

EDIT

TAKE A NEW DIRECTION

Read about how one local company diversified and struck gold



Invest 
Northern
Ireland
Building Locally
Competing Globally

BOOSTING
BUSINESS

ALSO INSIDE:

VIRTUAL SELLING, REAL RESULTS
BOOST TURNOVER WITH ONLINE SALES

READY, STEADY... EXPORT!
TAKING THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS EXPORTING

EDIT

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Business Pulse

To find out how Invest NI can help your business, call: **0800 181 4422**

A brief business round-up...

A GOOD START

If you're thinking about setting up a business you'll be happy to hear about the Regional Start Initiative – a new programme of support from Invest NI. Enterprise Northern Ireland will be delivering the programme, making good use of their network of regional delivery partners. Interested? Find out more on freephone **0800 027 0639** or at the goforitni.com website.

WORKPLACE PENSION REFORM

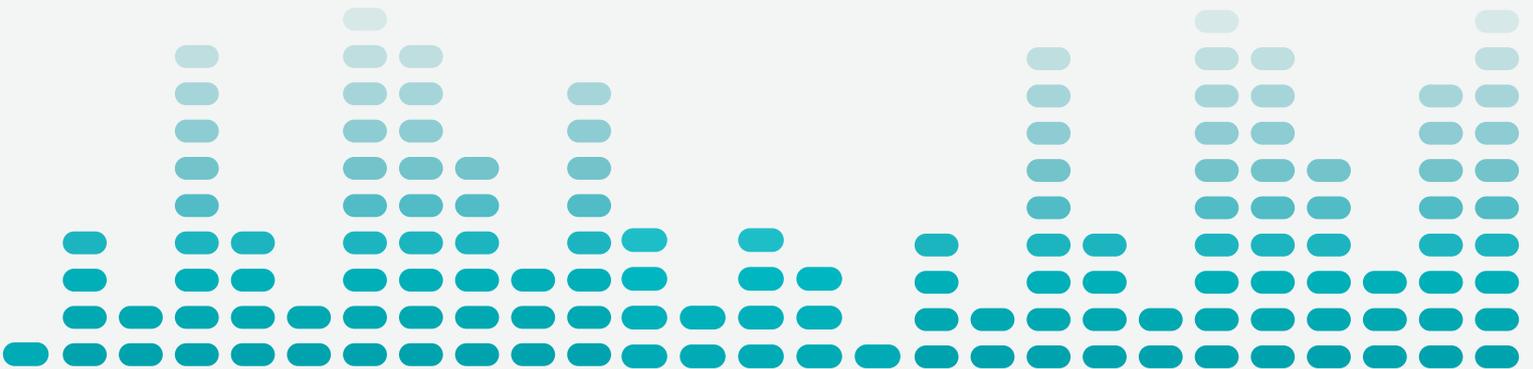
Are you up to speed on the changes to workplace pensions? Every employer now has a duty to inform and enrol the majority of employees into a workplace scheme – and contribute a percentage. Workers are eligible if they are over 22 years of age, are not already in a qualifying workplace pension, work or usually work in the UK and earn over £8,105 a year. Find out the details at nibusinessinfo.co.uk or call **0845 600 1268**.

BELFAST SET TO BE 'SUPER-CONNECTED'

Following a £13.7 million investment in the city's broadband, Belfast is set to become a 'super-connected' city, one of a number of UK cosmopolitans sharing a £114 million fund to provide businesses with ultra quick broadband and high speed wireless Internet access. It is hoped that this will encourage new businesses to flourish in key creative industries requiring super-connectivity.

WATER CHAMPIONS

Businesses and farm owners are being encouraged to get involved in Water Champions, a campaign from NI Water, the Consumer Council and Invest NI. The cornerstone will be the Water Champion Award which will be granted to businesses or farms that show how they saved money on their water bills, reduced their water usage and put in place water efficiency measures.



Business Solutions

FROM INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

Running a business means you may come up against issues that you don't have the expertise or experience to handle. So it's good to know that Invest NI can provide expert advice.

We have specialists that can help with everything from ICT and e-commerce, to staff training, starting to export, research and development or making your business more productive. And most of our advice is free.

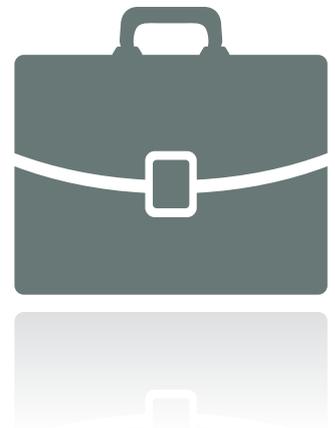
STRATEGY AND NEW MARKETS

We can help you focus on developing your business, growing your online sales and creating a comprehensive strategy for exporting your goods or services.

We can help you with focused market research and we have excellent market intelligence databases that you can use. To explore overseas markets first hand you can take part in our trade missions and speak to our overseas advisors. We'll help you with the cost.

We've already sent local business people to China, Germany, Dubai and many other locations around the world.





To find out how Invest NI can help your business, call: 0800 181 4422

SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP

Increasing your profits is your goal so we offer training and support to improve your staff's skills and boost productivity. We can also offer advice on recruitment, employment law and performance management. Through our coaching, mentoring, learning centres and study visits, you can also strengthen your business by developing your leadership skills.

And we can help you develop those all-important sales skills, improve your tendering capability and link up with other businesses to share expertise and knowledge.



OPERATING EFFICIENCIES

Controlling costs and working smart mean you'll get the most out of your business investment. Our experts can offer advice on managing your supply chain, improving productivity and getting to grips with lean manufacturing.

We can advise you about new technology and making your ICT systems the best fit for your business. And so you can get more out of your resources, we'll help you reduce waste and become more energy savvy.

If you need a new home for your business, talk to us and we can help you find premises to rent or supply information about funding to build premises.

PRODUCT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Looking to develop your products and services? No matter what stage of the process you are at – from the inkling of an idea to being ready for full on collaborative working – we can help.

We offer support for research and development, help with design, and can guide you through the process of developing a brand identity. You'll also find direction on managing intellectual property and legislative issues, and our technical experts can provide practical support.

Get your business moving in the right direction.

Best Business Blogs

To find out how Invest NI can help your business, call:
0800 181 4422

Blogs are the smart business person's secret resource. They're free and full of up-to-the-minute business news, advice and opinion. Our hotlist will keep you informed and might even give you the edge over your competition...

SMALL BUSINESS TRENDS

A gem for small business owners and entrepreneurs, this award-winning business blog is crammed full of advice from hundreds of industry experts. There's news, views, tips, advice and all the resources you'll need...

smallbiztrends.com

QUICK SPROUT

A super-savvy digital marketing and business blog by entrepreneur, Neil Patel. Patel was named one of the top influencers on the web by the *Wall Street Journal* when he was 21 and he's been recognised as a top 100 entrepreneur under 30 by President Obama.

quicksprout.com

MASHABLE

With 20 million unique monthly users Mashable is massive, and for good reason. It's a hub of digital innovation, news, info and resources. It's entertaining, fresh and just a little bit addictive. Swing by and get in the social media know.

mashable.com

SALECHASE

The blog that devotes itself to 'connecting the dots in global commerce', Salechase talks business management trends, ideas, advice and growth strategies.

saleschase.com/blog

Keeping it in the **family**

The stats: Less than 30% of family businesses survive to the second generation. The good news: There are simple things you can do to make yours a success...

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Make sure you have a plan for tackling key issues. For example, how will the business' shares be allocated between family and non-family members? How will the roles and responsibilities differ? How will each be rewarded and how will you cope with conflict if it arises? Make sure you always take decisions for business reasons – not personal ones – and ensure that the family finances aren't totally dependent on the business.

And don't assume that the head of the family is the best person to be the head of the business; ask yourself who has the best skills and experience.

“**Surround yourself with talent. The very best people you can get. Then treat them as family, even if they aren't.**”

Kevin Fitzpatrick, FM Environmental, Newry



TALK IT OUT

Communication can be easier in a family business – but there is also room for conflict. Don't assume that you know what other family members are thinking. Keep communication open and professional and ensure emotional issues stay out of the workplace. Appointing a non-executive director to the board to offer an impartial viewpoint is a good idea.

PERKS & PAYROLLS

Everyone in your business should be paid based on their value rather than personal need. Look at market rates when deciding and don't lure family members into the business with inflated rates. Have a remuneration strategy that is consistent, fair and open. And base benefits, bonuses and incentives on set criteria – so everyone knows the score. Write down your policy, be open about it and review it often.



“Without open communication, it's impossible to always know what others are thinking. Even if you grew up with them.”

Kirstin and Jonathan Maxwell,
Maxwell Concrete, Castlederg

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Oddly enough

Think your business idea is out there? Feeling trepidation about going out on that limb? These off-the-wall success stories prove that no business idea is too odd to pursue...

AFTERLIFE AVATARS

That is not a typo. Intellitar in Alabama has created the Virtual Eternity Program – allowing you to digitally create and preserve yourself and your family. You'll all be stored in an interactive time capsule for future generations. You can tinker with personality traits, record your voice, knowledge and life experiences. A doppelgänger digital clone, no less! And all for a small monthly fee...

A CLEAN SWEEP

Ontario mum, Carolyn Wilman teaches people how to be winners – at sweepstakes. Demand for her services is so high that she's published a book, writes a blog, has a weekly radio show and charges \$100 for a day-long seminar. She's now developing a webinar series.

ZOMBIE RUN

Forget the gym. Running from the walking dead is the à la mode way to get in shape. Run For Your Lives organise 5K obstacle courses where you are chased by real zombies (well, people in very scary attire) trying to grab the flag on your belt. These events are all the rage in North America with people even paying just to watch the madness!

DOODYCALLS

Most of us detest cleaning up after our doggies and moggies, but not DoodyCalls. This Virginia-based company provides a professional pet waste removal service – leaving your back gardens, decking and litter boxes spick and span. This year DoodyCalls and its franchisees have brought in about \$1 million. Poo pays.



VIRTUAL SELLING, REAL RESULTS!

There will be some 190 million Europeans shopping online by 2014, generating an expected €114 billion worth of sales. Interested? You should be.

If you aren't already selling online it's time to think again. The internet is the biggest supermarket in the world and increasingly the first place people look to buy a product. There's lots to get your head around but take it step by step and you could soon be multiplying your turnover.

SETTING UP AN ONLINE SHOP

For an effective online shop you will need an e-commerce package. There are many to choose from but you can get advice from Invest NI's ICT advisors. A good e-commerce package will handle catalogue management, secure ordering processing and easy online payment, usually using Secure Socket Layer technology to collect card details.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

You want people to be able to find your website easily when they search for a product or service online. That's why it's important to make sure that it appears high up on the search engine listings. Search engine optimisation helps you to do that.

It's about using keywords in your content, having links to other websites, keeping content updated and making sure it's easy to find your way around the site.



PAY PER CLICK ADVERTISING

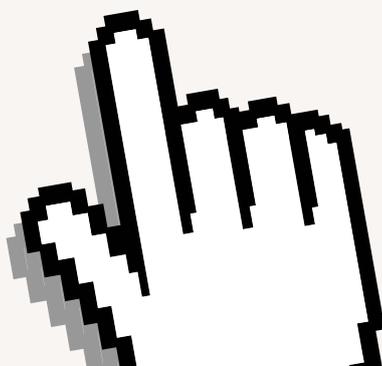
Pay per click advertising is a cost-effective way of driving people to your website. You create sponsored links (they normally appear in a column to the right of, or above the results on search engine results pages) and when someone clicks on the link you pay a pre-agreed cost. As pay per click advertising is easy to set up you can try it for a while and see if it works for you.

ONLINE NETWORKING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Your website also gives you the chance to talk to, and get feedback from, your customers. You can invite people to post comments on your products or services, write a blog to keep people up to date with what your company is up to, or set up a Facebook page.

Engaging with your customers in this way can be very effective and can help build a loyal customer base. But it's also time consuming and can be tricky to get right. You need to be genuine about the interaction being two-way and not be blatantly pushing for sales.

To find out how Invest NI can help your business, call: 0800 181 4422



WE'RE GETTING BETTER & BETTER...

Even the most successful businesses can improve performance by continuously reviewing their operations.

Start by looking at eight key areas that we affectionately call TIM WOODS. Mr WOODS can help you cut costs, lead time, down time and overstocking, and increase capacity, customer responsiveness, efficiency and flexibility.

Getting staff at all levels involved is essential, because everyone is looking at the business from a different angle and seeing different aspects of the process. And if the business becomes more efficient, it becomes more profitable... so everyone benefits.



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How **TIM WOODS** can help you identify waste or wasted effort:

THE EIGHT WASTES	PRODUCT BASED BUSINESS	SERVICE BASED BUSINESS
Transport T	Minimise movement of materials by putting processes next to each other	Cut down unnecessary movement of documents or people
Inventory I	Aim for 'just-in-time' production	Don't keep unnecessary files and copies or extra supplies
Motion M	Look at the layout of the workplace and reduce unnecessary motion of business operations	Reduce unnecessary walking to access files, attend meetings etc
Waiting W	Eliminate waiting periods between shifts or processes	Cut down the time spent waiting for approvals, waiting for the photocopier etc
Overproduction O	Make just what the customer orders	Don't produce too much paperwork
Overprocessing O	Use resources of appropriate capacity to achieve required quality	Eliminate excessive checking, duplication of information
Defects D	Cut down on work that needs to be redone because of errors	Cut down on work that needs to be redone because of errors
Skills S	Use your staff's full capacity and ability	Use your staff's full capacity and ability





IMAGINATION LOCATION

Music, movies, animation, TV, gaming, and digital arts... Northern Ireland is cashing in on its natural creativity, and the world is watching.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

Northern Ireland has become a star of the silver screen in recent years, playing a leading role as the setting for HBO's Emmy award-winning **Game of Thrones**, now filming its third series here.

As well as cracking Hollywood we've been auditioned and cast by Indian production company Getaway Films, which shot part of its thriller **DAVID** in Belfast earlier this year.

We've also lots of home-grown success to shout about including Terry George's 30-minute short **The Shore** which won an Oscar in the live action short category at this year's Academy Awards.

TITANIC STUDIOS

The Paint Hall in Belfast is one of the largest film studios in Europe. With the recent opening of two new sound stages alongside it, the total space available is over 100,000 square feet, making it even more attractive to makers of large scale films and TV series.

Titanic Studios will be marketed globally by Northern Ireland Screen as it works to secure new international film and television projects. Construction of the £8.3 million sound stages was assisted by a £3.4 million loan from Invest NI to Titanic Film Studios Ltd.



Creative Locations

Game of Thrones set (top & left) and *The Shore* (above).

To find out how Invest NI can help your business, call: **0800 181 4422**

MUSIC, FILMS, ANIMATION, TV, GAMING, AND DIGITAL ARTS ARE COLLECTIVELY KNOWN AS THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



Jellyflug

Jellyflug was created by Troll Inc, a video game studio based in Derry~Londonderry

PICTURE PERFECT

Did you know that the state-of-the-art graphics that go into a lot of movie blockbusters, such as *Titanic*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Finding Nemo*, use technology developed by a Northern Ireland company?

Several other local companies are producing graphics and animation for some of the world's most highly respected production companies.

Belfast company Sixteen South, for example, has produced award-winning children's television working in partnership with Sesame Workshop (*Sesame Tree*), The Jim Henson Company (*The Pajanimals*) and the BBC.

GAME ON

There's plenty of game design talent in Northern Ireland. Young small businesses such as *Zombiesaurus Games*, *Troll Inc*, *Dugong Games*, and *StraandLooper* are passionate about developing creative games and are working away on new products for the mushrooming global games industry.

Watch out for *Soul Grinder*, *Jellyflug* and *Project Ninpo* – just some of the new mobile games coming your way soon.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Music, films, animation, TV, gaming and digital arts are collectively known as the Creative Industries, and are an area that Invest NI is actively supporting.

Invest NI offers wide ranging support for companies in this sector. As well as working in partnership with the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure to support the wider creative industries agenda, Invest NI can offer both financial and advisory support to help companies to get established and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Take a new direction

If you feel like you're running to stand still in your business, maybe you should think about branching out in a new direction...



Diversification is a step further than creating new products or services related to your current business. It's actually more like setting up a new business using your resources in a different way.

That's exactly what Richard and Leona Kane did when they set up Brighter Gold on their family farm in Limavady. Among the crops grown on the farm is rapeseed. Previously Richard used the rapeseed to produce biodiesel, but he was looking around for a new use for the rapeseed oil.

That's when Leona came up with the idea of cold pressing rapeseed oil into a premium cooking oil, and Brighter Gold was born.

Brighter Gold Rapeseed Oil has already gained the IFEX 2012 Gold Award for Best Product Packaging and Overall Product of the Show Award, and won a gold star at this year's UK Great Taste Awards.

Leona says: "Rapeseed oil is being used increasingly by leading chefs as an alternative to olive oil because of its high Omega 3,6,9 and Vitamin E content, and also because it is probably the most versatile cooking oil. Brighter Gold oil also has half the saturated fat of olive oil."

Richard and Leona used an Invest NI Innovation Voucher to get specialist help to analyse the nutritional value of Brighter Gold oil.

Chefs now using the oil include the team at Hastings Hotels, Northern Ireland's top hotel chain. The company is also supplying the oil to high-end restaurants in the Republic of Ireland.

Richard and Leona are now planning to diversify again, this time into industrial tourism with an exhibition centre where visitors can see how the oil is produced.

To find out more about Brighter Gold, visit: brightergold.co.uk



"Our customers want local produce and to know its provenance."
Leona Kane





READY, STEADY... EXPORT!

Everybody's talking about the importance of exporting but if you haven't done it before it can be daunting. Fear not! With good preparation and planning you can take your sales from Belfast to Berlin and beyond.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Not every market offers the same opportunities so it's important to do market research to identify the regions that offer the best opening for your product or service.

Invest NI's Business Information Centre has worldwide business directories, company databases, market research and business related information that is a great starting point for your research. For more information call 0800 181 4422.

START CLOSE TO HOME

With 1.3 billion consumers China might be tempting, but it's probably better to start closer to home. Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the Netherlands offer English speaking customers and are easier to test than markets further afield.

Invest NI's Going Dutch programme helps companies explore opportunities in the Netherlands. For more information on the Going Dutch programme call 0800 181 4422.

PLAN YOUR APPROACH

Will you be selling direct to customers or through a distributor? What kind of marketing activity will you need to do? Will you need staff on the ground? How will you transport your goods? Questions, questions, but getting the answers could be as simple as going along to an Invest NI export skills workshop. The workshops cost £75 (inc. VAT) per person. Included in the cost is an optional half-day personal workshop session with the trainer.



Start Close To Home

With 1.3 billion consumers China might be tempting, but it's probably better to start closer to home. Consider the Netherlands

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Business diary

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Take a look at some of the workshops, conferences and trade missions coming up between December 2013 and March 2013 that could help you boost your business. **Click the icons for event listings...**



Design advice clinics

We're running 20 clinics all over Northern Ireland in the next few months. Why not go along to one in your area?



Trade missions

Kurdistan, Jordan and the Baltics are our next trade mission destinations. Maybe it's time for you to look east...



Food exhibitions

If you have a food business you might be interested in our menu of major exhibitions coming up in Dublin, London, Glasgow, San Francisco, Dubai and Paris.



Technology exhibitions

We're organising trips to some of the world's biggest technology conferences covering a range of fields from mobiles and games development, to learning and music technology.



Skills workshops

Our skills workshops can help you become a better leader and recruiter. We can also help you reduce costs and up efficiency using 'lean thinking'.



Multi-sectoral exhibitions

We will also be attending some of the leading exhibitions for the life sciences, design, security, shipping, renewables and healthcare sectors.



Design advice clinics

11 December	Invest NI Office, Derry~Londonderry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
12 December	Invest NI Office, Newry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
12 December	Invest NI HQ, Belfast	To register, visit investni.com/registration
13 December	Invest NI Office, Omagh	To register, visit investni.com/registration
13 December	Invest NI Office, Ballymena	To register, visit investni.com/registration
08 January	Invest NI Office, Derry~Londonderry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
09 January	Invest NI Office, Newry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
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14 February	Invest NI Office, Ballymena	To register, visit investni.com/registration
12 March	Invest NI Office, Derry~Londonderry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
13 March	Invest NI Office, Newry	To register, visit investni.com/registration
13 March	Invest NI HQ, Belfast	To register, visit investni.com/registration
14 March	invest NI Office, Omagh	To register, visit investni.com/registration
14 March	Invest NI Office, Ballymena	To register, visit investni.com/registration



Trade missions

20-24 January	Trade Mission to Kurdistan and Jordan , Erbil and Amman	To register, email noel.johston@investni.com
18-22 March	Trade Mission to Canada Toronto	To register, email kate.gilmore@investni.com
25-29 March	Trade Mission to the Baltics Riga and Tallinn	To register, email elaine.curran@investni.com



Food exhibitions

20-22 January	Winter Fancy Food Fair San Francisco	To register, email fiona.lavery@investni.com
19-21 February	Catex Dublin	To register, email fiona.lavery@investni.com
25-28 February	Gulfood Dubai	To register, email fiona.lavery@investni.com
10-12 March	Boston Seafood Show Boston	To register, email fiona.lavery@investni.com
20-21 March	Sandwich and Snack Show Paris	To register, email fiona.lavery@investni.com



Skills workshops

17 January	Leadership Experience Event Titanic Building, Belfast	To register, visit investni.com/registration
January to March	Recruitment & Selection Workshops Antrim, Belfast and Craigavon	To register, email michele.newell@investni.com
January to March	Performance Management Workshops Antrim, Belfast and Craigavon	To register, email michele.newell@investni.com
January to March	Lean Service Workshops Antrim, Armagh, Belfast, Cookstown and Derry~Londonderry	To register, email gavin.gilmore@investni.com



Technology exhibitions

30 January - 3 February	BETT Powering Learning London	To register, email terry.reilly@investni.com
25-28 February	Mobile World Congress Barcelona	To register, email terry.reilly@investni.com
March	ITLG California	To register, email terry.reilly@investni.com
8-17 March	SxSW Interactive Conference Austin, Texas	To register, email terry.reilly@investni.com
25-29 March	Games Developers Conference California	To register, email terry.reilly@investni.com



Multi-sectoral exhibitions

28-31 January	Arab Health Dubai	To register, email theresa.madden@investni.com
5-7 February	Surface Design Show London	To register, email eleanor.butterwick@investni.com
27-28 February	RenewableUK Wave & Tidal Conference, London	To register, email janice.kerr@investni.com
11- 14 March	Cruise Shipping Miami Miami	To register, email eleanor.butterwick@investni.com
12-14 March	Security & Policing Exhibition Farnborough	To register, email elaine.curran@investni.com
13-14 March	NHS Expo London	To register, email theresa.madden@investni.com

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Contact us

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For business advice, support and opportunities get in touch with Invest NI today. Contact our Belfast Head Office or check out our Regional Office Network. We also have offices overseas...

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Eastern

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Overseas Networks

Find out more about opportunities outside Northern Ireland or accelerate your exporting with our Overseas Network. We have offices in London, Dublin, Brussels, Düsseldorf, Dubai, Erbil, Jeddah, Mumbai, Bangalore, Shanghai, Taipei, Tokyo, Boston, New York, Chicago, San Jose and Toronto.

We also have In-market Advisors in the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, the Nordics, the Netherlands, Kurdistan, South Africa, Brazil and Canada.

Find out more at investni.com

Business Edit is an independent publication. All information is correct at time of publication.

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