

10,000 Small Businesses graduate awarded an OBE for services to industry and innovation

29 June 2018 | Birmingham, UK.

Visiting Industrial Fellow at Aston Business School and Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* alumni, Byron Dixon, was included on the 2018 list of Queen's Birthday Honours in June this year.

Byron, founder and CEO of Micro-Fresh Limited, received the award nomination for services to industry and innovation.

A chemist by trade, Byron spent 4 years working for Danish shoe brand ECCO, responsible for the finishing treatments at the company's factories in Denmark, Indonesia, Thailand, Portugal, Slovakia and Italy. He left the firm in 2006 to establish Micro-Fresh and developed the technology underlying its current product range – anti-bacterial and anti-fungal treatments that prevent the growth of micro-organisms including MRSA, E. coli, and salmonella. The technology is now used in products made by Kickers, Scruffs Workwear, and Avon as well as big-brand retailers including John Lewis, Next and Sainsbury's.

Byron's previous international experience has enabled his company to quickly expand its international operations. They now export 80% of their products globally and recently added North America, Vietnam, and Pakistan to existing operations in India, China, Portugal, and Singapore.

Speaking about the award to the Leicester Mercury, Byron said: *"It was a complete shock and I'm absolutely gobsmacked. It's lovely to think that somebody somewhere thinks I'm doing something worthwhile."*

The company are continuing to innovate and currently developing two new, environmentally-friendly products for the construction, laundry and automotive industry. The Plaster Project - a two-year construction project partly funded by Innovate UK - will prevent the growth of household mould in walls and ceilings, and is set to improve the standard of living in social housing.

ENDS

About Aston University

Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established university led by its three main beneficiaries – students, business and the professions, and our region and society. Aston University is located in Birmingham and at the heart of a vibrant city and the campus houses all the university's academic, social and accommodation facilities for our students. Professor Alec Cameron is the Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive.

Aston has been a leading university for graduate employment success for over 25 years and our students do extremely well in securing top jobs and careers. Our strong relationships with industry partners mean we understand the needs of employers, which is why we are also ranked in the top 20 for graduate employability.

About Micro-Fresh Limited

Headquartered in the United Kingdom, Micro-Fresh® was established in 2006 to prevent the growth of mould on products in transit from the far corners of the world. With a mission to offer the best in freshness using natural solutions, Micro-Fresh® has become the 'go to' brand for innovation-conscious retailers. The company has offices in China, India, Portugal, Vietnam, Singapore and the USA and maintains collaborative partnerships with Aston University and Leicester University to take advantage of recent scientific breakthroughs.

For media inquiries in relation to this release, call Ben Kennedy, Press & PR Officer, on 0121 204 4592 or email b.p.kennedy@aston.ac.uk. Alternatively, email pr@aston.ac.uk

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