



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE



CHAMBER AWARDS 2006
Regional Winners Press Pack
North West

The crème of North West's businesses recognised by British Chambers of Commerce

BCC announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2006 in the North West

17th October 2006 – The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Microsoft today announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2006 in the North West area. Now in its third year the Chamber Awards was developed to recognise outstanding business achievement within the UK business community.

There are seven 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 North West region are detailed below.

Award	Sponsor	Chamber	Winner	Nature of Business
Microsoft Award for Innovation Through Technology	Microsoft	East Lancashire	MDA Ltd	A marketing procurement and fulfilment organisation
Business of the Year	Composite Legal Expenses	Greater Manchester	Zen Internet	Internet Service Provider (ISP)
Most Promising New Business	BT	Greater Manchester	'Wigs up North'	A theatrical wig and make-up company
Business Commitment to the Community	Westfield Heath	East Lancashire	Enjoy Travel, part of Enjoy Ireland Ltd	A tour operator and event organiser
Award for Skills and Workforce Development	The Telegraph Business Club	Manchester	Gilds Associates Ltd	A recruitment agency for the hotel and catering market
Entrepreneur of the Year	Yorkshire Bank	East Lancashire	Helen Colley Farmhouse Fare Ltd	Manufacturer of specialist hot eating and chilled desserts
Exporter of the Year	UK Trade & Investment	East Lancashire	Whittle Eastern Europe Logistics Limited	Transportation Services 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 Award for Outstanding Business Achievement courtesy of Microsoft. Last year this was won by Anthony Alan Foods Ltd from Barnsley Chamber of Commerce, South Yorkshire, which has the UK licence to manufacture cakes under the Weightwatchers brand. Using innovative and ground breaking technology, the company was able to produce a range of products that became instant market leaders and have remained so ever since. This is despite fierce competition from existing incumbents in the market, all of whom are household names.

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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

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For further information or requests for interviews please contact;

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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 North West regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology

MDA Ltd, a member of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation through Technology in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. The business (a marketing procurement and fulfilment organisation) won the Microsoft-sponsored award for its integrated Enterprise Resource Planning strategy (ERP). ERP is an IT infrastructure that links together different systems, enabling more accurate management of internal and external resources. It involves all MDA functions from customer service, purchasing and supply chain management to warehousing and logistics. ERP has resulted in the company being able to deliver better services faster and more cost-effectively for the benefit of the business and its customers.

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

"In an ever more competitive market, businesses are on the hunt for anything that can give that all important competitive edge. The most innovative are looking closely at their technology investment to identify not just where they can streamline their business processes but how they might enhance or create products and services. We are proud to celebrate the best of these ideas."

MDA 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Technology now touches all businesses. It is often the difference between success and failure. MDA Ltd has made its technology investment work. They have looked closely at how their businesses could be made better, not just more efficient, with technology."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Composite Legal Expenses announce the North West regional winner of the Business of the Year Award

Zen Internet, a member of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business of the Year Award in the North West region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (an internet service provider) won the Composite Legal Expenses-sponsored award for its remarkable growth in turnover, profit and job creation. Up to 2004 Zen virtually doubled turnover year-on-year, from just under £2 million in 2001 to £14.2 million in 2004. Over the last 12 months the turnover has grown steadily. Judges also remarked on the quality of management and the people orientation of the business.

John Mullin, Managing Director, Composite Legal Expenses, commented:

“This award is reserved for the very best businesses across the country. Congratulations to Zen Internet you join a very small and elite band of businesses that exemplify this pinnacle of achievement. In all areas of your business you illustrate a level of skill for all business people to learn from.”

Zen Internet 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said:

“Zen Internet is a business that really stands out from the crowd. The competition was fierce. Making it to the short list is tough and winning is reserved for only the very best. Congratulations.”

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and BT announce the North West regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award

'Wigs up North', a member of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (a theatrical wig and professional make-up company) won the BT sponsored award for having the foresight to spot the gap in the market in the north and the management skills and financial planning to make such a success of the company in such a short space of time.

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

"Starting a new business is daunting enough, but to take it successfully through its' first few years needs courage, talent and tenacity. BT is delighted to recognise this success and applauds those entrepreneurs for their determination and achievement."

'Wigs up North' 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Success in business is always the result of very hard work on the part of the founders. So many businesses fail to make it past their first let alone their third year. 'Wigs up North' is an inspiration to all of us in business. "

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Westfield Health announce the North West regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award

Enjoy Travel (part of Enjoy Ireland Limited), a member of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (a tour operator and event organiser) won the Westfield Health-sponsored award for its innovative, creative and committed approach to its CSR strategy. For example the company has calculated how much carbon dioxide their own flights release into the atmosphere and have planted 78 trees this year to help create a natural forest. The company also proactively supports a number of charitable causes, including the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimages Trust (HCPT), The Mill Hill Fathers African Missions and other local church related fund raising events.

Jill Davies, Executive Director, Sales and Marketing, Westfield Health said;

"For many businesses the contribution they make to their community stops at the payment of taxes or salaries to employees. The winner of this award sees its role in much broader terms. It shows us that seeking to improve the communities in which you operate is not just a moral obligation but a business opportunity too."

Enjoy Travel, 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Business has always been the economic backbone of our society but now many of us want to go much further than this. The winner of this award shows us how you can combine your business objectives with a desire to positively impact your local community."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and the Telegraph Business Club announce the North West regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development

Gilds Associates Limited, a member of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. The organisation (a recruitment agency for the hotel and catering market) won the Telegraph Business Club sponsored award for total commitment to workforce development. The company proved that their continued success and expansion is a direct result of their training and development ethos which is not only focused on permanent staff but also temporary staff. This commitment to training has provided them with a USP and sets them apart from their competitors.

"Every week the Business Club page in the Daily Telegraph reveals the 'Secrets of Success' of an exceptionally talented entrepreneur," says David Sumner Smith, programme director of the Telegraph Business Club. "And in the vast majority of cases that 'secret' relates directly to the performance of their staff team. The winner of this award provides another strong reminder of the positive impact on business performance resulting from investment in the development of your workforce's skills."

Gilds Associates 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"The BCC has long been an advocate of the importance of investing in the skills development of your workforce. A strategic skills and workforce development programme will be one of the most effective investments any business can make. The winner of this award sets a standard we should aspire to."

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Yorkshire Bank announce the North West regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Farmhouse Fare Ltd, a member of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. Helen Colley, won the Yorkshire Bank sponsored award for the remarkable success of the company she founded when she was just 18 years old and based from her parents' kitchen. Farmhouse Fare is now a the leading independent company of its type in the North West supplying foods to Tesco, Asda, Sainsburys, Morrisons, Waitrose, Costco and Makro.

Brian Colquhoun, Head of Integrated Financial Solutions, Yorkshire Bank said,

“Just as they say there is a novel in us all everyone thinks they can spot a business opportunity and create a successful company. This is not true. Entrepreneurs are rare. This award recognises the achievements of the best.”

Helen Colley, 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

“Entrepreneurs are the pioneers of the modern age. They take risks. They spot opportunities when most of us see barriers. The finalists of this award are members of an all too small elite club in this country.”

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MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and UK Trade & Investment announce the North West regional winner of the Exporter of the Year Award

Whittle Eastern Europe Logistics Limited, a member of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Exporter of the Year Award in the North West for the Chamber Awards 2006. The organisation (a transportation services company) won the UK Trade & Investment sponsored award for its remarkable use of language skills (their workforce collectively speak 24 different languages) which has also helped them to overcome cultural as well as language barriers. The judges were also impressed by the company's vision of growth with projected turnover reaching £8m by the end of December 2008.

Andrew Cahn, Chief Executive of UK Trade & Investment commented:

"I am delighted that UK Trade & Investment is sponsoring this award, and congratulate Whittle Eastern Logistics Ltd on becoming regional winner for the North West region. Exporters like Whittle Eastern Europe Ltd make a crucial contribution to the economy and it is good to see them receiving recognition for this. I wish them all the best in the national competition.

Whittle Eastern Europe 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 2006 will be announced at a Gala Dinner at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London on the 23rd November 2006.

David Frost, Director General of BCC said;

"Making a success of your business in your local community or the UK is tough enough – extending that into international markets takes courage and skill. Congratulations to Whittle Eastern Europe Logistics Ltd. Export markets are all too often an untapped business opportunity. You have shown what can be achieved."

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Note to the editor:

UK Trade & Investment is the lead government organisation that provides support for UK companies looking to develop international business. It also provides support for overseas companies wishing to invest in the UK. UK Trade & Investment has a wide range of services, backed-up by a network of trade advisors around the UK and worldwide who can provide market intelligence, advice on regulations, sales leads, and financial and practical support.