

National Business Awards in partnership with Orange 2011 - Finalists Announced -

Over 150 of Britain's most innovative and sustainable public and private sector businesses have been announced today, Tuesday 2nd August, as finalists of the National Business Awards in partnership with Orange. Organisations shortlisted this year range from the well-known Debenhams, JD Wetherspoon, moneysupermarket.com, Harvey Nash and Stannah – through to the rising stars of Ovo Energy, Door-Stop, ShortList Media and HeartSine Technologies.

The combined turnover of all finalists this year was £96bn, - if the National Business Awards finalist organisations were a country they would be a top 50 country in the world just behind Romania and ahead of New Zealand. Almost three times the size of Luxembourg.

Martin Stiven, Vice President of Business at Orange, part of Everything Everywhere, said:

"The National Business Awards, now in their tenth year, embody the core principles of business excellence, innovation and ethics, all of which are central to Orange's company values. Reaching the finals of the National Business Awards is no mean feat and I am delighted that the calibre of entrants keep on improving. All finalists have demonstrated exceptional drive, resilience and innovation during challenging economic conditions. Many congratulations to all finalists and best of luck with the next stage of the competition, I very much look forward to the live judging in September and October."

While there were plenty of examples of aggressive growth among all entrants, through acquisition as well as organic, the finalist organisations that stood out were those taking steps to ensure growth is sustainable – innovating to become leaner and concentrating on core strengths rather than over-diversifying. There was a notable increase in the proportion of smaller businesses across all categories, and many that had launched within the last two years. The fastest growing were in e-commerce, cosmetics, digital media, mobile apps, and gourmet food.

Commenting on the increase in start ups entering the National Business Awards, Prof. Dominic Swords, Henley Business School and Economist said:

*"2010 and 2011 have seen a return to a strong net creation of businesses in the UK. The latest figures tell us that by the end of 2010 new business start ups had returned to their pre-recession levels and that the UK was amongst the top three performers across the OECD in this respect: only France and Australia have shown a stronger rebound according to a recent study by the *OECD. It is really encouraging to see that the National Business Awards entrants reflect the wider economic trends".*

Finalist will now prepare to make their presentations in person before an independent, expert judging panel in September and October at the offices of Coutts & Co at 30 St Mary's Axe. Judges include Julie Meyer, CEO, Ariadne Capital; Sherry Coutu, Investment Committee, Nesta; Martin Stiven, VP of Business at Orange, part of Everything Everywhere; Mr Eric Van der Kleij, Chief Advisor to UK Government's Directorate for Investment, UK Trade & Investment; Martin McCourt, CEO, Dyson; Sir Roger Bone, President, Boeing UK; and Simon Calver, CEO, LOVEFiLM.

Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone, is chairing this year's judging programme, where 100 of the country's leading CEOs, Entrepreneurs and Senior Directors, are to assess and reward Britain's most promising and successful companies.

“The economic climate continues to present UK businesses with an unprecedented challenge: it is therefore particularly encouraging that the entries in this year’s National Business Awards have shown no drop in quality or performance. Congratulations to all finalists for demonstrating tremendous strength in their ability to adapt and innovate which no doubt reflects the resilience and optimism that are the hallmarks of UK enterprise”, said Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone, Chair of Judges, the National Business Awards.

Winners will be honoured at the National Business Awards gala dinner, organised by UBM plc, at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, Tuesday 8th November, where George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will deliver this year’s welcome address. Visit www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk for a full list of all 2011 finalists.

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Notes for editor:

1. Visit www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk for a full list of all 2011 finalists.
2. About the National Business Awards
Open to organisations of all sizes from all sectors across the UK, the National Business Awards in partnership with Orange is the UK’s most prestigious independent business recognition platform with its particular emphasis on excellence, innovation and ethical business. Now in its tenth year, the National Business Awards connects the nations’ professionals through its annual awards ceremony; year-round thought leadership and round table events; and is UBM plc’s flagship awards programme. Visit www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk for further information.
3. National Business Awards Categories 2011 are:

The Transformational Change of the Year; The Huawei Customer Focus Award; The Croner Employer of the Year; The Excellence in Marketing Award; The ICAEW Sustainability Award; The BlackBerry Growth Strategy of the Year; The Orange Innovation Award; The Entrepreneur of the Year Award; The BlackBerry Business Enabler of the Year; The Small Online Business of the Year; The WorldPay Online Business of the Year; The Santander Small to Medium sized Business of the Year; The 3i Private Business of the Year; The Grant Thornton Mid Cap Business of the Year; Coutts & Co Large Cap Business of the Year; The Daily Telegraph Award for a Decade of Excellence in Business; and The Orange Leader of the Year.
4. *For the full Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2011 report visit:
http://www.oecd.org/document/8/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_48276232_1_1_1_1,00.html

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