

OPPORTUNITIES IN US-UK TRADE

How can SMEs win in changing markets?

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Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the vitality of local economies both in the UK and US. As they look to expand their business, the latest developments in international trade – for example the prospect of a new trade deal between these countries – are likely to affect their growth plans. New technologies are also opening up new opportunities for SMEs and can help them to make their mark in the international arena. What are the challenges and opportunities of a new UK-US trade deal? How can SMEs win in changing markets and how can they tackle barriers to growth? What is the role of technology in strengthening trade relations?

This confidential editorial breakfast, organised by the Financial Times in partnership with Western Union, will bring together a varied group of UK and US policy makers, business leaders and analysts to understand the key obstacles to growth and to learn more about the practical solutions.

Agenda

08:00 Guest arrival and welcome refreshments

08:10 Welcome remarks from **Ed Crooks**, US Industry Editor, *Financial Times*

08:15 Opening remarks from **Kerry Agiasotis**, President, *Western Union Business Solutions*

08:25 Discussion commences

- What are the challenges and opportunities presented by a new US-UK trade deal? How can SMEs take advantage of the changing transatlantic market?
- Is a rapid launch and conclusion of a trade agreement between the US and the UK possible? Which factors would affect the length of time required to conclude this deal?
- How will SMEs be affected by the new US tone of protectionism and anti-globalisation? Will business for trade-facing SMEs become harder or easier under the Trump administration?
- As both the UK and the US are actively distancing themselves from larger, neighbouring trading partners, how important is foreign trade for US-UK businesses? To what extent are companies in both countries dependent on each other? Will it become harder or easier to sell to specific markets?
- How can SMEs successfully win high value contracts and trade with larger businesses? What are the barriers to accessing supply chains and financial resources? Are SMEs being removed from the value chain as new technologies increase return on scale and replace their function?
- What is the role of technology in finding new customers and creating a trustworthy business environment? Which skills and resources are required for SMEs to keep up with technological developments? What are the other practical solutions for growth in international trade landscape?

10:00 Closing remarks from **Ed Crooks**, US Industry Editor, *Financial Times*