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# OXYGEN FAST- GROWTH 50 2026



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# MOVE ASIDE, MARKET GIANTS

DOUG  
WOODBURN,  
EDITOR, IT  
CHANNEL  
OXYGEN

**ARE IT CHANNEL OXYGEN** and other channel publications too fixated on the big channel partners like Softcat, Computacenter and CDW?

It's a fair question, and a criticism I've had levelled at me on more than one occasion.

After all, it's often said that the thousands of smaller, SMB-focused MSPs, resellers and IT consultancies with 100 staff or fewer are the true lifeblood of the channel.

Compiled for a third year in association with Giacom, Fast-Growth 50 is our attempt to address this criticism head on.

It celebrates the 50 fastest-growing outfits on our radar from among that broader partner space a recent government study estimated could contain over 11,000 firms.

To compile it, we examined Companies House headcount data from 686 channel partners that sit below our Oxygen 250 report, but have more than ten staff.

Those who made the cut exhibited the highest growth in their average monthly headcount over their last four sets of annual accounts (see methodology, p7, for more).

Between them, these 50 firms added 1,560 staff across this three-year period – up 139% on the base year (see p32 for more).

The fact that our league table is based on headcount rather than revenues or profit has been given added resonance as AI promises to help MSPs and IT solutions providers do more with less.

Whether the firms in this report will look more to AI and less to new hires to drive future growth is a key question we explore on p14.

We caught up with leadership from 33 of the 50

firms, asking them about what's underpinning their growth, the mega-trends shaping their fortunes (see p10), their quirks (see p20), and which competitors they most admire (see p18).

## MEET THE FAST-GROWTH 50

This year's Fast-Growth 50 crop includes a connectivity reseller surfing booming demand for Starlink satellite services, a B Corp which gives a portion of its profits to charity, and an MSP originally conceived by its two founders while they were still at college in Sussex.

They range from MSPs, MSSPs and VARs to software consultancies focused on single vendors including Microsoft, Oracle, Sage and ServiceNow.

Some have been built via organic growth, and others through M&A (with two outfits in this report making five acquisitions in 2025 alone).

Many are relatively young firms started by entrepreneurs who felt they could do a better job than legacy competitors.

This includes 8th-ranked BestPath, a Cisco partner founded in 2017 by two contractors convinced that existing partners weren't serving their own needs.

"We saw that a lot of partners cared about the transaction, but nothing past that because they didn't think from the perspective of an engineer," MD Nicholas Bridgeman tells us (see p27 for more).

"We thought, and we still believe, we can do that a lot better than a lot of the other partners we see."

Many of the firms in this report are dreaming big.

This includes top-ranked Flotek, which is now gunning for £100m revenue having only been founded in 2022.

"We acquired more businesses than we thought we would, and had grown to £12m within 18 months or two years. We all agreed we needed to rethink the [original ten-year plan of] £20m," CEO Jay Ball tells us.

So, move aside market giants.

For 50 bite-sized case studies of small but ambitious channel partners lighting up the market with their growth, read on...



# WHY X MARKS THE SPOT ON CHANNEL GROWTH

**THIS YEAR'S FAST-GROWTH 50** is a reminder that strong growth remains possible in the channel, even in the most challenging market conditions.

Economic pressure, cautious investment and geopolitical tension have been defining characteristics of the business environment over the past year. Yet the companies featured here have continued to invest, innovate and create brilliant solutions for their customers.

Communications, connectivity and IT services sit at the heart of almost every modern business. When conditions become challenging, organisations may delay projects or reduce spending in some areas, but they cannot afford downtime, security risks or unreliable systems. If anything, technology dependence becomes even greater during periods of uncertainty.

However, while the need for technology is inescapable, the way businesses consume it is changing. Across the SMB market, spending is steadily shifting toward subscription and service-based delivery models, often described collectively as Everything-as-a-Service (XaaS). Analysts forecast that cloud subscription and services will represent 58% of all technology spend by 2029, reflecting a long-term move away from break-fix relationships toward ongoing service partnerships.

That shift is already visible in the channel's growth patterns, with MSPs forecast to grow at more than double the rate of traditional resellers as they build service-led businesses and move away from transactional models.

This approach isn't just about growth. Recurring revenue also gives providers greater visibility and control. It allows them to plan ahead, invest confidently and build long-term value while strengthening customer loyalty. When services are embedded into day-to-day operations, providers become trusted strategic partners rather than occasional suppliers.

That sense of partnership is becoming even more important as technology continues to evolve. AI is a prime example, with a growing gap between what these technologies can offer and the ability of businesses to consume them.

For the channel, that gap represents a major opportunity. Businesses do not just need access to AI. They need help understanding

what's possible, where it can deliver real value, and how to apply it in ways that improve productivity and performance. They want to be guided by providers who can turn these powerful tools into real, measurable outcomes.

Customers respond well when technology solutions are presented to them as part of an integrated XaaS model, ideally bundled and priced on a per-user, per-month basis. Time and again we've seen that the partners who get this right, make things really simple and ensure everything 'just works', are the ones that grow the fastest.

For providers, this model also offers numerous commercial advantages. It simplifies purchasing for customers, delivers predictable costs and dependable service, and supports stable, recurring revenue that enables long-term planning, sustained growth and stronger business valuations over time.

At Giacom, we've built our Cloud Market platform to support this model, making it easier for partners to deliver integrated subscription services, manage customers more efficiently and grow predictable recurring revenue.

The companies recognised in this year's Fast-50 have achieved impressive growth in a challenging market, and it's an honour for Giacom to play a part in recognising their achievements. Their performance reflects the resilience of the channel and the continued strength of demand across the SMB sector.

The direction of travel is clear, and the market is steadily moving toward managed XaaS-led models underpinned by predictable pricing and ongoing support. For the fast-growth providers of the future, the smart money is on those that build businesses around those expectations.

NATHAN MARKE,  
CHIEF STRATEGY  
OFFICER, GIACOM



# THE OXYGEN FAST-GROWTH 50

## 50. WESTSPRING IT

**HEADCOUNT:** 31 (+107%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT managed services

**HQ:** Bristol

■ This Bristol-based MSP more than doubled average monthly headcount from 15 to 31 in its four most-recent years on record. It currently has 33 full-time employees.

Founded in 2016 by Jason Small and Phil Cater, the Microsoft, Datto and WatchGuard partner's website features case studies with recruitment firms Talentia and SR2, among others.

The onset of AI "changes where we add headcount rather than whether we add it", CEO Emma Carter tells us below.

## 49. PKF SMITH COOPER SYSTEMS

**HEADCOUNT:** 63 (+70%)

**SPECIALISM:** Sage

**HQ:** Derby

■ One of two Sage-focused partners in this report, PKF Smith Cooper Systems grew average monthly headcount

from 37 to 63 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025, accounts indicate.

The Sage 200 and Sage Intacct specialist claims to serve over 700 customers from locations in Derby, London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Reading and Newcastle.

It is part of £30m-revenue, 300-employee accountancy PKF Smith Cooper.

## 48. COMMUNICATE TECHNOLOGY

**HEADCOUNT:** 55 (+77%)

**SPECIALISM:** Cybersecurity and IT network solutions

**HQ:** Stockton-on-Tees

■ Founded in 2011, this Rockpool Investments-backed outfit's roots lie in providing IT and comms to business park owners.

Today, it counts The National Portrait Gallery among its customers and is "one of very few providers that genuinely owns both a private SD-WAN core network and a full SOC-backed security stack under one roof", CEO Paul Bryce tells us (see 8).

Communicate's average monthly headcount rose from 31 to 55 between calendar 2021 and 2024, its accounts indicate.

It's worth noting, however, that these numbers will not fully reflect recent M&A activity (recent acquisitions York Data Services and Blaze Networks propelled revenues to £17m).

## Q&A WITH WESTSPRING IT CEO EMMA CARTER

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We've grown primarily through organic demand – winning and retaining the right clients who are focused on leveraging technology to achieve their business objectives.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** We have invested six-figure numbers in systems this past 12 months – with a focus on automation removing repetitive work, improving reporting, and delivering efficiencies – but AI doesn't take away the need for great people in client experience, knowledge and experience in security, and personal touch in service management and consultancy.



# WHO ARE THE FAST-GROWTH 50?

**WHO ARE THE 50 FIRMS** in this report, and the 686 firms that make up the wider population from which they were drawn?

Outside the Oxygen 250\*, *IT Channel Oxygen* now tracks 686 UK channel partners with a headcount of ten or more. We found them by scouring vendor partner locators, leaping into Companies House any time a new name came on our radar, and generally keeping our ear close to the ground.

The Fast-Growth 50 represents a high-growth microcosm of these 686 firms.

In a reflection of the market's current hotspots, a disproportionately high number who made the top

50 are MSSPs or pure-play Microsoft partners. The remainder are either generalists IT MSPs, consultancies and resellers, or specialists in areas such as ERP software, AWS cloud or networking.

Just two (Dublin-based duo Auxilion and US-based Abacus) are headquartered overseas.

As you'd expect, a sizeable proportion – 22 – also appeared in last year's Fast-Growth 50 report.

The remaining 28 alumni have either been acquired (for instance Sci-Net, Infrastar, Stripe OLT) have grown to become an Oxygen 250 firm, or an Oxygen 250 firm in waiting (eg UBDS, Highgate, Croft, Everything Tech), or have moderated their rate of expansion.

## METHODOLOGY

Fast-Growth 50 features the fastest-growing UK channel partners on *IT Channel Oxygen's* radar outside of Oxygen 250\*. Our league table is based on the average monthly headcount figure displayed in each company's last four sets of annual accounts filed on Companies House (as of 20 March 2026)\*\*.

To qualify, firms were required to have an average monthly headcount of at least ten in the final year, and to have grown (or at least not shrunk) in each year in scope.

Outside of Oxygen 250, *IT Channel Oxygen* tracks 686 UK resellers, MSPs, MSSPs, IT solutions providers and IT consultancies with a headcount of 10 or more.

Fast-Growth 50 represents a high-growth microcosm of these 686 firms.

They made the cut based on a 50-50 split between absolute and relative average monthly headcount growth during the three-year period. For example, a company that doubled headcount from 40 to 80 during the period would score twice that of a peer that increased from 20 to 40 staff (see final page for all the scores).

\* Published in January 2026, Oxygen 250 ranked and profiled the UK's largest resellers and MSPs by revenue (revenue cut-off £16m)  
 \*\* In some cases, these figures may not reflect the firm's true size when factoring in overseas entities, sister companies or contractors



**Q&A**

**WITH COMMUNICATE TECHNOLOGY CEO PAUL BRYCE**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Most of the increase has come through M&A – including the acquisition of Fortinet Expert Partner MSSP Blaze Networks.

**Name one thing you have planned for the next 12 months.** To tell our story better. We are doing some great work bringing together networks and security solutions for well-known customers and, over the next 12 months, we want more people to hear about it so we can help them too.



**47. TRIDENT**

**HEADCOUNT:** 79 (+58%)  
**SPECIALISM:** IT support  
**HQ:** Brighton

■ This Brighton-based IT support outfit makes the Fast-Growth 50 cut after growing average monthly headcount from 53 to 79 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025.

The Microsoft and Dell partner counts the YMCA DownsLink Group and Southern Hospice Group among its clients.

Revenues in its latest annual period – covering an elongated 13-month period to 30 April 2025 – hit £11.4m.

**46. NINE23**

**HEADCOUNT:** 24 (+140%)  
**SPECIALISM:** UK sovereign cloud  
**HQ:** Southampton

■ This provider of sovereign managed services grew average monthly headcount from 10 to 24 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025, accounts show.

It was founded in 2012 by Stuart McKean, a former British Army Lynx helicopter pilot.

The Nutanix, Trellix and Pulsant partner recently evolved its portfolio from a defence-only focus to also encompass national security and critical national infrastructure (see Q&A with CEO Steve Jewell below for more).

**Q&A**

**WITH NINE23 CEO STEVE JEWELL**

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** The widening disconnect between the UK's growing demand for sovereign, high-assurance infrastructure and a global technology ecosystem that is rapidly optimising for AI-centric hyperscale workloads.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?**

Nine23 was one of only two SMEs invited to join the Secure by Design working group with TechUK and DSIT, contributing directly to the development of the national Secure by Design framework.



**45. BARRIER NETWORKS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 29 (+123%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Cybersecurity  
**HQ:** Glasgow

■ This Glasgow-based cybersecurity service provider and VAR saw average employee numbers jump from 13 to 29 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024, accounts indicate.

**Q&A**

**WITH CHORUS IT CEO NICOLA SANER**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We have proudly expanded through organic growth, particularly from our channel managed security services, which has seen great demand and expanded into new regions.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?**

It will be AI. In 2026, we expect AI to move from hype into practical adoption, and this is going to raise many security challenges for organisations – who are going to turn to their MSP or MSSP for guidance and support.



It started life in 2006 as 'Securanet', before assuming its current moniker in 2011.

Counting critical national infrastructure organisations among its clientele, Barrier Networks launched a risk operations centre (ROC) in December 2025.

A former CrowdStrike partner of the year, it also counts the likes of Fortinet, OPSWAT and F5 Networks among its vendor allies.

**44. PRAGMATIQ SOLUTIONS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 26 (+136%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft Dynamics and Power Platform  
**HQ:** Milton Keynes

■ Making the cut for Fast-Growth 50 for a third consecutive year, Pragmatiq saw average monthly headcount swell from 11 to 26 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024.

A Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform project for Brighton Therapy Centre is among the case studies trumpeted on its website.

Pragmatiq's headcount currently stands at 35, MD Stuart Goldwater tells us below.

**43. CHORUS IT**

**HEADCOUNT:** 93 (+60%)  
**SPECIALISM:** MSSP  
**HQ:** Bristol

■ Founded in 1999, this Microsoft MSP and MSSP counts the RAC, the University of Bristol and The Donkey Sanctuary among its customers.

Bristol-based Chorus' average monthly headcount shot up from 58 to 93 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024.

AI's move from hype into practical adoption

will drive customers into the arms of MSPs and MSSPs for support in 2026, CEO Nicola Saner predicts above.

**42. TRULY SMB**

**HEADCOUNT:** 21 (+163%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft AI  
**HQ:** Castle Donington, Leicestershire

■ This AI-focused Microsoft partner was launched in 2025 by wife and husband pairing Vicky and Brett Critchley, who sold previous venture Bam Boom Cloud to Pax8 in 2023.

**Q&A**

**WITH PRAGMATIQ MD STUART GOLDWATER**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We've grown headcount by 20% organically, driven by strong demand from both existing clients optimising their business applications and a surge in net-new customers choosing Pragmatiq for modernisation and AI-driven transformation.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** The rapid adoption of AI-powered business applications and Copilot solutions is transforming customer expectations.



# FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO ACTION: ROLLING THE AI DICE

**2026 HAS ALREADY SEEN** some big stories around chip shortages and the rise of sovereign cloud. But when we asked our Fast-Growth 50 leaders which mega-trend they felt would most shape their 2026, most were more preoccupied with helping their customers deliver measurable business impact with AI. Here is what a selection of them said....

## WHAT MEGA-TREND WILL SHAPE YOUR COMPANY'S 2026?



The shift from AI experimentation to AI accountability. Most organisations have already "tried" AI. Now the conversation is about governance, infrastructure readiness, cost control and real-world value. Alongside that, sovereign cloud and data residency are becoming board-level discussions.

**Mitesh Patel, MD of 10th-ranked Fifosys**

This year remains the year of AI transformation as we move from organisations trialling technology to full adoption of agentic services to reduce white collar headcount.

**Stuart Fenton, CEO of 9th-ranked Ingentive**



The biggest trend we expect to see is organisations moving from AI experimentation to AI delivering measurable business impact.

**Jason Osmond, CEO of 3rd-ranked Forge Technologies**

It will be AI. In 2026, we expect AI to move from hype into practical adoption, and this is going to raise many security challenges for organisations – who are going to turn to their MSP or MSSP for guidance and support.

**Nicola Saner, CEO of 43rd-ranked Chorus**

Definitely AI and the drive to digitisation due to the uncertain costs of hardware.

**Carl Maher, CEO of 30th-ranked Innov8**



The Iran conflict and strikes across the Gulf have been a very recent and unsettling situation. With confirmed outages hitting regional AWS datacentres, businesses are suddenly having very real conversations about disaster recovery and the challenge of true DR resilience and distributing data across multiple geographic regions versus data sovereignty constraints. We expect to be spending a lot more time in 2026 spent helping clients researching their approaches to compliance and vendor selection.

**Craig Bird, CEO of 38th-ranked CloudTech24**

The shift from "AI experimentation" to secure, governed AI adoption. Customers now want AI that delivers productivity and insight without compromising data sovereignty or trust.

**Daniel Bumby, MD of 31st-ranked Simoda**

Agentic AI and agent-to-agent security. As AI embeds and interacts increasingly in human-led processes, protecting workflows, interfaces, data and agentic logic security will shape autonomous security this year.

**Matt Lovell, CEO of 18th-ranked CloudGuard**

The defining trend for us this year is the squeeze between AI demand and infrastructure scarcity, as chip shortages and capacity constraints force every organisation to rethink how and where they run AI workloads. At the same time, the rapid rise of sovereign cloud requirements is reshaping client expectations, pushing us to design services that are compliant, region-aware, and resilient from day one.

**Stephen Richardson, CEO of 14th-ranked Digital Origin**



## Q&A

**WITH TRULY SMB EXECUTIVE CHAIR VICKY CRITCHLEY**

What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about? We have an engineering team developing IP.

Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years? It makes it less likely that we will hire the same types of roles. We are more likely to hire people who can really push AI and automation to the next level.

Name one thing you have planned for the next 12 months. Acquisition.



The business is built on the acquisitions of Leicestershire-based True MSP and a book of US and Canadian customers.

UK accounts show headcount rising from eight to 21 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025. Total employee numbers currently sit at 43, with further acquisitions planned (see above).

Specialising in providing IT solutions and services to organisations with more than 50 users, Port-P became an employee-owned trust in 2024 as it celebrated 30 years in business. It offers IT hardware, networking, peripherals and supplies. Revenues reached £15.5m in its latest period.

### 41. BLUELIGHT CRM

**HEADCOUNT:** 33 (+120%)

**SPECIALISM:** CRM for not-for-profits

**HQ:** West Malling, Kent

■ One of two employee-owned outfits in this report, this Kent-based CRM specialist counts charities Epilepsy Action and Caba among its customers.

Its headcount hit 33 in calendar 2024, up from 23, 19 and 15 in the three previous years, accounts indicate.

Bluelight CRM MD Marios Chrysanthou "enjoys a good stake and a long run", according to its website.

### 40. PORT-P

**HEADCOUNT:** 23 (+156%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT procurement

**HQ:** Birmingham

■ This Birmingham-based IT procurement specialist grew average monthly headcount from nine to 23 between calendar 2021 and 2024, accounts indicate.

### 39. CENTRAL TECHNOLOGY

**HEADCOUNT:** 93 (+63%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT support

**HQ:** Chesterfield

■ Revenues, profits and headcount continue to head north at this Chesterfield-based Veeam, Microsoft and Wasabi partner, despite it bemoaning a "challenging economic environment" in its latest accounts.

Calendar 2024 revenues advanced 14% to £11.5m (70% of which were recurring), pre-tax profits more than doubled to £427,000 and average monthly headcount rose to 93 (up from 87, 73 and 57 in the three previous years).

These numbers do not include the contribution of April 2024 acquisition IT3000, which continued to operate separately during the period.

Following another acquisition and a major customer win, Central Technology's headcount now stands at 115, CEO Ian Snow tells us (see Q&A, p12).

**Q&A**

**WITH CENTRAL TECHNOLOGY CEO IAN SNOW**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?**

A mix of acquisition and strong organic growth. We acquired Microsoft consultancy Yoko:10 (adding four team members) and onboarded a major customer that transferred three staff via TUPE, but most growth has come from a strong year of new customer wins and building out every department and region to support future scale.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue adding headcount at the same rate?** Yes. Our goal is to decouple revenue growth from headcount growth. Automation and AI will reshape how MSP teams operate, so growth will look different with more efficiency and new roles emerging.



**38. CLOUDTECH24**

**HEADCOUNT:** 27 (+145%)

**SPECIALISM:** Cybersecurity and IT support

**HQ:** Woking

■ Marking itself out with its Microsoft Direct CSP status, this Surrey-based MSP saw average monthly headcount swell from 11 to 27 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024.

It counts charity GambleAware and recruitment agency TeacherActive among more than 250 clients.

Recent AWS datacentre outages in the Gulf are sparking "very real conversations about disaster recovery", CEO Craig Bird tells us.

Headcount has since clambered to 46, Bird said.

**37. TECH SOURCE**

**HEADCOUNT:** 18 (+200%)

**SPECIALISM:** End-to-end IT fulfilment

**HQ:** Northampton

■ This Northampton-based outfit styles itself as a "single touch IT partner" for its clients' IT requirements.

Tech Source's average monthly headcount trebled from six to 18 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024, accounts indicate.

Its vendor allies include the likes of HPE, IBM, NetApp and Lenovo.

**36. ITVET**

**HEADCOUNT:** 97 (+64%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT support

**HQ:** Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire

■ This commercial property-focused IT support provider makes the Fast-Growth 50 cut for a second consecutive year after its average monthly headcount vaulted from 75 to 97 in its fiscal 2024.

Serving shopping centres, smart buildings and hotels, it counts JLL, Savills, and The Crown Estate among its customers.

The Hertfordshire firm also has a sideline providing refurbished laptops to schools and other organisations to tackle digital exclusion.

**35. AUXILION**

**HEADCOUNT:** 131 (+54%)

**SPECIALISM:** Managed digital services and consulting

**UK HQ:** Sheffield

■ This Dublin-headquartered consultancy harbours "ambitious plans for growth" and will "continue to recruit to support these ambitions", CEO Patrick Jordan tells us below.

Its Sheffield-based, UK business saw average monthly headcount hit 131 in calendar 2024 (up from 85 in the base year). UK headcount now stands at 140 it told us.

The HPE and Microsoft partner counts care home group Canford Healthcare among its clients.

**34. MERCURIUS IT**

**HEADCOUNT:** 24 (+167%)

**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft Dynamics

**HQ:** Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

■ Consistent headcount growth shown across its fiscal 2022 to 2025 accounts propels this Buckinghamshire-based Microsoft Dynamics specialist into Fast-Growth 50.

Founded in 2005, its services span consultation, implementation, customisation and support.

A Business Central implementation for milk recording company National Milk Records is among the case studies highlighted on its website.

**33. INSTANT ON IT**

**HEADCOUNT:** 66 (+89%)

**SPECIALISM:** Managed and cloud services

**HQ:** London

■ This fast-growing, London-based cloud services specialist has built its client base "entirely through word of mouth", CEO Paul Coote tells us below.

Instant On IT's average monthly headcount rose from 35 to 66 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025, with the tally since rising to 72.

Claiming to have 94% client retention rate since it was founded in 2004, the Microsoft partner moved into a new, bigger office in Hatton Garden last year.

**Q&A**

**WITH AUXILION CEO PATRICK JORDAN**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Increasingly

we're winning business starting with advisory, and process optimisation, and then expanding into our managed digital services to sustain those improvements at scale.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** We've ambitious

plans for growth in the next few years and, therefore, will continue to recruit to support these ambitions. But

the nature and composition of our talent acquisition strategy will evolve as AI and automation reshape how work is done.



**Q&A**

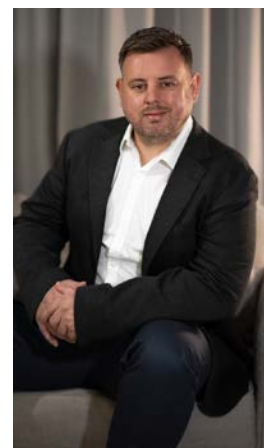
**WITH INSTANT ON IT CEO PAUL COOTE**

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** We've

built our reputation and client base entirely through word of mouth, so it appears we're doing something right.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** We

expect to add more staff in analytics, system analysis and client management. Clients still want interaction with real humans, and that will become increasingly more important as AI usage spreads, so support headcount will still grow.



**Q&A**

**WITH CLOUDTECH24 CEO CRAIG BIRD**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** With

the exception of a small client book acquired via an asset sale, our growth has been achieved organically by net new client wins and upsell/cross-sell into our existing client base.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** The Iran conflict and strikes

across the Gulf have been a very recent and unsettling situation. With confirmed outages hitting regional AWS datacentres, businesses are suddenly having very real conversations about disaster recovery and the challenge of true DR resilience and distributing data across multiple geographic regions versus data sovereignty constraints. We expect to be spending a lot more time in 2026 spent helping clients rearchitecting their approaches to compliance and vendor selection.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** CloudTech24 hold Microsoft Tier 1 Direct CSP status.

# WILL AI SLOW HIRING? FAST-GROWTH 50 DISAGREE

**PREDICTIONS THAT THE ONSET** of AI and automation will fuel a bonfire of MSP jobs have thankfully failed to materialise, at least according to our data.

The 686 MSPs we track continued to grow headcount in their latest years on record, albeit at a slightly slower pace. They employed an average of 21,405 full-time staff, a 5.4% rise on the previous year. That's down slightly on the 6.9% and 7.4% headcount growth they achieved in the two previous years, however.

But how will AI shape the hiring and expansion strategies of the 50 high-growth companies in this report as its promise of helping them do more with less grows? The leaders we caught up with harboured mixed views...

## WILL AI WILL CURB YOUR RATE OF HIRING?



In the near term, and for high-growth companies, we think AI is going to be a productivity booster – that means doing more with the same team. This will weight on our demand for new hires – and for white-collar workers everywhere.

**Richard Maynard, CEO of 32nd-ranked Wessex IT**

The correlation between headcount growth and revenue growth is broken because of AI. We are no different. We need half the resources in back-office functions than would have needed even three years ago. We already have a number of agents performing tasks in the business and this will dramatically increase through 2026.

**Stuart Fenton, CEO of 9th-ranked Ingentive**

Yes, we have already started making early inroads into how we adopt and integrate AI into our everyday working practices as well as our product development. Whilst we will still grow, it will not be at the levels we have seen to date.

**Mark Sweeny, CEO of 2nd-ranked de Novo Solutions**

Yes. Our goal is to decouple revenue growth from headcount growth. Automation and AI will reshape how MSP teams operate, so growth will look different with more efficiency and new roles emerging.

**Ian Snow, CEO of 39th-ranked Central Technology**

They allow us to automate routine processes, respond faster to customer needs and scale services without necessarily adding headcount at the same rate.

**Sohin Raithatha, CEO of 21st-ranked Redsquid**

Unsurprisingly, this came up on a recent analyst call. Imminently, AI will automate some lower-level analysis but the governance and financial complexity it introduces means demand for experienced specialists is actually increased rather than decreasing.

**Tony Crawley, CEO of 17th-ranked Synyega**

Quite the opposite. AI is creating entirely new categories of work and customer demand. We see it accelerating our growth, not replacing it.

**Matt Dunn, Sales Director of 15th-ranked Original**

AI changes where we add headcount rather than whether we add it. If we use AI well, it should help our team do higher-value work and keep service consistent as we scale.

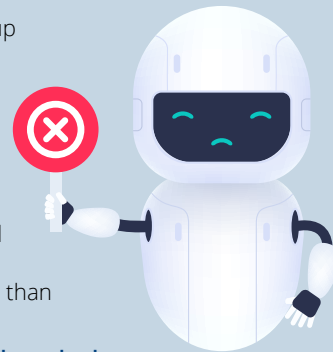
**Emma Carter, CEO of 50th-ranked WestSpring**

AI changes where we hire, not whether we hire. We're investing more in higher value skills – consulting, architecture and technical – rather than pure operational roles.

**Daniel Bumby, MD of 31st-ranked Simoda**

I think certain roles may change, but all going well we will continue to grow at a similar rate – it's a big world, and not everything will be AI regardless of what social media may have us believe.

**Steve Snowden, CEO of 13th-ranked Snowden Consulting**



## 32. WESSEX IT

**HEADCOUNT:** 38 (+138%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT support

**HQ:** Horsham, West Sussex

■ Buy and build has helped fuel this West Sussex MSP's recent growth, Technical Director Richard Maynard tells us below.

Having chosen the name and registered the domain while at college in 2001, Maynard and co-founder Andrew Sewell officially launched Wessex IT in 2005.

It counts luxury skincare brand TempleSpa among its customers.

Productivity gains from AI will "weight on our demand for new hires", Maynard acknowledged.



### Q&A WITH WESSEX IT CEO RICHARD MAYNARD

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Buy and build has been a common theme in our growth over the last 21 years and that continued in 2025 with our acquisition of Knibbs Computer Services (our 12th). Our customers have grown, new business is strong and we stand by the popular wisdom that it's easier to retain a current client than win a new one!

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** "Wessex" (to us at least) is a shortening of "West Sussex" and of no relation to the Anglo-Saxon "Kingdom of Wessex" which ceased to exist in 1066.

## 31. SIMODA

**HEADCOUNT:** 42 (+133%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT reseller

**HQ:** Sheffield

■ Founded in 2019, this Sheffield-based IT solutions provider has grown organically to reach an average monthly headcount of 42 in its fiscal 2025.

Simoda's website features testimonials from customers including luxury car brand Lexus and homecare services outfit Prestige Nursing & Care.

The Microsoft, HPE, Cisco, Arctic Wolf, Dell, Veeam, SentinelOne and RingCentral partner is betting on wider AI adoption to shape its 2026, MD Daniel Bumby tells us below.



### Q&A WITH SIMODA MD DANIEL BUMBY

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?**

We've grown organically by focusing on outcomes led technology and long term customer relationships, rather than chasing volume. That's allowed us to expand capability in consulting, security and AI while staying profitable.

**What mega trend will most shape 2026 for your company?** The shift from "AI experimentation" to secure, governed AI adoption.

## 30. INNOV8 TECHNOLOGY

**HEADCOUNT:** 65 (+110%)

**SPECIALISM:** Sage

**HQ:** Stockport

■ Our numbers can't quite keep pace with the frenetic growth of this highly acquisitive Sage partner.

While Innov8's average monthly headcount vaulted from 31 to 65 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024, it ended 2025 with 125 staff and runrate revenues of £20m, MD Carl Maher told us.

The Stockport-based Sage 50, Sage 200, Sage Intacct and Sage CRM specialist has



**Q&A**  
WITH INNOV8 TECHNOLOGY MD CARL MAHER

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Via organic growth and strategic acquisitions – we made 5 acquisitions in 2025.

**What’s a fact or quirk about your company most people won’t know about?** Most people know us as a reputable Sage Business Partner, because in the Sage ecosystem we are a big player. But we are also a Microsoft Partner and Software Author.

**Name one thing you have planned for the next 12 months.** Further acquisitions – watch this space!

“well-established relationships” with fellow solution providers including Eureka and Panintelligence.

More acquisitions are planned for 2026, Maher stresses above.

The Microsoft and Google partner is betting on “responsible, auditable” AI adoption in schools to drive growth in 2026, CEO Owen Napier tells us below.

Its headcount has since risen to 106.

**29. COMPUTEAM**

**HEADCOUNT:** 100 (+85%)

**SPECIALISM:** Edtech

**HQ:** Stockport

■ Average monthly headcount at this Cheshire-based provider of IT support, cybersecurity and connectivity to schools, hit an even 100 in calendar 2024, accounts indicate (up from 79, 64 and 54 in the three previous years).

A certified B Corp, Computeam donates 2% of EBIT to charity.

**28. DYNAVICS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 34 (+183%)

**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft Dynamics

**HQ:** Farnborough, Hampshire

■ This Microsoft Dynamics specialist’s headcount continues to rise with the consistency of a helium balloon, hitting an average monthly figure of 34 in calendar 2024 (up from 29, 17 and 12 in the three previous years).

Counting bakery chain Cake



**Q&A**  
WITH COMPUTEAM CEO OWEN NAPIER

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We have grown headcount by strengthening our core service delivery operation, cybersecurity offering and our bid team, whilst focusing on partnerships with small, growing multi-academy Trusts.

**Which 2026 mega trend that will most shape the year for your company?** Responsible, auditable AI adoption in schools and MATS, especially Microsoft Copilot with policy led governance, will define the year as clients ask for Ofsted/DfE aligned, safe implementations that bring some of the promised benefit of this exciting new technology.

Box and The British Museum among its customers, Dynavics was recently named as one of the top 50 best-performing technology scale-ups by Megabyte. Revenues in its latest year hit £5.7m.

**27. ALTERNIT ONE**

**HEADCOUNT:** 62 (+121%)

**SPECIALISM:** UC

**HQ:** London

■ It’s not the first rodeo for the team behind this London-based outsourced technology and UC provider – they previously built Capital Support to 150 employees before selling it to Six Degrees in 2015.

AlternIT One specialises in the design, build and run of IT infrastructure for financial services firms.

The AWS, BT, Cisco, Golt and Gamma partner’s average monthly headcount swelled from 47 to 62 in its fiscal 2025, propelling it to 27th in the rankings (12 spots higher than last year).

**26. KFP TOTAL IT SOLUTIONS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 95 (+94%)

**SPECIALISM:** Retail IT solutions

**HQ:** Abingdon, Oxfordshire

■ Counting Fat Face among its clients, this retail and hospitality ace leaps into Fast-Growth 50 on the back of three years of aggressive headcount growth.

Average monthly headcount stood at 95 in its fiscal 2025, up from 70, 60 and 49 in the three previous years.

The Oxfordshire-based Cisco, Aruba, HP, Zebra and Cradlepoint partner specialises in providing in-store retail IT systems, services, solutions, project management and support platforms.

**25. CLOUD BRIDGE**

**HEADCOUNT:** 48 (+153%)

**SPECIALISM:** AWS

**HQ:** Marlow, Buckinghamshire

■ This Marlow-based AWS Premier partner prioritises profitable, sustainable growth over acquisition-led scale, CEO Simon Walker tells us. Minority owned by Bytes Technology Group since 2023, Cloud Bridge’s last four sets of accounts show average monthly headcount swelling from 19 to 48.



**Q&A**  
WITH CLOUD BRIDGE CEO SIMON WALKER

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We’ve grown by being deliberate rather than reactive. Our close alignment with AWS gives us global visibility, but growth has been driven by building services customers genuinely need – particularly around governance, managed services and AI-led optimisation.

We hire against proven demand, expand where we see repeatability, and prioritise profitable, sustainable growth over acquisition-led scale.

**What’s a fact or quirk about your company most people won’t know about?** Around half of our revenue now flows through ecosystem partners and distributors rather than solely through direct customers.

A public cloud migration project for skincare brand Tropic Skincare is among the case studies trumpeted on its website.

**24. ACUUTECH**

**HEADCOUNT:** 60 (+131%)

**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft solutions provider

**HQ:** Loughton, Essex

■ Celebrating 30 years in business this month, this Microsoft solutions provider today boasts offices in Essex, Singapore and Houston.

A 131% jump in average monthly headcount shown across its calendar 2021 to 2024 accounts is enough to thrust it into the top half of our rankings.

# RESPECT IS DUE

The 50 firms in this report command respect for their ability to grow in a flat market. But which competitor do they respect themselves?



Across the South West there are many MSPs who set the bar high, but we have a special place in our hearts for those like Chorus (Bristol), Computer Geeks (Bristol), SystemMagic (Bath), Mintivo (Lacock), and Elevate Cloud (Chippenham).

Emma Carter, CEO of 50th-ranked WestSpring

Aura Technology. We've worked with them for years and their strategic engagement model is excellent. They focus heavily on maximising long-term value for their customers.

Ian Snow, CEO of 39th-ranked Central Technology

I really respect the team at ANS in Manchester, they are the masters at sales growth. Their sales leader Adam is incredible.

Vicky Critchley, Executive Chair of 42nd-ranked Truly SMB

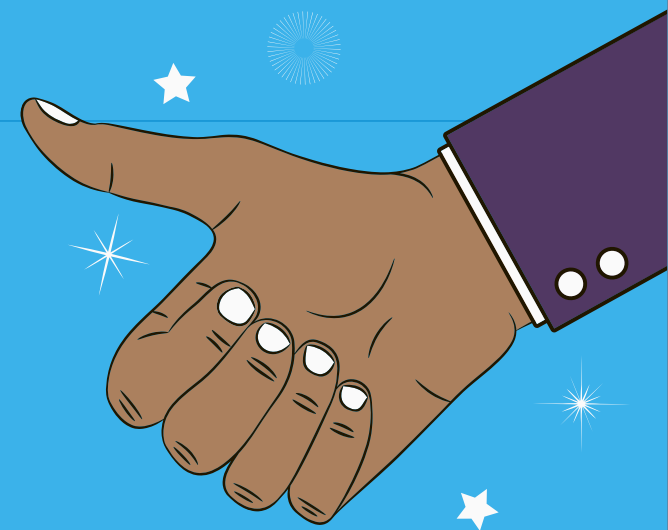


Whilst they are not a competitor, a company we have utmost respect for is Elixir International Plc – the challenger consultancy.

Mark Sweeny, CEO of 2nd-ranked de Novo Solutions

I'd have to say Kinspeed, because despite an ever-increasing competitive marketplace, they always remain professional and we even reclassify them as a 'frenemy'.

Carl Maher, MD of 30th-ranked Innov8 Technology



It would probably have to be Bridewell. Great capability, carved out a strong niche for themselves and continue to set the benchmark for successful businesses.

Ian Thomas, CEO of 16th-ranked Sapphire Technologies



I think Transparency and Infinity are great firms in an overlapping space. Kainos too has some decent skills in AI.

Stuart Fenton, CEO of 9th-ranked Ingentive

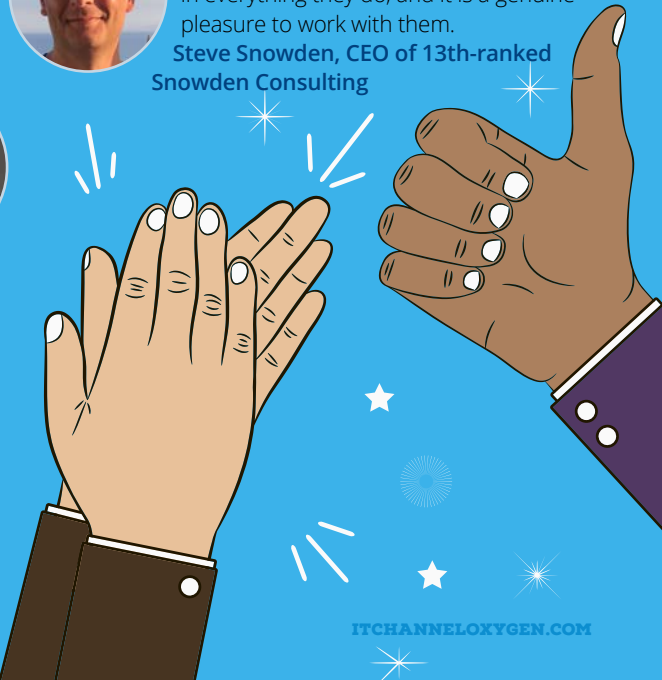
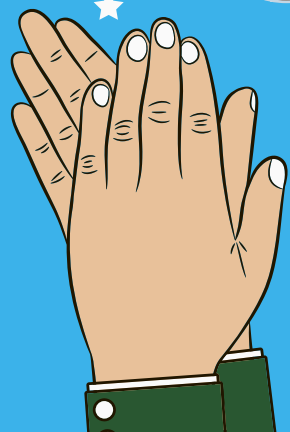
We respect Turn it On and the Transforming Learning Group for their focus on bringing together edtech software companies with a unique edge in the market, whilst seeing the paramount importance of a specialist education-MSP to deliver the solution to end users.

Owen Napier, CEO of 29th-ranked Computeam



As a peer, the company I hold utmost respect for is Kainos – they exude quality in everything they do, and it is a genuine pleasure to work with them.

Steve Snowden, CEO of 13th-ranked Snowden Consulting



Still headed up today by co-founder Priti Mehta, its services span Office 365, virtual desktop, managed IaaS and Microsoft Azure.

## 23. VALTO

**HEADCOUNT:** 41 (+173%)

**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft

**HQ:** Chester, Cheshire

■ Harbours a vision of being “the best Microsoft partner in the world”, Valto recently pulled off the “rare” feat of bagging all six Microsoft Solution Partner designations.

Founded in 2017, today it boasts offices in Chester, Southampton and the USA.

Its average monthly headcount rose to 41 in its year to 30 April 2025, its latest filed accounts indicate. That's up from 36, 28 and 15 in the three previous years.

A project to help trade union the Musicians' Union streamline customer enquiries with Power Apps is among the case studies adorning its website.

## 22. NORMCYBER

**HEADCOUNT:** 54 (+145%)

**SPECIALISM:** MSSP

**HQ:** Fareham, Hampshire

■ This organically grown MSSP breaks into the Fast-Growth 50 after average monthly headcount swelled from 22 to 54 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024.

Founded in 2015, it counts former Nasstar top execs Wayne Churchill and Mark Lee as its CEO and Sales Director, respectively.

Boasting the world's largest grower of cut roses, Flamingo Group International, among its customers, NormCyber's recent growth

reflects efforts to target more complex, enterprise projects, Churchill tells us below.



## Q&A WITH NORMCYBER CEO WAYNE CHURCHILL

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat**

**market?** NormCyber's growth has been organic and demand led, reflecting our move from predominantly midmarket engagements to supporting larger, more complex enterprise organisations.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** Something that sets Norm apart from MSSPs is our Focal Analyst model. Focal Analysts are senior security analysts who work as part of a team and methodology we deploy to achieve material improvements in cyber resilience for our customers.

## 21. REDSQUID

**HEADCOUNT:** 69 (+123%)

**SPECIALISM:** Managed technology and cyber

**HQ:** Borehamwood, Hertfordshire

■ The Companies House data we're using does little justice to the enlarged scale of this acquisitive managed tech and cyber provider, which snapped up five peers in 2025 alone.

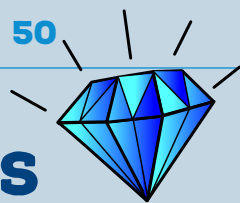
Although its average monthly headcount hit



## Q&A WITH REDSQUID CEO SOHIN RAITHATHA

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** We're the UK's only B Corp accredited MSSP that is also a Cyber Essentials certification body, while operating a security operations centre that supports platforms including Google, Microsoft and CrowdStrike. That combination of governance, operational security expertise and ethical accreditation is incredibly rare in our industry.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** They allow us to automate routine processes, respond faster to customer needs and scale services without necessarily adding headcount at the same rate.



## HIDDEN GEMS

We asked our Fast-Growth 50 to tell us a fact or quirk about their company most people wouldn't know. Here's what some of them said...

We have a martial arts world champion working on our Healthcare Service Desk.  
**Ian Snow, CEO of 39th-ranked Central Technology**



We recently calculated that we successfully solved more than 10 million end-user issues since inception.  
**Patrick Jordan, CEO of 35th-ranked Auxilion**

**Certified** We're a values driven business that donates 2% of EBIT to charity, gives staff time to our client schools, and has ambitious environmental commitments, from EV adoption to using remanufactured devices. This has helped us become one of a small number of certified B Corps in our sector.  
**Corporation Owen Napier, CEO of 29th-ranked Computeam**

All of our team members have all had very non-linear career paths: from a professional musician and secondary-school teacher, to the founder of a Free School, to domestic abuse advocacy, to an on-the-beat police officer... to name a few!  
**Nathan Swift, CEO of 11th-ranked Swift Strategies**



We have a Chief Bark Officer – our office dog!  
**Keith Bucknall, CITO of 7th-ranked Outbound Group**

69 in its year to 31 March 2025, that figure has since grown to 124, it told us.

One of three B Corps in this report, Redsquid recently unveiled ambitions to build a £50m-plus UK technology group (see Q&A with CEO Sohni Raithatha, p19).

### 20. PURECYBER

**HEADCOUNT:** 36 (+200%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Cybersecurity  
**HQ:** Cardiff

■ One of two Cardiff-based firms in this report, this BGF-backed cybersecurity specialist trebled average monthly headcount

between its fiscal 2021 and 2024, accounts indicate.

Founded in 2016 by CEO Damon Rands, its mission is to “make cyber security accessible, affordable and understandable for all businesses regardless of size, sector or location”.

PureCyber is something of a growth league table connoisseur, having ranked as one of Wales' top 50 fastest-growing companies last year.

### 19. UP3

**HEADCOUNT:** 63 (+133%)  
**SPECIALISM:** ServiceNow consultancy  
**HQ:** London

■ This fast-growing London-based outfit claims to “live and breathe ServiceNow and digital transformation”.

A 133% rise in the average monthly headcount figure shown in its 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 accounts is enough to propel it into the upper reaches of this report.

One of only 13 small UK tech companies which are an official Great Place to Work for Women, UP3 was founded in 2016 by Matthew Shears and Ruth Weatherall.

### 18. CLOUDGUARD

**HEADCOUNT:** 23 (+283%)  
**SPECIALISM:** MSSP  
**HQ:** Manchester

■ Manchester has usurped London and other cities as the UK's leading source of cyber talent, the CEO of this high-growth MSSP said in 2024 following its decision to relocate there.

Serial entrepreneur Matt Lovell founded SMB-focused Microsoft Sentinel specialist CloudGuard in 2020, alongside Javid Khan (see Q&A, p21 for more).

Its average monthly headcount stood at 23 in its year to 31 August 2025, up from 17, 12 and six in the three previous years (employee numbers have since risen to 28, he told us).

### 17. SYNVEGA

**HEADCOUNT:** 32 (+220%)  
**SPECIALISM:** IT asset management  
**HQ:** Warrington, Cheshire

■ This “bootstrapped” IT asset management consultancy operates completely independently from software vendors and resellers, CEO Tony Crawley tells us below.

## Q&A WITH CLOUDGUARD CEO MATT LOVELL

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Headcount has grown entirely through organic expansion into new customers. Our approach is to nurture long-term engagements at all levels within the business and skills.

Over the last two years, we've provided two university undergrad placement opportunities with Manchester Metropolitan and now also with Queens University Belfast. And they have all come back and chosen CloudGuard to begin their careers.



Founded in 2015, its average monthly headcount hit 32 in calendar 2025 (up from 24, 12 and 10 in the previous three periods), recently filed accounts indicate.

The Cheshire-based firm recently recruited former Softcat ITAM Enterprise Director Matt Ward as its first Client Success Officer.

## 16. SAPPHIRE TECHNOLOGIES

**HEADCOUNT:** 136 (+81%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Cybersecurity  
**HQ:** Newcastle upon Tyne

■ This Newcastle-based cyber security solutions provider saw average monthly headcount vault 81% between calendar 2021 and 2024 amid efforts to expand its consulting and managed services activities.

Its 2023 acquisition of operational security specialist Awen Consulting added four staff.

Despite this, the family-owned Check Point, Exabeam and Okta partner – which turns 30 this year – saw 2024 revenues dip 9% to £11.9m amid a “strategic reduction in technology resell”.

## Q&A WITH SYNVEGA CEO TONY CRAWLEY

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Our growth is entirely organic. Synvega was bootstrapped and deliberately chose the harder path of remaining completely independent from software vendors and resellers, meaning we only get paid to represent the client's interests.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** We have supported some of the world's largest

organisations, advised on software agreements worth over £1bn and even advised national governments on how they manage technology spending.



## Q&A WITH SAPPHIRE TECHNOLOGIES CEO IAN THOMAS

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** All our growth is organic and despite a difficult market there is still demand for the right products and services out there. Cyber security remains in demand, and we've seen big growth in managed SOC services and clients looking for help to deploy AI securely.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** We're 30 years old this year and still owned by the family who started us out of frustration with IT services companies charging a fortune to install firewalls in the late 90s.

# ALL AT C

The Cs have it.

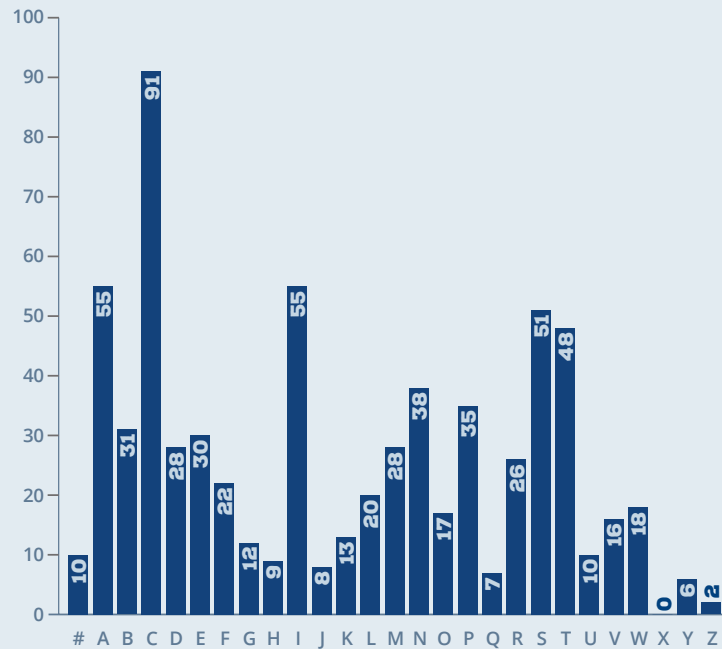
The third letter of the alphabet is by far the most-common starting letter for UK MSPs and IT solutions providers.

An incredible 91 – or 13% – of the 686 we track have ‘C’ as the first letter of their moniker.

This includes eight of the Fast-Growth 50 in the shape of **Central Technology, Chorus, Clarus Networks, Cloud Bridge, CloudGuard, CloudTech24, Communicate Technology** and **Computeam**.

In an indication that many have half an eye on being high in the pecking order alphabetically, ‘A’ is the joint second-most popular starting letter, along with ‘I’.

‘S’, ‘T’, ‘N’, ‘P’, ‘B’, ‘E’ and ‘M’ round out the top ten. ‘Y’ is the least popular, with none of the 686 partners we track beginning with the alphabet’s penultimate letter.



## 15. ORIGINAL

**HEADCOUNT:** 21 (+320%)

**SPECIALISM:** Cisco

**HQ:** Cheltenham

■ This Cisco specialist makes a second successive appearance in Fast-Growth 50 on the back of a 320% rise in average monthly headcount between its fiscal 2022 and 2025.

Boasting offices in Cheltenham and Prague, Original sees hybrid work, cloud transformation, collaboration, enterprise networking, cyber security, datacentre and Internet of Things as its sweet spots. It is one of three B Corps in this report.

Sales Director Matt Dunn pinpoints AI-driven infrastructure transformation as the mega-trend that will shape Original's 2026 (see below).

## 14. DIGITAL ORIGIN SOLUTIONS

**HEADCOUNT:** 36 (+227%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT and comms

**HQ:** Towcester, Northamptonshire

■ Starting life in 2018 with a mission to consolidate mobile, telco and connectivity with IT in the SMB space, this Northamptonshire-based MSP made four acquisitions between 2019 and 2023.



### Q&A WITH ORIGINAL SALES DIRECTOR MATT DUNN

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know?**

We're a team of 27 and a five-time Cisco360 Preferred Partner, but we're probably the biggest small company you'll find in the Cisco channel. The scale of what we deliver consistently surprises people.

**Does the rise of AI make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount?** Quite the opposite. AI is creating entirely new categories of work and customer demand. We see it accelerating our growth, not replacing it.

### Q&A WITH DIGITAL ORIGIN CEO STEPHEN RICHARDSON

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We shifted from an acquisition led strategy to pure organic and new logo growth, and that meant building the firepower to match.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** Most people don't realise our Digital Display product is one of the longest-standing parts of our business, now over 50 years old, and still one of our most commercially powerful product pillars.



Organic growth is now the watchword for the Microsoft and 3CX partner following its sale in 2024 to serial MSP acquirer Evergreen's Lyra Technology brand, CEO Stephen Richardson tells us above, however.

Digital Origin's average monthly headcount more than trebled from 11 to 36 between calendar 2021 and 2024, with employee numbers since swelling to 65. It boasts 450 clients.

## 13. SNOWDEN CONSULTING

**HEADCOUNT:** 33 (+267%)

**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft Dynamics

**HQ:** London

■ This Microsoft Dynamics consultancy was founded by its eponymous CEO Steve Snowden in 2012 after he grew "frustrated by poor implementations and delivery" on ERP and CRM projects he'd previously been involved with.

Snowden Consulting's calendar 2024 average monthly headcount stood at 33, up on 22, 12 and nine in the three previous years (with employee numbers since having risen to 60, it told us).

Despite the threat AI poses to jobs, the London-based outfit will continue to grow headcount at the same rate "all going well", Snowden reveals (see right).



### Q&A WITH SNOWDEN CONSULTING FOUNDER AND CEO STEVE SNOWDEN

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We have expanded headcount due to continued demand for our services, including our AI readiness IP but also through strategic partnerships which will continue to be vital in our ongoing story.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** Certain roles may change, but all going well we will continue to grow at a similar rate – it's a big world, and not everything will be AI regardless of what social media may have us believe.

## 12. SEP2

**HEADCOUNT:** 77 (+148%)

**SPECIALISM:** MSSP

**HQ:** Leeds

■ The three friends who founded this high-growth MSSP in 2016 are as passionate about

the business as they were ten years ago, CEO Paul Starr tells us (see p25).

Average monthly headcount hit 77 in its fiscal 2025, up from 65, 45 and 31 in the previous three years (with employee numbers since breaking the 100 mark).

The Leeds-based Google, Wiz and Check Point partner is gunning for 35% growth in 2026.

### 11. SWIFT STRATEGIES

**HEADCOUNT:** 10 (+900%)

**SPECIALISM:** Digital tech and delivery partner

**HQ:** London

■ The employees of this fast-growing tech consultancy have all had non-linear career paths, eponymous founder Nathan Swift tells us below.

Its average monthly headcount hit 10 in calendar 2024, up from six, two and one in the previous three years (full-time employee numbers currently stand at 13, it told us).

The London-based outfit ranked 17th in the 2025 edition of the Sunday Times' list of the fastest-growing private companies.

It likes to "swoop in and help you solve the stickiest, trickiest, most complicated transformation projects no one else wants to take on", according to its website.



#### Q&A WITH SWIFT STRATEGIES CEO NATHAN SWIFT

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Our growth has been organic expansion in existing clients (being asked to do more things!), word-of-mouth referrals and recommendations, and new client acquisition through relationships and proven delivery.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** All of our team members have all had very non-linear career paths: from a professional musician and secondary-school teacher, to the founder of a Free School, to domestic abuse advocacy, to an on-the-beat police officer... to name a few!

### 10. FIFOSYS

**HEADCOUNT:** 76 (+171%)

**SPECIALISM:** IT MSP

**HQ:** London

■ This acquisitive MSP leaps up the Fast-Growth 50 standings thanks to a 171% rise in its average monthly headcount between its fiscal 2022 and 2025.

Revenues reached £9.4m in its most-recent period, up from £5.9m a year earlier.

Boasting branches in London, Colchester, Wolverhampton and Fareham, Fifosys counts leisure management outfit Everyone Active SLM among its larger clients.

The coming year will be defined by the shift from AI experimentation to AI accountability, MD Mitesh Patel tells us below.



#### Q&A WITH FIFOSYS MD MITESH PATEL

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Our growth has been through a strategic acquisition and strong organic growth.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** The shift from AI experimentation to AI accountability. Most organisations have already "tried" AI. Now the conversation is about governance, infrastructure readiness, cost control and real-world value. Alongside that, sovereign cloud and data residency are becoming board-level discussions.

## "WE'RE REALLY PUSHING OURSELVES THIS YEAR"

The 12th-ranked outfit in this report, SEP2, is targeting 35% growth this year, CEO Paul Starr tells us

#### WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND SEP2'S INCEPTION?

It was started by three friends. We'd worked together for many years. At the time, we felt there was very little value being shown to customers, and it was about changing that. The services industry, especially in cyber security, needed someone to really challenge it, show value, and give customers the best security, rather than just reselling solutions and ultimately margin stealing.

That's a culture and ethos we've kept with us all the way up until our tenth birthday.

#### WHAT DOES SEP2 LOOK LIKE TODAY IN TERMS OF SIZE AND FOCUS?

As of last week, we hit 104 staff. We're targeting ourselves with 35% revenue growth this year. We've averaged out at about 30% over the last two to three years, so we're going for a bit of a step up this year to really push ourselves.

We see ourselves as an out-and-out MSSP. We only want to be doing cyber security, so we partner with other organisations for digital transformation, workspace, or 365 migrations, as opposed to diversifying.

The business is focused on MDR and EDR services. It's very much about providing the best 24/7 service to our customers. And we do it all from the UK – we don't offshore or outsource.

#### THE ANALYSTS SAY THE CYBER MARKET IS GROWING AT AROUND 10%. HOW HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO OUTPACE THAT?

There are a lot of partners out there that aren't as evolved as we are.

#### TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SEE THINGS LIKE CLAUDE CODE SECURITY AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO PARTNERS LIKE YOU?

We don't necessarily see it as a threat. It will be a disrupter.

People who use it might get into sticky situations if they rely on it too much. It's about trying to get that balance.

We were a very earlier adopter in AI. We're using AI both in our processes, and in code writing and optimisation. But we know it's not that utopia yet, where we can just go and tell it to do something and we're fully protected.

It's about optimising it the best we can, as opposed to seeing it as something that's going to make us obsolete.

#### WHO ARE YOUR KEY VENDORS?

Google, Google Wiz and Check Point are huge partners for us.

#### WHAT IS YOUR CUSTOMER SWEET SPOT?

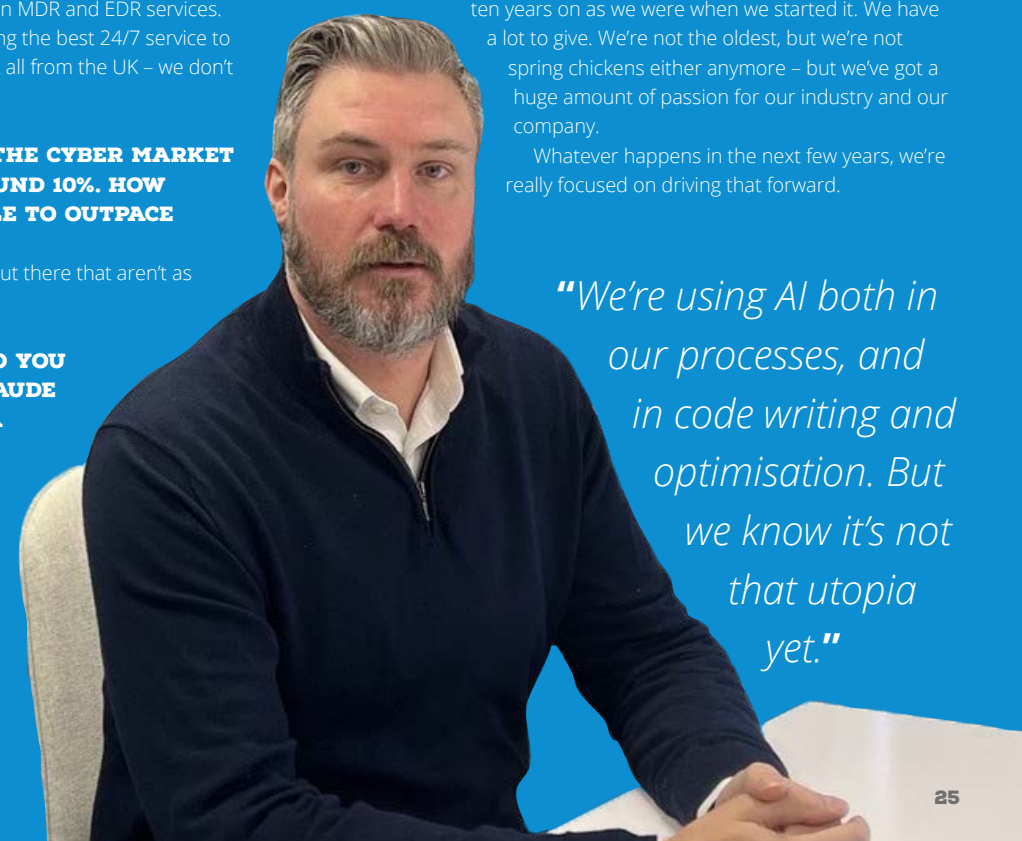
Our sweet spot is probably that medium size of customer, but everybody needs cyber security. We've tried to build our services so they can be scalable. Whether you've got 50 users or hundreds, we want to be able to service everybody.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-TERM AMBITIONS FOR SEP2 NOW YOU'RE TEN YEARS IN?

It's always worth being aware of what's out there.

The three directors are as passionate about this business ten years on as we were when we started it. We have a lot to give. We're not the oldest, but we're not spring chickens either anymore – but we've got a huge amount of passion for our industry and our company.

Whatever happens in the next few years, we're really focused on driving that forward.



*"We're using AI both in our processes, and in code writing and optimisation. But we know it's not that utopia yet."*



**Q&A**  
**WITH INGENITIVE CEO**  
**STUART FENTON**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** We have the benefit of being in a part of the market including Dynamics and AI that is growing faster than the overall market. Additionally, we added more capabilities in order to provide more services to our clients. On average we grew over 100% in 2025 and for January 2026, our growth rate was 177%. Headcount is a shade under 100 heads now and we expect to add between 30 and 40 heads during 2026.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** This year remains the year of AI transformation as we move from organisations trialling technology to full adoption of agentic services to reduce white-collar headcount.

Platform, Dynamics 365 and AI among its Microsoft sweet spots. 2026 will see organisations move from trialling AI to full adoption of agentic services, Fenton tells us (see left).

**9. INGENITIVE**

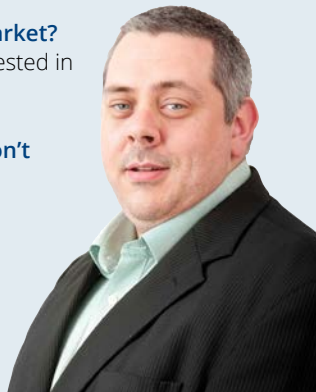
**HEADCOUNT:** 56 (+229%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Microsoft  
**HQ:** London  
■ Owned and led by former Insight and Quantiq bigwig Stuart Fenton, this ambitious Microsoft partner is aiming to add another 30-40 heads in 2026. Companies House accounts show its average monthly headcount rising from 17 to 56 between calendar 2021 and 2024. Employee numbers have since rising to 95, it told us. The London-based outfit counts Power

**Q&A**  
**WITH OUTBOUND GROUP CITO KEITH BUCKNALL**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Our growth has been organic expansion, although we are interested in M&A to grow further.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** We have a Chief Bark Officer, our office dog..!

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** Customers still want to talk to a real person and not an AI agent, however for live chat, support optimisation, reporting and back office I think it will be highly beneficial.



**8. BESTPATH**

**HEADCOUNT:** 23 (+667%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Networking  
**HQ:** London  
■ Founded in 2017 by two networking contractors disillusioned with how existing IT providers focused solely on the transaction, BestPath's average monthly headcount hit 23 in its fiscal 2024. That's up from 16, 11 and three in the three previous years. The consulting-focused Cisco, Arista and Palo Alto Networks partner counts financial services as a key vertical market (see interview with MD Nicholas Bridgeman, above).

**7. OUTBOUND GROUP**

**HEADCOUNT:** 13 (+1,200%)  
**SPECIALISM:** MSP  
**HQ:** Basildon, Essex  
■ This organically grown MSP saw average monthly headcount swell from one to 12 between its fiscal 2021 and 2024, accounts indicate. The Essex-based HP, Dell, Lenovo, WatchGuard, Nutanix and Proofpoint partner has since grown full-time employees to 23, it told us. Customers still want to talk to a real person and not an AI agent, CITO Keith Bucknall says (see below).

**"PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY, 'YOU'VE DONE IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND'"**

BestPath MD Nicholas Bridgeman on the 8th-ranked outfit quirky approach to the networking space...

**HOW DID BESTPATH BEGIN?**

James [Williamson] and I were working together as individual contractors at a client. We always had similar interests, and we'd worked together long before that. We'd known each other for a good 15 years. Then one day we were having a coffee and said, 'let's do it'. We saw all the other partners not delivering to the standard we'd have done it if we were a company. We saw that a lot of partners cared about the transaction, but nothing past that because they didn't think from the perspective of an engineer.

We thought about what we'd want if we were the customer. I'd want my network to be stable. I don't want to get called out at 3am. I'd want everything handed over nicely documented, and I'd want that warm, fuzzy feeling. And James and I just thought, no one else does that. We thought, and we still believe, we can do that a lot better than a lot of the other partners we see.

All of our work so far has been organic. We've only taken on salespeople in any anger in the past couple of years.

**DOES YOUR FOCUS BEYOND THE TRANSACTION MEAN CISCO'S NEWLY LAUNCHED 360 PROGRAMME PLAYS INTO YOUR HANDS?**

No, not so much. We have a really good relationship with Cisco. But we've always felt a bit of a poor relation in terms of how they see partners. Before 360, they always said they cared about partners who do services. But the reality is they only care about tin sales. If you're not selling tin, you're not really on their radar. 360 changes that a bit with the way we've been scored, but for us to get even more on the radar, we have to start transacting more.

People always say, 'you've done this the wrong way around'. A lot of partners start selling tin, and look to move into professional services. We started purely in professional services, and still now only do a small amount of tin – just as an avenue to push more professional services.

**DO YOU AGREE THAT YOU DID IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND?**

No. We wouldn't want to do it any other way. James and I were engineers by nature. We come from a consulting background. That's where our strengths are.

Tin sales can be challenging – there's not a huge mark up in it. It can sometimes be a lot of work for little gain. If we never sold

any tin, we wouldn't be that bothered. But we have to, just to have a seat at the table with customers. It's a necessary evil.

**WHAT'S BESTPATH'S CUSTOMER AND TECHNOLOGY SWEET SPOT?**

The vendors are very mixed, but it's predominantly Cisco and Arista, and then some of the security guys like Fortinet, Palo Alto, Juniper, and a bit of NVIDIA.

A lot of our work is financial, but that's more through luck than judgment – but financial clients generally have the biggest datacentres and biggest budgets.

We've always had two avenues.

One is through larger partners who probably care more about tin sales than services. Often, larger partners will go and sell tin, not be able to deliver a solution, and then we come in and wrap up the design, do the build, do the implementation and do the handover.

And then the other avenue is direct clients, where we are much more in control of our own destiny.

Our sweet spot is much more the SME market, rather than the largest enterprises. It's a shorter buying cycle, less politics, less red tape, and we can influence things a bit more.

**WHAT ARE YOUR LONG-TERM AMBITIONS FOR BESTPATH?**

We've not thought about exit strategies. At the minute, it's just pure customer acquisition and retaining the value as we grow. All we want to do is grow the reputation, the brand and the customer base.



**Q&A**  
**WITH CLARUS NETWORKS MD**  
**DEREK PHILLIPS**



Clarus Networks' husband and wife team, Derek and Debra Phillips

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Our growth in headcount has been driven entirely through organic expansion. As demand for Starlink enterprise services has accelerated globally, we have expanded into new sectors while also increasing our international footprint.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** The biggest trend shaping the year for us is the rapid advancement of Low Earth Orbit connectivity. Companies like SpaceX are pushing the boundaries of what satellite networks can deliver, with multi-gigabit speeds now becoming a realistic expectation.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** Clarus was founded by my wife Debra and I, and we actually still share an office and sit next to each other every day. People often ask how we manage to run a business like Clarus and live together, but we have very different roles that complement each other well, and that constant collaboration is a big part of why the business has grown so successfully.

**6. CLARUS NETWORKS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 47 (+488%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Starlink reseller  
**HQ:** Bathgate, Scotland  
■ Founded in 2014 by wife and husband Debra and Derek Phillips, this Starlink reseller saw average monthly headcount swell from eight to 47 between calendar 2021 and 2024. The company's headcount has since grown to 90, it told us. Specialising in connectivity for businesses operating in remote locations, all its growth has been organic, Derek Phillips tells us above.

**5. TECHSOL GROUP**

**HEADCOUNT:** 36 (+899%)  
**SPECIALISM:** IT MSP  
**HQ:** Cardiff  
■ Aiming to be the "go-to technology partner for SMBs across the UK", Techsol claims to now employs 50 staff as it continues to grow through acquisition. The Cardiff-based outfit dipped into its wallet in August 2025 to acquire Gloucestershire-based Microsoft Dynamics and Power Platform specialist Cloud 2020 (following on from its purchases of Charlton

Networks and IBIT Solutions). Its fiscal 2024 accounts reveal an average monthly headcount of 36 (up from 15 in 2023, six in 2022 and four in 2021). The Microsoft, Sage, ConnectWise and Sophos partner boasts satellite offices in St Austell, Coventry and Tewkesbury.

**4. ABACUS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 85 (+400%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Financial services-focused MSP  
**UK HQ:** London  
■ This US-headquartered, financial services-focused MSP roughly doubled the size of its UK operation in 2024 when it acquired local per Tribeca. That's reflected in UK calendar 2024 accounts showing average monthly headcount more than doubling to 85 (up from 30, 20 and 17 in the previous three years). Globally, Abacus boasts offices in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Dallas, Greenwich, Los Angeles, Charlotte, Miami, London and Edinburgh. It claims to provide IT and cybersecurity managed services to over 700 financial services firms.

**Q&A**  
**WITH FORGE TECHNOLOGIES CEO JASON OSMOND**

**How have you been able to increase headcount in a flat market?** Forge is founder-funded and 100% employee-owned, with no outside investors, and 100% of profits reinvested into the business. That allows us to take a long-term view of where we invest and how we grow as we continue to double year-on-year.

**What mega trend do you think will most shape the year for your company?** Organisations moving from AI experimentation to AI delivering measurable business impact.

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** One thing people are often surprised by is that we operate without traditional offices. Our team is distributed across the UK, which allows us to hire the best talent regardless of location rather than limiting ourselves to a particular city.



**3. FORGE TECHNOLOGIES**

**HEADCOUNT:** 52 (+1,200%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Midmarket MSP  
**HQ:** NA  
■ This "consulting-led technology partner" marks itself out from the crowd by operating without traditional offices, CEO Jason Osmond tells us above.

Only founded in 2021, its average monthly headcount hit 52 in the 12 months to 30 September 2025 (up from 32, 12 and four in the previous three years).

The Cisco, Fortinet, Rubrik, Arctic Wolf, Citrix and Microsoft partner specialises in cloud, AI, data, networking and security. Some 75% of its revenues are recurring in nature.

**2. DE NOVO SOLUTIONS**

**HEADCOUNT:** 84 (+950%)  
**SPECIALISM:** Oracle and ServiceNow  
**HQ:** Newport, Wales  
■ Having sold their previous venture, Certus Solutions, to Accenture in 2018, Mark Sweeny and Tim Warner are building this Oracle

**Q&A**  
**WITH DE NOVO SOLUTIONS**  
**FOUNDER AND CEO MARK SWEENEY**

**What's a fact or quirk about your company most people won't know about?** The core team of de Novo were the original pioneers of Oracle Cloud applications in the UK&I, working with Oracle Product Development directly to help shape and influence the product from an implementation perspective.

**Does the rise of AI and automation make it less likely you'll continue to add headcount at the same rate in the coming years?** Yes, we have already started making early inroads into how we adopt and integrate AI into our everyday working practices as well as our product development. Whilst we will still grow, it will not be at the levels we have seen to date.



# "I RETIRED WHEN I WAS 35... BUT GOT BORED"

Fast-Growth 50 top dog Flotek is eyeing £100m revenues after shattering the goals it set when it launched in 2022, CEO Jay Ball tells us...

## WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT FLOTEK?

That we're just an M&A builder. I've done panels before, and other MSPs hate the fact we've had this fast growth. And they're like, 'yeah, it's because they buy'.

But we do 20 to 25 new logos a month at a time when everybody's telling me nobody's winning new business. We're winning shed loads of business. We need to highlight that our organic growth is so strong – it was something like 43% last year.

## YOU LAUNCHED FLOTEK IN JANUARY 2022. WHAT WAS THE RATIONALE?

I was 21 when I set up a business called Datakom, and built it to about £5m revenue and £0.5m EBITDA. SCG [Southern Communications Group] came in and bought the business.

They were going to give me 5% of the business initially, then I was going to transition into CEO, and then I was going to become majority, and it was very exciting.

I stayed on for a year and a half, and I just hated it. I hated being part of a big

corporate, and lost all my entrepreneurial spark. It didn't really matter how much money somebody gave me to stay. I wasn't interested. So I retired when I was 35 and went to live in Cyprus.

Then after a year, I got really bored. I wasn't ready to retire, and I felt there was a massive gap in the UK where comms and IT just weren't joined up.

## YOU FOUNDED FLOTEK WITH MALCOLM HOLLAND AND DAVID MIDDLETON. WHAT WAS YOUR ORIGINAL AMBITION?

We had a plan to get to £20m revenue and £4m EBITDA in ten years, sell the business for £40m and live happily ever after.

## FOUR YEARS ON, WHERE ARE YOU ON THAT PLAN?

We acquired more businesses than we thought we would, got some debt agreed with a bank, which was backed off my financials, and had grown to £12m within 18 months or two years.

We all agreed we needed to rethink the £20m.

It's still a 10-year plan, but we're trying to get to £100m. I don't know if we'll get there if I'm honest. I don't know whether I want to, because you lose all the fun in business then – if we get to £40m-£50m, then happy days. But the whole thing for us is about having a really solid fundamental business.

## YOU'VE COMPLETED 15 ACQUISITIONS TO DATE. WILL THE CADENCE OF M&A SLOW?

We'll probably do another two or three this year. We think we'll hit £25m revenue this year. We're

*"We've got an absolutely killer sales funnel, which is my passion. We've got a really good tech stack. We've simplified the model."*

and ServiceNow partner at breakneck pace following its launch in 2021.

The Newport-based outfit saw average monthly headcount bulk up from eight to 84 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025, enough to place it second in this report.

Factoring in its 40 Indian employees, de Novo Solutions' total headcount today stands at 138. That rate of growth may slow due to AI, however, Sweeny acknowledges (see p29).

It is no stranger to fast-growth lists, having ranked 33rd in the recent FT1000 report.

## 1. FLOTEK



**HEADCOUNT:** 97 (+3,133%)

**SPECIALISM:** MSP

**HQ:** Bridgend, Wales

■ Having retired at the age of 35, Flotek CEO Jay Ball returned to the MSP space in 2022 after spotting a "massive gap" in the market (see interview, left).

In the intervening four years, the Bridgend-based IT and comms specialist has made 15 acquisitions and is on course for £25m revenues this year.

But its growth has not all been through M&A, with Ball claiming Flotek's "killer sales funnel" ensures it pulls in 20-25 new logos a month.

It tops Fast-Growth 50 by a country mile after average monthly headcount swelled from three to 97 between its fiscal 2022 and 2025 (according to numbers it broke out for us).

Having already surpassed its original ten-year plan, Flotek now has its sights set on reaching £100m revenue.

Flotek prides itself on taking a "telecoms approach" to the IT world by offering just two IT plans, Ball tells us.

very cash generative – the last three or four acquisitions we paid through the cash we generated. We've got a bit of debt, but not a lot. We'll probably go through a raise and do another £5m debt to do some bigger acquisitions in the next two years.

## WHAT IS FLOTEK'S BUSINESS MODEL?

We run our IT and comms teams as two separate desks. You're not trying to get IT people to fix broadband issues or phone system issues, which they absolutely hate, and vice versa.

As a business, we're 60% IT and 40% comms, and we want to keep that going. I much prefer IT, but comms is just a natural thing.

We've got an absolutely killer sales funnel, which is my passion. We've got a really good tech stack. We've simplified the model.

We're not like most IT companies, where you look at a menu and you've got to pick 20 things off it. We have two IT plans where it bundles it all together. We took a telecoms approach into the IT world, and just made it really simple. And that was our USP – don't over-complicate it.

## WHO ELSE IN THE INDUSTRY DO YOU RESPECT?

The only business I would say I look up to is Focus Group. I've known [Focus Group co-founder] Ralph [Gilbert] for many years, and he's a lovely person.

They're obviously comms, really, but are trying their hardest to transform into IT. I think they've got an uphill battle to do that, because they're just so big. But they've got the sales engine right. They got the product right. They've got the principles right.

There are lots of companies out there trying to build their own telephony platform, or RMM, and it's just silly, because all you're doing is wasting time. Focus took the attitude of, 'we're not a technology builder; what we are is an enabler with a sales engine'. And I respect that.

## WHAT MARKET TREND IS TOP OF YOUR RADAR AS AN MSP LEADER?

The easy answer is AI. But I want to give you a better story. For me, it's the sovereign cloud story. We bought a host of desktop business last April. I could see everyone went to the hyperscalers, and they're now starting to come back on premise.

It's not the sexiest thing, but I find it really quite exciting that we've got our own team managing our own stack, and I think that will be a real growth curve for the next year or two.

# BORN OF FRUSTRATION?

Many of this year's Fast-Growth 50 grew out of a desire to address a grievance with legacy providers, Doug Woodburn writes



**WE'VE NOW MET** the Fast-Growth 50.

But what traits set them apart from the wider population of 686 partners from which they were drawn?

To begin with, these 50 firms are – by definition – significantly outgrowing the market... but by how much?

Collectively, they employed 2,685 staff in their latest years on record, a 139% rise on their 1,125 headcount in the base year.

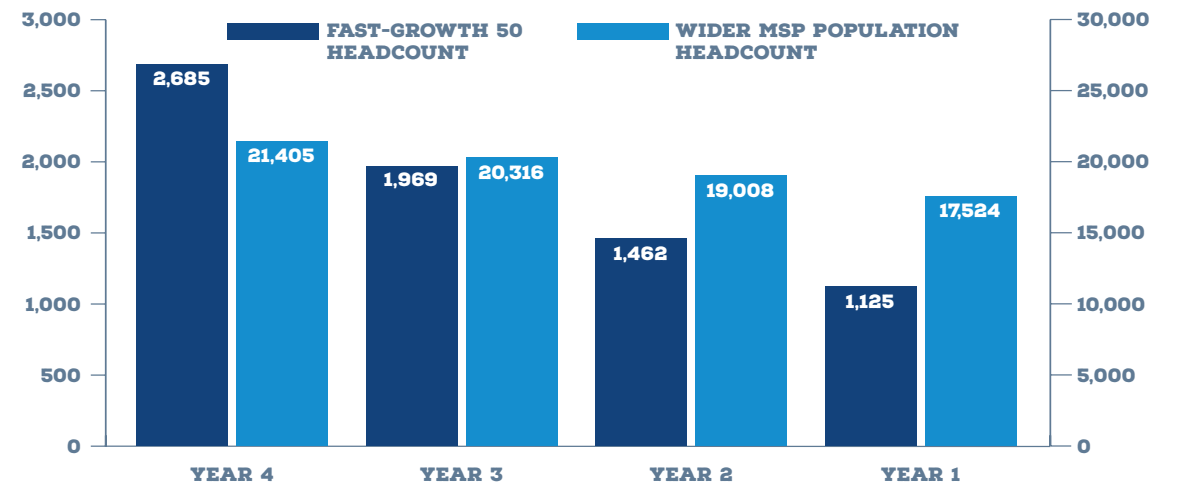
That's over six-times the headcount growth registered by the wider population, who saw

total employee numbers rise 22% over the period (from 17,525 to 21,405) (see graph, p33). Such is their market-busting growth that a number are lighting up national growth league tables compiled by some of the UK's biggest newspapers.

Having grown from zero to 138 staff inside a five years, 2nd-ranked **de Novo Solutions** placed eighth in the Sunday Times 100 Fastest-Growing Companies list last year, for instance.

6th-ranked **Clarus Networks** this month

## COLLECTIVE HEADCOUNT OF FAST-GROWTH 50



finished #92 in an annual list of Europe's Fastest-Growing Companies 2026 from the FT, meanwhile.

Demographically, a disproportionately high number focus on fast-growth segments of the market including cybersecurity and Microsoft.

Many have a bias towards managed services and consulting rather than traditional product resale.

To take two examples, 3rd-ranked **Forge** and 39th-ranked **Central Technology** generate 75% and 70% of revenues from recurring services, while 8th-ranked **BestPath** marks itself in the Cisco channel with a focus on consulting.

### "WE THOUGHT WE COULD DO IT BETTER"

But it's interesting to note how many were also born out of irritation that existing partners weren't serving the market well enough.

This includes 13th-ranked **Snowden Consulting**, a Microsoft Dynamics consultancy founded by Steve Snowden in 2012 after he grew "frustrated by poor implementations and delivery" on ERP and CRM projects he'd previously been involved with.

It has since grown to 60 employees.

Similarly, 8th-ranked **BestPath** was founded by two contractors who felt the existing channel partners they dealt with had missed a trick.

"We'd known each other for a good 15 years," MD Nicholas Bridgeman tells us (see p27).

"We saw that a lot of partners cared about the transaction, but nothing past that because they didn't think from the perspective of an engineer... We thought, and we still believe, we can do that a lot better than a lot of the other partners we see."

12th-ranked **SEP2** is another whose founders opted to set up their own firm after spotting a gap in the market.

"We'd worked together for many years," CEO Paul Starr tells us (see p33).

"At the time, we felt there was very little value being shown to customers, and it was about changing that."

### "WE'RE WINNING SHED LOADS OF BUSINESS"

Unsurprisingly Fast-Growth 50 firms tend to be relatively young, with several – including top-ranked **Flotek**, 3rd-ranked **Forge**, 18th-ranked **CloudGuard** and 2nd-ranked **de Novo Solutions** – founded this decade.

There are a few notable exceptions to this, with 16th-ranked **Sapphire Technologies**, for instance, celebrating its 30th birthday this year.

Their growth is just as likely – if not more likely – to have come via organic rather than acquisitive means.

This includes 18th-ranked **CloudGuard**, a Manchester-based MSSP that has grown from zero to 28 staff inside six years partly via targeting local graduate talent.

"Over the last two years, we've provided two university undergrad placement opportunities with Manchester Metropolitan and now also with Queens University Belfast.

And they have all come back and chosen CloudGuard to begin their careers," CEO Matt Lovell told us.

On the other hand, this report features several young buy-and-builds who have grown rapidly via M&A.

This includes 21st-ranked **Redsquid** and 30th-ranked **Innov8**, both of which made five acquisitions last year alone.

But even the buy-and-build outfits in this report claim they are outshining their peers when it comes to organic expansion.

"I've done panels before, and other MSPs hate the fact we've had this fast growth. And they're like, 'yeah, it's because they buy,'" Jay Ball, CEO of top-ranked **Flotek**, tells us (see p30).

"But we do 20 to 25 new logos a month at a time when everybody's telling me that nobody's winning new business. We're winning shed loads of business. We need to

*"That constant collaboration is a big part of why the business has grown so successfully."*

**Clarus Networks' Derek Phillips on running the business with his wife Debra**

highlight that our organic growth is so strong – it was something like 43% last year."

**"I LOST MY ENTREPRENEURIAL SPARK"**

The Fast-Growth 50 also features more than its fair share of channel partners seeking to raise the bar when it comes to

sustainability and ethics.

21st-ranked **Redsquid**, 15th-ranked **Original** and 29th-ranked **Computeam** have all recently joined the B Corp movement of companies seeking to balance profit with purpose. The latter told us it donates 2% of EBIT to charity.

40th-ranked **Port-P** and 41st-ranked **Bluelight CRM** are among the recent converts to a growing trend of employee ownership.

Clients can take comfort knowing "everyone they deal with at Port-P is personally invested in our future", it claims.

19th-ranked **UP3** is one of only 13 small UK tech companies which are an official Great Place to Work for Women, meanwhile.

Multiple partners in this report are bound by the bond of friendship and even marriage.

6th-ranked **Clarus Networks** is one of two founded by a wife and husband team.

"We actually still share an office and sit next to each other every day," Derek Phillips said of his working relationship with wife Debra.

"People often ask how we manage to run a business like Clarus and live together, but we have very different roles that complement each other well, and that constant collaboration is a big part of why the business has grown so successfully."

Perhaps the last word should go to the CEO of this report's top-ranked outfit, who typifies the entrepreneurial spirit of the firms in this report.

Jay Ball retired to Cyprus at the age of 35, after selling his previous MSP venture.

"Then after a year, I got really bored. I wasn't ready to retire, and I felt there was a massive gap in the UK where comms and IT just weren't joined up," he said.

Arguably, it is this commitment to enterprise and innovation that really sets these 50 firms apart.

## FAST-GROWTH 50 IN NUMBERS

**1,560**

Number of staff added by Fast-Growth 50 over 3-year period

**3,133%**

Headcount growth of #1-ranked Flotek

**53.7**

Average headcount of Fast-Growth 50 firms in most-recent year

**22.5**

Average headcount of Fast-Growth 50 firms in base year



**5**

Acquisitions made by both #30th-ranked Innov8 and #21st-ranked Redsquid in 2025 alone



**3**

Number of B Corps in Fast-Growth 50

## RESELLER-TO-MSP PIVOT GAINS PACE

*MSPs gaining share of SMB tech budgets hand over fist, according to Analysys Mason*



Karthik Pannala, Principal Analyst at Analysys Mason

**THE RESELLER-TO-MSP PIVOT** is really happening, **Giacom** Chief Strategy Officer Nathan Marke has asserted following the release of fresh data into where SMBs are spending their tech budgets.

According to figures from **Analysys Mason**, MSPs' share of UK SMB tech spending is set to rise from 25% to 31% between 2024 and 2029.

In contrast, resellers' share of the spoils will drop from 42% to 39% over the same period, the analyst predicts.

Giacom conveys highlights of Analysys Mason's SME tech spending research to its partners twice a year.

The dynamic its data uncovered shows that SMBs are seeking out more strategic IT partners post-pandemic, Marke claimed.

"What's interesting to us is seeing this pivot from reseller to MSPs," he told *IT Channel Oxygen*.

"The growth of classic resellers in SMB is only 2-3%, but the MSPs are growing at 10-11% so are getting 3x growth – and broadly we attribute that to SMBs believing tech is far more important to them.

"SMBs are now looking for a strategic partner, and MSPs represent that more strategic relationship around IT that perhaps this very fragmented reseller community of old, pre-pandemic, didn't really represent."

"The data shows how MSPs are continuing to gain market share as increasingly tech savvy SMBs seek a strategic partner to help them gain advantage from their technology investments," Karthik Pannala, Principal Analyst at Analysys Mason added.

### "MASSIVE UPTICK" IN SWITCHING SUPPLIERS

Analysys Mason's data also suggests there has been a big uptick in SMBs switching tech suppliers since the start of the pandemic.

"There was hardly any switching going on before the pandemic, as small businesses didn't tend to think tech was particularly important for them," Marke said.

"Since the pandemic, there's been a massive uptick in switching amid this drive from SMBs to look for a strategic partner, which I think is really significant."

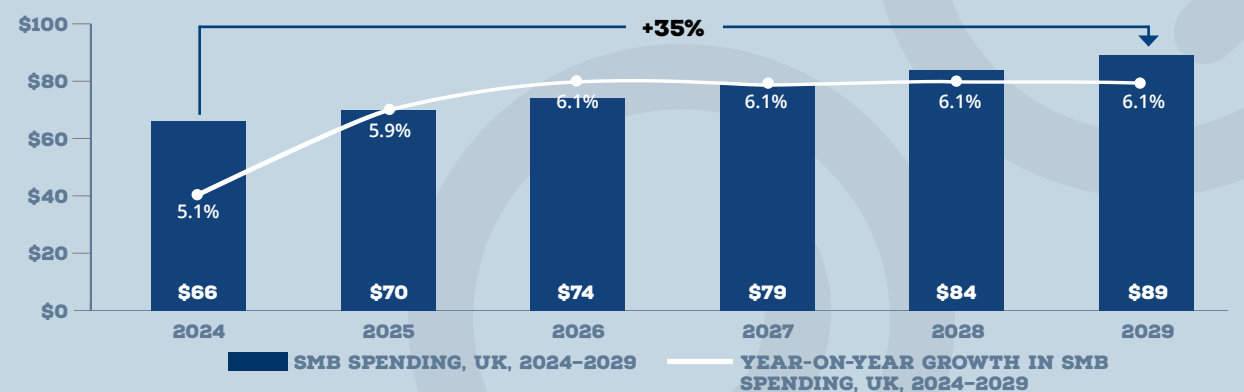
In total, SMBs – namely businesses with 1-500 employees – are set to spend \$70bn on IT solutions in 2025, by Analysys Mason's reckoning. That figure is set to rise to \$89bn by 2029.

IT managed services generates a quarter of that total, closely followed by UC and digital services (22%), infrastructure (21%) and business applications (19%). Devices and peripherals (9%) and cybersecurity (3%) generate the remainder.

Marke said Giacom backs the research because SMBs tends to "get lost" in the more enterprise-focused IT spending forecasts of many market analysts.

"The vast majority of the reseller and MSP community don't make their money from large companies, but from smaller ones. That's why we think this is particularly interesting," Marke concluded.

### SMBS IN UK WILL INCREASE SPENDING DESPITE UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS



# FAST-GROWTH 50

	HEADCOUNT				STAFF INCREASE (ABSOLUTE)	STAFF INCREASE (RELATIVE)	COMBINED SCORE
	YEAR 4	YEAR 3	YEAR 2	YEAR 1			
1 FLOTEK	97	62	27	3	94	3133%	2945.3
2 DE NOVO SOLUTIONS	84	50	29	8	76	950%	722.0
3 FORGE TECHNOLOGIES	52	32	12	4	48	1200%	576.0
4 ABACUS	85	30	20	17	68	400%	272.0
5 TECHSOL GROUP	36	15	6	4	32	800%	256.0
6 CLARUS NETWORKS	47	33	12	8	39	488%	190.1
7 OUTBOUND GROUP	13	4	2	1	12	1200%	144.0
8 BESTPATH	23	16	11	3	20	667%	133.3
9 INGENTIVE	56	22	21	17	39	229%	89.5
10 FIFOSYS	76	38	33	28	48	171%	82.3
11 SWIFT STRATEGIES	10	6	2	1	9	900%	81.0
12 .SEP2	77	65	45	31	46	148%	68.3
13 SNOWDEN CONSULTING	33	22	12	9	24	267%	64.0
14 DIGITAL ORIGIN	36	27	17	11	25	227%	56.8
15 ORIGINAL	21	15	10	5	16	320%	51.2
16 SAPPHIRE TECHNOLOGIES	136	87	79	75	61	81%	49.6
17 SYNYEGA	32	24	12	10	22	220%	48.4
18 CLOUDGUARD	23	17	12	6	17	283%	48.2
19 UP3	63	47	27	27	36	133%	48.0
20 PURECYBER	36	32	16	12	24	200%	48.0
21 REDSQUID	69	40	31	31	38	123%	46.6
22 NORMCYBER	54	43	26	22	32	145%	46.5
23 VALTO	41	36	28	15	26	173%	45.1
24 ACUTECH	60	32	26	26	34	131%	44.5
25 CLOUD BRIDGE	48	39	25	19	29	153%	44.3
26 KFP TOTAL IT SOLUTIONS	95	70	60	49	46	94%	43.2
27 ALTERNIT ONE	62	47	40	28	34	121%	41.3
28 DYNAVICS	34	29	17	12	22	183%	40.3
29 COMPUTEAM	100	79	64	54	46	85%	39.2
30 INNOV8 TECHNOLOGY	65	43	31	31	34	110%	37.3
31 SIMODA	42	37	25	18	24	133%	32.0
32 WESSEX IT	38	28	20	16	22	138%	30.3
33 INSTANT ON IT	66	59	49	35	31	89%	27.5
34 MERCURIUS IT	24	21	14	9	15	167%	25.0
35 AUXILION	131	125	102	85	46	54%	24.9
36 ITVET	97	75	70	59	38	64%	24.5
37 TECH SOURCE	18	12	11	6	12	200%	24.0
38 CLOUDTECH24	27	21	13	11	16	145%	23.3
39 CENTRAL TECHNOLOGY	93	87	73	57	36	63%	22.7
40 PORT-P	23	20	13	9	14	156%	21.8
41 BLUELIGHT CRM	33	23	19	15	18	120%	21.6
42 TRULY SMB	21	12	10	8	13	163%	21.1
43 CHORUS IT	93	91	80	58	35	60%	21.1
44 PRAGMATIQ SOLUTIONS	26	23	19	11	15	136%	20.5
45 BARRIER NETWORKS	29	16	13	13	16	123%	19.7
46 NINE23	24	19	13	10	14	140%	19.6
47 TRIDENT	87	79	66	55	32	58%	18.6
48 COMMUNICATE TECHNOLOGY	55	42	37	31	24	77%	18.6
49 PKF SMITH COOPER SYSTEMS	63	52	45	37	26	70%	18.3
50 WESTSPRING IT	31	25	17	15	16	107%	17.1

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