

BUSINESS Post Daily

Business briefing

Eversheds: The Nottingham office of law firm Eversheds has announced the promotion of Sophie Robinson to the firm's partnership.

Sophie is a member of the firm's commercial team and specialises in projects work using a variety of funding, procurement and contractual structures.

She advises both public and private sector clients in the UK and internationally across a variety of sectors.

The Nottingham office has also announced Louise Howarth, Mark Pipkin and Clare Ward as principal associates and Douglas Hight and William Spickett as senior associates.

Reed: New permanent jobs are growing faster than temporary or contract vacancies as confidence grows among UK employers, says website reed.co.uk

So far in 2014, the number of permanent jobs available has grown by more than 21 per cent compared to the 2013 average. At the same time, temporary jobs and contract positions have both risen by 16 per cent.

Overall, April saw new jobs in the UK grow by 28 per cent year-on-year.

Expansion plans: Alliance Boots chairman Stefano Pessina.

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Boots in big Latin America deal

By Richard Baker

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BOOTS cosmetics made in Nottingham will go on sale in shops in Latin America after the high street giant unveiled a £370 million acquisition deal.

Parent company Alliance Boots revealed that it has signed a deal to buy a pharmacy business which owns more than 1,000 stores in Mexico and Chile.

The move marks the latest step in a strategy to transform the business into a global leader in pharmacy, health, beauty and wellbeing retailing and wholesaling.

Alliance Boots announced yesterday that it had signed an agreement to buy Farmacias Ahumada, which runs two pharmacy retailing businesses in Mexico and Chile.

Farmacias Benavides is the third biggest pharmacy chain in Mexico and runs about 1,000 stores, while Farmacias Ahumada is one of the largest pharmacy chains in Chile with around 400 stores.

Alliance Boots has not said how much it has agreed to pay for the business, which has

total annual sales of around £835m, but it is thought to be more than £370 million.

Speaking to the Post, Alliance Boots executive chairman Stefano Pessina said the acquisition marked Alliance Boots' first step into Latin America and offered more opportunities to export products made in Nottingham.

"This is another step for-

"This is another step forward for us - 1,400 pharmacies is a good start

Stefano Pessina

ward for us," he said. "There are other things we would also like to achieve in Latin America, but 1,400 pharmacies with two good names is a good start.

"These are quite well-established names and it means we will have more pharmacies where we can sell Boots products.

"Customers in Chile are quite affluent, perhaps not so much in Mexico, but we have

products which are suitable for all markets and we will choose what we sell very carefully.

"I believe that most of the beauty products that we sell will go down well in Chile and Mexico."

Alliance Boots is in the process of becoming one of the biggest businesses of its kind in the world, having entered into a partnership two years ago with the US giant Walgreens to create a world-leading pharmacy, health and beauty and wellbeing business.

The strategy has seen Boots-branded products appearing on the shelves of Walgreens' store network in the US.

But it is also looking to buy businesses in other parts of the world, with Mr Pessina hinting he wanted to do more in China.

Boots already has a presence in 25 countries, a store chain which is 3,100 strong and 108,000 employees.

Farmacias Ahumada adds 400 outlets in 98 Chilean cities employing 3,900 people, while Farmacias Benavides has 1,000 stores in 150 cities and 7,800 staff.



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Optimism on rise among smaller manufacturers

Optimism among the UK's smaller manufacturers has surged to its highest level since records began in 1988, says the CBI's SME Trends survey.

That's on the back of small and medium-sized manufacturers saying that total orders and output rallied in the three months to April.

Numbers employed also enjoyed a sharp boost, and em-

ployment is expected to grow even more in the next quarter.

The survey of 366 SME manufacturers showed that domestic orders rose strongly, while exports bounced back from a fall in the previous quarter. Both are expected to see robust growth in the next quarter.

Output grew solidly for the third consecutive quarter, with

output expectations for the next three months at their highest since January 1995.

Firms' investment intentions for buildings in the year ahead are flat, but spending for plant and machinery remains firmly positive.

Katja Hall, CBI chief policy director, said: "It's very encouraging to see record levels of optimism among SMEs."

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