

**3 September 2009**

**PRESS INFORMATION**

**THE PHONE CO-OP NAMED FINALIST IN NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

The Phone Co-op has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Small to Medium Sized Business category of this year's National Business Awards.

In total, over 160 of the UK's most innovative and resilient public and private sector businesses were yesterday named as finalists in Awards which are sponsored by Orange.

The Phone Co-op's Chief Executive, Vivian Woodell, said: *"This is the first time we have entered for this prestigious award, and we are delighted to have been selected as a finalist. We believe our customer-owned co-operative business model can make a unique contribution to our economy and our society, and has been an essential ingredient in our success. The fact we have made it to the final stage of the National Business Awards is a tribute to everyone involved in our business – our employees and our customer-members alike."*

Martin Lyne, Director for Small and Medium Enterprise for headline sponsor, Orange, commented, *"To reach the final stage of the UK's most important business recognition programme is an enormous achievement. This year's finalists are a stimulating mix of established businesses and new entrepreneurial ventures with a common thread running through them all - resilience and determination to succeed. It is companies like these, who are bucking the economic trend and delivering excellent results that will benefit most when the upturn finally comes."*

The number of organisations entering The National Business Awards has increased by over 20% over last year despite the challenging market

conditions. Commenting on the encouraging figures and the calibre of entries, Philip Forrest, Chairman of Judges, The National Business Awards, said: *“The economic climate continues to present UK businesses with an unprecedented challenge and some sectors have suffered in its wake. It is therefore encouraging that the entries in this year’s Awards has shown no drop in quality or performance. This not only reflects the resilience and optimism that are the hallmarks of UK enterprise but has served to make this one of the most competitive years so far. The organisations that entered have a combined revenue of £253bn, employ over 1 million people and generate profits in excess of over £40bn.”*

Finalists will make presentations in person before an independent, expert judging panel later in September.

Winners will be unveiled at a gala award ceremony on 10<sup>th</sup> November at the Grosvenor House hotel in London. Current title holders include Sir John Rose, CEO, Rolls-Royce, who won The Orange Business Leader Award in 2008 and Paul Walsh, CEO, Diageo, who won The Daily Telegraph Decade of Excellence in Business accolade.

Open to organisations of all sizes from all sectors across the UK, The National Business Awards is the UK’s most prestigious business recognition platform with its particular emphasis on success, innovation and ethical business. The National Business Awards connects the nations’ professionals through its annual awards ceremonies, year-round marketing and promotional activity and is United Business Media’s leading awards programme. For further information on The National Business Awards sponsored by Orange and the list of 2009 finalists visit [www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.nationalbusinessawards.co.uk)

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**Notes to editors:**

The full list of finalists for the Small to Medium Sized Business of the Year Award is as follows:

- Iron Mongery Direct, Hockley
- Cantifix, London
- Wow! Stuff, Wolverhampton
- Go Ape High Wire Forest Adventure, Bury St Edmunds
- Hughes Safety Showers, Bredbury
- Mash Direct , Comber
- Octopus Investments, London
- Odin Consulting Engineers, Glasgow
- Petroleum Experts, Edinburgh
- Myprotein.co.uk, Manchester
- The Phone Co-op, Chipping Norton
- Tekdata Interconnections, Stoke-on-Trent

Last year's winner in the Small to Medium Sized Business category was Pasta King (UK).

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**The National Business Awards**

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