

# Competitive horizon

## ***Growth slowdown predicted for global economy***

A report published by [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com) notes that the World Bank has upwardly revised its predictions for global economic growth in 2018 to 3 per cent from the 2.7 per cent cited previously. Performance is also now expected to be stronger in 2019. However, the bank points to lower investment levels, falling productivity and more stringent financial controls as reasons why it believes the worldwide economy will slow down beyond this period. For instance, collective growth in advanced economies is expected to slip to 1.7 per cent in 2020. The 4.3 per cent that emerging and developing economies contributed to global growth in 2017 is also set to be lower over the next few years. Governments are urged to carry out structural reforms to increase the potential for stronger growth in the longer-term. Investment in human and physical capital is seen as a means of increasing productivity and overall prosperity. A decade of slow growth that will hit both borrowers and investors alike is possible if necessary action is not taken.

## ***Will 2018 signal better fortunes for German plastics packaging industry?***

Performance revival over the past two years has increased confidence in the German plastics packaging sector for 2018. A survey commissioned by industry body Industrievereinigung Kunststoffverpackungen e.V. (IK) discovered that many of the participants felt more optimistic about both economic conditions over the year and their expectation of sales. With regard to exports, levels of optimism were similar to those expressed in the previous year. But the report, as published by [www.plasticsnewseurope.com](http://www.plasticsnewseurope.com), also highlights various concerns. Over half of firms surveyed believe that raw materials will increase in price and impact on profits. High energy costs in Germany and tax cuts in the USA that could prompt similar actions elsewhere are other issues facing companies in the sector. Failure to address these factors and the emergence of a skills shortage could lead to growth being impeded, IK claims.

## ***The easy way to market a local business online***

An article published by [www.score.org](http://www.score.org) claims that simple and cost-effective ways exist for local businesses to market themselves online. In the first instance, it is wise to get listed within different types of online directories. These might include general search engines or ones specific to locality or industry, for example. The important point is to have a listing on directories that the firm's customers are likely to use the most. In today's business environment, exploiting the capabilities offered by social media is a must. Companies are urged to use one platform for their main social media presence and to choose the one most appropriate for reaching their target audience with advertising. The final tip is to use e-mail marketing as another means of engaging with customers. It is important to resonate with recipients by including content that is both relevant and interesting. Selecting a suitable e-mail provider and ensuring that people opt-in to receive messages are other points to consider. The report also recommends carrying out tests to ascertain what content best engages customers and if e-mails elicit a more positive response when sent at a particular time. Ensuring that all these efforts are aligned with the firm's domain name can enhance their impact and also ensure that customers are directed to a specific page on the company's website.

## ***Manufacturers in the USA upbeat about 2018 prospects***

Over half of manufacturing companies recently surveyed as part of a study jointly carried out by EKH&H and Leading Edge Alliance expect growth in their sector during 2018. Many cite increasing sales as a top priority that might be achieved through organic growth within the USA or development of new products or services. The report, as published by [www.industrytoday.com](http://www.industrytoday.com), also advocates additional growth approaches including acquisitions or strategic alliances with such as supply chain partners. Alternatives are even more necessary for companies reaching a saturation point in domestic markets. Respondents also propose a stronger focus on technology to generate improvements in areas like output, product quality

and customer service. Any impact might be enhanced further if firms embrace 3-D printing, the Internet of Things, and other newer technologies. Intentions likewise include additional investment in research and development that can also offer tax benefits to companies. One of the main concerns emerging from the anticipated growth is increased competition for talent. Manufacturers plan to address this challenge through attractive salary packages and more training opportunities. According to the report, companies will become better placed to exploit the anticipated growth if they are prepared to revise strategies they have relied on in the past.