

HOW TO SET UP YOUR BUSINESS IN LONDON



LONDON
& PARTNERS

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MAYOR OF LONDON

About this guide

This guide is published by London & Partners, the Mayor of London’s official promotional agency.

Inside you’ll find:

Essential steps

Things you must do when setting up a business in London

Guidance from our professional partners

Expert insights on tax, property, finance, legislation, recruitment, research and development, intellectual property, PR, social media and more.

Opportunities:

We highlight growth spots, tax and financial breaks and emerging trends.



London & Partners were an incredible source of knowledge and support for our business expansion.

Nick Keating, Director
EMEA, BounceX



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01 WELCOME TO LONDON

*The no.1 city in the world in which to live, work
and build a global business*

As CEO of London & Partners, I'd like to thank you for choosing London. You have made a great choice. Whether a growing startup company or an established organisation setting up your headquarters, you are joining the no.1 global city in which to live, work and build a business.

Since 2006, our team has guided 2500+ companies like yours from more than 67 countries to set up and scale their businesses.

And we haven't done it alone. We have a vast network of expert and experienced professionals who can advise and guide you on every aspect of locating and doing business here.

This guide combines the insights and experience of our team with professional advice from our extensive partner network who are instrumental to how we support you.

From advice on setting up your legal entity and UK taxation, to practical guidance on visas, building your team or finding a well priced office, this guide is designed to give your business a head start in this market.

We look forward to supporting you on your journey to set up and succeed in London.



Laura Citron
CEO
London & Partners





ABOUT LONDON & PARTNERS

London & Partners is the Mayor of London's official promotional agency. We help overseas businesses set up and grow in the capital.

Our expert team offers free advice to potential investors, from start-ups to established companies, to help them explore how London can play a role in their global business.

We provide bespoke advice based around business drivers to help companies make informed decisions more quickly. Working with a network of partners, we provide investors with the information they need to take advantage of London's opportunities from day one.

Free and confidential, our services include:

- Building the business case for London
- Sector-specific information and contacts
- Finding the best property in the right locations
- Access to high-quality professional, legal and accountancy advice through our network of commercial partners
- Advice on relocation
- Help finding the best people from London's huge pool of talent and skills
- Connecting companies to London's business networks.

Contact us to see how we can help.

business@londonandpartners.com
invest.london

We have helped

2500+
international
companies set
up operations
in London.

“

I was trying to keep costs down and I was doing everything myself. I couldn't ask for money from my company until I started generating revenue. I wasn't experienced in setting up a company. Then London & Partners came along. It was like a breath of fresh air for me; a big relief.

Sergio Anidjar
Director Bedrock Europe

10 reasons why you should set up in London

London is one of the world’s most exciting, dynamic and profitable cities in which to establish a business. Here are 10 reasons why you should set up here.



01 COMPETITIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The UK ranks consistently in the top 10 in the world for ease of doing business.

02 LOW TAXATION ECONOMY

At 19%, London has the lowest Corporation Tax in the G20. It is set to be reduced to 17% by 2020.

03 HIGHLY SKILLED TALENT POOL

London is the only global city to have four universities in the top 40 world ranking¹ of the Times Higher Education World Ranking and two more only an hour outside London.

04 COMPETITIVE TAXATION

The UK offers tax incentives for R&D, 30% tax relief on investments up to £1 million, favourable personal taxation and the most flexible labour regulations in Europe.

05 TECH HUB

London is one of the world’s leading digital hubs and the largest tech ecosystem in Europe, with an estimated ecosystem value of \$44bn.

06 WORLD LEADING FINANCIAL CENTRE

London ranks first in the 2016 Global Financial Cities Index with a long tradition as a financial capital and home to more than 250 international banks – more than New York, Paris or Frankfurt.

07 CONNECTIVITY

London is the supreme gateway city, with direct flights to more than 396 destinations.

08 TIMEZONE

London’s office hours overlap with countries generating 99% of global GDP.

09 ACCESS TO FINANCE

A global venture capital and private equity hub, London attracted more investment than any other major European city in 2016².

10 QUALITY OF LIFE

London is one of the world’s most open, multi-cultural and cosmopolitan cities, with a long-standing tradition of welcoming international businesses and visitors.

¹2016-17 Times Higher Education World Ranking

²Pitchbook data sourced by London & Partners December 2016

“

London was an easy choice. The city has a huge tech community, large talent pool with lots of diversity, strong digital and language skills as well as great infrastructure and communication links. There was simply no better city than London to make our European HQ.

Nick Keating, Director EMEA, BounceX

”

Why London?

A comment from Stuart Lisle, Partner at accountancy and business advisory firm, BDO

The world is going through a period of immense change. Developments in technology and regulation, a changing relationship with the EU and the increasing pace of globalisation means that uncertainty is now the 'new normal'. But with uncertainty there is also opportunity.

London is undoubtedly the best city in the world to realise that opportunity. London remains entrepreneurial, outward looking and full of creativity and possibility. The strength of London is its diversity – a diversity of cultures, of ideas and of businesses. Diversity is the lifeblood of the city and that won't change.

London is globally recognised as an international hub of finance but it caters for all sectors of business. London has innovative manufacturers, pioneering digital start-ups and forward thinking retailers. Why? Because as well as being a business-friendly city and home to world leading entrepreneurs, it is also a fantastic place to live and to study.

London offers the most business-friendly fiscal environment in Europe, with the lowest corporate tax rates and lowest social security costs of any member state. Therefore, even outside of the European Union, the UK will continue to be the best location for setting up for inward investors.



02 FORMING A UK ENTITY

In this chapter, our legal and accountancy partners talk through the first steps of setting up a UK company.

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How to get started

Tim Stovold, Head of Tax and Chandru Iyer, Head of International Business Development at Chartered Accountants & Business Advisers Kingston Smith take you through the options for establishing your business in the UK.

1. Think about your structure before rushing in

A UK Limited Company will be the right entity in most cases but you should also explore the advantages of registering your overseas company as a branch (known as a “UK Establishment”) before rushing to form a company.

If a company is the right entity for you, you should also explore whether a holding company with multiple subsidiaries should be used if you are intending to carry out more than one type of activity in the UK or if you wish to ring fence valuable real estate or intellectual property from risk bearing trading activities.

2. Get registered!

The two tax registrations you will need first are:

- payroll scheme to enable you to make tax deductions at source from payments you make to your employees (known as a payroll scheme); and
- Value Added Tax (VAT) registration to enable you to recover VAT on your expenses and charge VAT (where applicable) on your sales invoices.

Alongside these registrations, as a UK employer, you are obliged to have at least £5m of Employer's Liability Insurance, so arranging this early on is advisable. The above documents can also be helpful when applying for immigration permissions as they can be used as evidence that you are a genuine UK business.

3. Talk to banks early on

Do not underestimate the time it will take to open a bank account. If your documentation is perfect and the relevant

people are located in the UK, this can be a quick process but if there is a complex ownership structure outside of the UK and/or key directors are constantly travelling, this can be quite a time-consuming process so it should be started as soon as your entity is formed. If you have relationships with banks in your home country which are represented in the UK, you may find this to be an easy place to start from.

4. Seconded employee tax references

The HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is responsible for the collection of taxes amongst other regulatory functions. Most of your employees' interactions with HMRC will require them to have either a UK Social Security number (known as a National Insurance number) or a Unique Tax Reference (UTR). Your employees should be encouraged to apply for these reference numbers as soon as they can after arriving in the UK so there are no delays later if they need to communicate with the UK tax authority.

5. Look ahead

Work with an adviser to establish a calendar of compliance activities for the UK entity so you know exactly the timelines and can accordingly plan to either outsource or get certain activities done in-house.

In terms of UK tax, there are monthly, quarterly and annual obligations to be dealt with and being able to prove that you are tax compliant is increasingly becoming a pre-requisite in tenders so keeping on top of these matters is essential for businesses wishing to have the greatest chance of success in the UK.



Choosing a legal entity

When establishing a business in London, you need to set up a legal entity. Andrew Oury, Partner at chartered accountants, Oury Clark, takes you through the options.

There are various ways to trade in the UK and the most common types are:

UK limited company

A limited liability company structure owned by shareholders and run by the directors.

Pros

- Quick and inexpensive to set up
- Limited liability protecting directors and shareholders
- Well recognised and understood
- No need for directors or shareholders to be UK resident
- Minimum share capital 1p, and only one director required
- UK Corporation Tax at 19%
- Access to generous UK R&D incentives
- Compatible with EIS & SEIS
- Management and ownership can be separate
- Can be used for a Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa, Tier 2 Visa Sponsor and a Representative of Overseas Business Visa

Cons

- Tax losses stay in the UK
- An audit may be required based on the size of the world wide group
- Information on directors publicly available
- Requirements to publicly disclose all persons of significant influence

Limited Liability Partnership

A partnership but the liability of the members is limited.

Pros

- Easy to set up
- Transparent for tax
- Flexible for profit distributions
- Can be useful for ensuring efficient repatriation of profits
- Can be used for a Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa and a Tier 2 Visa Sponsor

Cons

- Not as well recognised or understood as a limited company
- Need at least 2 people or companies to set one up
- Members all have to file UK tax returns and pay UK tax on profits derived from UK activities
- Very limited access to R&D incentives
- Cannot be used for a Representative of an Overseas Business Visa



UK Establishment (branch)

A UK establishment is the place of business or branch of an overseas company within the UK. Effectively a direct extension of the overseas company, officially registered at Companies House and the tax authorities to trade. Financial reports of the parent company are likely to be filed in the UK annually.

Pros

- Enables the direct offset of costs in the parent company jurisdiction, and can mean that losses can be claimed in a foreign country
- Part of the parent and therefore could give better credit terms than a newly incorporated company
- Compatible with EIS & SEIS
- No audit required
- Can be a Tier 2 visa Sponsor and a Representative of an Overseas Business Visa

Cons

- Part of the parent without separate limited liability thereby exposing the whole business to the UK risks
- Cumbersome to set up
- It is likely the group accounts would need to be filed publicly with Companies House, even if they are not filed at home
- Cannot take advantage of the low UK rate of 19% if the parent company jurisdiction has a higher rate of Corporation Tax
- Cannot be used for a Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa
- Can be seen as temporary or early stage

Guide to UK taxation

Which taxes should you be aware of, what rates should you pay and what are your obligations? James Dolan, Partner at accounting, tax and advisory practice, Blick Rothenberg covers the highlights.

Corporation Tax

What is Corporation Tax?

Corporation Tax is the tax levied on a company's profits. UK resident companies are subject to Corporation Tax in the United Kingdom on their worldwide taxable profits (subject to an option to exempt profits of non-UK branches). Furthermore, an overseas entity trading in the UK through a UK branch or "permanent establishment" is subject to Corporation Tax on profits relating to UK activities.

A UK company needs to register with the UK tax authorities, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), and prepare a Corporation Tax return and tax computation each year based on its annual statutory accounts. This is filed with HMRC. Similar obligations apply to UK branches of foreign companies.

How much?

Corporation Tax is paid on the tax adjusted profits the UK business makes. The rate of Corporation Tax in the UK is 19% with effect from 1 April 2017. This rate is currently scheduled to reduce to 17% from 1 April 2020. Special rates of Corporation Tax can apply to companies in the oil and gas, banking/insurance or shipping sectors.

Who works it out?

UK companies are required to calculate their own tax liability and file an annual Corporation Tax return on a self-assessment basis. Payment of Corporation Tax may also be due on an instalment basis for larger groups. It is important to seek advice early on regarding the most appropriate trading model to adopt in the UK. For example whether the UK company should be a service provider to the overseas parent company or whether the UK company will directly enter into contracts with customers. These factors can influence the level of taxable profits in the UK company.

Income Tax

What is Income Tax?

Income Tax (and National Insurance as outlined below) is generally deducted from an employee's salary on a monthly basis, through an employer-run system known as "Pay As You Earn" (PAYE), and paid monthly to HMRC.

How much?

For the tax year beginning 5 April 2017, a UK employee will pay 0%, 20% or 45% Income Tax, depending on their earnings. The tax is paid on a "slice" basis, so individuals can usually receive the benefit of their tax free personal allowance before they begin to pay tax at higher rates.

Employer responsibilities

As an employer, it's important that you calculate Income Tax liabilities for your UK workforce and any overseas workers you are hosting, taking into account items such as workplace pensions, social security and any benefits provided.

How much Income Tax will you pay?

Depending on your circumstances, for the tax year beginning 6 April 2017 the first £11,500 of earnings is covered by your personal allowance (an annual exempt allowance). The next £33,500 is taxed at the basic rate of 20%. The higher rate of 40% applies to taxable income between £45,001 and £150,000, after which the additional rate of 45% applies. Note that if an individual's income exceeds £100,000, their personal allowance is tapered away at £1 for each £2 over this limit.

National Insurance Contributions (NICs)

What is it?

NICs is the UK's social security mechanism.

Who makes contributions?

Both employers and employees are subject to NICs as a percentage of the gross salary paid to an employee.

How do I calculate NICs?

As an employer, you must calculate this amount for both your workforce and the company and pay it to HMRC on a monthly basis, along with Income Tax. Current rates for employees are 12% of their salary between £157 and £866 per week, and then a further 2% on income above that limit.

For employers, the rate is 13.8% of a total salary above £157 per week. This is a cost that should be factored into budgeting for UK staff in addition to basic salary and any benefits provided. In certain circumstances, overseas nationals may be exempt from paying UK National Insurance; however it's important to seek advice to ensure the correct treatment.



Why the UK?

Successive Governments have reformed the UK Corporation Tax regime making it more attractive to international businesses. This has included reductions to the rate of Corporation Tax, the introduction of a number of innovation incentives (the Patent Box regime, Research & Development Credits etc) and wider reforms that make the UK an attractive "hub" for intellectual property rich businesses and as a holding company for overseas operations.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Sandy Cochrane, Indirect Tax Director at accountants and advisory firm, RSM gives a quick guide to Value Added Tax and what you need to know.

What is VAT?

Value Added Tax (VAT) is a consumption tax on goods and services in the UK and European Union, with different member states having different levels of VAT. All companies that transact with customers or suppliers within the EU will need to understand these levies, even if they do not have a European presence.

What is the VAT rate in the UK?

The VAT rate applicable depends upon the goods or services you supply, although certain goods or services are exempt from VAT and therefore may not count towards the VAT registration thresholds.

The standard rate in the UK is currently 20% and is applied to most taxable goods or services. A reduced rate (5%) or a rate of 0% can apply. You may also be charged UK VAT on goods and services that are supplied to you, but if you are a UK VAT registered business you can recover these payments by paying (or reclaiming) the net amount via your next VAT return.

Who needs to pay VAT and when?

The time at which a VAT registration is required will depend on a number of reasons such as whether the registration is for a UK entity and/or subsidiary or for a non-established trader. A non-established trader can take many forms, for example, a business that does not have a place of business in the UK, usually a business that is supplying goods from its local country to consumers in the UK.

If the annual VAT-taxable turnover of your UK business (via a subsidiary) exceeds £85,000 per year, you are required to register with HMRC and charge your UK customers VAT on all sales. The tax should then be paid to the UK tax authorities (Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs or HMRC) on a periodic basis, usually each quarter.

For a non-established trader selling goods to UK customers, the threshold is zero; therefore there will be a mandatory requirement to register for UK VAT before the first sale takes place. If a UK

business receives certain services from non-UK suppliers that cumulatively exceed the VAT registration threshold, this may also create a requirement to register for UK VAT.

Who to ask for advice?

VAT legislation is complex and you should seek expert advice to make sure that you are paying the correct rate of VAT and if your supplies will be treated as VAT-taxable supplies of goods or services. Furthermore, penalties can be levied by HMRC for not registering at the correct time, for claiming VAT incorrectly or not accounting for VAT correctly on sales.





Expert Tips

Tax Incentives

James Dolan, Partner at accounting, tax and advisory practice, Blick Rothenberg shares his advice.

Research and Development (R&D)

The UK has become a great place to undertake Research & Development (R&D). R&D tax incentives are available to companies undertaking innovative scientific or technological research work. The incentives are most attractive for SMEs, which can claim a deduction of 230% of qualifying R&D expenditure. SMEs with tax losses can claim a cash credit from HMRC of up to £33.35 for every £100 spent on R&D.

Businesses find that many unexpected areas of development, particularly around software and technology generally, are innovative and qualify as R&D. Large companies are eligible to claim an R&D Expenditure Credit (RDEC), which provides tax relief equal to 8.91% of qualifying R&D spend. The claim is included within the company's Corporation Tax return and must be made within two years of the end of the accounting period within which the qualifying expenditure was incurred.

- Share incentive arrangements can be implemented as part of an individual's total remuneration package. You should review all options and consider whether tax efficient arrangements for certain HMRC "approved" plans can be implemented – these may have additional personal tax benefits.
- The UK as a holding company location – the UK is a highly attractive location for a headquarters or holding company. This may be relevant to groups looking to expand into other jurisdictions in the future.
- Don't forget personal tax implications – these are particularly relevant to expats being relocated to the UK and to short term business visitors to the UK. In some cases, certain personal tax reliefs may be available.

Consider other incentives

The UK has a number of other incentives that may be relevant to overseas companies setting up or expanding in the UK. In particular:

- The UK has also introduced certain other film tax and creative sector (e.g. television and video games industry) reliefs that may provide tax credits for certain qualifying expenditure of these industries.
- The UK has an established tax regime associated with the taxation of intellectual property – in some cases tax deductions for amortisation of certain acquired intangible assets may be available.
- The UK Patent Box allows companies to elect to apply a 10% Corporation Tax rate to all profits attributable to qualifying patents. The calculation to arrive at qualifying Patent Box profits is complex and, as of 1 July 2016, all new entrants to the regime will have an additional test to satisfy in that the underlying development activity for the Patent has been undertaken, at least in part, in the UK.



I felt London & Partners' services were exceptional... [they] helped us make a clear decision to set up our headquarters in London vs other European locations.

Ray Grainger, CEO, Mavenlink.



A quick guide to Patent Box

A scheme that allows companies to apply a 10% rate of Corporation Tax to all profits attributable to qualifying patents, whether paid separately as royalties or embedded in the sale price of products.

Who?

A broad range of sectors including electronics, defence, pharmaceuticals, life sciences and manufacturing can benefit.

Why?

To incentivise companies to retain and commercialise existing patents and to develop new, innovative patented products.

And not forgetting...

The regime will also apply to some other IP rights such as plant variety rights, data protection and supplementary protection certificates (SPCs).

Visit the HM Revenue & Customs website to find out more.
[hmrc.gov.uk](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Expert Tips

Intellectual Property Rights in the UK

Mark Owen, Partner, IP and Media at law firm Taylor Wessing gives us a quick, essential guide to intellectual property rights in the UK.

There are several forms of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the UK, which can protect a wide variety of different creations including as brand names, logos, inventions, designs, text or images. The main forms of IPRs in the UK are:

FORM OF PROTECTION	EXAMPLES OF WHAT CAN BE PROTECTED	DURATION
Registered trade marks*	Your brand name, business name, domain names, social media handles, logo and product name (but also, potentially packaging, colours and shapes).	10 years, but can be renewed.
Rights in passing-off	Your brand name, domain names, social media handles, goodwill and reputation, including packaging.	Potentially indefinitely.
Registered* and unregistered design rights	Packaging, the whole or part of a product, 3D shape or configuration, product shapes and graphic design.	Generally 10 -15 years depending on which form of design right.
Copyright and database rights	Investment in databases, text (such as product descriptions), images, pictures and drawings (such as design documents, marketing materials and product packaging), films, music and software, consumer and sales details.	Generally 70 years from the death of the creator.
Patents*	Inventions, which have a technical effect. Ones which are essentially a business model are harder to protect.	20 years.
Confidential information	Any commercially sensitive information such as customer or supplier information, know how, manufacturing processes and product launches.	Potentially indefinitely.

*Registration is required in order for a right to arise.

03 PRACTICAL STEPS

In this chapter, our expert partners give advice on practical issues such as visas and immigration, opening a bank account, sourcing talent for your team and setting up your offices. talk through the first steps of setting up an office.

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Guide to UK visas

There are various UK visa categories that may be suitable for your business needs in London. Tom Redfern from immigration specialist, Redfern Legal explains how to identify the right one for your type of business and what you want to achieve.

It is important to consider the options early on to avoid surprises and to ensure choices down the line, like residence, are not ruled out.

Once the UK leaves the EU, it will automatically leave the European Economic Area (EEA). Until Brexit occurs, the rights of EEA nationals remain unchanged so you do not need to worry about that for now. Croatian nationals continue to have limited restrictions imposed on them.

Some EEA nationals have been applying for residence documentation to certify their free movement rights to remove uncertainty. You may want to suggest this practice to any of your current or future staff who are EEA nationals.

A business visa allows you to come here for business. It does not allow you to work. There can be a grey area between the two. If you are a company based overseas with no UK presence, you can expand your business here by sending a senior employee to establish a registered branch or wholly-owned subsidiary of the overseas business through the Sole Representative visa. If you are an

entrepreneur with the skills and knowledge to run a business and you have a business idea which you can drive to success, you should consider the Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa route (if you have the required level of funds to invest in it) or the Tier 1 Exceptional Talent route (if you have the required talent level). This is a self employed route.

You can consider hiring persons outside the EEA provided your UK company has a sponsor licence. Sponsor licence applications fall under Tier 2, an employed route. They can take between two to eight weeks to be processed. Preparation time for the application is usually four to eight weeks but the most time-consuming requirement for UK start-ups is to show they have a UK bank account. This is caused by money laundering checks required to be carried out by UK banks.

The sponsor licence comes with different sub-categories - the ones commonly used when hiring non-EEA employees are the Tier 2 General and Tier 2 Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) categories. Recent UK immigration rule changes for the ICT route show that the

intention is to allow companies to employ non EU foreign workers to meet their business needs when, in addition to being of at least graduate level, they are more senior and highly paid.

The government application fees for these visas have been rising and the Tier 2 visa applications now include an NHS surcharge and a skills charge. Contributions are also payable by the employer. However, for secondees from outside of the UK, they may be eligible for an exemption of between one and five years from UK National Insurance which can give rise to a saving for both the individual and the business. A certificate of coverage may need to be applied for in the home country so this process should be started as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary contributions being made which can be time consuming to reclaim.

Decision maker: which visa?

Antonio Lam, UK Directory of immigration specialist, Newland Chase runs through the options.

VISA TYPE	IDEAL FOR...	APPLICANTS MUST...
Sole representative visa	Established senior employee of an overseas business that does not have any active presence in the UK. Applicants must not be majority shareholders of the parent business.	Be the UK entity's first hire and be responsible for running the new UK office, which must be set up as a wholly owned subsidiary or branch of the overseas business.
Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa	Business owners and founders: there are no restrictions on the size of shareholding in the new London business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have access to at least £200,000 (£50k in some limited cases) to invest into a trading UK company (other than a property business)• Sufficient personal maintenance funds• English language• Meet a “genuine entrepreneur” test assessing track record and credibility
Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visa	Internationally recognised leaders or emerging leaders in the fields of science, humanities, engineering, medicine, digital technology or the arts.	Receive an endorsement from one of the designated endorsing bodies: Arts Council England; British Academy; Royal Academy of Engineering; Royal Society or Tech City UK.
Tier 2 visas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsored visa for skilled workers• The UK employer must hold a sponsorship licence from UK Visas & Immigration There are minimum skill and salary levels for all Tier 2 visas• A 12 month cooling off period often applies from the end of a Tier 2 visa or UK assignment preventing the migrant from applying for a new Tier 2 visa, but it does not apply if salary is at least £159,600 per year• In addition to government visa application fees, applicants may also have to pay a mandatory upfront contribution to the National Health Service of £200 per person, per year of the visa• Sponsor must also pay an “Immigrations Skills Charge” at a rate of £1,000 per year of sponsorship (£364 for small and charitable sponsors) Certain exemptions apply, such as for the hire of graduates switching into Tier 2• Workers sponsored under certain public health codes must undergo police clearance before applying	
Tier 2 Intra Company Transfers (ICT)	Transferring skilled overseas-based non-EU employees from overseas group companies to your UK operation. Usually requires 12 months overseas service but some exceptions apply i.e. minimum salary of £73,900.	For a visa of more than 12 months duration, be paid at least £41,500 per year. rom April 2017 all ICT visas (except for Graduate Trainees) have a minimum salary of £41,500 (regardless of visa length).
Tier 2 General	Direct hires by the UK licence holder, either from outside the UK or in the UK, such as recruits from other UK businesses currently on Tier 2 visas with another sponsor or recent UK graduates.	Be paid a minimum salary of £30,000 per annum, with some exceptions for new entrants (recent graduates). Must meet English language requirements.

Please note: visa timings fluctuate and The UK’s immigration rules can change in the aftermath of the General Election of June 2017. Salary thresholds are correct as of May 2017, but are updated frequently. The UK’s immigration rules are likely to change over time in the event of a vote by the UK to leave the EU.

RESULTING IN...	DON'T FORGET...	HOW LONG TO ORGANISE?
A three-year visa, extendable by a further two years. Permanent residency after five years' continuous stay. Or further extensions where necessary.	Basic English language requirements (CEFR A1) and be based full time in the UK (personal and business travel is permitted). Business plan for the UK expansion required.	Two to four weeks from application.
A 40-month visa, extendable by a further two years. Permanent residency after five years, but can be accelerated in some circumstances.	You can only extend your visa beyond 40 months if you invest the required level of funds (£200k or £50k) into a UK business, register as a UK director or as self-employed, and create at least two full-time jobs for settled workers lasting at least 12 months each.	Two to eight weeks from application (can sometimes take several months).
Period of grant up to 5 years. Leads to permanent residency after 5 years.	This is a capped visa category with a total of only 1,000 visas available each year (500 in April and 500 in October).	Up to three months depending on timing of endorsement.
		Licence for start-ups: approx. three to six months from having first employee on the ground in UK.
A visa of up to five years in total (or nine years if annual salary is at the ICT high earner level, which will be £120,000. Does not lead to permanent residency. Subject to cooling off period (unless high earner).	After a maximum of five years (nine years if annual salary is at or above the ICT high earner level), the employee must leave the UK. During the period of the visa, the employee cannot change to employer or change to a Tier 2 General visa with the same employer or a different employer, unless the new annual salary is at least £120,000. No English requirement.	Two to four weeks from application (but a sponsor licence must be in place first).
The visa capped at six years (up to five years initially with an extension to six years in total). Leads to permanent residency after five years.	Applicants must not own more than 10% of the business. The UK business may need to advertise the role for at least 28 days before arranging a visa to a non-EU national, but various exemptions apply. Hiring of a non-EEA citizen resident outside the UK requires additional permission to recruit against the UK's immigration cap (20,700 visas per year). Sponsors are exempt from the shareholding restriction, advertising and the cap if UK salary is at least £159,600 per year.	Two to four weeks from application (but a sponsor licence must be in place first and the required advertising/cap process must have also been completed).

The Sole Representative Visa

Tom Redfern, Redfern Legal

If you are planning to start up in the UK and wish to send somebody from a non EEA country, you should consider whether the Sole Representative visa route can be used. It is the simplest work visa available and can be obtained relatively quickly. It is an application prepared jointly by the parent company and the person lined up for the visa.

Checklist: Sole Representative visa

The applicant:

- must be an employee of the parent company. It used to be that the employment had to be of at least six months, but no more. The employment can be of a much shorter period
- must hold a senior position within the parent company and must have the power to take operational decisions
- must not be a majority shareholder in the parent company. Additionally, if the person holds 30% or more, it is likely the application will be scrutinised more closely
- must have relevant experience
- must meet the English language requirement
- must have enough money to support themselves without help from public funds
- can bring their family members/dependents with them. A spouse or long term partner is allowed to work under the dependent visa. The children must be under 18
- can only work for the parent company under this visa. If the applicant wants to change jobs in the UK, this visa will cease and the applicant must obtain a different work visa

The parent company:

- must have a track record in the home country. It cannot be a start up itself.
- must not be intending to move its HQ to the UK
- must prepare a business plan for the UK operation
- must disclose financial information about itself to evidence its track record
- must intend to establish the parent company's first commercial presence in the UK, eg a registered branch or a wholly owned subsidiary

The UK business:

- can be in existence at the time of the visa application but must have no trading activity or staff before the visa is granted. A bank account can also be in existence but dormant
- must carry on the same line of business as the parent company

The visa:

- is applied for in the applicant's home country with the applicants delivering up their passports with the application
- is granted for three years and can then be extended for a further two years provided certain conditions are met including that the sole represent-

ative is still the most senior person in the UK operation. At five years, the visa holder can apply for indefinite leave to remain which means the person can stay indefinitely without the need for further work visas

Tier 1 Entrepreneur Visa

Tom Redfern, Redfern Legal

The Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa route allows eligible applicants to set up or invest in an existing business in the UK by investing at least £200,000 of their own funds (or £50,000 in limited circumstances) and creating full-time employment for at least two British, European or settled workers.

The funds must be held by the applicant for at least 90 days prior to applying, or made available to the applicant by a third party. In addition to investment funds, each applicant must also demonstrate access to savings funds over a certain threshold for 90 days prior to applying.

The applicant must also satisfy the English language requirement, the police clearance requirement, and to undergo tuberculoses (TB) testing

depending on country of origin/residency. The applicant also has to prepare a business plan to evidence how their background relates to the business they are proposing to operate. Their qualifications, work experience and previous business dealings are all part of this assessment.

Investment in property development or property management is not acceptable for visa purposes. Purchasing a business from a previous owner does

not count as qualifying investment if the money goes to the previous owner and leaves the company.

If approved, the initial visa is granted for three years and four months, and further leave of two years is granted if the applicant complies with the various extension requirements. This route leads to settlement after five years or can be accelerated to three years in some circumstances.





Opening a bank account

When you set up your business in London, you will also set up a business bank account. Charles O'Neill, Head of Inward Investment at Metro Bank, tells you what you'll need to bring along if you've set up a company or limited liability partnership (LLP).

- Business customer application for:**
 detailing company activities, projected turnover, transactions details, directors and beneficial owners and principal controllers, including the personal addresses and dates moved in.
- Identification and verification of address:**
 a recent bank statement or utility bill for all beneficial owners, directors and people who may be considered principal controllers of the business.
- Mandate for companies registered under the Companies Act:**
 contains details of all signatories to the account.
- Company structure chart:**
 detailing ownership and respective percentage share held. Underlying documentation must be supplied including but not limited to: certificate of incorporation, share registers, share certificates, partnership agreements, and trust agreements.
- Bank statements:**
 if your company is a newly registered subsidiary of an existing company, you will need to provide statements for your parent company – original or certified copies of the latest three months. If the business is new, you must provide original or certified copies of the latest three months of the personal bank statements of the business owners, directors and principal controllers.
- Registration of the company:**
 UK companies should provide the company registration number. Overseas companies should provide a certificate of incorporation and documentation confirming beneficial ownership at an individual level.
- Audited accounts:**
 if your business wants to borrow money from the bank, the bank may request copies of your financial accounts.

Recruiting staff

To be successful in London, you need to recruit and develop the best talent. You may also want to relocate team members from your offices around the world. This section tells you what to consider when relocating, recruiting and paying your team.



At a glance guide

Recruiting in the UK

Richard Cummings, Managing Director of Kingston Smith HR Consultancy, shares 7 key areas to consider when starting recruiting in the UK.

01 JOB DESCRIPTION

You may have an idea of the role, but detailing the total job purpose and then a list of tasks will help you convey what you are looking for, if you are recruiting yourself or using an agency.

02 RECRUITMENT AGENCY

Generally the more specialist or higher remunerated the role, the harder it is to find. Whilst agencies can charge up to 30% of the annual salary in fees (this is always negotiable), they do help reduce the volume of CV/resumes in your inbox and will manage the candidates expectations. Doing it yourself may save money in the short-term, but it can be time consuming and unfruitful.

03 EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

After two years' employment, employees have rights, until this point they are protected by Anti-discrimination laws, even during the recruitment process.

04 RIGHT TO WORK

Make sure all employees have the right to work in the UK by checking passports, work permits or visas, making sure you see original documentation and not copies. Keep a copy of any documentation you view, then sign and date it to confirm you have seen them. This could protect your business if an employee is found to not have the right to work in the UK at a later date.

When recruiting someone from outside of the UK, from April 2017, the Immigration Skills Charge will be applicable to all employers that employ migrants in skilled areas. This will cost employers £1,000 per Tier 2 migrant employee for each valid visa year. As most Tier 2 visas are issued for three years, this will mean that the additional cost of such applications will increase by £3,000.

05 OTHER CHECKS

Other factors to consider are background checks and referencing. The importance of these will depend on the role itself and these are necessary if you are a regulated business or the business you work with may want you to undertake these checks.

06 SALARY

Offering a competitive remuneration package can help secure the right candidate, but check you are in line with the current market. You can ask your recruiter or put yourself in the mind-set of a candidate and search a few live roles on the internet to compare.

07 THE CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Legally, your employee needs a contract during or before the end of the eighth week of employment. Detail the type of contract such as Permanent, Contract for Services, Fixed Term or Casual (there are others). You must also state, pay, pay date, hours of work, location of work, pension details and holidays. Protect your business with some well-drafted restrictions too.

Employer withholding tax responsibilities & social security

As an employer you have a number of tax and National Insurance Contributions (“NIC”) obligations relating to your workforce. Lee Knight, Employer Solutions Director at RSM, highlights the main obligations new employers to the UK should be aware of.

The basics

Employers in the UK are required to register as an employer with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), to pay employees in accordance with minimum wage legislation and to deduct Income Tax and employees’ NIC from employees’ earnings through the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system. Employer’s NIC is due on employees’ earnings via the PAYE system too.

Under PAYE you will need to complete tasks by deadlines each tax month, for example, information must be reported to HMRC online when employees are paid. Tax and NIC must be paid to HMRC by the 22nd of the month following payment, and non-compliance normally attracts HMRC penalties. These PAYE requirements can apply even to overseas employees working in the UK for short periods, so it is important you seek professional advice to find out whether this applies to your international employees.

From 6 April 2017 employers with a total wage bill in excess of £3 million are also required to pay an Apprenticeship Levy through the PAYE system.

Non-cash benefits and employee expenses

As an employer, you are also required to report certain non-cash benefits provided to employees on forms P11D by 06 July of the following tax year. It is, however, also possible to “payroll” certain benefits and/or deal with benefits via a PAYE Settlement Agreement.

An exemption for employee business expenses means that, where conditions are met, employee business expenses are not reportable to HMRC or liable to tax or NIC. You must ensure that you are meeting the conditions of this exemption in respect of employee expense payments.

Do not get caught out on self-employed worker status

If you engage self-employed workers you are required to check that their contractual and working arrangements support self-employed status by applying certain tests.

If HMRC contend that self-employed workers should have been treated as employees, they can recover the underpaid tax and NIC which should

have been paid through PAYE from you together with interest charges and penalties. It is crucial, therefore, that the status of self-employed workers is properly considered from the outset.

Other employer obligations

In addition to these tax and NIC requirements, there are a wide range of other statutory requirements which will apply to your workforce. As an example, employers are now legally required to enrol most of their workforce into a workplace pension scheme and to make employer contributions to that pension scheme. As an employer, it is vital that you are familiar and compliant with all of your statutory obligations as an employer.

UK employment law

UK employment law is influenced by European employment regulation but does have its own rules and requirements, advises David Kent, Partner at Fieldfisher.

Recruitment is a simple matter in the UK – avoid any discriminatory selection criteria, and utilise appropriate contracts of employment when signing on successful candidates which confirm key terms and protect the company’s confidential information and intellectual property. A well drafted offer letter will ensure that the proposed employee has the right to work in the UK. If the proposed employee is a non-EU national the employee will need to obtain one of the various immigration clearances to work in the UK. Care should also be taken to discover what notice period the proposed employee needs to give to leave the previous employer and what

non-compete clauses the employee is under even at the end of the notice period. Many UK hires can take longer than expected to bring on board.

The UK allows employers a lot of latitude in the early stages of an employment relationship. It is relatively easy for the employer to dismiss an employee – whether because of performance concerns or because the role is no longer required – and the employee will be entitled to an agreed notice period and any contractual payments. Once employees have been with the company for two years, they will gain additional rights which can mean dismissals require

more care and specific reasons. The UK has arguably the fairest and most reasonable employment laws of any country in the EU. However there is no such thing as termination at-will.

All employees enjoy certain rights and entitlements such as minimum levels of pay, paid holiday leave and notice, and limits on their working time. In most cases employees will also be entitled to receive a basic level of sick pay and pension contributions, and may be entitled to special paid time off for certain “family-friendly” leave such as for maternity, paternity or adoption.



Expert view

How to attract and retain talented individuals

James Webb, Managing Director of leading staffing company Propel shares his advice.

There are a number of ways to ensure that you not only attract the best talent but also retain it. Our recent Digital Insights report showed that 63% of staff would consider a new role within a year. What can you do to make sure you have motivated and happy staff? What can you offer them to make them stay with you as you grow your business?

Our survey showed us that whilst salary is very important (60% of our respondents said that was the main reason for taking a new role), there are other factors which will attract staff such as benefit packages. These will vary in terms of scale and options but the most important features that we have tracked are:

- Medical Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Childcare
- Travel insurances
- Pensions
- Discounted memberships
- Career breaks and sabbaticals

We also found that elements of remuneration packages, such as bonuses are incredibly important and can have an impact in reducing leaving intentions, especially with C-level executives.

Lastly, what is becoming more and more important now is the culture and work environment that your organisation offers. 17% of respondents in our survey cited this as a reason as to why they left a role. Bear in mind that as you grow your London team, you should also grow your London culture.



Setting up your office

London offers an unrivalled range of property: from flexible office start-ups through to multi-storey buildings, prestigious headquarters and secure warehousing. This section explains what you are likely to get for your money and the best ways to fit out a space.

Expert view

Choosing serviced office space

Predicting the growth and profitability of where your business will be in five years is extremely difficult, says Dan Brown, Director, Serviced Office Space at JLL, a financial and professional services firm that specialises in real estate and investment management.

- **Location:** ensure you select a location that has good transport links and the area offers good amenities, these points are crucial to attract the right kind of personnel. It often helps to be located in an area associated with your specific sector.
- **Price:** the rent that you pay includes almost all of the costs that you would normally expect to pay on top of rent in a conventional office. There are no additional costs for services, including security, cleaning and more.
- **Serviced offices:** offer clients flexible, cost-effective, “plug and play” rental solutions. The space is fully fitted and furnished and offers immediate occupation. Office suites can be rented from 1 to 100 people with contract periods

from three months to three years, which operate on a rolling renewal basis. The offices are rented by the workstation, which gives you a total office occupancy cost.

- **Co-working:** favoured by tech companies, this solution is typically open plan and tends to be in an informal setting, offering a community feel and encouraging companies to network with each other on a daily basis. Shared space tends not to be allocated and can be rented hourly, daily or monthly.

At a glance guide

Serviced office costs across London

01 OUTER WEST AND NORTH WEST

West London – Chiswick, Heathrow, Ealing **£350-600**

02 INNER NORTH

Angel **£650-900**
Kings Cross, Euston **£650-1000**

03 CITY

Bank, St Pauls, Liverpool Street **£550-1200**

04 INNER EAST

Old Street, Shoreditch **£650-900**
Aldgate, Whitechapel **£500-750**

05 OUTER EAST AND NORTH EAST

Stratford **£400-500**
Greenwich **£450-500**
Canary Wharf **£700-800**

06 OUTER SOUTH

Croydon **£350-450**

07 INNER SOUTH

South Bank (including Waterloo) **£550-1100**
Vauxhall **£500-750**
Victoria **£650-1000**

08 INNER WEST

West End, Mayfair, Soho, Covent Garden and Piccadilly **£850-1500**
Paddington **£650-800**
Hammersmith **£550-800**



Data provided by JLL. All prices are based on the cost of one workstation per month and subject to change

Expert view

How to plan the perfect office

Planning your office starts with your people, says Joe Firestone, Project Director at Progress Work Place Solutions.

Before you do anything, collate the information you need to create a brief for your designer. Start with an organisational chart and consider how this might change during your likely expansion throughout the lease term.

Collect photos of your overseas offices and seek guidance from colleagues who have delivered projects before. What would they have done differently? Decide whether you are going to replicate the look and feel of your other offices, or adopt a new London look.

Your brief should include desired and essential features as well as physical needs such as the number of required meeting rooms. Clearly state your IT requirements. Do you need a server room? Video conferencing? Laptop or PC-based solutions? You should

also decide how the workplace should 'feel'. Collate all the information ready for a discussion with your designer and/or project manager. They should fill in any gaps but it's sensible to choose a fit-out company that has proven experience of setting up other overseas companies in London.

Do...

- Employ a professional designer and/or project manager.
- Establish your requirements throughout the likely lease period.
- Decide on your office look and culture.
- If you operate in a talent-competitive sector, think about how your facilities could attract the talent you will need to succeed.
- Decide how much you want to be involved personally.

Don't...

- Attempt to deal with the statutory regulations, contractors and suppliers yourself.
- Assume additional space can be added as the business expands.
- Assume that services and costs will be the same as your home market.
- Spend your valuable time on setting up the office unless you want to.
- Rush. It's important that you set a realistic timetable and understand how long the search, negotiation and fit-out process is likely to take.

Progress is pleased to offer all London & Partners' clients a detailed feasibility study prior to property search. It helps to clarify your requirements and provides an accurate prediction of the property space you will need.



At a glance guide

How to negotiate a lease

Some key points to consider are set out below and we would recommend that you instruct a commercial surveyor and a real estate lawyer to advise you, says Karli Hiscock from professional services consultancy, Bates Wells Braithwaite.

01 THE PREMISES

Consider not only the space you need now but also your options for the future. The lease will govern your ability to sublet, share or assign. You will need the landlord's consent to make alterations to the premises.

02 RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE

You may be able to negotiate a rent free period or a stepped rent and also a service charge cap.

03 REPAIR

You will be responsible for the standard to which the premises must be maintained *during* the lease as well as the condition they must be handed back in at the *end* of the lease. You may want to negotiate a schedule of condition to qualify the standard of repair.

Find out at an early stage the likely Land Registry fees and Stamp Duty Land Tax payable

04 BREAK RIGHTS

If you need the option of terminating the lease early, a break right must be negotiated. The break will be subject to conditions.

05 USE

You need to ensure that the premises can be used as you intend - the position under planning law should be investigated.

06 DATA CABLING

If you need new cabling then you must ensure that the landlord will help you put in place the necessary agreements with the data operators.



Central Working

Central Working have created a bespoke offer for London & Partners clients, with membership costing just £149 per month, excl VAT, for up to 12 months. You can access all three central London locations – Bloomsbury, Shoreditch, Whitechapel.

First Office Hub

First Office Hub have developed a range of offers ranging from a starter plan for £75 per month, excl VAT to business lounge, co-working to private office membership options starting from £89 per month, excl VAT.

Hubble

Hubble have created a one-of-a-kind offer for London & Partners clients on a variety of their more than 1,000 offices - perfect for businesses in technology, media and creative industries. These include one month's free rent or up to 20% off for 3 months rent on a selection of spaces in different locations across London.

[Find out more: business.london/desk-hire](https://business.london/desk-hire)



London & Partners knew our company culture well and ensured that our office location would not only match these values, but help us flourish here in London.

James Eiloart, Senior Vice President,
EMEA, Tableau

Setting up a communications network

Danny Hill from IT Managed Services Provider, ITRM advises on considerations for your IT and telecoms provision.

Setting up a new office can be a larger project than most people realise. It is essential that you consider your IT and telecoms options early in the process as far too often they are left to the last minute, leading to added stress, or at worst, long delays and increased costs.

Every business wants fast internet and you need to determine your requirements as well as assess what is available in terms of both speed and providers at every location before you commit to an office site.

With many things to consider, it can be a daunting task. Other key areas to think about include:

- The type of telephone system you should install
- How much cabling will you need
- The best internet service – and what is available at your new site
- Whether to publish geographic or non-geographic numbers
- Setting up a server room

Working with an IT Managed Services provider can ensure that your infrastructure is properly managed, assembled and fully functional in your new office right away. We have extensive experience at setting up low cost, simple and effective solutions whilst also taking into consideration your long-term business needs.



The administrative cost of building a company in London is relatively low, with co-working spaces popping up all over the city to combat high rents. As London continues to foster an ecosystem that supports innovation, businesses will continue to achieve scale-up success.

Phil Cox, Silicon Valley Bank



04 LAUNCH AND GROW

The key to success in a new market is support for your launch and growth. Our experts share their advice on what it takes to ensure success in London and the UK.

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How to plan for a successful, and enjoyable, market entry

Knowing that London is a huge, dynamic market can lull a business into a false sense of security, hoping that by simply turning up, magic will happen. Jo Williams from market entry specialists Rochester PR shares her advice.

A good marketing and PR plan is essential when entering a new market. Start your research and preparation as early as possible – the perfect time to launch your business might be by participating in an annual show or exhibition, or putting on your own event, so land at the right time to take advantage of the opportunity.

Establish clear and engaging messages and an understanding about the tone of voice and brand personality that will stand you apart from your competition. Research what they are doing and saying, analyse the findings and agree what makes you different. Take another look at your business from a London point of view or take advice from a local.

Take the time to identify all the key stakeholders and develop a plan to reach them; the media, social media and influencers are stakeholders in their own right, as well as suppliers, customers, potential brand ambassadors, employees, local communities, industry trade and professional associations and governmental and regulatory bodies.

Often businesses do not appreciate the time it takes to meet the right people or that a new country can mean a completely different way of doing business. So build and use your network and the contacts of your advisers to best effect.

Companies often say they knew market entry would not be easy but that they

also did not think it would be quite so challenging. Do not rely solely on social media to build your profile. While it has changed the way many businesses and brands interact with their customers, it is unlikely to be the single answer to becoming known in a new territory.

Good PR or marketing ideas do not need to be complicated or expensive. Sometimes you will need to be pragmatic about what can be achieved.

Finally, enjoy yourself. Half the excitement and fun is being open to new ideas and leading or jumping on new emerging trends. Don't worry if your strategy needs to change, the world is constantly changing and London with it.



How to sell in the UK

Act like a local, says Damon Bonser, Director at market entry company, Trade Horizons.

01 SET AMBITIOUS, BUT ACHIEVABLE TARGETS

Understanding what is achievable in your market sector is essential to setting ambitious, but achievable targets. Examine your direct competitors: how long did it take them to build their market share? For how long were they a tier two supplier, before they became a preferred partner? What type of activities and level of investment helped them establish their position?

02 THE VALUE OF LOCAL TALENT FOR SALES

The value of hiring a local senior sales-person to lead your early sales efforts, someone who has sector experience, knowledge, and contacts, cannot be under-estimated. Such a person is most likely to get appointments with target prospects and start generating results quicker than someone from HQ.

03 HIRE FOR ATTITUDE, TRAIN FOR SKILLS

As a new market entrant, you need a sales team that is willing to adapt. Provide constant training and support to develop their knowledge of your products or services and invest in developing any required skills. Do not over-focus on having a sales team with knowledge and skills from day one. The right sales attitude is much more important, certainly in the early years.

04 REWARD WITH MORE THAN JUST MONEY

If you are hiring sales people in the UK, they will have chosen to work for you, not the other way around. These people need to be kept motivated and feel they are valued. If not, you will find yourself over-spending on recruitment and lose time and focus on vital early sales.

05 FEED YOUR SALES PIPELINES

As a new business in the UK, you will need a steady flow of sales leads to feed your sales pipelines. You will also typically experience a slower rate of conversion as your reputation is being built in the marketplace and so a constant, high level of qualified leads is required. Resources (people, money and time) are required to find and qualify these leads, and also to manage the data in the pipeline to ensure you have an accurate snapshot of the sales you expect to close.

06 GET YOUR PITCH RIGHT

UK clients will have different expectations, the tender processes may be different and more complex, and most importantly, the competitors may have shaped the way new business is pitched. As a new entrant, you have an exciting opportunity to change the way things are done, but always be mindful that your pitch may need to be adapted to be effective against the established competition.

At a glance guide

Promoting your business

Rachel Gilley, Managing Director at brand communications agency Bite talks through introducing your business to London and the UK.

Introducing your business to London is an exciting feeling, but may feel a little daunting. There are many brands vying for attention in the capital, but if you're smart, you will be heard. London is bursting with culture and every brand has an opportunity to be part of it.

What makes you different?

Take a step back and look at your business with a fresh pair of eyes. What makes you different in London? Your brand needs a story that everyone can tell, including your agency, friends, family and customers. Keep it simple, and it'll get people talking.

What is your vision?

You need to be a thought leader. How and why was the business founded? How was it set up? What does your industry need to do to thrive? And importantly, what is the long term vision for the company? Demonstrating this focus will prove your brand is going places.

Immerse yourself

Get to know British nuances and idiosyncrasies, and take the time to embed yourself in the culture. Opportunities can pop up from every part of London life. You never know, your brand could thrive in a market you'd never even considered before.

Working with a communications agency

Your communications agency should feel like an extension of your business. Form a tight partnership early, and it could be the start of something beautiful. Here are a few things to consider:

Influencing the game

The art of comms is to know exactly who you need to be talking to; whether they are journalists, analysts, bloggers or super fans. A good comms agency will be able to list the top 10 influencers you should be talking to in your first 90 days. Create a plan for targeting these individuals/publications/analyst houses with messaging that is bespoke and relevant.

Content cache

You need to have a steady stream of original and engaging content, and ideally your agency will be able to help produce it. Keep the format varied: opinion articles, videos and infographics, alongside more traditional assets such as press releases.

Winning formula

Being shortlisted for awards and – fingers crossed – actually winning them adds credibility to your brand. Logo endorsements from organisations can also be added to your marketing collateral, including your website. Work with your agency to identify the best awards to enter, and get ready to pop the champagne.



It's great to have an ally like London & Partners when you are entering a new market.

Christopher Lukezic, Publisher and Special Projects Manager, Airbnb

Expert view

The art of networking

James Layfield, Founder of Central Working, says the secret of successful networking is making the most of London's friendly and connected community.

We're a friendly bunch in London so when you need help you must ask. London has the people and the resources to help you to grow your business.

In London, we are awash with opportunities to make connections. From the many websites like Eventbrite.co.uk, MeetUp.com or Lanyrd.com which can yield a plethora of potential meetings, events, lunches, drinks and other activities. Through to members clubs and workspaces which will try to help you settle in to the city.

Fundamentally getting the most of networking is a two way street. It is not just about broadcasting what you want or need. The best way is instead to listen and try to help with their challenges and opportunities.



You can find a list of local business networks that can help you connect with the ecosystem on [invest.london](#). London & Partners also run the London Business Growth Programme and the London VC Club, both of which can help your business grow in London once you have landed.

Business Growth Programme

Tailored to your business growth ambitions, London & Partners' Business Growth programme offers impartial business advice and support to businesses based in London with fewer than 250 employees and turnover of less than £40m, looking to grow across London and the outer boroughs. We can help unlock your business potential by identifying barriers to growth and providing strategic solutions including mentoring, workshops, business growth advice and opportunities across our London network.

Find out more: [business.london/growth](#)

London VC Club

The London VC Club facilitates introductions to London's leading investors allowing startups and scale-ups to grow more quickly. If you're a startup or scale-up seeking investment, joining the London VC Club will enable you to put yourself in front of London's leading Corporate Venture Capital (CVC) firms, Venture Capital (VC) firms, crowdfunding platform and angel network.

Find out more: [business.london/vc](#)

05 ENJOY LONDON LIFE

London is one of the most exciting and vibrant cities on earth. This chapter takes you through the best ways to find your home and enjoy daily life in this unique metropolis.

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Top tips when relocating

Relocating to a new city can be both daunting and exciting. Katie Shapely, Managing Director of The Organisers, relocation experts, gives her top tips to finding your new home.

01 THINK

Think about what kind of property you would like, would you prefer an apartment, a house, bungalow, new build or character home? Do you want to rent or buy? Do you want to be able to move straight in, or would you like to add your own twist on décor and layout?

02 RESEARCH

What kind of area would you like to live in? Are you looking for the city buzz or the calmer suburbs? Make sure you investigate the local area – whether you're after a local supermarket, a park to run in or tube station for easy commuting, do your research.

03 BUDGET

When you have an idea on the property type and location, get your finances together. Property costs can veer wildly, even in the same area, and remember to allow for additions like Council Tax and in some cases, agent fees. Ensure you feel comfortable with the budget and what it covers..

04 PLAN

Start thinking about when you need to move in. Make a plan of action for your international relocation. Once you have an idea of these dates it will help with your new property search and create a timeline. A good British saying – if you fail to plan then you are planning to fail.

05 SEARCH

Whether it be online, through a relocation agent or recommendations from friends, start your property search. Be patient and flexible, and make sure your search partner understands what is really important to you. Ask lots of questions, including minimum rental period, inventory, who will be the property manager, what are the estimated bills and if there are any issues in the neighbourhood. When ready to sign on the dotted line, read the small print on your contract.

06 MOVE

Congratulations! You now have your documents all signed and a move date in the diary. Ensure you give yourself enough time to move to your new property. Get two quotes from removal firms and make sure you buy insurance too. Check the inventory carefully, and give feedback within the allotted time.

07 LONDON IS OPEN

Once unpacked and moved in, relax and open that well deserved bottle of English Sparkling wine, to celebrate your new home and your exciting London adventure.

What price for a roof over your head?

Data based on a sample compiled by Greater London Authority, covering 12 months from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

Median monthly rental values: 1 bed

£1,400+	£1,200-£1,400	£1,000-£1,200	£800-£1,000
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Schools

The competition for good school places in London remains fierce so do plan ahead, says Katie Shapley, Managing Director of relocation and education consultants, The Organisers.

The main options for education in London are the state and private, also known as independent systems.

The state system operates on a catchment area policy: your home address entitles you to a place at a school within a certain geographical radius. You will be asked to select your preferred schools from a list, but you will not be guaranteed a place at your ‘number one’ choice. The local education authority allocates school places, rather than the school itself. Parents do not pay for state school education, except to fund items such as uniforms and school trips.

Every state school is assessed and scored for the quality of its education. Visit ofsted.gov.uk to read the reports. State school classes are typically around 30 to 35 pupils in size, with a teacher and teaching assistant.

In the private sector, you are not limited to a catchment area: you can apply to any school you choose. Many private schools have feeder nurseries that they select their children from so it is important to know where to try and place pre-school

children. You can find ratings for independent schools at isi.net

Private nurseries and schools have smaller class sizes compared to state schools: typically 15–20 children per class with a teacher and, in the younger classes, there could be a teaching assistant too.

Annual private school fees range from around £8,000 to more than £18,000 per year.

Applying to a private school usually involves a registration process and visit, a report from your current school head teacher, an entrance exam and an interview.

The Organisers have a wealth of knowledge within the industry, as well as established relationships with many schools throughout London and can organise and guide you through the entire process.



Transport

With six airports and direct flights to over 396 destinations, London is an easy destination to arrive to and travel from. The vibrant city is also a pleasure to explore and whether it be by car, train, bus, bicycle or boat there are new ways to see London between meetings or in your free time.

Travel to and from London

Air
London has great links to six international airports, London Heathrow, London Stansted, London Gatwick, London City, London Luton and London Southend. Each are accessible via public transport.

Eurostar
London St Pancras offers a walk on passenger service to and from Paris in two hours and fifteen minutes or Brussels in one hour and fifty one minutes. This service runs frequently and is a great form of international travel, cutting out airport waiting times. Tickets can be bought online prior to travel or on the day depending on availability.

Travelling around London

London Underground
The Underground is divided into nine zones which have a range of different fares. The tube map is divided into different colour tubes lines, of which

there are 11, to show the available routes around London. The easiest way to travel on the Tube is to use your Oyster card or contactless bank card to tap in and out of tube stations.

National Rail
Trains offer transport across London and are useful to reach places that do not have the Underground. There are price changes depending on which zone and whether travelling during peak times

Black Cabs
London's traditional and iconic black cabs are available all around London. When in need of a taxi, they can be hailed down when they have their yellow light on show. Taxis are able to travel in bus lanes, reducing travel time. Payment can be made with cash or card.

Bus
Iconic red, double decker buses ride around London via their own bus lanes. Enjoy the views and atmosphere of the city by sitting on the top deck. Payment can be made with your Oyster card or contactless bank card.

Bicycle
There are lots of cycle lanes in London. Santander Cycle Hire has various docking locations to hire bicycles. The hire process is easy using your debit or credit card as payment, but if you are after a quick cycle the first 30 minutes are free.

The Transport for London (TFL) website provides information on all modes of London transport. For 24-hour travel information call +44 (0)343 222 1234 or visit their website tfl.gov.uk

Time off and time out

As a London resident, you, your family and friends will have some of the world's best sights and attractions on your doorstep. Here are some of London & Partners' top reasons to spend time away from your desk.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

You can't fail to be excited by London's amazing attractions. See London from above on the Coca-Cola London Eye, meet a celebrity at Madame Tussauds or examine precious treasures at the British Museum. What's more, many of London's top attractions are free!

WEST END THEATRE

London has the best theatre scene so don't be surprised to see a few famous faces on the London stage. Take your pick from long-running musicals, classic plays or a West End debut.

PREMIER SHOPPING DESTINATIONS

You're spoilt for choice when shopping in London; from the flagship stores on Oxford Street, to gifts and bric-a-brac at London's markets, or visit an iconic department store such as Harrods or Selfridges.

ICONIC SKYLINE

There are plenty of places to view the iconic skyline along the river, but make sure you take in a panoramic view of London from up high too.

BEAUTIFUL GREEN SPACES

The capital is home to eight beautiful Royal Parks, including Hyde Park, St James's Park and Richmond Park. Alternatively, visit one of London's peaceful gardens such as Kew Gardens or Chelsea Physic Garden.

RIVER AND WATERWAYS

The Thames flows through Central London and provides a stunning backdrop to many of the city's top tourist attractions. River bus services and river tours are great ways to beat the traffic and enjoy wonderful views.

TOP SPORT

See a match in London or take a tour of the capital's spectacular sporting venues from Chelsea FC's home at Stamford Bridge, to Lord's Cricket Ground or Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum.

EXPLORE LONDON'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

Venture outside Central London to discover fascinating London areas, from leafy Richmond with its green spaces and riverside walks, to Greenwich's maritime attractions, or Brixton's markets and lively cultural scene.

[visitlondon.com](https://www.visitlondon.com)



London & Partners is the Mayor of London's official promotional agency.

Our purpose is to support the Mayor's priorities by promoting London internationally, as the best city in the world in which to invest, work, study and visit.

We are the experts on doing business in the capital, helping businesses to set up and grow. We open direct access to expert and experienced professionals, who advise and guide businesses through every aspect of locating and doing business in London.



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