

CHICAGO, USA

POPULATION: 2.7 million

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Groupon, GrubHub, Uptake

PLUS POINT: Produced several 'unicorns'

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: A new hotspot for private companies and tech development, especially with the cost of living less than in the coastal hub, Silicon Valley. This city has produced over 10 'unicorns' (start-ups worth over US\$1 billion) and over 100 companies in the Inc.5000. Chicago start-ups use alternative funding methods, such as angel investors and crowdfunding, and tap into graduate tech talent from the many local universities.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

POPULATION: 8.6 million

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Zoopla, Innocent, ASOS

PLUS POINT: 75 per cent of Fortune 500 companies have London offices

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: London is home to many of the world's largest, most influential brands, media and financial companies and hosts the most start-ups in all of Britain. It also has Europe's greatest concentration of both female entrepreneurs and higher education institutions. The capital is brimming with not-for-profit organisations, creative talent and government-funded initiatives (Tech City UK) to get your business off the ground. With more than 300 languages spoken in London, there's a strong cultural offering when it comes to building a diverse, international business.

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Where's the hottest place in the world to be a start-up or entrepreneur? Is there one place you'd like to take your business. If you just said Silicon Valley, then let us stop you for a moment. There is – quite literally – a whole world out there for you to explore. Whitney Edwards has been on a journey of discovery, and here she offers her top picks



STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

POPULATION: 2.2 million

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Spotify, Skype, SoundCloud

PLUS POINT: Fika with colleagues

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Stockholm is one of the world's most prolific tech hubs – it is said to have the most digitally connected economy in the world. It has a vibrant, entrepreneurial culture, wealth of talent from the university's engineering graduates and experienced tycoons who love a new challenge. This Nordic city has excellent standards of living and an inspiring work-life balance featuring 'fika'; a short chat with colleagues featuring coffee and cake that boosts productivity. Start-ups here need to network locally but think globally.



TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

POPULATION: 426,000

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Wix, Fiverr, PlayBuzz

PLUS POINT: It's a beach city

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Tel Aviv is appealing to entrepreneurs as it offers a very open and trusting business scene with no funding gap. With the highest density of start-ups worldwide, this tech hub is powered by a wealth of angel investors and venture capital firms forming a collaborative community with local mentors, talent and creatives. Businesses here have international outlooks and keen problem-solving abilities; expect well-developed, innovative tech propositions.



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

POPULATION: 4.9 million

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Canva, Campaign Monitor, Freelancer.com

PLUS POINT: Sydney Harbour on your doorstep

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Beautiful scenery, friendly business culture and incredible coffee – Sydney attracts many business owners.

There's been an expansion in micro-businesses, with many start-up accelerators and incubators plus quality supporting infrastructure.

The local workforce is multicultural, with many specialists in the tech and creative industries. This city's time zone overlaps with business hours in Asia and the US West Coast – so you won't drop off the grid.



MANCHESTER

POPULATION: 523,727

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Fatsoma, PharamKure, TechBritain

PLUS POINT: Bustling start-up scene

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Forget music, entrepreneurship is the new 'cool' in Manchester. It's the second-largest tech cluster in Britain and the #MCRTop5 campaign is set to make it one of the top five start-up destinations in Europe. Manchester's cultural diversity makes it an ideal location for entrepreneurs – it contributes £46 billion to the UK economy; the tech and comms sector was responsible for £1.9 billion in 2013/14 and the innovative MediaCity is undergoing a £1.1 billion expansion. It's all systems go here.



BRISTOL

POPULATION: 442,500

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Blu Wireless Technology, MapleBird, SecondSync

PLUS POINT: Where better to 'start up' than Silicon Gorge?

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Topped the UK's 'Start-up Cities Index 2015'

Bristol needs little introduction. But, the sheer amount of entrepreneurial activity in this, the fastest growing start-up hub in the UK is astounding. If you're thinking tech, this city must be on your radar. It's home to the Bristol and Bath Science Park, which offers lab space and hot desks to fast-growing businesses, hosts the Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, which has 350 businesses on site, and it has a great community vibe. Head here and you'll find plenty of creative, innovative individuals waiting to connect your business.

THE CITIES OF THE FUTURE

Whatever corner of the UK your business is in doesn't matter, there's a fast growing network of high-tech, innovative cities with which you and your brand can connect

EDINBURGH

POPULATION: 492,700

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: FreeAgent, Float, 123Solar

PLUS POINT: Haggis, history, comedy and massive growth for start-ups

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Edinburgh is one of the fastest growing cities in Scotland. And that's before you take into account start-up growth. The city is home to some of Scotland's leading science parks and research centres, and innumerable office spaces and start-up hubs so you won't have to fight for space (there are more than 100 tech start-ups alone). Your first stop should be Techcube, an incubator that specialises in growth and development of early-stage businesses through community and mentoring. Edinburgh's community is close-knit, supportive and has a real sense of camaraderie, and a host of annual events give the perfect chance to network. You even get the Edinburgh Festival on your doorstep – do you need another reason?

CAMBRIDGE

POPULATION: 136,300

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Crowdsurfer, Darktrace, MISSION Therapeutics

PLUS POINT: Stunning architecture, famous university and punting (on your days off)

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: A recent study named Cambridge as the best place in the UK to work. This world-famous university city is at the forefront of the tech world, a status reflecting the growing influence of the East on the UK's entrepreneurial landscape – along with cities like Norwich and Ipswich, it's fast becoming a hub for young, innovative types. Contact Cambridge Angels, a group of high-net-worth investors with proven experience who invest in and mentor high-quality start-ups and early-stage businesses, particularly if you're a techie – the European Digital City Index lists Cambridge as the 11th best city in Europe for digital entrepreneurs, ahead of Madrid, Barcelona and Vienna among others.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

POPULATION: 273,400

SUCCESSFUL START-UPS: Rum Architecture, Joanna Kennedy Marketing, Cin Cin

PLUS POINT: Wake up each morning with a view of 'Silicon Beach'

WHAT'S WORKING HERE: Forget tourism, Brighton and Hove is buzzing with entrepreneurial growth. According to research by Start Up Britain, it has more start-ups per capita than anywhere else in the UK. Visit and you'll find a city entirely geared around innovation and new business. Denton Island, an enterprise centre, provides incubator units for start-ups with up to 10 people; Sussex Innovation Centre helps start-ups and corporate investors and Coast 2 Capital is fostering growth by connecting business with vital support services.