10%), management (16%)
7		Kew Green Hotels Hotel operator	West London	Aug 08	105.54	10,551	2,497	41,348	906	Moorfield Group (25%), Lloyds Banking Group (20%), management (55%)
8	44	Reservoir Group Oilfield services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	103.17	†20,389	4,939	†42,981	210	SCF Partners (69%), management (31%)
9		TSC Foods Chilled food manufacturer	Scunthorpe	Dec 08	97.93	4,513	1,152	31,806	305	Key Capital Partners (>50%), management (<50%)
10		Wireless Infrastructure Group Wireless tower operator	Lanarkshire	Dec 08	92.45	10,019	2,705	15,671	29	Royal Bank of Scotland (45%), Penta Capital (20%), management (35%)
11		Cognita Schools operator	Milton Keynes	Aug 08	92.43	22,866	6,175	110,562	2,428	Englefield Capital (81%), management (19%)
12		Seafood Holdings Fish and meat wholesaler	Hertfordshire	Jan 09	91.06	4,994	1,368	81,800	535	Risk Capital Partners (24%), Toby Baxendale (76%)
13	3	Giles Insurance Insurance broker	Central London	Aug 09	90.39	22,830	6,298	72,136	993	Charterhouse (65%), Chris Giles (20%), other management (15%)
14		Parasol Payroll services provider	Warrington	Apr 09	87.26	3,589	1,024	366,131	8,110	Inflexion Private Equity (65%), Rob Crossland (25%), other management (10%)
15		Fullwood Dairy equipment manufacturer	Shropshire	Dec 08	86.98	6,836	1,955	75,614	617	3i (20%), family and management (80%)
16	58	Moody International Technical services provider	West Sussex	Dec 08	82.92	41,193	12,311	249,232	4,796	Investcorp (75%), management (25%)
17		Ultimate Products Homeware designer and importer	Oldham	Jul 09	78.03	†5,163	1,629	†59,164	190	LDC (46%), management (54%)
18		Air Energi Recruitment consultancy	Manchester	Dec 08	76.22	5,348	1,722	113,745	110	Zeus Private Equity (40%), management (60%)
19		Inspicio Testing services provider	Central London	Dec 08	75.16	*39,524	12,883	*292,749	7,633	3i (78%), management (22%)
20		Promethean Educational technology developer	Blackburn	Dec 08	74.97	22,006	7,188	151,041	633	Apax (24%), Cann trustees (55%), management and staff (21%)
21		RFIB Holdings Insurance and reinsurance broker	Central London	Jun 09	73.52	6,506	*2,161	38,313	315	FF&P Private Equity (40%), management and staff (60%)
22		Jack Wills Clothing retailer	Northwest London	Jan 09	72.88	7,686	2,572	41,778	1,130	Inflexion Private Equity (27%), management (73%)
23		Mountain Warehouse Outdoor clothing retailer	Southwest London	Feb 09	69.28	6,342	2,213	31,616	415	Kcaj (40%), management (60%)
24		Mentor IMC Group Oil industry consultancy	East London	Jul 09	69.22	*4,392	1,534	*40,902	13	Iceni Capital (55%), management (45%)
25		Premier Medical Medical services provider	Shropshire	Dec 08	68.93	6,367	2,231	40,889	316	Nomura Private Equity (59%), management (41%)

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

2010 BUYOUT TRACK 100 LEAGUE TABLE

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2-yr	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
26	89	Protocol Skills Vocational training provider	Cheshire	Jun 08	68.68	*6,885	2,420	*38,025	826	CBPE Capital (75%), D Wright (8%), other management (16%)
27		Healthcare Homes Care-home operator	Essex	Sep 08	64.77	*5,495	2,024	*26,255	788	Bowmark Capital (80%), management (20%)
28		Webfusion Web hosting services	Uxbridge	Dec 08	64.35	*20,832	7,712	*91,960	500	Oakley Capital (100%)
29		Achilles Group Supply chain manager	Abingdon	Apr 09	62.34	7,500	2,846	31,100	479	HgCapital (69%), management (31%)
30	45	Integrated Dental Holdings Dental practice operator	Bolton	Apr 09	61.00	*†31,888	*12,302	*1159,976	2,121	Merrill Lynch Global Private Equity (80%), management (20%)
31		OSS Group Waste oil recycler	Merseyside	Dec 08	59.49	6,109	2,402	24,964	170	Dunedin Capital (42%), management and staff (42%), former directors (16%)
32		Lifeways Community Care Community care provider	Southwest London	May 09	58.91	5,049	1,999	49,317	2,195	August Equity (78%), management (22%)
33		International Tubular Services Oilfield services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	57.44	24,284	9,797	78,269	970	Lime Rock Partners (minority), Robert Kidd (majority)
34		Enpure Environmental engineer	Birmingham	Mar 09	55.97	3,491	1,435	81,417	200	Spirit Capital (80%), management (20%)
35	22	Eve Trakway Temporary roadway provider	Chesterfield	Mar 09	55.68	5,093	2,101	17,459	163	LDC (minority), management (majority)
36		Frozen Value Value food retailer	Barnsley	Jan 09	54.62	3,072	1,285	47,843	761	3i (40%), management (60%)
37		Hydrobolt Bolt manufacturer	Wolverhampton	Mar 09	54.60	*3,337	1,396	*17,792	175	Octopus Private Equity (48%), management (52%)
38		Marken Pharmaceutical logistics provider	West London	Dec 08	53.96	*46,283	*19,527	*103,167	325	Apax Partners (67%), management (33%)
39		VSG Security provider	Northampton	Mar 09	53.64	4,878	2,067	105,857	4,451	LDC (40%), management (60%)
40		GO Outdoors Outdoor equipment retailer	Sheffield	Jan 09	52.62	3,273	1,405	41,188	302	YFM Group (23%), management (77%)
41		Weldex Crane hirer	Inverness	Nov 08	51.86	12,573	5,452	27,500	116	NVM Private Equity (30%), McGilvray family (70%)
42	7	London City Airport Airport operator	East London	Dec 08	51.04	40,870	17,915	79,671	385	Global Infrastructure Partners (75%), Highstar (25%)
43	14	EIC Integrated building services provider	West Midlands	Dec 08	50.91	†7,121	3,127	†82,100	588	MML Capital Partners (67%), management (33%)
44		Inchcape Shipping Services Marine services provider	Essex	Dec 08	50.90	30,073	13,207	271,746	3,498	Istithmar World Capital (100%)
45		Mayborn Baby products manufacturer	Newcastle	Dec 08	50.50	16,939	*7,479	78,442	1,488	3i (47%), management (40%), other minority investors (13%)
46		Kelway IT services provider	Northeast London	Mar 09	50.11	4,187	1,858	110,782	196	Core VC (25%), management and staff (75%)
47	40	Tangerine Confectionery Confectionery manufacturer	Blackpool	Dec 08	49.80	7,939	3,538	131,006	1,235	Close Growth Capital (41%), management (40%), Appleby Trust (13%), Toms Gruppen (6%)
48	8	Tensator Group Queue control specialist	Milton Keynes	Dec 08	49.79	†4,812	*2,145	†28,190	205	The Riverside Company (90%), management (10%)
49		Wiggle Online sports goods retailer	Portsmouth	Jan 09	49.53	4,512	2,018	33,154	70	ISIS Equity Partners (48%), management (52%)
50		Aesica Pharmaceuticals Pharmaceuticals manufacturer	Newcastle	Dec 08	49.46	9,840	4,405	108,077	677	LDC (60%), management (40%)

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

2010 BUYOUT TRACK 100 LEAGUE TABLE

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2-yr	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
51	38	Tinopolis Film and television producer	South Wales	Sep 08	48.69	6,451	2,918	67,648	381	Vitruvian Partners (70%), management (30%)
52		Loewy Group Marketing and communications provider	Central London	Dec 08	48.24	4,600	2,093	44,825	397	VSS & ABRY Partners (24%), other institutions (6%), management and staff (70%)
53	17	QHotels Hotel operator	Leeds	Dec 08	46.45	37,415	17,446	130,186	1,930	Alchemy Partners (87%), management (13%)
54		Olaer Hydraulic equipment maker	North Wales	Dec 08	46.37	9,992	4,664	125,437	472	Gresham (80%), management (20%)
55		Group GTI Graduate recruitment publisher	Oxfordshire	Apr 09	45.88	7,849	3,688	25,183	249	Exponent Private Equity (60%), management (40%)
56		Optilan Telecoms systems integrator	Coventry	Oct 08	45.85	*†3,685	1,733	*†32,455	170	NVM Private Equity (41%), management (59%)
57		Bridgman Group Debt enforcement provider	Central London	Mar 09	44.44	3,912	1,875	26,161	301	Gresham Private Equity (30%), management (70%)
58		Icon Polymer Group Rubber products manufacturer	Nottinghamshire	Sep 08	44.08	3,033	1,461	18,359	255	LDC (48%), management (52%)
59		Minivator Stairlift manufacturer	West Midlands	Dec 08	43.83	4,003	1,935	38,292	325	Gresham Private Equity (48%), Michael Lord (25%), other management (27%)
60	75	Energy Cranes Offshore services provider	Aberdeen	Dec 08	43.54	*18,699	9,076	*152,087	1,353	CBPE Capital (70%), management (30%)
61		Kellen Group Natural gas supplier	Belfast	Dec 08	43.11	29,900	14,600	124,600	187	Terra Firma (100%)
62		Stewart Group Inspection and testing services	Prescot	Dec 08	42.84	†4,945	2,424	†32,939	570	CBPE (42%), management (58%)
63		Rixonway Kitchen manufacturer	West Yorkshire	Feb 09	42.80	3,771	*1,849	23,363	345	August Equity Partners (60%), management (40%)
64	59	RP Martin Wholesale money broker	Central London	Sep 09	42.77	15,266	7,489	84,847	331	Gresham Private Equity (43%), D Caplin (17%), other directors (10%), employees (30%)
65		InterContinental Brands Beverage manufacturer	Harrogate	Dec 08	42.10	†4,763	2,359	†49,366	143	Lloyds Development Capital (37%), management (63%)
66	90	National Fostering Agency Foster care agency	West London	Mar 09	41.65	†7,921	3,948	†47,921	189	Sovereign Capital (50%), Edwina Beech (21%), Michael Lovett (21%), other staff (8%)
67	63	Castlebeck Specialist healthcare provider	Darlington	Dec 08	40.72	26,663	13,464	75,331	1,678	Lydian Capital Partners (80%), management (20%)
68		Alexander Mann Solutions Recruitment services provider	Central London	Dec 08	40.17	*10,140	5,161	*341,353	914	Graphite Capital (69%), management (31%)
69	67	Wood Mackenzie Energy research consultancy	Edinburgh	Dec 08	38.81	38,718	20,094	96,636	621	Charterhouse (77%), management and staff (23%)
70	19	Precise Media Group Media intelligence provider	Central London	Sep 08	38.22	7,482	3,916	26,080	367	Phoenix Equity Partners (67%), management (33%)
71		QA Business training provider	Slough	May 09	38.19	6,949	3,639	107,700	635	Englefield Capital (65%), management (35%)
72		Microlease Electronic equipment provider	Harrow	Feb 09	37.63	10,614	*5,604	22,687	118	LDC (71%), management (29%)
73		Coffee Nation Self-service coffee operator	High Wycombe	Mar 09	37.27	†3,049	1,618	†20,107	59	Milestone Capital Partners (68%), Investec (12%), management (20%)
74		FDM Group IT services provider	Brighton	Dec 08	37.04	5,262	2,802	52,212	363	Inflexion Private Equity (acquisition still completing)
75	21	Stone Computers Computer manufacturer	Staffordshire	Dec 08	37.02	*4,252	2,264	*64,510	218	RJD Partners (51%), James Bird (22%), other management (23%), retained equity (4%)

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

2010 BUYOUT TRACK 100 LEAGUE TABLE

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2-yr	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
76		Kettle Foods Crisp manufacturer	Norwich	Sep 08	35.86	12,743	6,904	58,997	371	Lion Capital (100%)
77		St Tropez Self-tanning supplier	Nottingham	Jul 09	35.67	4,714	2,561	18,717	95	LDC (majority), management (minority)
78	2	Lowell Group Loan recovery agency	Leeds	Aug 09	34.46	†24,174	13,370	†46,864	369	Exponent Private Equity (81%), management (19%)
79	12	JDR Enterprises Cable manufacturer	Cambridgeshire	Mar 09	34.10	9,945	5,530	75,115	362	Vision Capital and Goldman Sachs (75%), management (25%)
80		Red Commerce SAP recruitment agency	Central London	Mar 09	34.07	3,879	2,158	51,540	103	Inflexion Private Equity (69%), management (31%)
81		TSL Education Educational publisher	Central London	Aug 08	33.90	36,691	*20,465	72,046	214	Charterhouse Capital Partners (73%), management (27%)
82	24	Dreams Bed retailer	High Wycombe	Dec 08	33.22	19,005	10,709	194,384	1,492	Exponent Private Equity (majority), management (minority)
83		Quotient BioResearch Laboratory testing services provider	Cambridgeshire	Mar 09	33.18	5,717	3,223	34,174	475	TA Associates (35%), other management staff and institutional investors (65%)
84		Teaching Personnel Supply teacher recruiter	Welwyn Garden City	Nov 08	33.10	†4,606	2,600	†43,294	175	RJD Partners (42%), management (58%)
85		Oval Insurance broker	Wakefield	May 09	32.92	†19,788	11,201	†104,635	1,246	Caledonia Investments (23%), Allianz (13%), management and staff (64%)
86	55	2e2 IT services provider	Newbury	Dec 08	32.90	23,462	13,284	204,948	1,323	Duke Street Capital (58%), Bank of Scotland Corporate (11%), management and staff (31%)
87	35	Dunlop Aircraft Tyres Aircraft tyre manufacturer	Birmingham	Dec 08	32.89	5,645	3,197	28,758	316	AAC Capital Partners (76%), management (24%)
88		epyx E-trading platform developer	Coventry	Dec 08	32.73	6,597	3,745	15,302	65	Hg Capital (49%), management (51%)
89		Leasedrive Velo Vehicle management	Berkshire	Dec 08	32.46	14,249	8,121	58,468	155	LDC (51%), management (49%)
90	88	etc.venues Training venue provider	Southeast London	Jun 09	32.37	3,947	2,253	14,790	185	Dunedin Capital Partners (57%), management and staff (43%)
91		Comtec Travel software developer	South Wales	Dec 08	32.11	4,126	2,364	12,788	121	RJD Partners (51%), Simon Powell (33%), other management (16%)
92		Poundland Discount retailer	West Midlands	Mar 09	31.04	20,026	11,662	396,188	5,474	Advent International (78%), David Dodd (12%), management (10%)
93	81	Office Shoe retailer	Central London	Jan 09	30.85	10,503	6,135	113,180	1,655	West Coast Capital (95%), Brian McCluskey (5%)
94	16	IRIS Software Business software developer	Berkshire	Apr 09	30.83	41,142	24,038	119,204	1,330	Hellman & Friedman (majority), HgCapital (minority), management (minority)
95		Survitec Group Safety and survival equipment maker	Belfast	Mar 09	30.76	27,721	16,214	151,117	1,304	Warburg Pincus, management
96	92	National Accident Helpline Legal services marketing agency	Northamptonshire	Dec 08	30.33	7,219	*4,250	26,781	49	LDC (30%), Inflexion Private Equity (30%), management (40%)
97		1st Credit Debt collection agency	Surrey	Dec 08	29.89	31,725	18,803	80,164	251	Bridgepoint (65%), management (35%)
98	41	AFI-Uplift Construction equipment supplier	Wakefield	Dec 08	29.33	13,872	8,294	32,367	263	Barclays Private Equity (40%), management (60%)
99		Attenda Internet services provider	West London	Dec 08	29.22	3,418	2,047	25,504	168	M/C Partners & Phoenix Equity Partners (52%), management (48%)
100		YO! Sushi Japanese restaurant operator	Central London	Nov 08	28.51	*4,880	2,955	*36,101	1,161	Quilvest Private Equity (71%), management (29%)

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts



Nick Varney, CEO of Merlin Entertainments Group, backed by Blackstone

10 BIGGEST

Breakdown

The 10 Biggest private equity-backed companies must have profits of more than £50m in their latest accounts and are then ranked by fastest-growing profits.

The top company is Merlin Entertainments for the third year running. The company, which first appeared on the main Buyout Track 100 table in 2007, more than doubled in size when it acquired The Tussauds Group for more than £1bn. The company is backed by private equity giant Blackstone and is reportedly looking to float in 2010.

Other companies in the 10 Biggest range from Permira-backed All3Media, which produces shows like Hollyoaks and Skins to ice cream manufacturer R&R Ice Cream, which was taken private by Oaktree Capital in 2006. Three of the 10 Biggest companies are new to the league table: Betfair (backed by a consortium including Softbank); Wales & West Utilities (backed by a consortium including Macquarie European Infrastructure Funds); and Spire Healthcare (backed by Cinven).

Private equity-backed businesses typically carry a great deal of debt. Of the 10 Biggest only Betfair pays negligible interest. Spire Healthcare, All3Media and Moto all paid out more in interest than they took in profit (EBITDA) last year.

10 Biggest league table with profits over £50m

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company	Activity	HQ location	Financial year end	% annual profit growth over 2 yrs	Latest profit £000	Base year profit £000	Interest payments £000	Latest sales £000	Staff	Main shareholders
1	1	Merlin Entertainments Group	Visitor attraction operator	Poole	Dec 08	97.54	203,000	52,021	n/a	662,300	9,778	Consortium of Blackstone, Kirkbi Invest, Dubai International Capital Caddis Assets (majority), management (minority)
2	2	Acteon	Offshore services provider	Norwich	Dec 08	66.99	73,034	26,189	18,602	309,154	1,595	First Reserve (51.5%), management (48.5%)
3		R&R Ice Cream	Ice cream manufacturer	North Yorkshire	Dec 08	65.07	56,488	20,730	52,531	355,001	1,865	Oaktree Capital, management
4		Wales & West Utilities	Gas distributor	Newport	Mar 09	55.42	125,600	52,000	122,900	309,400	1,376	Macquarie (50%), Canada Pension Plan (20%), Industry Funds Management (15%), AMP Capital (12%), Whaley Pty (3%)
5	4	Abbot Group	Drilling contractor	Aberdeen	Dec 08	54.73	**190,713	79,662	71,475	**1,060,287	7,350	First Reserve (61%), Pamplona Capital (18%), other investment funds (21%)
6		Betfair	Online bookmaker	West London	Apr 09	43.87	66,168	31,968	49	292,925	1,457	Softbank (23%), co-founders (24%), other (53%)
7		Spire Healthcare	Private hospital operator	Central London	Dec 08	37.60	121,130	63,977	155,404	564,068	6,203	Cinven, management
8		Arqiva	Communications services provider	Winchester	Jun 09	37.07	304,213	161,922	254,442	805,520	2,349	Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) (48%), consortium of other investors (52%)
9		All3Media	Television programme maker	Central London	Aug 08	36.78	50,287	26,878	58,763	370,231	1,754	Permira (51%), management (49%)
10		Moto	Motorway services operator	Bedfordshire	Dec 08	33.47	52,644	*29,550	69,555	842,935	4,404	Macquarie Group & Affiliates, Equity Partners Infrastructure Company, pension funds, management

* annualised figure † unaudited accounts

METHODOLOGY

The league table ranks companies based on their annual growth in profits (EBITDA). This is the profit measure favoured by private equity houses because it demonstrates cash generation potential and excludes tax, interest and non-cash items such as depreciation and amortisation.

- EBITDA is defined as operating profit + depreciation + amortisation
- Growth in EBITDA is measured over the latest two-year period of available accounts
- Companies with latest EBITDA < £50m feature in the main Buyout Track 100 table

Qualification criteria

- EBITDA > £3m in latest accounts
- EBITDA > £1m in base-year accounts
- Latest year EBITDA > penultimate year EBITDA
- Private equity stake > 20%
- Latest sales > £10m
- Companies with latest EBITDA > £50m feature in the separate **10 Biggest** table with the fastest growing profits

Research approach

The research was conducted between 1 August 2009 and 1 January 2010, based on latest available accounts. 61 of the Buyout Track 100 have 2008 financial year ends.

The final 100 companies are ranked by profit growth over the latest 2 years of accounts (compound annual growth rate – CAGR).

Companies were selected from a database of 1.5 million private UK companies after extensive database, telephone and research visits.

Most companies were interviewed over the telephone, while more than half were visited by the Fast Track research team, and their directors interviewed about the performance of their business and their plans for its future.

Definition of private equity

Private equity funds can be based abroad, as long as the portfolio company is UK-based. In addition to the standard private equity funds, which are often members of the BVCA, other investors, which act like private equity funds, were also included. Examples are Lydian Capital Partners, the investment vehicle for Irish investors John Magnier, Dermot Desmond, JP McManus and Denis Brosnan, which backs Castlebeck (No 68), and Global Infrastructure Partners which backs London City Airport (No 43).

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

Fast Track would particularly like to thank the sponsors of our Buyout Track 100, Deloitte and Lloyds TSB Corporate Markets, for a fourth year, and UBS Wealth Management for the first year.

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BACKGROUND

About the authors



Dr Hamish Stevenson

Hamish owns and runs Fast Track, which he founded in 1997, after securing cornerstone sponsorship from Sir Richard Branson. Hamish works closely with sponsors, leading entrepreneurs and media partners. He holds an associate fellowship at Templeton College, Oxford University.



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Helen is research manager, responsible for managing the Buyout Track 100. She previously worked as a business analyst for technology start-up Pursuit Dynamics, and at the UK office of Parsons, a US conglomerate. She has an MSc in International business from Birkbeck College.



Lindsay Uppadine

Lindsay is responsible for researching and interviewing companies for the Buyout Track 100. She previously worked as a research associate at Library House in Cambridge. Prior to that, she spent three years as a research chemist at the Université Louis Pasteur in Strasbourg, France. She has a doctorate and masters in chemistry from Oxford University.



About Fast Track

Buyout Track 100 is compiled by Fast Track, the Oxford-based research, publishing and networking events company that ranks Britain's top-performing private companies.

Fast Track runs invitation-only events for the owners and directors of the companies on the league table to network and to meet our sponsors.

In addition to the Buyout Track 100, Fast Track publishes five annual league tables with **The Sunday Times**:

- **Tech Track 100**, with title sponsor Microsoft, ranks Britain's private technology companies with the fastest-growing sales.
- **Fast Track 100**, with title sponsor Virgin, ranks Britain's private companies with the fastest-growing sales.
- **Profit Track 100**, with title sponsor PricewaterhouseCoopers, ranks Britain's private companies with the fastest-growing profits.
- **Top Track 250**, with title sponsor HSBC, ranks Britain's leading mid-market private companies by latest sales.
- **Top Track 100**, with title sponsor Deloitte, ranks Britain's biggest private companies by latest sales.

Fast Track is based in Oxford with 19 full-time staff and a network of freelance researchers.



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