



## UKTI sets up Stage One for success

### Fast facts

**Company:** Stage One Creative Services

**Industry:** Creative

**Target Market:** Hong Kong, Macao

**UKTI Service:** Trade Mission

**www.stageone.co.uk**



**UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) is supporting Stage One Creative Services with its overseas business. UKTI's Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) and a recent High Value Opportunity (HVO) Trade Mission to Hong Kong and Macao allowed the company to build relationships with local authorities and potential clients.**

Stage One is a leading innovative creative construction and manufacturing company. It combines design, engineering and technology to deliver astonishing visual impact on a global scale and has an enviable reputation for delivering difficult projects in high profile environments. The company's clients are some of the most creative minds and the best technical producers in architecture, engineering, entertainment, corporate events and art. The diversity of this client base means Stage One has developed a particular blend of expertise that is considered unique.

The company was established in Tockwith, near York in the UK and now also has offices in Australia and Qatar.

It has a team of 95 full time employees, who are supported by a dedicated team of freelance specialists as and when required.

"We bring the creative visions of our clients to life, providing innovative solutions for a wide variety of major projects," says Alan Ellis, Performance Director at Stage One. "Our innovation has been behind the 'wow!' factor at several Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Ceremonies from Athens 2004 to Sochi 2014."

### Olympic pedigree

Stage One's association with the London 2012 Olympics provided the company with a global platform to showcase its capabilities and expertise. It delivered the field of play and undercroft for the beach volleyball arena, provided scenic elements and rigging for the opening and closing ceremonies and most notably was commissioned to build the Olympic Cauldron designed by Thomas Heatherwick.

This success at London 2012 has been recognised internationally and has

subsequently led to projects that have been delivered for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. In September of 2013, Stage One was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise, Britain's most prestigious business award, in recognition of ten years' continuous innovation. These awards are not conferred lightly and this provides a strong affirmation of the strength and depth of the business.

### Creative Task Force

Around 75 per cent of Stage One's work is for overseas clients. Efficient internationalisation and effective partnership will provide the two main drivers for success against the company's strategic plan. Whilst there is opportunity for some growth in domestic markets, the bigger prize will come from finding and delivering against overseas opportunities. This will require international marketing, collaboration and partnership.

Stage One is already engaged with UKTI, which is helping it to identify and connect with appropriate export markets.



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Alan Ellis, Performance Director, Stage One Creative Services

The company was invited to join the Creative Industries HVO Task Force - a collection of the UK's top 100 creative agencies selected to represent the British creative industry, as part of a campaign to boost UK trade by £500 million over the next three years. As well as finding out more about the support that UKTI can offer UK businesses with its export efforts, Stage One has begun to partner with other companies from the Task Force, planning a joined-up approach to win overseas business.

“Joining the Creative Task Force really opened my mind to how to use UKTI's support to the best advantage,” says Alan. “It's critical to get in front of the right people at the right time. This is where UKTI really excels. They have been very supportive, advising us about how to get into new markets, what costs are involved and how to win new business once we're there. Expanding into overseas markets is challenging, and we're keen to be as efficient and effective as possible. Having UKTI to guide us helps reduce the risks.”

### Heading East

In the course of its discussions with a UKTI International Trade Adviser (ITA), Stage One learned about opportunities opening up for UK businesses in Hong Kong and Macao. Interested by what it heard, the company used OMIS to plan a fact-finding visit for October 2013. UKTI's in-market teams set up meetings with the West Kowloon Cultural Development Authority, leading architects in Hong Kong and four major operators in Macao. It also provided £3000 funding towards the trip. This visit laid the groundwork for some key relationships. A UKTI Trade Mission to Hong Kong and Macao in February 2014 gave Stage One the opportunity to develop those contacts further.

“UKTI is very well connected in Hong Kong and Macao, and gave us a short cut to potential clients who are incredibly relevant to our business,” says Alan. “Repeat visits are important to show your commitment to a market. The trade

mission in February gave me the chance to meet again with key decision makers that we had met on our independent visit in October, like Michael Lynch CEO of the West Kowloon Cultural Development Authority, and understand directly from them what their needs are and how we can help. UKTI also introduced us to new contacts, such as SJM Holdings. We are now in talks about creating a media room for them. HVOs can be complicated to navigate, but being aligned with the expertise that UKTI bring to the table, rather than approaching these markets in isolation, will give us a greater chance of being successful and winning business. That's why working with UKTI is a key part of our strategy over the next five years.”

### The UK and Hong Kong

**Hong Kong is an international city with a population of just over seven million. It is the world's 10th largest trading economy and one of Asia's leading financial and business centres.**

With one of the most open and business-friendly environments in the world, Hong Kong offers excellent opportunities for UK companies, large and small. For the big infrastructure/experience economy projects (such as West Kowloon Cultural District or Kai Tak Multi Purpose Stadium Complex) there are opportunities from front end design, consultancy and engineering and across the creative spectrum, through to retail.

In 2013, UK exports of goods to Hong Kong were valued at £5.25 billion, making Hong Kong the UK's 14th largest export market worldwide.

Not only is Hong Kong an attractive market in its own right and a connector to the Mainland China market, it is also an ideal base for regional operations. Hong Kong is situated in a central position in East Asia, with half the world's population within 5 hour's flying time.

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

### Helping you to do business abroad

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.

Through our Passport to Export programme we offer new and inexperienced exporters:

- Free capability assessments
- Support in visiting potential markets
- Mentoring from a local export professional
- Free action plans
- Customised and subsidised training
- Ongoing support once you're up and running

UKTI was delighted to support Stage One Creative Services in its business overseas.



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

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