JAMESCOWPER KRESTON
Accountants & Business Advisers

Expanding Your Business into the UK and Europe

"A comprehensive solution to your inward investment needs"

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Why the UK and where do we start?

The UK Government wants to encourage multinational companies to come to the UK. Tax legislation in the UK makes the UK a very attractive location for overseas investors.

Should you want to take advantage of these opportunities, James Cowper Kreston can help you through the expansion and cultural change process.

We discuss below some of the more common queries asked by our clients:

- How do we choose the right location?
- Do we need a UK company?
- What banking arrangements are appropriate and how should we fund the UK operations?
- How can we find employees and how should we pay them?
- What rates of tax will we pay?
- Should we outsource the UK accounting function?
- How can we locate reliable UK business suppliers?
- How much will it cost?

Our overseas clients have a wide variety of needs and our “in-house” team, together with our network of local contacts, can provide any help required.

Whatever your requirements you can be assured that client relationships are of the highest importance to us. Every client has a dedicated partner who will keep in touch on a regular basis and ensure that we deliver a positive and value for money service.

Whatever your stage of expansion into the UK, whether you are a new entrant or an established organisation, we would be happy to talk to you.

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Key reasons to do business in the UK

1. The UK is one of the easiest places to set up and run a business – the World Bank found that the time taken to set up a business in the UK was less than half the European average. It ranks the UK first in Europe and eighth in the world (189 countries) in which to operate a business.

2. One of the most flexible labour markets in Europe – many businesses have relocated to the UK from other European countries for this reason.

3. An internationally competitive tax environment – the top rate of corporate tax in the UK is currently 20% with the rate set to fall again to 19% from 1 April 2017. The corporation tax main rate will be reduced further to 17% for the financial year beginning 1 April 2020.

4. Top location for European headquarters – more overseas companies set up their headquarters in the UK than anywhere else. This in turn attracts more companies.

5. Geographical location and transport links – the UK's location makes it conveniently located for mainland Europe as well as North America. The UK has excellent transport links with all major industrialised countries. The UK is also one of the world's largest and most important financial centres and capital markets.

6. Technology and innovation – the UK is one of the most productive places for technology firms in the world. It has been ranked only second to the USA for the quality of its research base.

7. A stable political environment – the country has a consultative approach to the making of laws so there are fewer surprises for businesses.

8. Communication – because UK businesses operate in English they have a natural advantage when communicating globally. The UK also has one of the most extensive broadband networks among G7 countries and has one of the strongest ICT structures in the world.

9. Standard of living – UK residents enjoy a high standard of living, education and leisure. There is also a reasonable work life balance, which means that residents have time to enjoy the many leisure opportunities.

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Productivity is also high, with the region offering a highly skilled workforce with almost 40 per cent of those in employment holding a degree. The Southern Region stretches from Oxford to Southampton incorporating London and the Thames Valley. James Cowper Kreston's offices are in principal business locations in the region; London, Reading, Oxford, Southampton, Newbury and Henley. Other major towns in the area include Bracknell, Maidenhead and Slough.

As well as being close to Heathrow Airport, the Southern Region has good road and rail links. With strong communication networks and some of the world's leading universities, the area has become a focal point for inbound investment into the UK and a centre for technology, telecommunications, computer and internet enterprises.

Some of the world's biggest multinational corporations are located in the area including Microsoft, Vodafone, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Oxford Instruments and Amazon.com.

Yet at the same time it is the favoured location of many smaller dynamic companies testing out the UK or European market for the first time. This fits well with the region's reputation as one of the most entrepreneurial in the UK.

Inward investment has transformed the Southern Region in the last 20 years. Historically, the US has been the biggest investor, particularly in the software sector. In recent times there has been an increase in the number of Chinese and Indian companies coming into the UK and Australian companies have also been significant investors.

Whatever the prospects for the global economy in the next few years, the Southern Region is well placed to provide a great location for companies looking to develop a presence in UK or European markets.

How do we find the right property?

Depending upon your requirements you may wish to consider a serviced office. This provides maximum flexibility and usually includes secretarial support, boardroom hire and the use of office facilities. We can put you in touch with people who can help.

Similarly we can recommend property agents who will help with your search for all types of property.

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Do we need a UK company?

Typically, companies operate in the UK either through

- a UK subsidiary company or
- a UK registered branch

There are a number of important tax, legal and regulatory differences between these options, the key ones being:

	Branch	Company
Separate legal entity	No	Yes
Able to conclude contracts in own name	No	Yes
Registration with UK Companies House required	Yes	Yes
Filing of annual accounts at Companies House	Overseas parent	UK company
Annual audit required	No	Yes, depending on size
Taxable in the UK	Yes, depending on type of activities	Yes, on world-wide income and gains
VAT registration	Possibly	Possibly

Reviewing these factors in isolation is not enough. Your commercial requirements are crucial. At James Cowper Kreston we understand your business needs and we can help you conclude which operating structure is best for you.

Once a choice has been made, we can arrange for the necessary paperwork to be completed as quickly as possible.

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What banking arrangements are appropriate and how should we fund the UK operations?

Opening a bank account

Setting up a UK bank account is often a first priority. We have good contacts with all the national banks and can arrange introductions with local business bankers.

Funding the operations

If the new operation is seeking finance in the UK we can discuss with you the most appropriate lending source. Again we have a network of contacts that you might find useful. We can help you prepare the necessary business plans and projections and attend meetings with possible lenders if required.

If group funds are to be used, we can advise on the associated tax issues and opportunities involved with borrowing from overseas.

How can we find employees and how should we pay them?

The recruitment, retention and motivation of employees will be key to your business success. Employees hired in the UK will be subject to different cultural and regulatory practices from their home country.

However, you may also want to bring over key staff with the corporate head office culture, or specific knowledge of the business to the UK.

Using our own expertise and knowledge, together with our network of local contacts we can help you with a wide variety of people issues for both locals and expatriates including:

- Advising on work permit requirements for people transferring from outside the EU
- Advice on local property markets, schools etc for relocating employees
- Introductions to local recruitment consultants
- Cost projections for expatriate assignments
- Advice on tax-efficient remuneration and benefit packages
- Personal tax advice for key employees
- Advice on stock option plans
- A cost-effective and efficient payroll service
- Cross-border social security planning
- Advice on payroll taxes including expatriate payroll
- Employment contracts
- Advice on the UK tax implications for your inbound staff including short-term assignments and business visitors

What rates of tax will we pay?

The UK Government wants to encourage multinational companies to the UK. As a result new tax legislation has been introduced which now makes the UK a very attractive location for overseas investors. The UK now has one of the lowest rates of company tax ("corporation tax") in Europe. In addition UK social taxes are lower than many of its European neighbours.

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Corporation tax

In the UK both branches and companies pay corporation tax. The top rate of corporate tax in the UK is currently 20% with the rate set to fall again to 19% from April 2017, one of the lowest tax rates in the G7 and amongst the UK's core competitors. Individual tax rates are also one of the lowest in the EU. Both initially, and as your organisation grows, your global tax bill can be affected substantially by the way your UK operations are structured.

Our inbound team includes tax specialists who can advise you on a wide range of tax issues including:

- How should the UK operation be structured?
- What functions should the UK operation carry out?
- How much income should be recognised in the UK?
- How should inter-company transfer prices be determined?
- How can maximum advantage be gained from UK tax reliefs and incentives?

Value added tax (VAT)

VAT is the European sales tax.

A UK VAT registered business must charge and account for VAT, currently at the rate of 20%, on its taxable supplies (sales). It is usually possible, however, to offset any VAT incurred on expenses that relate to business purchases.

We can help you determine whether a VAT registration is necessary or desirable and help with the periodic returns. We would review any planning opportunities to minimize your VAT cost.

Customs duties

If your products are liable to import duties, or if you export from your UK base, then we can work with you to ensure all customs duty planning opportunities are maximized.

Employee taxes

In the UK the social tax is known as national insurance ("NI"). NI contributions have to be paid by the workforce as a deduction from their gross salary ("employees NI"), and by employers ("employers NI"). The rate of employers NI is currently 13.8%.

Employers have an obligation to collect NI, together with UK income tax, and pay the amounts over to the tax authorities.

Where you are bringing staff over to the UK, we can advise on their social security position which may mean they stay in their home country system.

The tax team

James Cowper Kreston have a dedicated tax team which is recognised as one of the most experienced in the Southern Region. The team is well regarded by the tax authorities and within the Southern Region business community. Members of this team have specific expertise in helping inward investors maximize their tax opportunities and are active in our international network, Kreston International. Our tax team won "International Tax Team of the Year" at the Tolley's Taxation Awards 2017.

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Should we outsource the UK accounting function?

Many of our clients do not initially employ a UK accountant in-house and therefore look to outsource some or all of their financial and regulatory functions.

Whilst some of the basic processing can be done overseas there is usually a need to do some bookkeeping in the UK. In addition there are a large number of ongoing regulatory, legal and tax filings that are specific to the UK. Whilst non-financial staff can deal with some of these, this can distract from the key task of growing the business.

Our services include:

- Arranging initial tax registrations
- Producing accounting records
- Preparing management accounts and reports in a format and to timescales acceptable to the overseas financial reporting system
- Preparing annual statutory accounts for Companies House

- VAT returns
- Payroll administration, including specialised expatriate payrolls
- Corporate tax returns and associated tax planning
- Being the Registered Office and preparing associated statutory filings
- Annual corporate tax returns
- Expatriate services aimed at your assignees

Audit

Under current legislation a UK subsidiary of a foreign parent invariably needs an audit, unless the group as a whole qualifies for exemption on the grounds of size.

If you have an international firm of auditors we would be happy to liaise with them to ensure all the information is in the format required. Alternatively we could independently carry out a cost-efficient UK audit in accordance with UK audit standards. We use a computerised risk-based audit approach to ensure a rigorous audit is carried out.

James Cowper Kreston is registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board. Authorisation from the PCAOB is a legal requirement for any firm of accountants carrying out audit work for UK subsidiaries.

The Sarbanes Oxley Act requires PCAOB audits to be carried out under US auditing standards. The Act also requires auditors to report on internal controls under Section 404 audit reporting for UK standards. Auditors of US holding companies normally accept responsibility for Section 404 audit reporting for UK subsidiaries, with the UK auditors assisting them in accordance with agreed procedures.

James Cowper Kreston has carried out PCAOB audit work and assisted management with internal control reporting under Section 404. This work includes recording internal controls, testing those controls and identifying weaknesses.

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How can we locate reliable UK business suppliers?

We have a network of local lawyers and bankers who we can introduce you to. We are used to working closely with our clients' lawyers and bankers to ensure consistency of service and advice.

We also have a network of local business suppliers who we can recommend. Examples include:

- Lawyers
- Bankers
- Travel agents
- Office equipment and furniture suppliers
- Mobile phone leasing
- Vehicle leasing
- Car retailers
- Property agents
- Removal firms
- Advice on local schools
- Availability of grants
- Translators
- Printers
- IT suppliers
- Recruitment agencies

How much will it cost?

Our approach is to provide a highly professional, personal and value for money service.

We would be pleased to talk with you to discuss your business plans and offer a free initial consultation.

Our fees are competitive. Should you decide to proceed we would provide you with a detailed quote for those services required.

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Inward Investment to the UK

Exploring a new business territory can be challenging; full of opportunity but also risk.

James Cowper Kreston's specialist International Services Team has extensive experience in helping businesses in an international context. We already provide advice to more than 150 international groups from a large range of sectors including education, technology, electronics, distribution and manufacturing. We are a credible alternative to the larger accountancy firms, providing a premium service without the associated premium level of cost.

Scope of our international services

James Cowper Kreston can offer informed advice to businesses expanding into the UK, Europe or beyond, whether exploring overseas markets or setting up a factory, office or company. We can also give invaluable support to investors and businesses wishing to move into the UK marketplace from abroad. Our expertise in international taxation and business strategy continues to open up a wealth of new possibilities for a diverse range of clients.

We can act as a "one stop shop" for all your requirements or merely provide a single service. Whatever your requirement, we have the expertise to meet your needs.

Our international connections

We have strong connections in North America, Europe and the rest of the world through our membership of Kreston International, which is ranked one of the largest accounting and business advisory networks in the world. Kreston International covers 120 countries with over 700 offices, providing a resource of over 21,000 professional and support staff. Tap into this worldwide expertise.

James Cowper Kreston is also registered with PCAOB (Public Company Accounting Oversight Board) in the United States. Authorisation from PCAOB is now a legal requirement for any firm of auditors which wants to work with UK subsidiaries of listed US based companies.

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Our experience and approach

The members of our International Services Team have previous experience working with Big 4 and other top tier firms and in commerce with international groups. Many have completed secondments outside the UK. Our approach is to provide a highly professional, personal and value for money service. We develop a close working relationship with our clients to help them achieve success, whatever their business or personal objectives. Our clients are important to us.

Examples of the international services we offer

Global Strategy and Structuring

Exploring a new market for the first time? We can help you get the initial planning right to minimise the pitfalls and maximise opportunities. Frequently asked questions include "Should I form a company? Is there a need to hire overseas employees? What about supply chain management? Do I need to open a bank account?" Our experience can help you find the answers that are right for your business.

Employer Assistance and Expatriate Advice

If you are hiring employees in a new territory or transferring existing employees abroad then let us assist you to implement tax efficient remuneration and incentive packages for your staff. We offer a full payroll service for UK employees, including numerous expatriates, and can introduce you to payroll providers overseas. We can manage your inbound and outbound expatriates by briefing them on their tax and social security position, and handling their tax registration and filing of tax returns, to ensure full compliance with all of the relevant tax authorities.

International Tax

As your business grows, your global tax bill can be affected substantially by how your operations are structured. Our tax team not only has an in depth understanding of the UK tax rules but understand how these rules interact with overseas legislation to minimise tax payments and avoid double taxation. We have carried out transfer pricing studies for many of our clients.

International Audit & Assurance

We are experienced in conducting audits of subsidiaries in the UK and international audits requiring travel overseas to clients in the US, Asia Pacific and Europe, giving us international capability in cross border businesses. We have expertise in IFRS and reporting under US GAAP.

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