

University of Winchester Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Rachel Waldron, of Beechcroft: Rachel's innovative approach to business has seen this Winchester based firm go from strength to strength. Capitalising on the growing demand for locally-produced and fully traceable food, Beechcroft have developed new and popular product ranges. The business has expanded considerably, having been pushed forward by the innovative use of e-marketing and e-sales. Judges were particularly impressed by Rachel's willingness to take informed risks in order to reap greater rewards.

Sara Hill, of Capability Jane: Capability Jane was founded by former management consultant and mother of two, Sara, in January, 2007. The company specialises in finding flexible working solutions for senior executive women looking to return to the workplace following a career break to have a family. Using non-traditional recruitment methods, Capability Jane have, in just one year, developed a network of more than 2,000 senior executives in Hampshire, Berkshire and Surry.

Kate Hughes, of Cook Academy: Kate established this successful cookery school in September 2005 after identifying a clear gap in the local market. Cook Academy runs one day cookery workshops, evening class courses, private lessons, cookery parties and corporate team building workshops. Kate's creativity and determination has resulted in continued expansion for this young company. Judges were impressed with Kate's ability to turn a passion into a viable and successful business.

Richard Butler, of Technilink IT Ltd: Founded by Richard Butler in 2000, Technilink is the provider of the integrated web-based conferencing product called Digital Meeting. It provides a simple and cost-effective way for clients to organise, host, chair and control meetings from anywhere in the world via the internet. Richard has seen his company grow considerably and expects the business to be worth more than £10m within four years.