The Early Adopter Effect

UK SMEs are tapping into emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain and cryptocurrencies to gain competitive advantage, according to research of exporting SMEs in the FedEx SME Export Report.

EMERGING TECH ADOPTION AMONG UK SMEs

Newer technologies are used by a growing number of European SMEs that export:

- **30%** use artificial intelligence (AI)
- **24%** use blockchain
- **17%** use cryptocurrencies

5 BENEFITS OF BEING AN EARLY ADOPTER VS. A LATER ADOPTER

1. More likely to report higher revenue
2. More likely to export to markets outside Europe
3. Export revenue accounts for a higher share of total revenue
4. More likely to cite bringing new products to market, market expansion and supply chain improvements as export revenue drivers
5. Less likely to be concerned by decreasing demand for their products and accessing finance

UK SMEs: INTERESTING NUGGETS

- **8 in 10** SMEs surveyed export outside of Europe
- **39%** of exporting SMEs expect an increase in exports to other European markets
- **41%** of exporting SMEs anticipate an increase in exports to markets outside of Europe
- **67%** of total revenue for exporting SMEs

**£1.67m**

Average annual export revenue per SME that exports

WHERE UK SMEs EXPORT TO

- **43%** to North America (+3%)
- **43%** to Europe (+2%)
- **31%** to Asia (+5%)
- **27%** to Asia Pacific (+5%)
- **29%** to Middle East (+3%)
- **24%** to Latin America (+9%)
- **24%** to Africa (+2%)

Bracketed figure shows change from 2017 study.

Summary

- **Other European markets = 88% (+2%)**
- **Markets outside Europe = 78% (+15%)**

About the research, Harris Interactive carried out 4,570 online interviews with senior executives in SMEs which export, in eight European markets between February and March 2019. Interviews were conducted with a representative mix of company sizes: micro (1-9 full-time employees), small (10-49 full-time employees) and medium (50-249 full-time employees). The sample size was approximately 500 respondents per market, with the exception of the UK, where the sample size was 1,016 respondents.