



THE BRITISH  
CHAMBERS OF  
COMMERCE



CHAMBER AWARDS 2005

Regional Winners Press Pack  
**West Midlands**

## The crème of West Midland's businesses recognised by BCC

### ***BCC announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 in the West Midlands***

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005 – The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Microsoft today announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2005 in the West Midlands 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 from the West Midlands region are detailed below.

<b>Award</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Chamber</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Nature of Business</b>
Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology	Microsoft	Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce	Central Telecom	Telecommunications
Business of the Year	Barclays	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise	Lyreco UK Ltd	Supplier of office products
Most Promising New Business	BT	Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce	Venatus Business Intelligence Ltd	Executive search and recruitment business
Business Commitment to the Community	BUPA	Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire and Worcestershire	Exel Droitwich	Warehousing and distribution
Export Communicator of the Year	CILT	Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Vogue UK Ltd	Heated towel rail manufacturer
Award for Skills and Workforce Development	Learning and Skills Council	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise	Lyreco UK Ltd	Supplier of office products
Entrepreneur of the Year	The Telegraph Business Club	Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Sylvia King The Public Ltd	Community arts organisation
Export Business of the Year	Travelex	Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce	Valve Train Components Ltd	Automotive component manufacturer

**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 24<sup>th</sup> November 2005.

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**For further information or requests for interviews please contact;**

Simon Thompson  
Tel: 07843 279977  
simon@chamberawards.co.uk

or

Judy Osborn  
Tel: 07834 60 20 30  
judy@chamberawards.co.uk

**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 West Midlands regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology**

Central Telecom, a member of South Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The business (a telecommunications company) won the Microsoft-sponsored award for becoming an industry pioneer in the use of new technology, and achieving consistently successful business performance over the last few years. The company's genuine CRM strategy has directly led to heightened customer satisfaction and more than a 35% increase in the value of its customer base.

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."

Central Telecom 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Business of the Year Award**

Lyreco UK Ltd, a member of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business of the Year Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a supplier of office products) won the Barclays-sponsored award for its outstanding success over recent years. Since 1998 the company's profits have quadrupled and in the last 4 years alone its sales have doubled. The judging panel highlighted that the company is extremely robust and is a considerable employer in the Shropshire area and beyond.

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."

Lyreco UK 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award**

Venatus Business Intelligence Ltd, a member of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (an executive search and recruitment business) won the BT-sponsored award for its impressive financial performance to date and for the strength of its reputation in the market despite being a relative newcomer.

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."

Venatus Business Intelligence 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award**

Exel Droitwich, a member of Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire and Worcestershire, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a warehousing and distribution company) won the BUPA-sponsored award for the pride it takes in contributing to its community in Droitwich and Bromsgrove. In recent years, the company has been able to help local schools and community organisations with practical as well as financial support.

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.”

EXEL 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Export Communicator of the Year Award**

Vogue UK Ltd, a member of Black Country Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Communicator of the Year Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a heated towel rail manufacturer) won the CILT-sponsored award for its commitment to providing multi lingual sales support and its display of good export practice. The company has in-house speakers of Spanish, Italian, French and German and support from linguists speaking Japanese, Korean and Russian. This investment has led to export sales increasing up to 25% per year.

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."

Vogue UK 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development**

Lyreco UK Ltd, a member of Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, has been announced as the regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (a supplier of office products) won the LSC-sponsored award for its innovative approach to workforce development. The company does not use professional trainers but people who were previously successful in the role. In addition, the company ensures that staff development is recognised at board level.

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.”

Lyreco UK 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 West Midlands regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award**

Sylvia King, founder of The Public Ltd, a member of Black Country Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. Sylvia (director of the community arts organisation) won the Telegraph Business Club-sponsored award for her dedicated work growing the organisation. Over the last 3 years the company has gone from 30 to 80 employees and it is forecast to have 160 employees by the end of next 2006 year. The projects Sylvia works on help people to raise awareness of issues within a community or to celebrate hidden strength.

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.”

The Public 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;

“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 West Midlands regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award**

Valve Train Components Ltd, a member of South Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Export Business of the Year Award in the West Midlands for the Chamber Awards 2005. The company (an automotive component manufacturer) won the Travelex-sponsored award for its incredible success penetrating new foreign markets. 95% of its business is currently exported to markets including China, the US and Europe.

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."

Valve Train Components 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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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