

UK Leather SWOT Analysis of the British Leather Industry



Where did the data come from?

Following the publication of the five-year strategy in late 2016 by trade association UK Leather, a Business Development Manager role was appointed in June 2017 to assist with delivery of the strategy objectives. In meetings across various sectors of the industry, discussions commenced regarding the challenges facing the leather industry today and key issues were noted repeatedly.

These concerns were summarised in an infographic, but it was felt that the truth of these statements needed industry verification before publication by UK Leather. A short online survey was developed in October 2017, comprising a series of statements regarding the self-identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the British leather industry which participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed with. There followed a couple of quick questions and space for verbatim comments and the opportunity to waive anonymity and leave contact details.

What are the results?

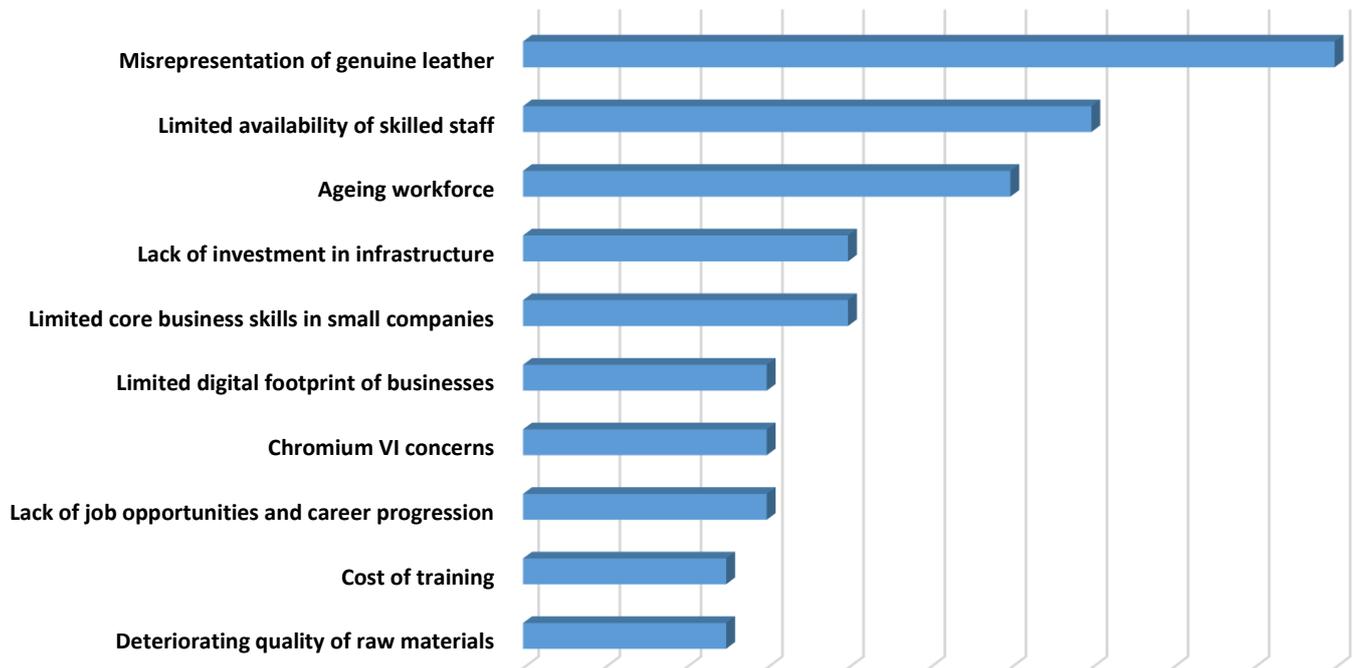
UK Leather were delighted with the level of engagement with the survey by various sectors of the industry, and believe it is very useful to have issues ranked in order of significance. A brief conclusion is detailed on page 6 as the results speak for themselves and are worth comparing with a UK Leather survey carried out in 2005, also shown on page 6.



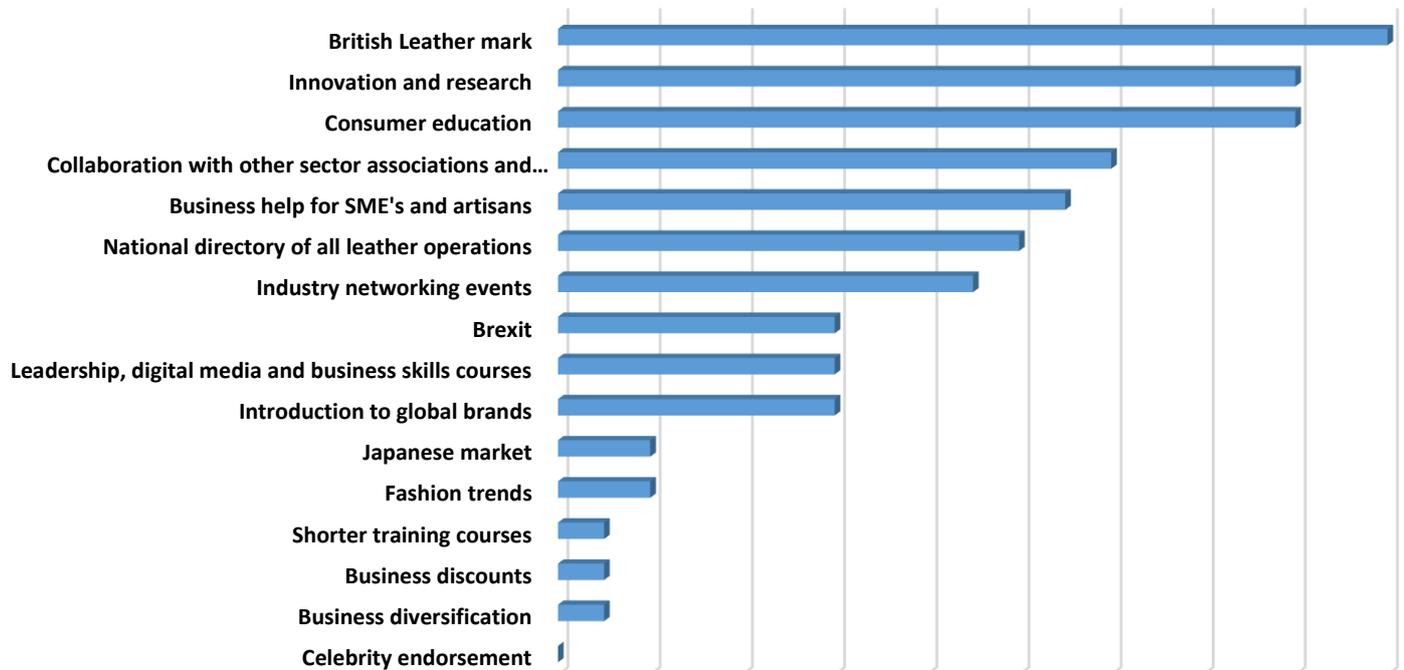
1. Which of the identified strengths do you feel should be the priorities for the British leather industry to focus on in the future?



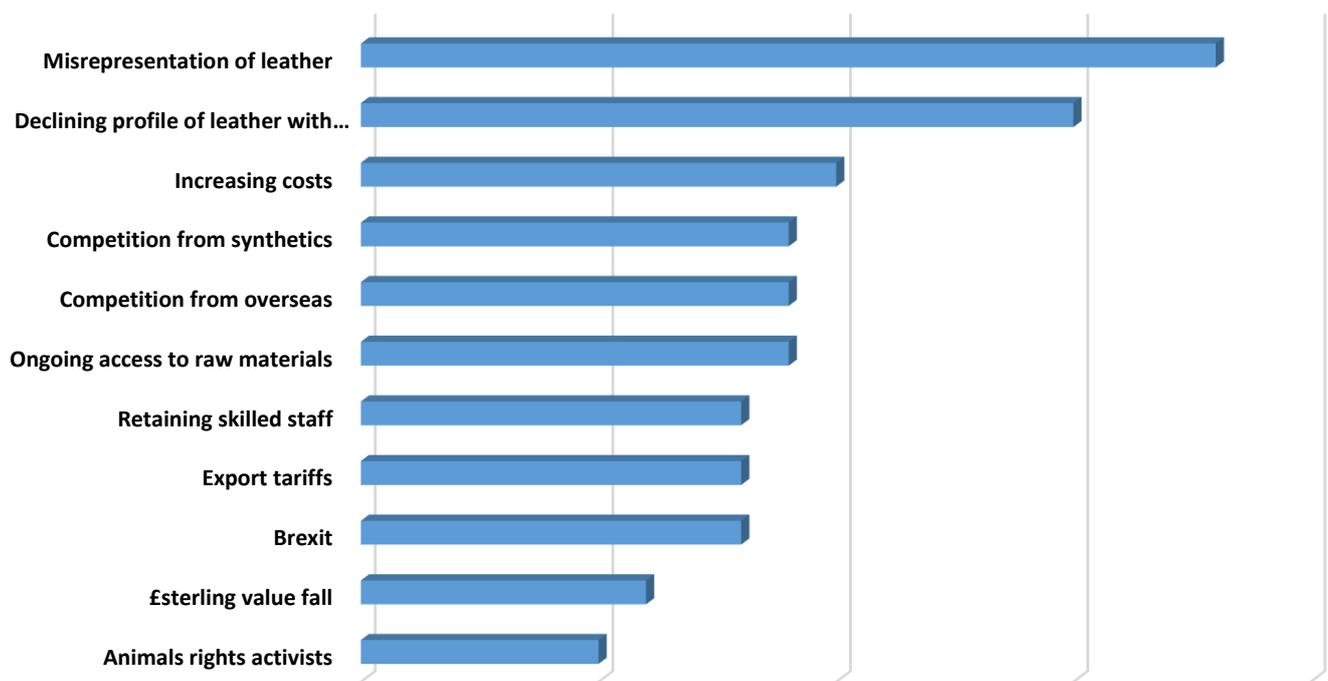
2. Which of the identified weaknesses do you feel should be the priorities for the British leather industry to focus on in the future?



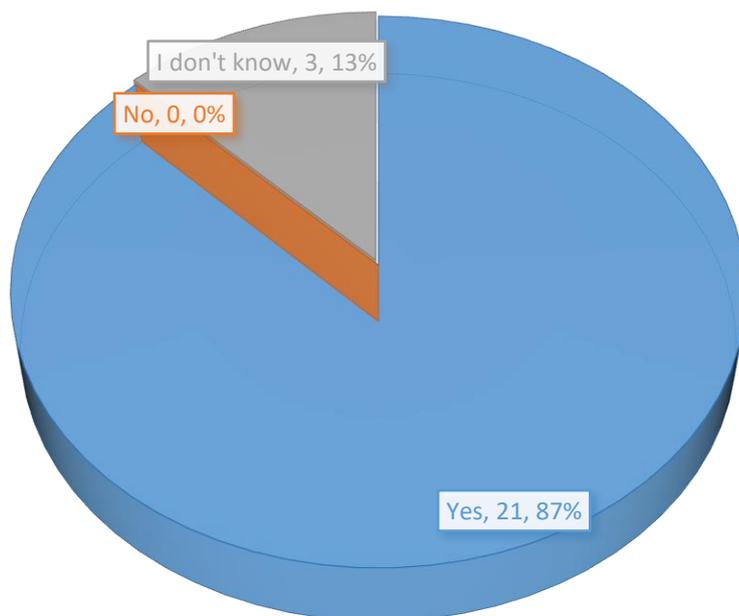
3. Which of the identified opportunities do you feel should be the priorities for the British leather industry to focus on in the future?



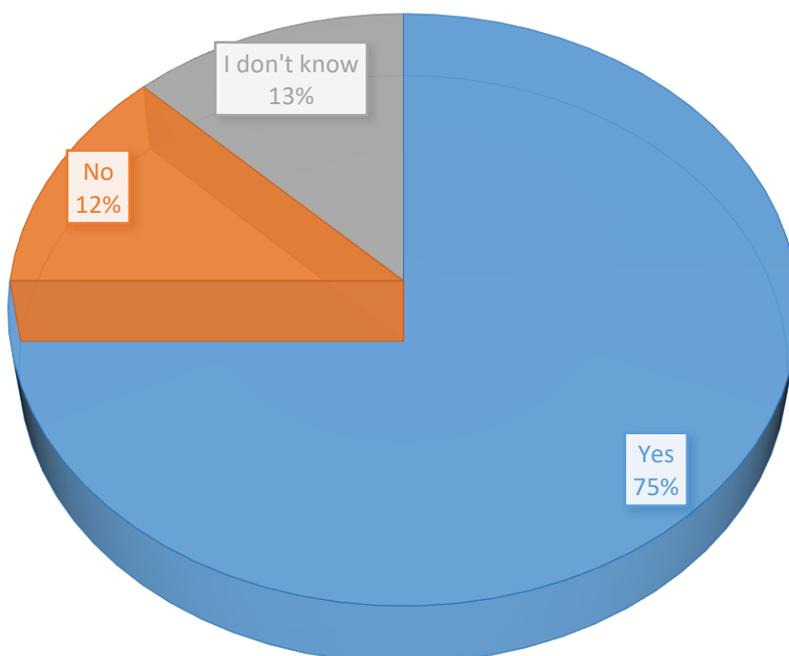
4. Which of the identified threats do you feel should be the priorities for the British leather industry to focus on in the future?



5. In general terms, do you agree with the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the leather industry?



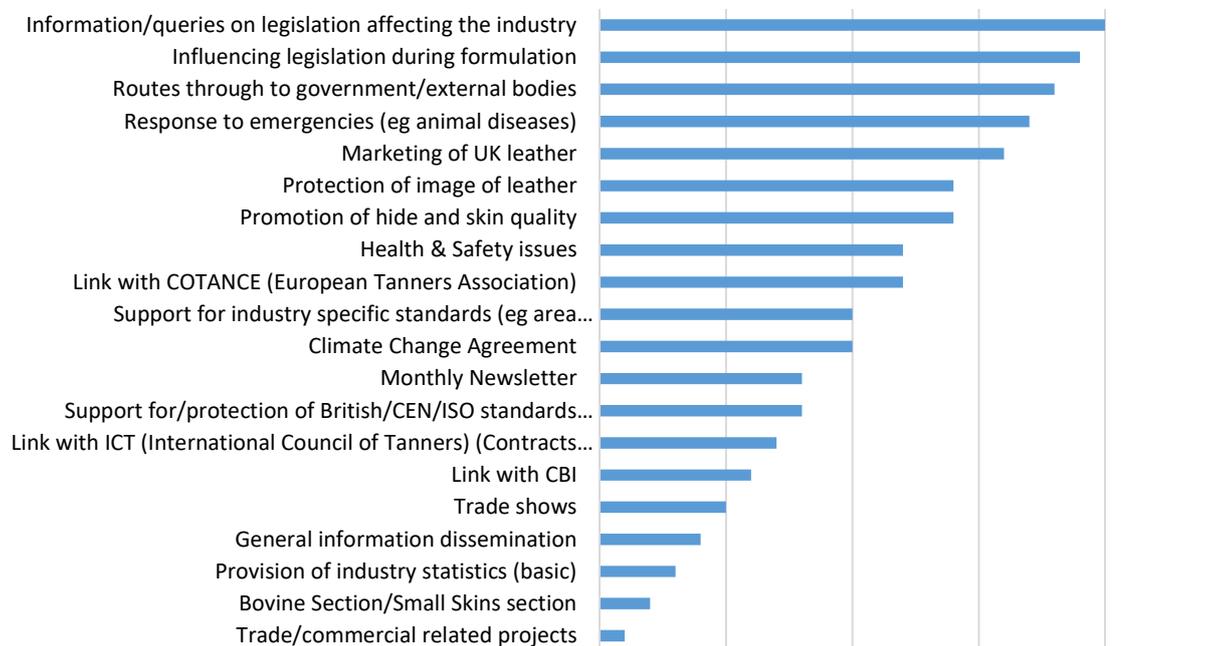
6. Do you believe that the British leather industry has a unique offer to domestic customers and the rest of the world?



7. How do you feel UKLF should support you and your business further?

- *Access to best practise from other industry UK sectors in recycling, waste, effluent treatment, training*
- *Networking opportunities, directory of dealers, related fixings, services serving users of leather. Introduction of 'kite' mark made in UK*
- *Monitoring, lobbying and advising on impacts of Brexit as trade arrangements are put in place. Social media training. Promoting integrity and quality of British leather within industry and to wider public*
- *Both business (especially specifiers) and consumer education to USP's of leather*
- *Support with a campaign similar to "The Campaign For Wool"*
- *In the next period quick and accurate information about Brexit. Longer term, consumer information/education about the benefits of leather, including splits, specifically for us not denigrating splits*
- *Help identify early possible ramifications to various Brexit options so we can prepare in advance*
- *Training/apprenticeships. Providing designers with a directory to help them find leather workers for their projects. Perhaps providing a directory of related suppliers e.g. for metal fittings, etc to help in sourcing*
- *Education is key. Both for succession planning within the industry and for engagement with consumers*
- *Skills and business education*
- *Commissioning us to create world-class pieces that showcase the quality, versatility and diversity of British leathers*
- *Support for small businesses and artisans*
- *Protecting our products from misrepresentation and promoting the strengths of leather manufactured within the UK*
- *Know and understand us personally. Every business is different and has different needs. We are stronger together*
- *Having a wider remit than just tanning technologies*

(2005) Which services / activities do you value most:



Conclusion

In terms of strengths and opportunities for the British leather industry, the high quality, craftsmanship and the Made in Britain attributes score the highest, with the UK's high animal welfare standards and traceability of products coming a close second. This reaffirms UK Leather's strategy to develop a British Leather authenticity label for leather and leather goods made in this country, with a gold standard applying to leather goods both sourced *and* made within the UK. A project is underway to determine the viability of the introduction of this scheme and feedback is welcome.

In terms of weaknesses and threats, the UK leather industry believes that the misrepresentation of genuine leather and consumer education are paramount causes for concern, followed by an ageing workforce and lack of skilled staff, with potential risks and opportunity from Brexit scoring moderately in each category. As detailed further in our five-year strategy, UK Leather has developed plans to counter the trend for mislabelling leather goods and increase the education and training opportunities for employment within the sector.

Interestingly, the top priorities from the 2005 data (above) focused primarily on lobbying and legislative influence, all but vanished from today's concerns - although the misrepresentation of genuine leather and the marketing of British goods still feature as top concerns.

UK Leather look forward to receiving comments on this research and continuing our work to support, promote and develop all areas of the British leather industry for the future. Thank you for your participation.