



Embargoed until 1st October 2012

Grimsby wholesale specialist claims Yorkshire and Humber's 'Business of the Year' prize at the Chamber Awards 2012

A Grimsby-based wholesale exporter offering British groceries has secured a prestigious achievement for the town after it was announced as the Chamber Awards 2012's Business of the Year (sponsored by Westfield Health) for Yorkshire and Humber.

Ramsden International, which employs 48 people at its Adam Smith Street facility, impressed judges with the scale of its growth and is currently on target to hit the £50m mark this year.

A member of Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shopping the company's expansion has come from its commitment to customer service, investment in staff and a focus on exploiting growth markets.

This has seen Ramsden International supply a 23,000 strong range of British groceries to over 700 customers in 120 countries worldwide, a staggering achievement that also saw it secure the Chamber Awards' Achievement in International Business title (sponsored by Dell).

There were seven other winners from Yorkshire and Humber, including the manufacturer of the world's first fully integrated medical tele-video system for healthcare, a low carbon shopping centre and an entrepreneur who has developed the UK's fifth largest Driver CPC training consortium.

The full list of Award winners includes:

- Brandon Medical Company (Excellence in Innovation)
- Freshney Place Shopping Centre (Marketing Campaign of the Year)
- HBP Systems (Commitment to People Development)
- INATIV's Tony Sykes (Entrepreneur of the Year)
- Shore Stewart Solicitors (Most Promising New Business)
- St Stephen's Shopping Centre (Sustainability Award)
- Weston Group (Excellence in Customer Service)

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.

Ramsden International believes the two regional Chamber Awards will reinforce its determination to become the World’s leading grocery retailer.

And there is little doubt that its global reach is spreading. In the last year, the firm has increased sales to China by 105% and has £1m+ worth of orders going to Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

It has reflected this growth by investing in the training of its staff and currently has employees who are fluent in 14 different languages.

Ramsden International, along with the seven other winners, will now represent Yorkshire and Humber 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**

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

Notes to Editors

Breakdown on the other winners:

Brandon Medical Company (Excellence in Innovation) – The company design, manufacture, market and export a range of innovative medical equipment to customers, including the NHS, Private Healthcare Groups and blue chip PLCs.

It has received global acclaim for 'Symposia', which is the world's first fully integrated medical tele-video system for healthcare. The open-technology platform allows full integration of any video source, including endoscopes, images from ultra sound, digital x-ray, MRI and CT scans.

Freshney Place Shopping Centre (Marketing Campaign of the Year) – Located in the heart of Grimsby, the thriving shopping centre boasts over 100 shops and attracts more than 13 million consumers ever year.

Freshney Place successfully launched 'Dress for Success', an innovative six-week initiative that invited women to 'spring clean' their wardrobes by swapping their unwanted workwear in return for a 10% off voucher to spend at leading retailers in the centre.

Over 800 people took part and all the clothes received were donated to local charity Women's Aid. The campaign helped contribute to a 3.35% increase in footfall at a time when national retail figures were down.

HBP Systems (Commitment to People Development) – HBP has over 20 years experience in providing business management and accounting software which ensures that customers are in complete control of finances, stock, customer relations and sales.

The Scunthorpe firm, which has increased turnover by 12% in 2012, invests heavily in developing its staff in line with supplier standards and its own determination to offer excellent levels of service.

It has also launched the HPB Apprentice Scheme, with six apprentices now employed, four of whom are working on a 3-month rotation scheme that sees them spend time in software support, IT, marketing and finance.

Tony Sykes (Entrepreneur of the Year) – The Doncaster businessman has played an influential role in the development of INATIV, a unique CPC Driver Training programme.

Working with business partner Martin Wraith, he has successfully created an experienced network of 20 training providers to deliver industry-leading courses, under licence, for the goods vehicle and passenger transport sectors.

A focus on quality has led to an agreement with City & Guilds to develop a new Certificate & Diploma qualification for drivers based around INATIV's existing course syllabus and materials.

Shore Stewart (Most Promising New Business) – Formed by Directors Kate Stewart and Michelle Shore in February 2011, Shore Stewart is a niche law firm operating in the legal service sector.

The company acts mainly for SMEs in employment law and commercial litigation and, following extensive networking and marketing, has seen its client base surpass the 100 mark.

Using experience gained at other legal practices, the enterprising duo is seeing demand for its client-centred, no legal jargon approach grow rapidly, with turnover increasing month on month.

St Stephen's Shopping Centre – (Sustainability Award) – St Stephen's Shopping Centre in Hull is an award-winning 560,000 sq ft retail destination, attracting 10.5million visitors a year.

It is home to stores, cafes, bars, a fitness club and a cinema and is widely regarded as one of the most environmentally friendly businesses in Yorkshire and Humber.

St Stephen's has almost erased its carbon footprint through a number of 'green' measures, such as electric vehicle charging, rainwater harvesting, recycling and energy efficient lighting.

In 2011, this translated into 675 tonnes of CO2 emissions cut, 35 million litres of water saved and 1100 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill through recycling.

Weston Group - (Excellence in Customer Service) - Based in Leeds, the company provides installations, service and support across the IT, telecoms, CCTV and mobile phone technology.

Turnover is on course for nearly £4m this year and this has been driven by a partnership approach to offering complete solutions to a client base that includes Pizza Hut, Next, Kings College London and the Manchester Evening News Arena.

Weston Group has developed an industry-leading approach to customer service that combines technology with a culture of continuous improvement. This will see the family-run business successfully secure accreditation to Customer First before the end of 2012.

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**