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CHAMBER AWARDS 2008

National Winners Press Pack

For immediate release

The best of the United Kingdom's businesses recognised by the British Chambers of Commerce

BCC announces the winners of the Chamber Awards 2008

28th November 2008 – The BCC and RBS Group today announced the winners of the Chamber Awards 2008. Now in its fifth year, the Chamber Awards were developed to recognise outstanding business achievement within the UK business community.

There are eight different categories of national awards and businesses were permitted to enter as many as they wished. The award categories and winners are detailed below.

Award	Sponsor	Chamber	Winner	Nature of Business
Outstanding Business Achievement 'Winner of Winners'	RBS Group	Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce	GD Environmental Services Newport	Waste Disposal / Environmental Services
Achievement in International Business	RBS Group	Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce	Nisa International Grimsby	Food and drink exporter
Excellence in People Development	Train to Gain	Doncaster and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce	H.I.Weldrick Ltd Doncaster	Pharmacy
Excellence in Customer Service	AXA PPP healthcare	Leeds Chamber of Commerce	Arena Group of Companies Wakefield	Print and document solutions provider
Award for Innovation Through Technology	Dell Corporation Ltd	Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce	Rapide Communication Ltd Coventry	Telecommunications
The Green Award	Westfield Health	Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce	GD Environmental Services Newport	Waste Disposal / Environmental Services

Most Promising New Business	BT Business	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce	Softstart UK Norfolk	Industrial automation
Entrepreneur of the Year	Staples	Dorset Chamber of Commerce	Barbara Cox, of Nutrichef Limited Poole	Healthy meal delivery service
Business of the Year	BlackBerry®	Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce	Nisa International Grimsby	Food and drink exporter

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

Paul Lynam, Chief Executive, NatWest and RBS Business Banking said: "I have been bowled over by the level of commitment, enthusiasm and success of the companies taking part. As Britain's leading bank for small businesses, we recognise the challenges of trading in an economic downturn, which is why the businesses featured in this year's awards fully deserve reward for the contributions to their industries, and communities."

Each of the winners received a certificate at a gala dinner in London at the Natural History Museum. GD Environmental Services, the winner of the Award for Outstanding Business Achievement also took home the top cash prize of £50,000 courtesy of RBS Group.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC, added: "Every one of our winners stands out for their achievement, innovation and contribution to the economy and their community. Businesses of every size and from all sectors can learn a great deal from each of our winners. Congratulations to you all."

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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.

BCC and RBS Group announce GD Environmental Services as overall winner of national Chamber Awards 2008 and £50,000 cash prize

GD Environmental Services, a member of Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce and winner of the Green Award at the national Chambers Awards 2008, has also been named as this year's recipient of the 'winner of winners' award for Outstanding Business Achievement. GD Environmental Services will also receive a cheque for £50,000 courtesy of sponsors RBS Group, Britain's leading bank for small business.

Paul Lynam, Chief Executive, NatWest and RBS Business Banking said: "We support over a million small businesses across Britain and yet we continue to be amazed by exceptional businesses like GD Environmental Services who stand out in every way. They are deserving winners and we look forward to seeing the business reach its true potential after receiving this life changing investment."

GD Environmental Services will use the £50,000 to help fund their Carbon Neutral Team. This local community initiative aims to raise awareness of the environment in Wales - as well as help individuals and business become greener and strive for carbon neutrality. www.carbonneutrals.co.uk

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC, said: "The talent shown by all our winners both nationally and regionally is outstanding. However, GD Environmental Services stood out as an exceptional company and sets a new standard that every business can aspire to. They have made a huge success of every project they tackled while operating in a fiercely competitive market. Congratulations to everyone at GD Environmental Services you really deserve this title and prize."

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

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About RBS Group

RBS Group, which includes NatWest and RBS, are proud to be Britain's leading small business bank. We believe in providing a full banking package for our customers through our network of locally based experienced managers, offering the widest range of practical benefits to support small businesses, from start up to stock market floatation. This support extends in all the important areas, not just financial.

The Bank is committed to providing more access to face to face advice and support to help businesses trade successfully in an economic downturn. For those businesses facing heightened financial pressures, the Bank is currently putting in place an experienced team of 500 to offer more intensive support to these customers. In addition, the Bank is taking steps to ensure that our managers increase their time with customers by 20% in 2009.

British Chambers of Commerce and RBS Group announce the national winner of the Achievement in International Business award

Nisa International, a member of the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the Achievement in International Business at the Chamber Awards 2008.

The organisation (a food and drink exporter) won the RBS Group sponsored award because the judges were very impressed with Nisa International's level of innovation and by its high performance culture. The company has a robust international strategy focused on customer retention, relationship development and market expansion. This same strategy is underpinned by targeted and comprehensive sales and marketing plans in every market they operate in. Their results proved how hard they have worked to achieve their goals.

Simon Roberts, Head of UK Cash Management and Trade Sales, RBS: "We help thousands of customers expand their businesses by exporting overseas and recognise the unique set of challenges they must overcome. Nisa International has found innovative solutions to the unique challenges of each export market it serves. Their successful track record, ongoing growth and vision made should be inspiration to other export wholesalers."

The National Winners of Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC said: "Trading overseas is not for the faint hearted. It takes a great deal of vision, skill and tenacity to make it work. Nisa International excels in all these qualities, making it a clear winner for this award. Congratulations."

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) and Train to Gain announce the national winner of the award for Excellence in People Development

H.I Weldrick Ltd, a member of Doncaster and Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the award for Excellence in People Development at the Chamber Awards 2008.

H.I Weldrick Ltd, (a pharmacy), won the Train to Gain sponsored award for its outstanding approach to employee development. In particular, the judges liked the way the company's human resource (HR) practices encourage staff to put forward innovative ideas of their own that provide self-development opportunities. Two recent examples of these ideas have led to the introduction of a new translation service and a specialist service for deaf and hearing-impaired patients and customers.

Sharon Forton, Director of Business Services, Learning and Skills Council commented, "H.I Weldrick Ltd shows how developing a workforce to the highest standards can give a business a real competitive edge. Everyone in the business is involved in employee development programmes, from career pathways to performance assessments. Ensuring continuous professional development for all of their staff is the driving force behind their ongoing growth and success. Congratulations and well done – a truly worthy winner this accolade. "

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Neville Reyner, President of the BCC said: "We congratulate H.I Weldrick Ltd for having the foresight to be so progressive in this area. The BCC has long been an advocate of the importance of investing in the skills development of every workforce. H.I Weldrick Ltd has shown that strategic skills and workforce development programmes are one of the most effective investments any business can make."

BCC and AXA PPP healthcare announce the national winners of the Award for Excellence in Customer Service

Arena Group, a member of Leeds Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the AXA PPP healthcare sponsored award for Excellence in Customer Service at the Chamber Awards 2008.

Arena Group, (a company specialising in print and document solutions), was chosen as the national winner because of the level of dedication and enthusiasm the company had for achieving the highest possible levels of customer service. All the judges were bowled over by what they had accomplished in this notoriously difficult area to manage.

Victoria Georgalakis, Customer Service Director, AXA PPP healthcare said; “Arena Group’s commitment to achieving the highest levels of customer service impressed all the judges. Their ongoing growth is underpinned by their investment and approach to professional development. Their customer service satisfaction levels consistently reach a very impressive 96%, a standard that many businesses could only dream of achieving; and their customer centric culture and ethos has undoubtedly given them a real edge over their competition. Well done and congratulations.”

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC, said: “UK firms face more competition than ever before from local, national and increasingly, international businesses. It is often the quality of a business’ customer service that sets it apart. Arena Group has shown how exemplary customer service has paid off. With such an amazing track record in customer satisfaction levels they really deserve to be recognised for this significant achievement.”

British Chambers of Commerce and Dell announce the national winner of the Award for Innovation through Technology

Rapide Communication Ltd, a member of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the Award for Innovation through Technology at the Chamber Awards 2008.

The organisation, (operating in telecommunications), won the Dell sponsored award because the judges were impressed by their original and thoughtful entry which encapsulated an open and intelligent approach to innovation. This approach has enabled them to secure a third of the FTSE 500 as customers.

Monique Bonner, Dell's SME Sales Director UK and Ireland, commented; "Rapide Communication Ltd is a very innovative organisation. Its competitive edge is driven by its ongoing quest to identify, develop and implement new ways to help their customers achieve their goals using unique and pioneering communication solutions. Congratulations to all at Rapide Communication Ltd - very worthy winners of the Award for Innovation through Technology."

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC said: "Rapide Communication Ltd shows us all what can be achieved when innovation is put at the core of the business. Rapide is successful in several markets and with a wide range of different businesses. It has really made its technology investment work and this in turn has had a profound effect on its success. Congratulations."

British Chambers of Commerce and Westfield Health announce the national winner of the Green Award

GD Environmental Services, a member of Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the Green Award at the Chamber Awards 2008.

The organisation (operating in waste disposal and environmental services) won the Westfield Health sponsored award because the judges were particularly impressed with their strategic focus and investment in innovation. Over the last 12 months alone, they have developed a two million pound, waste transfer station, delivered a range of recycling initiatives and are currently in the process of developing a £32 million waste to energy plant capable of turning waste into green energy.

Jill Davies, Chief Executive, Westfield Health commented; “GD Environmental Services is a unique and thriving young business, committed to reducing the impact that society has on our environment. They punch well above their weight in an increasingly competitive industry. Their aggressive development strategy has returned profitable and sustainable results. It is a truly inspirational business. Congratulations.”

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC said: “Once upon a time, green credentials were a ‘nice to have’ for many businesses. Today being green in business is not just a moral choice but a shrewd business opportunity too. GD Environmental Services is a terrific business that others should admire.”

British Chambers of Commerce and BT Business announce the national winner of the Most Promising New Business Award

Softstart UK, a member of Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the Most Promising New Business Award at the Chamber Awards 2008.

The company (operating in industrial automation) won the BT Business sponsored award because of the way they astutely spotted a gap in the market for a new breed of solution provider. Their research into the £8m market potential was second to none – showing real understanding of both of the customer need and the competitive threats. They have proved what can be achieved with the benefit of real customer insight.

Robin Mackenzie, Marketing Director, BT Business commented: “Softstart is a superb example of what a business needs to do to make sure the foundations are in place for a healthy start and for growth. They did their homework, and together with some great marketing, their ability to cut costs and to deliver in much shorter timescales, meant that they were off to a winning start. We look forward to watching them go from strength to strength.”

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner at the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC, said: “Softstart UK has an excellent business plan, and is built by talented entrepreneurs with a real understanding of how to succeed in today's markets. We all know that we have faced difficult business conditions recently. Despite this, Softstart UK has shown what can be achieved, even in uncertain times. It is an exciting business that we think will go long way. Congratulations.”

Dorset businesswoman collects national entrepreneur award

Barbara Cox, of Nutrichef Limited, has been named as the national winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year title at the Chamber Awards 2008, staged at London's Natural History Museum.

Barbara, who is a member of the Dorset Chamber of Commerce, won the Staples sponsored award because of her innovative, healthy meal-delivery service business, that is helping to make a real difference to people's lives.

Her niche business provides freshly-prepared, wheat-free, dairy-free meals direct to customers' homes – including people fighting serious illnesses such as cancer, individuals trying to lose weight and sportsmen and women. The company's achievements combined with Barbara's "no fear" attitude, commitment to staff development and a desire to take on new and exciting challenges, made her the natural choice as the national winner.

Staples Head of Marketing Yetunde Ige commented: "Barbara is the epitome of a true entrepreneur. With a passion for promoting good health and well-being, her entrepreneurial spirit, resilience and determination to succeed has delivered ongoing and consistent growth in sales, despite operating in such a fiercely competitive market. She really deserved to win the award."

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC said: "Barbara is a real inspiration to all. She spotted a brilliant business opportunity and instinctively knew how to really exploit it. She is an amazing entrepreneur who has really earned this national title. Congratulations"

British Chambers of Commerce announces Business of the Year Award winner

Nisa International, a member of the Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, has been announced as the national winner of the Business of the Year Award at the Chamber Awards 2008.

Nisa International, (a food and drink exporter), won the BlackBerry® sponsored award because the judges were unanimous that Nisa had demonstrated that they are true leaders in their market - consistently delivering all round business excellence in over 100 countries worldwide. They are also the first wholesale exporter in their field to provide an electronic ordering service. This has given them a competitive advantage resulting in increased profits that have grown faster than their turnover.

Neville Reyner, President of the BCC commented: "Nisa International are leaders in their field. It takes a special company to win this award. It is an exceptional business and is likely to go from strength to strength. Congratulations and well done Nisa International for winning the Business of the Year Award."

The National Winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 were announced at a gala dinner the Natural History Museum, London on the 27th November 2008.

"Nisa International is a business that stands out from the crowd. The competition was really tough. Making it to the shortlist is hard enough but winning at the national level is a huge achievement. Congratulations." Neville Reyner added.

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