

Exports boom for record-breaking rower's alkaline water

ACTIPH, the UK's first alkaline ionised bottled water brand, has seen sales double during the coronavirus pandemic. The London based start-up, founded by seven-time Guinness World Record holder, Jamie Douglas-Hamilton, is experiencing unprecedented demand, with sales up 1000% on Amazon, 800% on Ocado and 300% in smaller online retailers.

Jamie Douglas-Hamilton uncovered the benefits of alkaline water out of necessity during a 5,000-mile row from Australia to Africa; realising that fresh water mixed with sea water is more hydrating than fresh water alone, instantly increasing power, energy levels and reducing hallucinations. This revelation helped the team break two Guinness World Records and was the inspiration behind ACTIPH.

Exporting to 15 countries, ACTIPH has already experienced strong growth overseas, with international sales accounting for 40% of the company's annual turnover. However, ACTIPH is looking to expand and grow into new markets, following advice and introductions made by the Department for International Trade (DIT).

Jamie Douglas-Hamilton, Founder of ACTIPH says:

Alkaline water is the fastest growing beverage category in the world and is projected to be worth \$4.3 billion by 2023 – it's an extremely exciting place to be in.

Since launching in 2017, we have experienced 300% year-on-year growth and doubled our distribution in the last nine months. DIT has introduced us to a wide range of business contacts, especially in the US and Middle East, which has helped enormously.

Health has never been as relevant as it is now and is why our exports have soared by 300%. Within the next five years, we want to transform ACTIPH into a global lifestyle brand and become one of the top three players in the USA and the leading alkaline water in Europe, Middle East and Asia Pacific.

It is through expeditions like the one we completed in December, which was the first human powered crossing of the Drake Passage from South America to Antarctica that we intend to inspire and energise our community to live an active boundless life.

ACTIPH Water is produced via a three-stage process of purifying spring water from Shropshire, adding electrolytes and supercharging by ionisation. This high alkaline water has a pH level of 9.0 or higher, offering the ultimate

hydration for people seeking to live an active, balanced lifestyle.

DIT's overseas network is currently helping ACTIPH to enter Singapore, Australia and China markets, as well as assisting the company's expansion in the USA and Middle East.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss launched [UK-Australia free trade agreement](#) negotiations on Wednesday 17 June and reaffirmed the UK's intention to join the [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#); both moves will make it easier for SMEs, such as ACTIPH, to trade with these dynamic markets.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss said:

ACTIPH is a great example of the power of e-commerce, which continues to play an intrinsic role in keeping businesses afloat during these unprecedented times.

More trade is essential if the UK is to overcome the economic challenge posed by coronavirus and that's why we are negotiating free trade agreements that will open up new markets and provide exporters with greater opportunities overseas.

In 2019, the UK exported £8.1 billion worth of beverages, an increase of 3.9% compared to 2018. The USA was the biggest export market for UK beverages, accounting for over one fifth of all UK beverage exports in 2019.

[Virtual Syria meetings show UK support for victims of brutal conflict](#)

News story

Middle East Minister James Cleverly today held a series of virtual meetings with UK partners in Syria.



The Minister took part in discussions on several issues including humanitarian aid from the British Government, the need for a political solution to the country's conflict, and wider economic issues.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the Syrian crisis and the Minister was able to hear first-hand how UK aid is having a huge impact in the country, helping to change the lives of vulnerable people who need it most.

Mr Cleverly spoke with civil society activists and UK government partners working on projects that deliver life-saving assistance, empower women and help create the conditions for peace and security in Syria.

Partners showcased their achievements, made possible through UK support, such as increasing women's participation in peace negotiations and preventing and responding to gender-based violence in Syria.

Minister Cleverly said:

Today, I was grateful to see how the UK is providing vital support to victims of the brutal Syrian conflict.

This series of virtual meetings has been a welcome opportunity to reaffirm UK commitment to Syria as a partner in peace and one of the largest donors to the appalling crisis, which is now in its tenth year.

Speaking with UN officials and others, the Minister reaffirmed the importance of maintaining cross-border access in North West Syria to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. A vote on the mandate for UN cross-border aid into North-West Syria, an area with over 1 million internally displaced people, will take place at the UN Security Council in the coming weeks.

He also stressed the urgent need for a political agreement in line with UNSCR 2254 to help end the brutal conflict.

Further information

Published 29 June 2020

Tea is for team

When you're a department made up of people who can mainly work from home, how do you keep your team together?

It's something many of our offices are now facing, as it becomes apparent that for some of our teams, coming back to the office won't be an option for quite a while.

Our information services organisation (ISO) teams are tackling this with "cuppa and catch-up" meetings, held via Microsoft Teams.

The meetings are helping people stay in touch, whilst helping managers understand the concerns people have as we move into a post-Covid world.

ISO head of business and programmes, Steve Jennings, said:

We have seen a real shift in people's point of view recently.

It has always been the case that people appreciated the opportunity to talk to others.

At the beginning we were being told by our people they were coping really well, but as they've realised this could be much longer term than they first thought, their view has changed.

They feel much more daunted by the idea that working from home could be a permanent situation for them. The idea of no social interaction for months is hitting them hard.

This change in their views has shown us we have work to do as managers to help our people understand how this is going to work. Working from home could be the future for some of our people, but it's not something they should 'put up with', it's something they should feel they can embrace.

Such get-togethers are becoming an integral part of people's working week – not just in ISO but across the business where staff have found themselves working from home.

ISO's communications officer Lucy Routledge explained:

We encourage people taking part in the sessions to take a break from their home desk and grab a drink.

Although we are successfully home-working across ISO, we recognise

that no matter how good the capability and tools are, there is nothing that can substitute the face-to-face interaction that we all once enjoyed in the office environment.

The sessions are about allowing us to catch up with one another, to have a chat about how we're coping, how we are finding home-working, and what, if anything the ISO lead team can do to help.

The sessions also provide the opportunity to ask us any direct questions or raise any concerns. If they can't immediately be answered, the lead team come back with a response or address it in a future lead team blog.

[Easing coronavirus health measures at the UK border](#)

On 8 June, regulations came into force across the UK requiring people arriving into the UK from outside the common travel area to self-isolate for 14 days, with the exception of those on [a short list of exemptions](#). These measures have contributed to keeping the number of COVID-19 transmissions in the UK as low as possible, helping to protect us from a second wave of the virus.

Today (29 June 2020) I can confirm that the government will shortly begin to ease the health measures at the UK border, allowing passengers to be exempted from self-isolation requirements in certain circumstances on arrival in the UK. This will apply to international rail, maritime, and aviation.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre, in close consultation with Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer, has developed a categorisation of countries and territories from which it is considered to present a lower risk from a public health perspective for passengers to enter the UK, without a requirement for 14 days' self-isolation.

This has been informed by factors including the prevalence of coronavirus within the country and, crucially, the numbers of new cases and potential trajectory in the coming weeks of the disease in the country. This categorisation will inform ministerial decisions about the easing of the current border measures.

I will announce further details including a full list of the countries and territories from which arriving passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements later this week. Although people will not need to self-isolate after entering the UK from these countries, they must not be complacent about following the public health advice on hand hygiene and

social distancing.

Separately, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is reviewing its travel advice. Further details will be announced later this week.

Throughout this process public safety has been at the heart of our decision making. We have been guided by the science and worked closely with health and policy experts from across government to ensure the steps we are taking are gradual and will minimise the risk of new COVID-19 cases while helping to open our travel and tourism sector.

[COP26 President Alok Sharma at COP26 Business Leaders Event](#)

Good afternoon everyone, and huge thanks for inviting me to this Council for Sustainable Business COP26 business leaders event.

I am really sorry I can't be with you live, so to speak, but as this event is taking place, I am in the House of Commons Chamber, setting out our latest set of reforms to help businesses bounce back from the pandemic.

Of course, governments and businesses around the world are having to respond to the immediate and acute challenges posed by the pandemic.

But what we also know is that the climate crisis has not taken any time off.

Of course we do still have some time left to define the future when it comes to combating climate change.

But we have to act now. For this to be successful, it ultimately has to be a joint endeavour between nations, civil society and businesses.

In response to the pandemic, we are seeing countries around the world bring forward green recovery packages.

I do think this will provide an impetus for positive change.

Here in the UK, working with business, we have shown that green growth is absolutely possible.

Between 1990 and 2018, the UK economy has grown by 75% and at the same time, we have managed to cut emissions by 43%.

We have done this by working together and building entirely new industries.

Let me give you some examples. 20 years ago, the UK had two offshore wind turbines, powering just two thousand homes.

Fast forward to 2020, and the UK has more offshore wind capacity than any other country in the world.

Earlier this year, construction began at the world's largest offshore wind development, Dogger Bank.

This is a project which, when complete, is going to be able to power four and a half million UK homes.

The cost of wind power globally has fallen by almost 50 percent.

The cost of solar power is down by 85 percent since 2010.

Renewables are cheaper than coal power in two thirds of all countries.

And we have made progress because countries, cities, regions, and ultimately business, have led the way.

We have seen a shifting of investment priorities. There's no doubt about that.

We've seen the spurring on of innovation.

The scaling up of technologies

And all of it, driving down costs.

I believe there is a real momentum building

The business community has collectively understood that building a green economy isn't just good for the environment, it's actually also good for the bottom line.

Let me give you some examples from a number of companies at this event which are driving forward their own green agenda.

SSE has committed to spend more than 7 billion pounds on low carbon infrastructure projects over the next 5 years.

Unilever has committed to reach net zero emissions from all its products by 2039.

And Arup has made a commitment to be a net zero organisation by 2030.

I know many of you will have made similar commitments on the path towards net zero.

So as we look forward to COP26 next November, our aim is to ramp up ambition towards a climate-resilient, zero-carbon economy.

We want all countries to submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, driving further cuts in carbon emissions by 2030.

And we want all nations committing to reaching net zero emissions as soon as

possible.

Ahead of the summit, we have defined five areas which need particular attention: clean energy, clean transport, nature-based solutions, adaptation and resilience, and tying the whole thing together, finance.

Your contribution will be central to driving change in these areas.

I have four concrete asks from you.

First on clean energy.

Business has already played a big part in the clean energy transition.

But we need more companies to commit to 100 per cent renewable sources by 2050 at the latest, through the 'RE100' initiative and the Powering Past Coal Alliance.

So please, sign up to both initiatives.

Second, zero emission road transport. We must accelerate on this path.

The government, as you know, is consulting on bringing forward the end of the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035.

Or indeed earlier, if faster transition is feasible.

So we want manufacturers and businesses to accelerate this transition.

Join the EV100 campaign and commit to all of the vehicles you own or operate being zero-emission by 2030.

Third, for all you bankers, asset managers, financiers and insurers at this event, we want to see further progress on the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures agenda.

We need you to continue to sign up to the recommendations of the TCFD to build a greener and more resilient financial system.

Please, join the Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment to help transform infrastructure investment, by integrating climate risks into decision making.

My fourth and final ask is to urge you to join the Race to Zero Coalition.

This initiative launched by the High Level Champions for COP25 and COP26 a month ago is the largest ever alliance of businesses and non-state actors committed to reaching Net Zero by 2050 at the latest.

And let me assure you, if you sign up, you're going to be in pretty good company.

Around one thousand companies around the world have already signed up.

We all understand that we are in a difficult place in terms of the global

economy right now.

But it is always darkest before the dawn.

And I fervently believe that COP26, and the footsteps leading towards it, can be the moment when the world comes together to ramp up momentum towards a climate-resilient, zero-carbon economy.

Business is absolutely an integral part if our journey is to be successful.

So thank you for all you are doing, and let's renew and re-energize our efforts.

Thank you.