



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
COMMERCE



CHAMBER AWARDS 2006

Regional Winners Press Pack
Yorkshire and Humber

The crème of Yorkshire and Humber's businesses recognised by British Chambers of Commerce

BCC announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2006 in the Yorkshire and Humber region

17th October 2006 – The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Microsoft today announce the regional winners of the Chamber Awards 2006 in the Yorkshire and Humber 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 Yorkshire and Humber region are detailed below.

Award	Sponsor	Chamber	Winner	Nature of Business
Microsoft Award for Innovation Through Technology	Microsoft	Rotherham	The Music Factory Entertainment Group Ltd	Provider of entertainment solutions
Business of the Year	Composite Legal Expenses	Rotherham and Derbyshire	AESSEAL plc	Seal Manufacturer
Most Promising New Business	BT	Mid Yorkshire	Applied Language Solutions Ltd	Provider of translation services
Business Commitment to the Community	Westfield Heath	Rotherham and Derbyshire	AESSEAL plc	Seal Manufacturer
Award for Skills and Workforce Development	The Telegraph Business Club	Doncaster /Sheffield	H.I. Weldrick Ltd	Chain of Independent pharmacies
Entrepreneur of the Year	Yorkshire Bank	Mid Yorkshire	Applied Language Solutions Ltd	Provider of translation services
Exporter of the Year	UK Trade & Investment	Rotherham and Derbyshire	AESSEAL plc	Seal Manufacturer

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

Peter Mileham, President of the 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.

ENDS

For further information or requests for interviews please contact;

Judy Osborn
Purple Rabbit (on behalf of the BCC)
Tel: 07834 60 20 30
Judy.osborn@purplerabbit.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 Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation Through Technology

The Music Factory Entertainment Ltd, a member of Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Microsoft Award for Innovation Through Technology in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The business (a provider of entertainment solutions) won the Microsoft-sponsored award for its U-explore system – an innovative advice and guidance client software and portal server technology installed in schools and colleges. The system delivers relevant local careers advice and guidance to young people in the Rotherham area.

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."

The Music Factory Entertainment Group 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the BCC, said;

"Technology now touches all businesses. It is often the difference between success and failure. The Music Factory Entertainment Group 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."

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Composite Legal Expenses announce the Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Business of the Year Award

AESSEAL plc, a member of Rotherham and Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business of the Year Award in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (a seal manufacturer) won the Composite Legal Expenses-sponsored award for its demonstrating good growth rates in a difficult and static market (compound sales growth of 20% per year). The judges also felt that the company's commitment to customer service and their staff had really set them apart from their competitors.

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

"This award is reserved for the very best businesses across the country. Congratulations to AESSEAL plc. 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."

AESSEAL plc 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the BCC, said;

"AESSEAL plc 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."

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and BT announce the Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award

Applied Language Solutions Ltd, a member of Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Most Promising New Business Award in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (a provider of translation services) won the BT-sponsored award for their impressive growth rate over the last two and a half years. This year alone they expect that turnover will double by selling their services to more than 15 countries and to all business sectors. The company also plans to have 5 offices across the world so that they can offer 24 hour coverage.

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."

Applied Language Solutions 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the 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. Applied Language Solutions Ltd is an inspiration to all of us in business. "

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and Westfield Health announce the Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award

AESSEAL plc, a member of Rotherham and Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Business Commitment to the Community Award in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The company (a seal manufacturer) won the Westfield Health-sponsored award for the strong links they have with the local community including partnerships with educational establishments. They offer work-placements to pupils, access to their state of the art facilities and access to their in-house linguists to students studying for an NVQ in languages. Also in 2005 AESSEAL opened a wetlands wildlife sanctuary at their Rotherham HQ. . In addition to all of this, 1% of all AESSEAL net sales are donated to the international charity Water Aid.

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.”

AESSEAL plc 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the 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.”

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and the Telegraph Business Club announce the Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development

H.I Weldrick Ltd, a member of the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Award for Skills and Workforce Development in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The organisation (which runs an independent chain of pharmacies) won the Telegraph Business Club-sponsored award for the investment it has made in its training department. In 1999 the company took the decision to apply for City and Guilds Approved Centre status to provide NVQs in Pharmacy Services and Assessor and Verifier Awards. The judges agreed that this level of commitment to workforce development has been the driving force behind the company's growth and success.

"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."

H.I Weldrick 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the 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."

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

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

Gavin Wheeldon (Applied Language Solutions Ltd) a member of Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce has been announced as the regional winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. Gavin won the Yorkshire Bank sponsored award for being a true entrepreneur. By the age of 12, he had started several 'enterprises' and throughout the years he progressed quickly within commercial organisations before starting a number of his own businesses. His latest venture, Applied Language Solutions Ltd, has seen a massive growth in sales and has also been awarded the Most Promising New Business Award in this year's awards.

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."

Gavin 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the 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."

ENDS

MEDIA ALERT:

BCC and UK Trade & Investment announce the Yorkshire and Humber regional winner of the Exporter of the Year Award

AESSEAL plc, a member of Rotherham and Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the regional winner of the Exporter of the Year Award in the Yorkshire and Humber region for the Chamber Awards 2006. The organisation (a seal manufacturer) won the UK Trade & Investment sponsored award for its fantastic level of export sales (in the region of £39 million). The company exports through 54 branches and 150 distributors that are located in 83 countries. The UK sales team consists of graduate linguists speaking a total of 10 languages. The judges thought the company showed real commitment to the global marketplace supported by a service ethos, technical excellence and superior linguistic capability.

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

"I am delighted that UK Trade & Investment is sponsoring this award, and congratulate AESSEAL plc on becoming regional winner for the Yorkshire and Humber region. Exporters like AESSEAL plc 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.

AESSEAL plc 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.

Peter Mileham, President of the 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 AESSEAL plc. Export markets are all too often an untapped business opportunity. You have shown what can be achieved."

ENDS

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.

