

## E-businesses go for gold

David Neal

Government minister Stephen Timms has launched the sixth consecutive DTI/Interforum e-commerce awards. The awards celebrate UK business excellence in applying information and communications technologies and are sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland. The winners could provide models for other businesses to follow.

Changes for this year's awards reflect the ways UK industry is using online systems to improve efficiency and gain competitive advantage. Categories such as "best use of a fax" have been dropped in favour of "best use of broadband",



© **Timms: constant improvements seen**

"teleworking" and "advanced supply chain".

The awards are open to any business with more than 250 employees, and cash prizes worth £214,000 will be given. The awards are run on a regional and national basis and address activities including business transformation, e-business start-ups, e-trading, and best use of teleworking. Details are available at the URL below.

Announcing the awards, e-commerce minister Timms said each year had seen big improvement in the way firms use technology and a growing number of entries as a result. He said that since they began in 1999, the awards had seen over 6,500 entries with year on year growth of about 50 percent. "The awards are the opportunity to showcase best practice in the innovative and effective use of e-commerce among UK organisations," said Timms. "Again they have been enhanced and adapted to reflect the changing abilities and needs of businesses."

Andy Ross, director of e-commerce at

### AWARDS FOR E-COMMERCE

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- The winners could provide models for other firms to follow.
- The awards now include "best use of broadband", "teleworking" and "advanced supply chain" categories.

the Royal Bank of Scotland, said in a statement: "E-commerce is vital to the overall competitiveness of both the UK economy and individual businesses within it. Businesses large and small can benefit from new technology to improve all aspects of their business, such as process efficiency, cost management and marketing."

Last years' winners included a building firm that used in-cab PDAs and always-on GPRS connections to cut costs and improve productivity. The overall winner was a contractual maintenance firm that the judges felt had transformed its business processes, improving productivity and stock control as well as the customer experience.

➔ [www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk](http://www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk)