Swimming against the tide brings its rewards

Often in the shadow of their quoted rivals, Britain’s growing number of private businesses are coming to the fore, reports Andrew Bounds

Andy Rubin is in a strong position to discuss the relative merits of public and private companies.

The chief executive of Pentland Brands, part of the Pentland Group that owns a host of leading sports and leisure labels including Speedo, Hunter Boot and Berghaus, is the rare breed of entrepreneur who has experienced life on both sides of the divide.

The company was founded by his grandparents in 1932 as the Liverpool Shoe Company, floated on the stock market in 1964 but reverted to private family ownership in 1999.

Mr Rubin advocates. All the evidence shows that family-owned companies outperform public ones over time. ’

Pentland’s Speedo swimming brand is an example of its approach. After a big design and research push, sales have doubled in the past decade. At the Beijing Olympics in 2008, more than 90 per cent of gold medallists in the pool wore its swimsuits.

Rubin believes that securing the investment needed to achieve this success was a lot easier in the public market, while noting that institutions have been reluctant to invest in the company because it is controlled by a family.

While two-thirds of the UK’s 4.8m businesses operate as sole traders, there are, by contrast, about 2,500 quoted companies, while the number of companies on Aim, the small-cap exchange set up to allow growing companies to list, has fallen from 1,694 in 2007 to 1,086 last month.

Sir Richard Lambert, chancellor of the University of Warwick, former CBI director-general and former editor of the Financial Times, says a market listing is no longer a badge of honour for many businesses.

“All the evidence shows that family-owned companies outperform public ones over time.’

The stock market has not been a source of capital for British companies for a long time,” he said. “They spend more buying their own shares than they raise.”

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**Private Business**

Starting planning early to avoid family failures

Alternative funding lines are opening up, writes Andrew Burlton

Swimming against the tide brings rewards for private businesses

Private companies can be at the forefront of innovation, says Charles Johnson, chief executive of Oaklands Farm, who says: "It is more important than ever to be proactive in terms of innovation, technology and development on Aim. While the world can have its challenges, there are plenty of opportunities to be抓住."
Family businesses

Outside hires can be the key to success for family businesses

Traditional groups, writes Paul Solomon

When Thomas and Ellen Warburton took the helm of a traditional British bread-making company in 2005, they could not have imagined what the future would hold. Eight years on, they are running the business well and also doing good.

From model beginnings in the mid-19th century as a tiny bakery in Liverpool owned by John Neill, the company now operates around Manchester – two-thirds of respondents to the 2009 Family Business Survey; enterprising employers who help us.”

Corporate governance is

Taking the long view helps build a ‘better company’

Susan Murray

A company can’t build its own future. It needs to have a desire to impact the world. And if the business is family owned, it needs to have a long-term focus to its activity.

BrewDog, founded in 2007 by brothers James and Will Todd, set up in a disused brewery in Ellon, Aberdeenshire, which is now the company’s brewery.

And because the company is traditional, as well as growth businesses – listed or private.

B4Box has also made a
to keeping it in the family. But it’s not the same as having it in a box. It’s the idea of creating a new value for the family. It’s the idea of creating a new value for the family.

The company, which was founded by the Wates family in 1897. James Wates senior, who passed the business to his sons, was the grandfather of Sir Michael Wates, who joined the family business in 1956 and ran it until his death in 1987.

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Mr Hall tries to schedule as many as possible; he is careful to keep abreast of the financial crisis in 2009, according to the Brookings Institution, US a trade body.

Some workers have bought large or small companies that have been privatised. Mr Warnock, an entrepreneur himself, says: “There is no better way to run a business. You can run it small and simple enough to be agile and fast, to be able to do things that are not possible in a large organisation. And it’s also a much better way to be running a business. What you want to be considered is the business. We are the business, and you are the business.”

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**The value of reputation protection. Or: Our part in your downfall.**

Your reputation is your most valuable asset, but it can also be your most fragile.

At Nimax of the Republic, we have developed a specialism for reputation protection.

When sensitive information has been picked up by third parties, our timing and bravery can make a dramatic difference.

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Emphasising more than 1,000 analysts, the company produces comparable data across multiple platforms that enable it to project future trends.

Offering more tailored information, Nimax can make more informed decisions.

The company said: “We were not looking for the largest, most international business, but one that was in the right place to grow. We were also interested in the backer of our chosen business.”

**Private Business of the Year**

Graham Honeyman, director at HSBC Private Bank (UK), who headed the judging panel, says: “We were looking for the right people in the right place. We were interested in the backer of the chosen business.”

**High Growth Business of the Year**

Graham Honeyman, director at HSBC Private Bank (UK), who headed the judging panel, says: “We were looking for the right people in the right place. We were interested in the backer of the chosen business.”

**Best Team**

Graham Honeyman, director at HSBC Private Bank (UK), who headed the judging panel, says: “We were looking for the right people in the right place. We were interested in the backer of the chosen business.”

**Best Product**

Graham Honeyman, director at HSBC Private Bank (UK), who headed the judging panel, says: “We were looking for the right people in the right place. We were interested in the backer of the chosen business.”

**Best Customer Experience**

Graham Honeyman, director at HSBC Private Bank (UK), who headed the judging panel, says: “We were looking for the right people in the right place. We were interested in the backer of the chosen business.”