

SDO CONNECT

Insights, opportunities and connections to accelerate SME growth.

Discovery Report

Outsourced BD Support

Event Support

Associates Services



Recap of the Month

Wow - what a month it's been at SDO Associates! We were incredibly proud to win Start-Up Business of the Year at the South West Business Awards 2025. This achievement is a major milestone for our growing team and a testament to the hard work, momentum and commitment that has shaped our journey so far. Alongside this, we recorded our first podcast episode, which is coming very soon - stay tuned! Our Account Manager, Tom, spoke at the OBC RDSC: Routes to the UK Defence Market for SMEs, sharing practical guidance for small and medium enterprises looking to enter or scale within Defence. The event

united MOD experts and industry specialists for a meaningful discussion. We sponsored a local event featuring an insightful Q&A between Alistair Carns, Minister for the Armed Forces, and Will Stone MP. The discussion offered a valuable look at the evolving UK Defence landscape, with a strong emphasis on the crucial role SMEs continue to play in accelerating innovation, strengthening capability and supporting national resilience. Finally, we're excited to share that we are now partnering with New College Swindon and the Wiltshire Institute of Technology, welcoming T-Level software development students who will be joining us in the new year for several weeks of work experience. They'll be working on a live SDO Associates project, and we're thrilled to support the next generation of digital and defence-focused talent.

Events

This month, we supported Mastermelt, a leading precious metal recycling company, at JOSCAR Live, where their attendance proved hugely successful. Across the event, the Mastermelt team held 14 productive meetings, generating strong interest, positive conversations and several promising opportunities to progress. We exhibited at the Defence Academy Industry Fair, where the team spent the day connecting with military personnel, partners and SMEs, discussing how

industry and Defence can collaborate more effectively. To round off the month, we attended the End-of-Year Swindon Business Networking event hosted by the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, a great chance to engage with the local business community. Looking ahead, we're excited to be sponsoring next month's Western Regional Defence & Security Cluster event in Swindon – a brilliant opportunity to continue championing SME innovation across the Defence ecosystem.



Client News

It's also been a fantastic month for our clients, as we're pleased to welcome three new organisations to SDO Associates. Helix, one of the UK's leading electric-powertrain innovators, has engaged us to deliver a tailored Discovery Report. We're also pleased to be providing Outsourced Business Development Support to both SEGULA, a global engineering leader, and Skylift UAV, a UK provider of heavy-lift drone logistics to hard-to-reach locations. We're excited to be supporting all three organisations.

Meet the Associate: Doug Stewart



Doug Stewart is a seasoned business development professional with over 40 years' experience in the defence and security sectors, including 22 years of exemplary service with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. He has led global sales and strategic partnerships across multiple areas of defence and now provides consultancy support to organisations seeking expert guidance in defence strategy and market development.

Doug's Tip: Think ahead and understand the full procurement, commercial and legal requirements early, including certifications and export licences. These steps may feel mundane, but getting them right from the start saves time, prevents delays and opens the door to international opportunities.

Doug's Fun Fact: During my time in the Royal Navy, I once accidentally blocked Queen Elizabeth's car while collecting one of Prince Charles's, now King Charles's, polo ponies from Windsor Castle. A security guard later told me it was the first time a serving monarch had been stopped en route, fortunately, I avoided a trip to the Tower of London!