

# Making it in Leeds

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## News from Leeds Manufacturing

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### Export Success for Yorkshire Jukebox Firm

A new range of retro 50's juke boxes made in Leeds has got off to a flying start with a £50,000 export order for the machines from a premier Dutch firm that retails and restores classic models.

The container load order follows hot on the heels of Sound Leisure's first three "Rocket 88" models going into a leading UK fashion retailer's outlets.

Managing director Chris Black is delighted with the export order: "This is one of our biggest single export orders for some time. And the skills of our in-house cabinetmakers had the Dutch customer fooled when he had difficulty telling these new models from the originals, which he restores.

"We launched the Rocket 88 at the recent European exhibition, Rock a Round The Jukebox – which is Europe's biggest and expect more orders to follow from that."

Launched in 1978 by Alan Black and Eddie Moss, Sound Leisure operates from an 80,000 sq ft factory in Cross Gates, Leeds, with a subsidiary unit in Nottingham largely devoted to research and development on the product range. Great efforts are made to ensure that any sub-contracted parts and materials are sourced as close to the head-quarters as possible.

With an annual turnover of £7M, the company now employs 120 staff who skilfully blend traditional cabinet-making skills with the latest electronic technologies. Exports reach most parts of the world and there are now over 100,000 Leeds-made juke boxes operating globally.

Paul Stephens, Leeds City Council's chief economic services officer said: "Continued innovation has been the key to Sound Leisure's success. Manufacturing, particularly for export, remains vital for the future prosperity of the UK, with Chris and the team demonstrating how classic products can be adapted for new markets."

The firm's retail division also continues to forge ahead with increased demand for interactive audio devices at point of sale for major retailers. Last year, Sound Leisure supplied "talking window" devices for the festive season at Harvey Nicholls' Leeds store.

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Photo: Sound Leisure managing director Chris Black with a Rocket 88 jukebox

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