



Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce secures UK's Chamber of the Year Award

A dynamic approach to increasing membership and tailoring business support to boost the economy has played a pivotal role in the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce (NICC) being named as the UK's Chamber of the Year.

NICC, which boasts over 20 local Chambers, impressed judges with its ability to increase membership by 138% since 2008, with 58 of the top 100 businesses in the country actively involved in the organisation.

It has also improved retention to 85% and put in place a number of focused events that have delivered crucial assistance to companies battling back from the recession.

These included the business led 'Export First' programme and the 'Five Leaders, Five Days' series that was held during last year's elections and gave each party leader the chance to address members on their economic manifestos.

Martyn Pellew, President of the British Chambers of Commerce, commented: "The Chambers have not been immune to the pressures of the recession and we have had to change the way we operate in order to become more dynamic and ensure the services and support we offer match what our member businesses need.

"Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce has done just that and to double membership to over 900 in the process is a tremendous achievement and one that deserves the Chamber of the Year Award.

"It shows what can be achieved with a strong management team with a clear vision and a desire to be innovative in the way it delivers its services"

Over 500 guests were on hand at the Guildhall in London to witness the culmination of the British Chambers of Commerce Chamber Awards, which is the flagship event in the 'Business is Good for Britain' campaign.

Joining NICC on the podium were three other Chambers, who were all recognised for their achievements during 2012. These included:

- Business West (Excellence in International Trade)
- Doncaster Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise (Most Effective Campaigning)
- North East Chamber of Commerce (Excellence in Membership Services)

Now in its 9th year, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) Chamber Awards 2012 are supported by the RBS Group, BT Business, Dell, DHL Express, Westfield Health, Club Wembley, Acua Limited, Qdos Consulting and Composite Legal Expenses.

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Notes to editors:

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**

There are four categories in the annual Chamber Awards. Most Effective Campaigning, sponsored by BT Business, Excellence in Membership Services, sponsored by Composite Legal Expenses, Excellence in International Trade Services, sponsored by RBS and NatWest and Chamber of the Year, sponsored by Qdos Consulting Ltd.