



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE



CHAMBER AWARDS 2005

Regional Winners Press Pack
East of England

The crème of East of England's businesses recognised by BCC

BCC announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 in the East of England

3rd October 2005 – The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Microsoft today announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 in the East of England area. Now in its second year the Chamber Awards was developed to recognise outstanding business achievement within the UK business community.

There are eight different categories of awards Nationally and Accredited Chamber Members were permitted to enter as many as they wished. The award categories and winners for the East of England region are detailed below.

Award	Sponsor	Chamber	Winner	Nature of Business
Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology	Microsoft	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping	A Recipe for Success Ltd	E business solutions provider
Business of the Year	Barclays	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping	The Hearing Centre Care Ltd	Hearing care company
Most Promising New Business	BT	Essex Chambers of Commerce	Information Highway Assistance Ltd	ICT training
Business Commitment to the Community	BUPA	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce	Liftshare.com	Transport consultants
Export Communicator of the Year	CILT	Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce	AMG Systems Ltd	Manufacturer of fibre optic CCTV transmission equipment
Award for Skills and Workforce Development	Learning and Skills Council	Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce	Carpentry Management Contracting Ltd	Carpentry sub-contractor
Entrepreneur of the Year	The Telegraph Business Club	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping	Karen Finch The Hearing Centre Care Ltd	Services for the hard of hearing
Export Business of the Year	Travelex	Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce	AMG Systems Ltd	Manufacturer of fibre optic CCTV transmission equipment

NB: For more information on each of the different categories and winners please refer to relevant media alert below.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said:

"I am delighted the Chamber Awards provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the success of businesses across the country. Those who have got this far are already recognised as

outstanding within their own regions and I congratulate them. It will be tough to pick the national winners from such a high calibre of regional winners.”

Each of the regional winners received a certificate and they will all now go through to the national round of judging and the chance to win the top prize of **£25,000**. This prize will be awarded to the company that the judges agree should win the overall title of **Microsoft Award for Outstanding Business Achievement**. Last year this was won by DB Shoes LTD from Rushden, Northamptonshire. The company used database technology to pull itself back from the brink of receivership and enter itself into new and profitable niche markets - even whilst fighting off competition from cheaper overseas competitors!

Natalie Ayres, Microsoft's Senior Director Small and Medium Solutions and Partners Group added;

“The standard of entries received for this year's Chamber Awards has been incredibly high. We have been more than impressed by the commitment, enthusiasm and success of so many British companies. They all deserve recognition and reward for the contributions they make to their industries, to their customers and to the country. We wish all the winners the best of luck in the national judging.”

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

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Notes to the editors:

- The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is the authentic voice of British businesses.
- The BCC sits at the heart of a powerful nationwide network of Accredited Chambers of Commerce serving business across the UK, which employ over five million people.

About Microsoft

- Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realise their full potential.

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Microsoft announce the East of England regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology

A Recipe for Success Ltd, a member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping has been announced as the regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The business (an e-business solutions provider) won the Microsoft-sponsored award for the impact its e-KIS product has had on the business. The product (which simplifies internet services) has enabled the business to penetrate the SME, corporate and government markets. This increase in business is predicted to impact turnover by at least 43% in the next couple of years.

Natalie Ayres, Microsoft's Senior Director Small and Medium Solutions and Partners Group said; "We looked for companies that clearly exploited every opportunity that technology could bring to their businesses either to achieve specific goals or to enhance overall business performance. The regional winners are not just a great advertisement for the use of technology but great examples for their industries too. We look forward to announcing the national winner in November."

A Recipe for Success Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Businesses can often be intimidated by technology. Learning from those who have benefited from implementing new systems can break down some of the barriers to accessing technology. Companies who have invested and innovated in technology are leading the way for businesses, not only in the UK but across the globe."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Barclays announce the East of England regional winner of the Business of the Year Award

The Hearing Care Centre Ltd, a member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business of the Year Award in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a hearing care company) won the Barclays-sponsored award for achieving impressive success even when competing against organisations such as the free NHS service. The company also demonstrates major investment in staff training and has reaped the rewards of a motivated team.

Angela Potter, Head of International Trade & Cash Solutions at Barclays, commented:

"Year in, year out, businesses across the UK achieve phenomenal success and growth. To therefore be selected as a regional winner of the Business of the Year award takes something extra special. Each has demonstrated not only all-round excellence in their field but convinced the judges that they have strategies in place to drive future growth."

The Hearing Care Centre Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said:

"The winners of this award are being recognised not just for the success they have achieved but also for their potential. They have impressed the judges with their business excellence."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and BT announce the East of England regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award

Information Highway Assistance Ltd, a member of Essex Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (an ITC training company) won the BT-sponsored award for demonstrating great flair in enhancing technology to provide professional IT training at the clients' offices. The company's approach was considered to be ahead of the market and the judging panel felt that the company is now reaping the benefits of its vision and commitment.

Andrew McGregor, Head of Marketing & Strategy at BT Business, commented;

"We were looking for new companies that clearly have potential for growth and a finely tuned 'nose for success'. In particular, the judges were searching for businesses that demonstrated the greatest vision and commitment in their quest to succeed. The competition was stiff as there were so many exciting new businesses that entered. We wish the regional winners every success in the next round of judging."

Information Highway Assistance Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Small businesses are the backbone of the UK economy. We need to identify and support businesses which we believe have the capability to go from strength to strength in the years to come. We hope this award will encourage them to continue the progress they have already made."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and BUPA announce the East of England regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award

Liftshare.com, a member of Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (transport consultants) won the BUPA-sponsored award because its business has had such a positive impact on the environment and the community, including a school run service. The company has over 240 clients, 77,000 members and has saved over 4 million car miles and 17,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide in a year.

Steve Flanagan, Commercial Director of BUPA, said:

"We were looking for companies that have developed creative and innovative projects or programmes that have had a positive impact on their local community or environment. Responsible businesses like these tend to have happier staff and customers and, as a result, a healthier bottom-line. We wish the regional winners every success in the next round of judging."

Liftshare.com will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Small businesses are integral parts of their local communities. Running a business is a demanding profession but many firms still commit to giving something back to the areas in which they are based. This award recognises those who have tried to make a real difference to their local community."

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BCC and CILT announce the East of England regional winner of the Export Communicator of the Year Award

AMG Systems Ltd, a member of Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Communicator of the Year Award in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a manufacturer of fibre optic CCTV transmission equipment) won the CILT-sponsored award for its sophisticated approach to communication in foreign markets. The company not only produces materials in Arabic but has also exploited the use of an excellent website. The company also uses a PR agency in different markets to help build its profile.

Isabella Moore, Director, CILT, the National Centre for Languages commented:

"Critical to doing business internationally is the ability to communicate effectively. Companies, no matter what size, that invest in language skills will not only find it easier to remove cultural barriers - they will also create more opportunities to grow, especially in emerging markets. The regional winners of this award have done just that and deserve this recognition."

AMG Systems Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Doing business abroad not only requires the right products – it requires an ability to understand and bridge cultural and language difficulties. Winners in this category have demonstrated their ability to achieve this, to the benefit of their businesses."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and LSC announce the East of England regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development

Carpentry Management Contracting (CMC) Ltd, a member of Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a carpentry sub contractor) won the LSC-sponsored award for the hands on involvement of the management team in developing training as well as achieving and maintaining its Investors in People accreditation. The company's employee loyalty is scored at 67% compared to an industry average of just 23%.

Jaine Clarke, Director for Skills Strategy and Planning at LSC said;

"Having trained, motivated and hard working staff is the best financial investment that a business can make. The judges were looking for companies that have put workforce and skills development at the top of their agenda and are able to demonstrate how both individuals and businesses benefit from this investment. We wish the regional winners the best of luck in the next round of judging."

Carpentry Management Contracting (CMC) Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Access to staff with the right skills remains an ongoing challenge for many businesses. It is encouraging to see companies, such as these regional winners, who have taken responsibility for the development and training of their staff. They have shown the importance of investing in their workforce, and I hope other businesses will follow."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and The Telegraph Business Club announce the East of England regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Karen Finch of The Hearing Care Centre Ltd, a member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping has been announced as the regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the East Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. Karen won the Telegraph Business Club-sponsored award due to her determination and persistence in making the company, which provides services for the hard of hearing, a success in a competitive market. Despite significant investment costs in areas such as training, her gross profit figure stands at 70%.

Richard Collins, Head of the Daily Telegraph Business Club said:

“It was so encouraging to see so many ‘new breed’ entrepreneurs rising through the ranks and doing so well, despite challenging economic times. However, we were looking for individuals that really stood out from the crowd and had the vision and determination to take their business to extraordinary heights. We wish the regional winners every success in the national judging.”

Karen will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

“Entrepreneurs lead their businesses with vision and determination - never afraid to seize opportunities for growth and success. This award recognises those inspirational figures that have made an invaluable contribution to their companies over a sustained period of time.”

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Travelex announce the East of England regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award

AMG Systems Ltd, a member of Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award in the East of England for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a manufacturer of fibre optic CCTV transmission equipment) won the Travelex-sponsored award for increasing its export sales from 23% to 48% in just two years. The company has penetrated many markets in EMEA, APAC and Canada.

Tony Wilson Director, Commercial Foreign Exchange EMEA at Travelex, said:

“It takes guts to enter foreign markets but it takes greater skill and determination to make a success of it. We were looking for businesses that had not only gone the extra mile to tailor their products and services to suit overseas buyers, but that had structured their businesses in order to deal with the demand and risks inherent in trading overseas. The regional winners are ‘exemplars’ of this and we wish them every success in the national judging.”

AMG Systems Ltd will now go through to the national judging and the chance to win the top prize of £25,000, courtesy of Microsoft. The National Winners of Chamber Awards 2005 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on the 24th November 2005.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

“Doing business abroad not only presents a great opportunity for growth – it also creates a number of challenges for business. The companies who have entered this award show how it can be done and will reap the rewards of expanding their markets and customer base in other countries.”

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