



**Embargoed until 1st October 2012**

## **Lurgan entrepreneur lands Chamber Awards success**

A retail entrepreneur is proving that 'Business is Good' for Northern Ireland after securing a major title at the regional heats of the Chamber Awards.

Alana Interiors' Carol Little beat off challengers from across the country to secure the Entrepreneur of the Year title, impressing judges with the way she has developed the department store's offer to include flooring, furniture, giftware and ladies and children's fashion.

Under her customer-centric leadership, the retailer has increased turnover by 143% over the last four years and introduced a number of improvements to the customer experience, including the 80-seater Café Alana that is tapping into the growing coffee culture sweeping the world.

Over the last 12 months, Alana Interiors has also developed its online presence to include a fully optimised, e-commerce website ([www.alanashop.com](http://www.alanashop.com)). As a result, 85% of website customers are from elsewhere in the UK and 15% from the North and South of Ireland.

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 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 that highlights the role of business as a positive force for the UK recovery and the success of local communities and individuals.

Alana Interiors' Carol Little is one of nine regional winners in Northern Ireland, who will now go forward and compete for the national titles in their respective categories. All will have a chance to win 'Outstanding Business Achievement' and a £25,000 cash prize, courtesy of the RBS Group.

All winners are members of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce. Other successful companies include:

- Autoline Insurance Group (Excellence in Innovation)
- boojum (Marketing Campaign of the Year)
- Keys Commercial Finance (Most Promising New Business)
- Employers for Childcare Charitable Group (Business of the Year)
- People 1st (Commitment to People Development)
- Shredbank (Excellence in Customer Service)
- Ulster Weavers (Achievement in International Business)
- Williams Industrial Services (Sustainability Award)

Martyn concluded: "A record number of firms have taken part this year, all determined to prove that 'Business is Good' for the recovery!"

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**

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Russ Cockburn on 07812 600271 or email russ@dc-pr.co.uk**

#### **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**