



**Embargoed until 1st October 2012**

## **Corby electronics specialist claims East Midlands 'Business of the Year' prize at the Chamber Awards 2012**

The world's leading distributor of electronics and maintenance products has secured a prestigious achievement for Corby after it was announced as the Chamber Awards 2012's Business of the Year for the East Midlands (sponsored by Westfield Health).

RS Components, which employs 2500 people across the UK, made it a double celebration when it also won the Excellence in Innovation category (sponsored by Dell), beating off competition from across the region

Judges were impressed with the company's ability to grow turnover through advancements to its e-commerce facility and a renewed focus on developing its staff and expansion in international markets, where it currently boasts operations in 32 countries.

There were seven other winners from the East Midlands, including a specialist fastener supplier, a luxury apart hotel in Derbyshire and one of the fastest growing meetings, events and accommodation booking agencies.

The full list of Award winners includes:

- Birchover Hotel Apartments (Commitment to People Development)
- Hall Fast Industrial Supplies (Achievement in International Business)
- inspirepac (Excellence in Customer Service)
- Proactive International PR (Most Promising New Business)
- RS Components (Business of the Year and Excellence in Innovation Awards)
- Shredall's Lloyd Williams (Entrepreneur of the Year)
- Whittlebury Hall and Spa (Sustainability Award)
- Zibrant (Marketing Campaign of the Year)

President of the British Chambers of Commerce Martyn Pellew said: "There has never been a more important time for businesses to showcase the amazing work they are doing on a day-to-day basis.

“The Chamber Awards is a perfect platform for them to do just that and receive the recognition and profile they deserve for helping move the economy forward and create employment, often in local areas.”

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Chamber Awards 2012 is committed to finding the best businesses in Britain through a series of regional heats followed by a National Final, due to be held at London’s Guildhall on November 29th.

Now in its 9th year, the competition is one of the showcase events for the ‘Business is Good for Britain’ campaign that highlights the role of business as a positive force for the UK recovery and the success of local communities and individuals.

Located in headquarters in Corby, RS Components sell 550,000 different products ranging from semi-conductors to power tools and protective clothing.

It starts every morning with a zero sales book and, by the end of the day, it will have shipped over 45,000 orders to a customer base that is now spanning more than 1.6 million people.

Improved logistics, supply chain processes and focused marketing has helped the company bounce back from the recession to post year-on-year growth, with the transformation of its iconic paper catalogue into a number of local currency e-commerce websites driving this expansion.

RS Components, along with the seven other winners, will now represent the East Midlands in their respective categories in the Grand Final, with the chance to win £25,000 and the title of “Outstanding Business Achievement”, courtesy of the RBS Group.

Martyn concluded: “A record number of firms have taken part this year, all determined to prove that ‘Business is Good for Britain!’”

The Chamber Awards 2012 is supported by the RBS Group, BT Business, Dell, DHL Express, Westfield Health and Acua Limited.

For further information or to book your place at the National Awards Final, visit **[www.chamberawards.co.uk](http://www.chamberawards.co.uk)**

**ENDS**

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## Notes to Editors

### Breakdown on the other winners:

**Birchover Hotel Apartments (Commitment to People Development)** – Birchover Hotel Apartments is a luxury apart-hotel company, which offers an alternative to traditional city centre hotels through sites in Darley Abbey and Allestree in Derby.

In March 2010, the management diversified its service offer to include hotel facilities in a bid to attract leisure and short-term corporate guests with the results being year-on-year growth.

The firm, who pays some of the highest wages in the sector, has invested heavily in the personal development and promotional prospects of all its staff, with the Head of Housekeeping producing regular quality scores to help inform specialist training needs.

It's an approach that is helping Birchover buck sector trends, with occupancy currently at 82% - 10% above the UK average and 5% above figures seen in London.

**Hall Fast Industrial Suppliers (Achievement in International Business)** – The Newark company has come a long way since it started life in a home office in 2006 and now boasts a turnover of £1.2m and a 9-strong workforce.

Originally providing specialist fasteners to the UK automotive sector, Hall Fast has built on its core strengths by diversifying its product offer and now provides over 48,000 products, including workwear, tools and handling equipment.

Growth has also come from overseas, with the firm reacting to the recession of 2009 by moving into international markets, including Australia, Europe, Honduras, Thailand and, increasingly, into China.

In 2012, Hall Fast will supply into its 75th country and expect exports to account for 50% of its order book.

**inspirepac (Excellence in Customer Service)** – Employing 257 people in Chesterfield, the company specialises in protective packaging, retail ready packaging and point of sale displays for delivery throughout the UK.

inspirepac, which is set to increase turnover to £42m, works across most market sectors, serving high profile clients such as Tesco, M&S, Kimberly Clark, Unilever and Haribo.

At the heart of its success is a customer charter that helps govern the way the business operates. This includes a daily meeting, reviews of response times to enquiries, quality performance and the introduction of a designated account manager.

It also features a look at On Time in Full Delivery (OTIF), which currently stands at 95% with the target for 2012 being 98%.

**Proactive International PR (Most Promising New Business)** – Proactive is a globally focused PR consultancy working with 30 technology-based clients across four continents.

The agency has forged strong links with international events and industry bodies, not to mention a network of partners, contractors and suppliers that provide global reach for an increasing portfolio of customers.

It is already offering employment opportunities for young graduates and is continually pushing the boundaries of innovation, with the launch of a white label 'TV channel' service for online and trade media outlets.

The long-term aim for Proactive is to become the market-leading PR agency for the telecoms sector and smash the £2m turnover barrier in the process.

**Shredall's Lloyd Williams (Entrepreneur of the Year)** – Shredall is one of the UK's largest independently owned shredding and data storage companies, employing 40 people at its Nottingham base.

The driving force behind the business has been entrepreneur Lloyd Williams, who has grown the venture from a standing start to a firm set to break the £2m barrier this year and servicing 4,500 clients across the UK.

His passion for expansion has seen the company continually add to the services it offers and clients can now tap into scheduled/ad-hoc shredding on or offsite, including secure destruction of paper based documents, media tapes, computer hard drives, microfilm, uniforms and credit cards.

In 2010, Lloyd invited his son and daughter to join the board and the expanded team has successfully tripled the size of its specialist underground data storage facility.

**Whittlebury Hall (Sustainability Award)** – Whittlebury Hall is looking to become one of the 'greenest' hotels and conference centres in England.

The venue, which offers 212 spacious double bedrooms, a day spa, leisure club, 3 restaurants and 18 training suites, has not taken this decision lightly, instead believing it will help drive consumer popularity and increase bookings.

Some of the eco-friendly measures already introduced include power-off master switches, smart meter programming for the gas boilers, an energy efficient laundry machine and a phased in LED lighting system.

Whittlebury Hall is also fully committed to recycling all glass, office paper, waste, plastics and, through an onsite bailing machine, card waste. This waste management system has reduced costs from £38,000 to just £21,000 per year, with no waste sent to landfill.

**Zibrant (Marketing Campaign of the Year)** – The Derby-based company is a leading provider of international venue finding, event production, congress, event and incentive management and hotel booking services.

It places over 25,000 events in more than 50 countries and currently works with clients in automotive, banking, energy, healthcare, law, oil and gas.

Due to the nature of the industry in which it operates, Zibrant is continually working to keep its existing clients. To add further weight to the personal relationships in place, the firm launched a new marketing campaign around 'client marriage'.

A matrix of communication tools was used in this, including direct mail, e-campaigns, industry forums, new business packs/website and a Goatz CSR scheme. The result has been 100% client retention, a clear indicator that the investment paid off.

## **About the British Chambers of Commerce**

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is the national voice of local business.

The BCC sits at the heart of a powerful nationwide network of Accredited Chambers of Commerce, serving over **100,000 businesses** across the UK, which **employ over five million people**.

For more information visit: [www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)