



## Finding a partner in the Philippines

### Fast facts

**Company:** Pentland Brands plc

**Industry:** Retail/ Clothing, Footwear and Fashion

**Target Market:** Philippines

**UKTI Services:** Overseas Market Introduction Service, Trade Mission

[www.pentland.com](http://www.pentland.com)



**UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has supported the expansion of Pentland's international business for several years. In 2011, the company used the Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) to find a partner to introduce three of its brands to the Philippines.**

The Pentland story began in Liverpool in 1932, when Berko & Minnie Rubin began selling fashion shoes to UK retailers. In the 1960s, the Liverpool Shoe Company, as it was then known, expanded and set up a division in Hong Kong, one of the first UK companies to source products in Asia. In 1973, it changed its name to Pentland Industries Ltd, and continued to grow both in the UK and internationally over the decades that followed.

Through the 1990s, Pentland acquired a strong portfolio of some of the greatest international brands in sports, outdoor wear and fashion, including Berghaus,

KangaROOS, Mitre, Boxfresh, Red or Dead, Speedo and Canterbury. Pentland is also the global footwear licensee for Lacoste Chaussures and Ted Baker. The company, which is still family-owned today, has always been proactive in pursuing new markets. It is now present in 195 countries around the world, employs over 16,000 people and has annual sales of USD\$3 billion.

“Pentland is proud of its company history and its international growth,” says Jamie Meikleham, Commercial Director of Pentland Asia. “When our current Chairman, Stephen Rubin, took over from his father, he started sourcing products from Asia. Since then we have built up a strong portfolio of brands. Our key focus is to grow sales in key markets across Europe, the Americas and Asia.”

### Market research

In recent years, as it has sought to expand its global reach, Pentland has

often used UKTI's OMIS to research new markets, including India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Japan, Latin America and South Korea. In 2010, the company decided to target the next tier of emerging economies such as Indonesia, South Africa and the Philippines. It commissioned an OMIS asking the UKTI team in Manila to identify partners in the Philippines through whom it could sell three of its brands: Berghaus, KangaROOS and Mitre. UKTI delivered a list of potential candidates, and went on to help Pentland to arrange meetings for a market visit in mid-2011.

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“We have found that a strong OMIS brief to the in-market UKTI team can bring excellent results,” says Jamie. “The team in the Philippines were fantastic. They really understood our brief and delivered a shortlist of suitable candidates for us to meet. I flew out with the Regional Heads of the brands for just three days, and UKTI had lined up seven meetings for us in that short time. They also came with us to introduce us personally to the local businesses, which gave us credibility and helped to build a rapport right off the bat. It was an intense visit, but thanks to UKTI we certainly made the most of our time.”

### Promising partnership

One of the candidates that Pentland met, Quorum Holdings, particularly fit the bill. Like Pentland, the sports and lifestyle company is family-owned and it shares a similar business culture. In November 2012, Jamie returned to the Philippines with the Group CEO Andy Rubin for further talks with Quorum, taking the opportunity to meet the British Ambassador in Manila.

After further negotiations and a feasibility study, in December 2012 Pentland and Quorum signed Licence and Distribution

Agreements. Since then, the three brands have been launched very successfully in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in recognition of its success overseas, in 2013 Pentland received The Queen’s Award for Enterprise in the International Trade category. This was the fifth Queen’s Award for Enterprise presented to the company and its brands.

“We are pleased to include Quorum in our Asian partner network and look forward to a long and successful relationship with them,” says Jamie. “It’s not always easy to find local representation in overseas markets, but UKTI gives us access to a network of people on-the-ground. We find it very useful to have the support of the local British Embassy to open doors to partners and people that we couldn’t reach alone. OMIS in particular is a cost-effective way of researching a new market. It is the best support that the UK Government offers businesses, and I would certainly recommend it.”

### The UK and the Philippines

With a population of over 103 million people, the Philippines is one of the largest markets in South East Asia and one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world. The economy grew by 6.6 per cent in 2012 and prospects for 2013 are upbeat following the recent BBB- investment grade rating by rating agency Fitch.

The Philippines continues to offer significant opportunities for UK brands, with its expanding middle class, and young, consumer-driven market. In 2012, exports of goods from the UK to the Philippines were up 17 per cent compared to the year before, amounting to £332 million. Latest available data show a 6.8 per cent year-on-year growth in UK exports for January - May 2013.

**For further information about business opportunities in the Philippines, please go to [www.ukti.gov.uk/philippines](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/philippines)**

### Helping you access international markets

Doing business in another country can be a challenge, so it’s good to know that UK Trade & Investment is there to help you succeed.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected trade fairs, overseas missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, UK Trade & Investment can help you crack foreign markets and quickly get to grips with regulations and business practices overseas.

UK Trade & Investment’s Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) is a flexible business tool, letting you use the services of our trade teams, located in our embassies, high commissions and consulates across the world, to benefit your business.

A service package could include:

- Market, sector advice
- Analysis of market entry strategies
- Support during overseas visits
- Identification of possible business partners

UKTI was delighted to support Pentland Brands plc in its business overseas.



To find an adviser in your chosen market and begin your own success story now, scan this code with your smart phone, visit [www.ukti.gov.uk/trade](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/trade), or email [enquiries@ukti.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ukti.gsi.gov.uk)

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