



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE



CHAMBER AWARDS 2005
Regional Winners Press Pack
South East

The crème of South East's businesses recognised by BCC

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

3rd October 2005 – The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Microsoft today announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 in the South East 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 South East region are detailed below.

| Award | Sponsor | Chamber | Winner | Nature of Business |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology | Microsoft | North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce | Kings' School Winchester | Secondary mixed comprehensive School |
| Business of the Year | Barclays | North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce | Datanet.co.uk Ltd | Internet Protocol (IP) solutions provider |
| Most Promising New Business | BT | Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce | Sitewizard | Internet Solutions Provider (ISP) / website design |
| Business Commitment to the Community | BUPA | Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce | The Riverside Centre | Multi purpose community centre |
| Export Communicator of the Year | CILT | Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise | Genesis Forwarding Group | Freight forwarding service |
| Award for Skills and Workforce Development | Learning and Skills Council | Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise | Nugent Group | Ground work and building company |
| Entrepreneur of the Year | The Telegraph Business Club | North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce | Elizabeth Jackson Great Guns Marketing Ltd | Business-to-Business telemarketing company |
| Export Business of the Year | Travelex | Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise | SEOS | Visual display system company |

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 ~~do~~ 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 South East regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology

Kings' School Winchester, a member of North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The mixed comprehensive school won the Microsoft-sponsored award for exploiting its use of the Virtual School Business System that it developed. The system not only improved the quality of teaching and learning but also enables stakeholders, such as parents, to interact with the school and access information on homework, lessons and schemes of work. As a result the school and pupils have benefited from much improved examination grades.

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."

Kings' School Winchester 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 South East regional winner of the Business of the Year Award

Datanet.co.uk, a member of North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business of the Year Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (an Internet Protocol (IP) solutions provider) won the Barclays-sponsored award for the way it has recognised the specific needs of the SME business community and created a one-stop-shop for the market. In a marketplace that competes on price and volume, it was felt that Datanet.co.uk has created a strong sense of individual customer needs.

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."

Datanet.co.uk 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 South East regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award

Sitewizard, a member of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (an internet solutions provider specialising in website design) won the BT-sponsored award for developing an excellent website building product for small businesses and start up markets. The judges commented on effective business planning and management being at the heart of this new enterprise. The company has grown its turnover from £185,000 in 2002 to £580,000 in 2004.

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."

Sitewizard 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 South East regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award

The Riverside Centre, a member of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce has been announced as the regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The organisation (a multi purpose community centre) won the BUPA-sponsored award for its commitment to all groups of society on the Isle of Wight and in particular its dedication to disabled people. The centre serves the community by providing employment, training and activity space and support to businesses and social enterprises that develop opportunities for disabled people.

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.”

The Riverside Centre 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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MEDIA ALERT:

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

Genesis Forwarding Group, a member of Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Communicator of the Year Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a freight forwarding company) won the CILT-sponsored award by impressing the judges with the way it has developed a rich understanding of the cultural aspects of trading in its key markets. The company has had particular success in China where there are strong cultural differences and many different dialects to communicate with.

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."

Genesis Forwarding Group 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 South East regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development

Nugent Group, a member of Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, has been announced as the regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a ground work and building company) won the LSC-sponsored award for its exemplary standards in work force development. The judging panel commented that the internal development of staff at the company is exceptional for this particular industry. This has helped to develop a very strong sense of teamwork and mutual support within the company.

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."

Nugent Group 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 South East regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Elizabeth Jackson of Great Guns Marketing Ltd, a member of North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has been announced as the regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. Elizabeth won the Telegraph Business Club-sponsored award for developing such a successful telemarketing business in an extremely tough market. Liz, who is registered blind, developed the £1 million turnover business over a period of 7 years using a £1,000 grant from the Princes Trust. She has developed a unique franchise formula for the business.

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.”

Elizabeth 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 South East regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award

SEOS Ltd, a member of Sussex Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award in the South East region for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a visual display system company) won the Travelex-sponsored award for the success it has achieved in foreign markets. With a turnover of over £25 million in 2004, approximately 90% of the company's sales were made overseas.

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."

SEOS 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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