



E E B W

EAST OF ENGLAND
BUSINESSWOMAN
OF THE YEAR

Finalists Announced

Press Release

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Issued On behalf of IoD Suffolk Branch

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THE FINALISTS ANNOUNCED IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

After 2 months of judging, the Suffolk branch of the Institute of Directors, award organisers, are pleased to announce the finalists in the East of England Businesswoman of the Year Awards for 2008.

Once again this year the awards are being sponsored by Lloyds TSB, the high street bank that serves businesses in the region. Steve Elsom, Area Director for Commercial Banking for Lloyds TSB Norfolk and Suffolk, said "Innovation and entrepreneurial skills in today's economy are fundamental to the success of our regional economy and sponsoring these awards illustrates our ongoing dedication to the local business community." Additional sponsorship has been received from Adnams Plc who this year supports the Young Businesswoman of the Year Award.

Corporate Businesswoman of the Year Award.

Clare Whight of Suffolk based SOS-HR has clear understanding of what it takes to run a business, employ staff, network, deliver a service and market to her audiences. Her strong belief in proactive employee management and communication is at the centre of SOS-HR's culture in providing services covering employment law, health and safety, payroll and training. Her passion and pride for the HR profession is motivational for both her own staff and colleagues as well as her clients.

After joining the Herbert Group in 1999, **Leigh-Ondrea Bendall** was appointed Managing Director of Herbert Industrial Ltd in 2006. As a technical engineering business serving the food industry, the business was then at a pivotal time, did the main board continue to invest in the development of the division? Leigh-Ondrea's appointment was a major turning point for the company, and within



18 months this business was at break-even point with the plans and strategy to become profitable as both a UK and global business

Denise Smiles joined Optical Metrology Services in 2006 and as Director of Business Development, has been instrumental in the significant growth of sales and the client base in a relatively short period of time. Denise's role also encompasses the development of the business infrastructure to deliver this increased demand both in the UK and USA.

Enterprise Award

Norfolk based Cocoabeen Recruitment was established in 2006 by **Mary Pratt**. Having extensive experience in recruitment, Mary noticed a consistent niche being missed by other services and set up her own consultancy to bridge the gap. Three years on, she now has 11 consultants following her recruitment ideology and has moved from being a consultant herself to a strategic role, concentrating on solidifying the brand, business expansion and taking Cocoabeen into the national arena.

Founded 21 years ago by **Pam Calvert**, Hertfordshire based Communications Management is a reputation management consultancy which focuses on economic and social issues. Now employing 27 people the client base includes the prestigious names of Vodafone, the Imperial War Museum and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Pam has overseen the portfolio growth and the development of the company's status to number 1 ranking consultancy in the public sector outside of London, and number 6 in the UK

Samantha Hale is founder and managing director of the Advance Performance running stores in Peterborough and Cambridge, retail outlets providing both products and advice for those who exercise. Samantha's focus for providing motivation and advice to her customer base has seen her invest significantly in her staff; ensuring that they provide specialist footwear advice whilst building loyalty through long lasting customer relationships.

Young Businesswoman of the Year Award

Norwich based Media Jems was founded in 2006 by 27 year old **Jenna Gould** as a way in which to continue her marketing career, care for her family and generate an income. The pr and marketing agency had a solid start and has continued to develop; now employing four members of staff. Innovative retainer and pay as you go packages and additional services such as MediaCV are offered to the growing portfolio of clients across the UK.

Launched in March 2007 and based in North Bedfordshire, Wellingborough based Muddy Matches, a niche market online dating and social networking website aimed at country-minded or 'muddy' people in the UK was founded by **Lucy Reeves**. 'Muddies' joining the network can engage in 'real'



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events such as sailing trips, pub meals and art exhibitions as well as access like minded 'muddies' online. Now with over 15000 members 'muddies' Muddy Matches is well established and growing significantly on a daily basis.

Sophie Morford founded Suffolk based Bizari Promotions in July 2007 to provide innovative and imaginative pr to businesses in the area. Working in collaboration with other marketing functions, Bizari Promotions ensures that pr works effectively within the marketing mix. Sophie's background in the media has provided clear insight of how to present her creative ideas to editors, meaning increased column inches and greater impact of presence.

The winner of each category will be announced at the Gala Dinner to be held on 5th February at the Radisson SAS Hotel, Stansted Airport.

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Notes

The original Businesswoman of the Year Award for the East of England was launched by the Cambridge Businesswomen's Network in 1989. A few years later the Enterprise Award was created, in addition to the main award, followed in 2002 by the Young Businesswoman of the Year Award. These prestigious awards have been organised since 1997 by the Suffolk branch of the Institute of Directors, and are supported by the other Eastern Region branches of the IoD.

The Awards are designed to acknowledge the enormous achievements of businesswomen in the East of England region, and to act as an encouragement to others. It is felt particularly important that young women who are considering a career in business should have high-profile role models, and these awards not only recognise the success of individual businesswomen but promote and publicise their achievements for the benefit of all women in business throughout the region.

Benefits for winners and finalists

- Recognition of achievement for every finalist and for her business and its staff;
- Media coverage within the region and a commemorative video for all the finalists;
- Entry to the National Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman of the Year Award (main Award winner);
- A variety of gifts and prizes for the winners donated by supporters of the awards;
- Membership of the EEBW past winners' network.



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