



## Here are the North East's top 10 companies of 2018 - as picked by our business team

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National and regional prize winners, and firms changing the face of our cities, make Journal Business' list of North East success stories



End clothing, Hyperdrive Innovation and Noveltea all feature in our list of the North East's top 10 companies of 2018

2018 has been a great year for many North East businesses - but here are the 10 companies we have picked as having had the best 12 months.

### *Merit Holdings*

Tony Wells MD of Company of the Year Merit

Tony Wells MD of Company of the Year Merit (Image: Newcastle Journal)

The Northumberland construction and engineering firm was named North East Company of the Year after seeing off tough competition in the finals of the region's Business Awards.

The [Cramlington firm](#) saw off Boldon-based financial advisory group Fairstone and Teesside vegetarian food producer Quorn to win the title after big increases in turnover over the last three years and high profile contracts at London's Royal Albert Hall and for the British Antarctic Survey.

#### *Northern Gas and Power*

Northern Gas and Power's team in Gateshead (Image: Dan Aziz)

[The Gateshead firm](#) - which gives staff all of December off if targets are hit - was ranked top company in the UK for work-life balance.

The accolade from jobs website Glassdoor came in a year that the company announced plans for its first office in Singapore and revealed revenues were hitting £28m.

#### *By the River Brew Co*

The By The River Brew Co will open this weekend (Image: Graeme Whitfield)

The latest venture from the team [behind Wylam Brewery](#), the box park of restaurants and bars underneath the Tyne Bridge was a huge hit in the long, hot summer, opening to coincide with the Great Exhibition of the North being in Newcastle and Gateshead.

The site won praise from the prestigious Michelin Guide and Guardian restaurant critic Jay Rayner called its Träkol restaurant "outrageously good".

#### *NBT Group*

Toby Bridges who represents the overall business winner, NBT Integrated Services (Image: Newcastle Chronicle)

The [Killingworth firm](#) was named the fastest growing company at the annual Fastest 50 event held by Newcastle law firm Ward Hadaway.

The company, which dates back to 1908, originated as a adhesive tape supply business but has pivoted in recent years to become an integrated supply chain supplier which handles tens of thousands of transactions for its clients.

#### *END*

The END clothing store in Newcastle (Image: gallery)

The trendy clothing retailer continued to attract national and local acclaim, as well as regular queues outside its Grainger Street store when it put much sought-after trainers on sale.

The Newcastle firm, which has a huge web presence, was the sole North East company to feature in the Sunday Times BDO Profit Track 100 league table, which ranks Britain's private companies with the

fastest-growing profits over the last three years. It saw turnover top £100m for the first time and opened its first shop in London.

#### *Hyperdrive Innovation*

Hyperdrive Innovation's 48V battery pack (Image: Unknown)

The Sunderland battery manufacturer was rarely out of the news this year, and all of it was positive.

In April, the company struck a £40m deal to go into the Asian market, and it announced in June it was on track to triple turnover after winning a host of major clients. It also outlined plans to double the size of its manufacturing plant and secured £6.7m investment to fuel international growth.

#### *Noveltea*

The Tale of Oolong is the latest release from Newcastle-based Noveltea (Image: PR)

The alcoholic tea firm continued to break into new markets, and it was named one of the most innovative firms in Europe, but it will be its appearance on [BBC TV](#) show Dragons' Den that will stick in the memory.

Founders Vincent Efferoth and Lukas Passia turned down the offer of investment after the Dragons asked for too much of their company. They were proved right weeks later when a crowdfunding drive raised more than four times as much money as they had been offered for a smaller slice of the company.

#### *The Lakes Distillery*

The Lakes Distillery (Image: Trevor Walker)

The distillery with a base in Newcastle also turned to crowdfunding, bringing in almost £1.5m in less than a month.

That sparked an even more ambitious bid to grow and in September the company announced plans to float on the London Stock Exchange.

#### *High Street Group*

CGI of proposed apartment development in Birmingham by Newcastle's High Street Group (Image: handout)

No company has done more to change the face of Newcastle in 2017 than the High Street Group, with work starting on what will be the city's tallest building, Hadrian Tower.

The company also announced plans to build on the Brett Oils site in Gateshead and on a plot close to Newcastle Arena, with activity being planned closer to its Newcastle base after a number of high profile projects around the country.

#### *Tekmar*

Offshore technicians assembling Tekmar's patented  
TEKLINK cable protection system during offshore  
installation on an offshore wind farm (Image: Unknown)

The Newton Aycliffe firm raised more than £60m when it floated on  
the London Stock Exchange in June.

Tekmar, which specialises in manufacturing protection systems for  
subsea cables and umbilicals, later bought back Subsea Innovation,  
which had split from Tekmar in 2011, and announced a record order  
book going forward.

