

For more information about the Warrington Business Awards 2007, call Elaine Hunt on 434054 or e-mail her at [ehunt@guardiangrp.co.uk](mailto:ehunt@guardiangrp.co.uk)

# Meet the designers of business awards

By Nick Lakeman business reporter

Youngsters take pride in their trophies

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STUDENTS at Priestley College have impressively raised their game in making the trophies for this year's Warrington Business Awards.

Course tutors Mark Eccleston and Julie Evans say they have been impressed by the creativity, hard work and expertise of their students as they race to put the finishing touches to their masterpieces.

"We're very proud of them," says 3D art tutor Julie.

"Some, in particular, have worked so hard and really produced something that we didn't think they had in them.

"They have come up with interesting forms and applied a really professional finish.

"Designing and making them for a real client has inspired them to raise the bar.

"There have been times when I've been walking around in class and they've said: 'I wouldn't give that to a real person' and gone back to the drawing board when they could have just said: 'Here, mark that'.

"That's because they have pride to do as professional a job as possible because they want a positive reaction when someone picks up their trophy as an award winner."

Priestley College has been supplying the Warrington Business Awards for several years and the design brief handed to the students by the event organisers has become a key part of their A-level course in product design.

The whole process began in January when they were given a 'blue sky brief'.

"They were given each award category, asked to come up with something desk-top sized, with a strong visual impact and then told 'anything goes!'" says product design tutor Mark.

"It was good because they could really use their creativity



**AWARDS:** Two of the students pictured with the prototypes for their trophies. **LEFT:** Danielle Lunn, with her design for the Inntat Business Award; **ABOVE:** Alan Quinn shows off his design for the Start-up Business Award, called 'Learning Curve'

and consider a wide range of materials and designs for a real life client."

The awards' main sponsors visited the college to choose their favourite designs from foam prototypes made by the students and then each student selected the raw materials from which they would make the trophy.

Danielle Lunn, aged 17, chose the International Business of the Year award because she had strong ideas about how she wanted that trophy to look.

"I went for a moon-shaped design with palm trees to sum up being abroad," she said.

"I spray-painted it blue, pink and purple and gave it a mahogany base.

"Making it was the hardest part, but I'm really pleased. Product design is something I've always enjoyed."

The 20 trophies for the winners and runners-up of the 10 categories will be presented at the awards ceremony on July 20.

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● The Retailer of the Year Award is sponsored by Golden Square Shopping Centre.

All you need to know about the awards is online at: [warringtonbusinessawards.co.uk](http://warringtonbusinessawards.co.uk)

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# The biggest filing cabinet in Cheshire

Farming couple in Stretton diversified business three years ago

By Nick Lakeman business reporter

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FOR office workers paperwork is the bane of their lives, but down on the farm, Tim and Cathy Blackshaw positively welcome it!

That's because the couple have turned a barn at their dairy farm in Stretton into a gigantic filing cupboard, making money from carefully looking after what most people wish they could toss in the bin.

"All sorts of companies use us," says Tim, the 47-year-old managing director of The FileRoom.

"Airlines, solicitors, accountants, hospitals. We have more than 60 customers with about a quarter based in Cheshire and the rest in Merseyside, Manchester and the rest of the north west.

"We have grown the business by 100 per cent in the past year and we're looking at increasing our capacity by 30 per cent."

Such growth is largely down the emphasis that Tim, company director and accounts manager Cathy, and office manager Russell Kernahan place on how



**LATERAL THINKERS: Tim and Cathy Blackshaw, of the FileRoom, at Stretton**  
Picture: Mike Boden MBA030507

they treat their customers and the quality of the service they provide.

The FileRoom came runner-up in the 2006 Warrington Business Awards customer care category and the trio believe customer satisfaction is the key to getting people coming back.

"All of the paperwork here is very important to our customers

and a lot is confidential," says Tim.

"With 14,000 boxes, it's important that if a customer wants to see something, we can get it for them."

The company offers three levels of service when it comes to delivering paperwork to a customer: emergency (within the hour), same day and next day.

They will also go to a customer's office, collect it all, then file it away, having logged everything electronically.

"Face to face contact and reputation is very important," says 41-year-old Cathy. "It gets people confident in you and says 'we're a good company, come to us'."

The couple set up The FileRoom three years ago after a downturn in agriculture forced them to diversify.

Their first customer entrusted 60 boxes to their care and they have never looked back.

There is room on Walnut Tree Farm to expand into another barn but Tim says a second small site could be better for the business and its customers.

"A different team with their own customer base could be the way forward," he says.

"We wouldn't want to let that standard drop by getting too big - it's critical that doesn't happen."

"In this business, the customer is always king."



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