



UK Trade & Investment

Global exposure for Touch Bionics

Fast facts

Company:	Touch Bionics
Industry:	Life Science/ Medical Technologies
Target Markets:	Brazil, China, India, Germany, Sweden
UKTI Services:	Overseas Market Introduction Service; Events; Tradeshaw Access Programme; Trade Mission

www.touchbionics.com



UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has helped Touch Bionics to explore new markets for its innovative prosthetic solutions and promote its i-limb products at high profile events around the world.

A spin-out out from the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital in Edinburgh, Scotland, Touch Bionics launched the i-limb Hand in 2007. This was the first powered prosthetic hand to have five independently powered fingers that open and close around objects in a natural and anatomically correct way. The company also supplies other prosthetic technologies, including i-limb digits for partial hand patients and a lifelike passive functional prosthesis that can be matched to the skin tone and contours of the natural limb, whilst offering some basic function.

From its earliest days, Touch Bionics focused most of its efforts on overseas markets with healthcare systems that routinely reimburse practitioners and patients for the cost of the prosthetics. The company's top markets are currently the US and Germany. As well

as 45 employees in the UK, it has 50 in the US and a further 7 in Germany, Italy and France. Sales in 2013 reached £12.3 million.

"We believe that patients can benefit considerably from our technologies, which can restore significant function and self-esteem following the trauma of upper limb loss," says Ian Stevens, Chief Executive Officer of Touch Bionics. "Innovation is at the heart of everything we do and all our R&D and manufacturing takes place in Livingston, Scotland. Our customers are a network of trusted, expert prostheticians who work closely with patients to make sure that the best possible outcome is achieved for each one. Our products are having a real impact on patients' lives."

Supportive relationship

Over the years, Touch Bionics has forged a strong relationship with UKTI and its regional partner, Scottish Development International. The company has used UKTI's Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) to find out about new markets and identify distributors. Local UKTI teams in Delhi,

India and Shanghai, China have also provided in-country support before and during visits to these markets. In 2010, the company received funding through UKTI's Tradeshaw Access Programme to attend international trade show Arab Health in Dubai.

During the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games, UKTI invited Touch Bionics to participate in a Global Business Summit at Lancaster House. Ian joined a panel of NHS procurement officials and other experts in the area of prosthetics to address an audience of healthcare professionals on the subject of assistive medical technologies.

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Ian Stevens, Chief Executive Officer,
Touch Bionics



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Ian Stevens, Chief Executive Officer, Touch Bionics

Later in 2012, he joined a delegation to Brazil led by the British Prime Minister, David Cameron. During the visit, the company and its local distributor attended high profile events at the British Consulates in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and the British Embassy in Brasilia.

“UKTI has been very supportive of our business in a number of ways,” says Ian. “When UKTI carries out market research for us through OMIS, their specialist teams on the ground can access information that would take us much longer to discover on our own. Being associated with high profile events that UKTI organises, like the Prime Minister’s visit to Brazil, raises our credibility and that of our local distributor. We also benefit from UKTI’s international networks of contacts.”

Raising global profile

The i-limb Hand was featured extensively in UKTI’s GREAT Britain campaign, which showcases the very best of what Britain has to offer around the world. In December 2013, it was on display at the Konserthuset in Stockholm, Sweden, the venue where Nobel Prizes are presented each year, at a UKTI event called Research & Innovation is GREAT. The event brought together leading experts from both the UK and Sweden for a day of informative presentations and discussions about trade and investment opportunities in the healthcare sector.

It was also showcased at CeBIT 2014, the world’s largest and most international computer expo held in Hanover, Germany and attended by up to 850,000 visitors each year. Touch Bionics was invited to join the UKTI stand at the event, receiving financial support towards the costs of attending. A video presentation about British innovation showed an image of the i-limb hand, which provided the backdrop to a speech on the subject by Prime Minister David Cameron. Later he and his German counterpart, Chancellor Angela Merkel, spoke to Touch Bionics’

patient ambassador, Claudia Breidbach about how the i-limb hand has enhanced her life.

“Being connected with the GREAT campaign is a fantastic honour and has done wonders for our profile around the world,” says Ian. “To have a 15 metre hand on display outside the building where the Nobel Awards are given every year was a wonderful endorsement of our work and an immense source of motivation for our staff. Similarly, you simply cannot buy the level of exposure we achieved when the German Chancellor and British Prime Minister visited our exhibit and were photographed using the hand at CeBIT. UKTI’s support has been invaluable and we look forward to continuing to work with them as we grow our business in overseas markets.”

The export advantage

International trade has always played an important role in the UK economy. Today it accounts for almost 20 per cent of the nation’s GDP.

Exporting can be challenging, but the benefits can be the difference between profit and loss. Research carried out by UKTI shows that:

- companies that export become 34 per cent more productive in the first year alone
- 59 per cent of companies that exported either developed a new product or service or modified an existing one
- 85 per cent of companies reported that exporting led to a ‘level of growth not otherwise possible’
- 87 per cent said exporting had significantly improved their profile or credibility
- 73 per cent said exporting had increased the commercial lifespan of products or services

For more information about exporting please go to www.gov.uk/ukti

Helping you access international markets

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

UK Trade & Investment’s Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) is a flexible business tool, letting you use the services of our trade teams, located in our embassies, high commissions and consulates across the world, to benefit your business.

A service package could include:

- Market, sector advice
- Analysis of market entry strategies
- Support during overseas visits
- Identification of possible business partners

UKTI was delighted to support Touch Bionics in its business overseas.



To connect with an International Trade Adviser and begin your own success story now, scan

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UK Trade & Investment is the Government Department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high-quality investment to the UK’s dynamic economy. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.