



48 OF THE UK'S TOP SME'S BEAT 2,945 ENTRANTS TO COMPETE FOR THE TOP PRIZE OF £30,000 IN THIS YEARS E-COMMERCE AWARDS

Fifth anniversary year of the InterForum / UK online for business E-Commerce Awards highlights maturing use of e-technologies

2 October 2003: In total, 6,373 companies have entered the InterForum/UK online for business E-Commerce Awards over the past five years. Out of this years 2,945 entrants, 48 regional winners from around the UK, ranging from an organisation which helps people to save money on utility bills, to a charity which offers free help and advice to victims of bullying, are going head to head for the chance to be crowned overall winner of this years Awards. A cheque for £30,000 will be presented to the National winner by Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services, at the national final and gala dinner on Wednesday 8th October at The Grosvenor House Hotel, London.

In their fifth anniversary year, the E-Commerce Awards have set a new record, attracting over 75 percent more entrants than last year. The quality of entrants has also improved, highlighting the increasing maturity in the SME market when it comes to adopting new technologies. The size and outreach of the entrants has also changed; this year, with nine percent of companies entering employing over 50 people, and a further 22 percent employing between 10 and 50 individuals.

The annual Awards aim to recognise and reward innovation in the application of Internet and information and communication technologies to transform small and medium sized businesses in the UK. Last year's winner, Global Recycle, is a great example of how quickly a good idea, solid foundations and a practical application of e-technology can grow a business. Since winning the Awards, Global Recycle has continued to grow on its early success and today operates the largest online trading exchange for the recycling industry in the world.

-more news overleaf-

-news release continued-

Sponsored nationally for the third year by Royal Bank of Scotland Group and Cisco Systems, the awards are run on a regional and national level and recognise excellence in the areas of e-business start-ups, e-trading, e-business and achievements in the voluntary and community sector. This year also sees the introduction of four new Innovation categories run at a national level in recognition of the increased take-up of new and emerging technologies among SME's.

Each finalist has already won £2,000 as a category winner in its regional heat, and will go on to compete in the national final for the chance of winning £8,000 as a national category winner. All four national category winners will then compete for the title of E-Commerce Awards champion 2003 and a cheque for £30,000.

Phil Flaxton, Chief Executive of InterForum comments, "Adopting new technology is no longer about setting up a website and establishing an on-line presence. The way in which businesses are applying new technologies clearly demonstrates an increasing focus on business transformation."

Liz Grant, Director of ePolicy and Delivery, UK online for business adds, "This year's entries show that businesses are using information and communication technologies in increasingly mature ways. More and more companies realise that to really be e-enabled, technology must be integrated across all parts of a business, its people and its processes."

For further information about the regional and national winners of this year's InterForum/UK online for business E-Commerce Awards, or to register your interest for next year's Awards, visit the dedicated website at www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. UK online for business

UK online for business is a partnership between Government and industry and promotes the use of e-commerce amongst small and medium sized businesses. There is a network of UK online for business advisers situated in the Business Links in England and their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These advisers provide down to earth, practical and impartial advice to individual businesses on how technology can cut time and cost from the way they do business. For further information call 0845 715 2000 or visit www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk

2. www.interforum.org is a not-for-profit organisation that helps British companies to conduct their business electronically. All of InterForum's activities are governed by the need to raise awareness of the many business opportunities and challenges presented by new Internet, information and communications technologies. InterForum works to ensure that education, legislation and technology are in place to help British businesses to profit from the digital economy. For further information on InterForum please visit its website <http://www.interforum.org>

For further information on UK online for business, please contact:

Antonia Germanos/Victoria Harris
UK online for business publicity centre
Tel: +44 (0)20 7072 4129; Email: agermanos@gciuk.com

For further information on InterForum, please contact:

Jo Timmins / Kate Francis
The *itpr* Partnership
Tel. +44 (0)1932 57 88 00; Email: katef@itpr.co.uk

Further details of the regional award winners and their web addresses

E-Business Category

East

BT, EEDA
Savastore.com (a division of Watford Electronics)
www.savastore.com

Watford Electronics is a long-established retailer of computer equipment. In 2001 Watford Electronics re-branded its Internet division 'Savastore'. The new business 'Savastore' now enables Watford Electronics to sell a broader range of products to fulfil the higher demands of today's consumer.

East Midlands

East Midlands Development Agency
Trade Appliances
www.trade-appliances.co.uk

Established in 1988, Trade Appliances began with a showroom in Nottingham. www.trade-appliances.co.uk was launched in December 1999 to help the company achieve its mission of becoming the leading retailer of built-in kitchen appliances and constantly delivering new levels of customer care.

West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands, Aramiska
Galleon Systems
www.galleon.eu.com

Galleon Systems are specialists in time synchronisation using atomic clocks and GPS. Galleon has supplied time synchronisation solutions to many companies including Matsushita, Rolls Royce, Honeywell, Fujitsu, Ford, Sharp, and Shell.

London

London Development Agency
Eventwise
www.eventwise.co.uk

Established in 1996 by Company Director Penny Ellis, EventWise is the definitive guide to corporate events, committed to offering a professional, friendly and refreshing service for corporate clients. The Eventwise team work closely together to create and co-ordinate memorable events, drawing from the extensive experience of the team.

South West

Business Link

Fresh Air Studios

www.freshairstudios.com

Fresh Air Studios, an independent voiceover recording and Production Company based in Plymouth, produces audio for IVR systems, radio commercials, telephone systems and corporate presentations. In 1998, they launched Voiceovers.co.uk, an online Voiceover database, to provide the industry with a new and innovative way to find, audition and book Voiceover talent both in the UK and abroad, which formed the basis of their application.

South East

SEEDA

Jali Ltd

www.jali.co.uk

Jali was founded in 1990 to design, manufacture and market decorative wood products for the home and forDIY, architectural and display industries. In just over a decade, Jali has made some astounding achievements with prestigious projects for Harrods, Paramount Pictures, John Lewis and Shepperton Studios to name just a few.

North West

BT, Digital Industries North West

Caldwells Group Limited

www.iesa.co.uk

Caldwells Group was founded in 1893 as a provider of products for the Construction and Industrial markets. The company's continued growth reflects its emphasis on meeting and surpassing customers' expectations, and being flexible to their changing needs.

North East

Sage

Bison Bede

www.bisonbede.co.uk

Bison Bede was formed in County Durham in1983 when its founders realized that there was a niche market for stairlifts which could be tailored to individual needs. In 1998 Bison Bede was acquired by Domus Homecare AG, a private group of companies with subsidiaries in Germany, Sweden and Canada, and moved into the homecare market.

Northern Ireland

Invest Northern Ireland

Segue Software Ltd

www.support.segue.com

Segue Software Ltd is part of Segue Software, Inc., the e-business reliability experts, that offer integrated automation solutions to address reliability across the entire application life cycle, helping companies realize the full potential and maximum reliability of their enterprise applications. Their unique offerings include innovative technology, expert service, and integrated support solutions to address the risks and complexities that affect the performance and quality of business systems.

Wales

Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Information Society, WDA

Coast and Country Holidays

www.welsh-cottages.co.uk

Based in Pembrokeshire in Wales, Coast and Country Holidays offer a portfolio of high standard cottages across Wales. Coast and Country Holidays excel in taking the time to identify exactly what type of cottages and in which locations, what standards and equipment and most importantly what prices make their customers want to holiday with them year after year.

Yorkshire & The Humber

Yorkshire Forward, BT, Business Link

IMS Ltd

www.ukims.co.uk

IMS (Intelligent Marketing Solutions) is a young, dynamic and innovative field marketing company who provides intelligent marketing solutions. IMS differs from other field marketing companies in that it is the first in its field to build its entire business model around e-business solutions.

Scotland

Space and People

www.spaceandpeople.com

Space and People is the UK's most comprehensive database of promotional space in Shopping Centres and other venues. It is designed to help companies profile, select and book suitable space, enabling organisations to market their products and services to a Shopping Centre visitor base.

E-Business Start-up Category

East

BT, EEDA

Motherbliss

www.motherbliss.co.uk

Based in Loughton and founded in 2001 as a 'mothers-to-be ' site, Motherbliss has grown to accommodate mothers and young families alike. The company aims to empower mothers to fulfil articulated and unarticulated needs: Anytime, Anywhere, Anyplace, and through Any device.

East Midlands

East Midlands Development Agency

Chris Worth Productions

www.chrisworthproductions.com

Chris Worth Productions offer high quality, royalty free music. Professional musicianship, inspiration and versatility are the foundations on which the copyright free catalogue is built. Chris Worth Productions draws upon every genre from the rich and colourful history of music, right up to the present moment.

West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands, Aramiska

UK Power Ltd

www.ukpower.co.uk

Based in Coventry, UK Power aims to help make it easy for people to save money on gas and electricity bills by using fast and efficient Internet technology to save time. UK Power's services include a listing of all the UK Gas and Electricity Suppliers, together with convenient links to their transfer pages.

London

London Development Agency

Wrapit plc

www.wrapit.co.uk

Founded by former fashion journalist, Pepita Diamand-Levy, Wrapit plc provides the ultimate wedding list service to both guests and the lucky couple, to create a wedding list of their dreams. Wrapit provides a one-to-one personal service from start to finish in its showrooms in London and Harrogate, North Yorkshire, over the phone or via its website.

South West

Business Link

Royalty-Free.tv

www.royalty-free.tv

Royalty-free.tv is based in the south of England, and provides instant downloads of high quality royalty free music. The site is designed for, and used by television & film producers,

TV broadcasters, radio stations, video producers, advertising agencies, web designers & 'new media' producers.

South East

SEEDA

The Fuller CV Ltd

www.thefullercv.com

The Fuller CV is based in Surrey and was founded by Rebecca Fuller a former Recruitment Consultant with 13 years experience. Rebecca established a nation-wide network of recruitment offices and directly managed a dedicated team of 2,000.

North West

BT, Digital Industries North West

Flowers Direct Online Ltd

www.flowersdirect.co.uk

Established in 1992, Flowers Direct provides the very best in quality service and value. As a national network of florists, it provides quality flowers and gifts locally, nationally and abroad. With over a million satisfied customers the award winning Flowers Direct website is the easiest way to send flowers.

North East

Sage

Infection Music

www.infectionmusic.co.uk

Based in Houghton-le-Spring Infection Music Limited was founded in 1999 to promote innovative and original electronic music to a wider audience. Their first signing T-Bass UK was already widely acclaimed within the UK and global electronic music scene thanks to their incredible debut album The Infection of Time.

Northern Ireland

Invest Northern Ireland

Fusion Antibodies Limited

www.fusionantibodies.com

Fusion Antibodies Ltd was primarily created to provide high quality antibody reagents to the Pharma, biotech and academic sectors. Based in Belfast, Fusion Antibodies offer an all-in-one service, including cloning, expression and purification of fusion proteins for customers and involves high-throughput techniques that enable rapid synthesis of antigens.

Wales

Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Information Society, WDA

Coolload Limited

www.coolload.com

Coolload Ltd is an interactive load matching service, suitable for businesses involved in refrigerated transport. When a load is posted on the system, the details are sent to all 'Transporters' who have registered to receive 'Load alerts' for that particular route. These details are sent via sms text message and/or by e-mail.

Yorkshire & The Humber

Yorkshire Forward, BT, Business Link

Abletogo Ltd

www.abletogo.com

Based in Wakefield, abletogo.com aims to be the leading UK based Internet holiday and Accommodation Company for people with mobility difficulties. The site was founded and developed by disabled people and enables you to check out facilities, details of where you want to go and the type of accommodation you're looking for and suggest premises that 'best fits' your unique needs.

Scotland

Lingo 24

www.lingo24.com

Lingo24 provides a range of high quality foreign language translation and related services. The company specialises in translation services between English, French, German, Spanish

and Italian but undertake projects in all major world languages. The company was founded by two Oxford graduates, Christian Arno and Jos Shepherd, under the name tgv24.com, in 1999 and has since grown substantially, having attracted major blue chip corporations.

E-Trading Category

East

BT, EEDA

Mad about Cards

www.madaboutcards.com

Mad about Cards, found by Sandie & Andy Goble, went live in 2002, aimed at the handmade greetings card enthusiast. As well as a range of blank cards, envelopes and special papers, they offer a number of products to adorn cards. In September 2001, Sandie and Andy exhibited at a craft fair and due to the success of their cards and crafts Mad about Cards was born.

East Midlands

East Midlands Development Agency

Tracklogs

www.tracklogs.co.uk

Set up in 2003 and based in Derbyshire, TrackLogs is a software development company and an online retailer. The software side of the company specialises in the development of digital mapping applications for recreational users, offering GPS units, digital mapping software, GPS accessories, Laminated OS Maps, Batteries and Chargers.

West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands, Aramiska

The Ludlow Sausage Company

www.theludlowsausage.co.uk

The Ludlow Sausage Company is an online store selling sausages, set up by five local butchers in Ludlow. The Ludlow Sausage Company came into being as a project started by Townscape, a web authoring firm in Ludlow which saw the potential for the town's five traditional retail butchers to work together online.

London

London Development Agency

Need a Present.com

www.needapresent.com

Needapresent.com was found by Martin Gerhard, a BBC journalist for ten years, and Jason Hick, a web designer who came up with the business idea in 1999 after being sick and tired of rushing around the shops whenever they needed a present for someone. What they wanted was an easy to use website - full of stylish gifts, at reasonable prices - which would take the hassle out of gift buying.

South West

Business Link

Sunsile.co.uk Limited

www.sunsile.co.uk

Sunsile.co.uk Limited, based in Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, offers tailor made package holidays to Greece to suit exact requirements, choosing from a selection of quality studios, apartments and villas as well as flights and car rental, from any of the Ionian Islands of Corfu, Zante, Kefalonia, Lefkada, Paxos or Kea.

South East

SEEDA

DIYframing Ltd

www.diyframing.com

Diyframing is a mail order business set up by Managing Director Duncan McDonald in 2002. Based in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, the company was established after research found that there was no one place for people to go to get all the tools and materials needed to make their own frames.

North West

BT, Digital Industries North West

Dabs.com

www.dabs.com

dabs.com is the UK's leading internet retailer of IT and technology products, offering a huge range of products from the world's leading manufacturers to almost a million online customers across the country, having grown significantly over the last three years to become the number 1 online retailer in their sector.

North East

Sage

Perfiliate Technologies Ltd

www.perfiliate.com

Perfiliate Technologies' speciality is developing Internet marketing and technology solutions. The directors have extensive experience of the Internet and have been marketing and selling on the Internet since its earliest days.

Northern Ireland

Invest Northern Ireland

BlackStar

www.blackstar.co.uk

BlackStar is a video and DVD e-tailer based in Dunmurry, Belfast and with customers in more than 100 countries, is regarded as the undisputed king of online video sales. The trio who founded the company are Darryl Collins, the chief executive, who has a film-production background, Tony Bowden, who set up the first net company in Northern Ireland and Jeremy Glover who was formerly with the McCann-Erickson advertising agency.

Wales

Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Information Society, WDA

Blushingbuyer.co.uk

www.blushingbuyer.co.uk

Blushingbuyer.co.uk, based in Newport in South Wales, provides a secure yet discreet environment in which to purchase important yet sometimes embarrassing products. Trading since September 2000 Blushingbuyer continues to grow steadily and sells all those products that make you blush, as well as a lot that don't.

Yorkshire & The Humber

Yorkshire Forward, BT, Business Link

Karate-kid.co.uk

www.karate.co.uk

Based in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Karate-Kid.Co.Uk sell Martial Art supplies world wide with 90% of sales achieved via the Internet. Products include uniforms, footwear, training and practice equipment and protective wear to suit all level. With top brands like Adidas, Blitz, Cimac, Giko, Kamikaze, Shureido and TSport in the range, it boasts the best selection of products and prices on the web.

Scotland

Black Circles Ltd.

www.blackcircles.com

Black Circles offers quality tyres at cheap prices. Founded by Michael Welch in 2001, Black Circles is the result of many years experience operating at the highest level within the car tyre industry. The Black Circles team offers the best fully fitted prices in the UK and prides itself on a high level of customer service by offering access to over 700 service points, all inclusive fitted prices and an appointment service.

Voluntary & Community Category

East

BT, EEDA

The Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre

www.msrmc.co.uk

The aim of MSRC is to act as a one stop service for anyone affected by MS. Whether it is those with a diagnosis or expecting one, family, friends, employers, work colleagues, professionals in the field or those just with an interest, it aims to provide answers and support. With a small team of committed and experienced staff, MSRC treat each enquiry with genuine empathy whilst tailoring the response to the needs of the caller.

East Midlands

East Midlands Development Agency
Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland)

www.ruralcc.co.uk

The Rural Community Council (RCC) is an independent charity which provides information, advice and assistance to groups and individuals living and working in rural Leicestershire. It is part of a network of rural community councils, all involving themselves exclusively with rural issues.

West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands, Aramiska
Syncope Trust and Reflex Anoxic Seizures

www.stars.org.uk

The STARS group was originally known as the Reflex Anoxic Seizure Information and Support Group and was founded in March 1993 after Francesca Lobban was diagnosed as having RAS and with the full support of Professor Stephenson, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist - Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow.

London

London Development Agency
Time Bank

www.timebank.org.uk

TimeBank was conceived by the founders of Comic Relief who wanted to make the giving of time easier and more accessible. Their vision was to create a media based campaign which would inspire a new generation of TimeGivers and encourage people to give as much or as little time as they choose.

South West

Business Link
Brook Young Peoples Clinic

www.brook.org.uk

Brook Advisory Centres - commonly known just as Brook - is the only national voluntary sector provider of free and confidential sexual health advice and services specifically for young people under 25. Brook is a registered charity, and has nearly 40 years' experience of providing professional advice through specially trained doctors, nurses, counsellors, and outreach and information workers to over 100,000 young people each year.

South East

SEEDA
Visitandlearn - HMS Endurance Tracking Project

www.visitandlearn.co.uk

The visitandlearn.co.uk website tracks the passage of HMS Endurance and provides factfiles about various aspects of the journey - looking in particular at climates, ecosystems, wildlife and timezones at locations along the route, with additional information on the work of Endurance and the British Antarctic Survey.

North West

BT, Digital Industries North West
The Pentalk Network

www.pentalk.org

The Pentalk network is a practical 'rapid reaction' scheme to assist farmers in Cumbria both during the recent Foot and Mouth crisis and in its aftermath. The scheme is run by a voluntary organisation which draws its financial support from local and national government, and from educational, business and charitable sources. Funds are held at Barclays Bank Penrith.

North East

Sage

One Voice Network

www.onevoice.co.uk

One Voice Network was established in 1996 to bring together voluntary and community organisations in County Durham and Darlington to examine the practical benefits of working together in facilitating the activities of the organisations and individuals within the network, by whatever means is appropriate at the time.

Northern Ireland

Invest Northern Ireland

FOSEC (Foyle Skills & Education Cluster)

www.fosec.org.uk

Foyle Skills & Education Cluster was set up in November 1999 in response to recommendations in the Strategy 2010 document: collaborative clusters of schools, businesses and colleges should be established to deliver education and training outcomes tailored to the needs of the economy. FOSEC's principal purpose is the development and enhancement of linkages between the world of education and the world of work in the Derry City Council area.

Wales

Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Information Society, WDA

Morrison Orpheus Choir

www.morrisonorpheus.com

Formed in 1935 and enjoying an international reputation as a leading exponent of male choral singing, the Choir is in constant demand, performing 25-30 engagements annually. Although a registered charity and financially self supporting, much of its work is devoted to assisting local and national good causes, at home and overseas, such as Leukaemia Research, NCH Action for Children, RNLI, Royal National Eisteddfod, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Save the Children Fund.

Yorkshire & The Humber

Yorkshire Forward, BT, Business Link

Bullying Online

www.bullying.co.uk

Bullying Online is a charity offering free help and advice to children and parents all over the UK to help them deal with school bullying. The charity was founded in April 1999 by Mrs Liz Carnell and her son John, as a direct result of their experience of dealing with school bullying, which included taking successful legal action against North Yorkshire County Council. In the last four years Bullying Online has answered more than 16,200 emails.

Scotland

Scottish Archive Network

www.scottishdocuments.com

Scottishdocuments has been created by the Scottish Archive Network (SCAN) and offers a complete index to all the registers of Scottish wills and testaments from 1500 to 1901, available free of charge on the website. The Scottish Wills team has a permanent staff of three archivists seconded from the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) and two conservators, with 11 volunteers from the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU).