

## **UK Technology Innovation & Growth Awards 2007**

### **Entrepreneur of the Year – Nick Claxson**

#### **3. Nomination**

He's young. Nick turned 30 this year, at a time when the company he started from nothing in University reported a turnover of well over £4m (presently it's on target for about £7m in the next financial year). Growing Business magazine has also bestowed him with the honour of being one of its prestigious 'Young Guns' for 2007.

He's successful. Comtec has grown 3,000% in the last five years, drawing the attention of Deloitte who list it as the No.1 fastest growing technology company in the South East of England and 11th fastest in the UK & Ireland.

He's visionary. Nick identified the 'green technology' issue 6 months before the rest of the IT marketplace, which enabled him to rapidly position the company as one of the leading exponents of carbon-reducing IT solutions. Comtec was the first technology company to invest carbon credits on its customers' behalf, the first to acquire a hydrogen fuel cell power system for its own datacentre, and even has waterless urinals in the office gents' loo (!!)

As a result of the culture instilled by Nick, CNET recently short-listed Comtec alongside IBM, Ricoh and PC World for 'Best Green IT Initiative'.

#### **Evidence of running a successful private or public fast growth technology firm**

Nick has steered the good ship Comtec to significant financial growth in the last five years. In the 2007 Deloitte Technology Fast 50 rankings of the fastest growing technology companies in the UK and Ireland, Comtec Enterprises ranked 11<sup>th</sup>, making its second appearance in consecutive years, with a staggering 3,026% revenue growth over five years.

What is more, Comtec also achieved the accolade of being the 44<sup>th</sup> fastest growing technology company in the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 EMEA and 1<sup>st</sup> in the South East regional rankings in the same year.

Throughout this same period Comtec has expanded its full-time workforce by 70%, and recently made a seven-figure acquisition of a local company, providing a total of 54,000 square-feet of premises, ensuring that the organisation's fast-track growth is sustainable and backed up by the ability to deliver on client and market requirements.

#### **Display of relevance of the technology within the market place**

Nick has founded Comtec's success on the ability to pre-empt customer requirements and ensure that these needs are met - something that is particularly important to Comtec's SME target market. Comtec's product portfolio is an amalgam of vendor products that can be bundled to provide a tailored solution for the customer that won't require them to retrofit their infrastructure to accommodate the technology.

Nick considers it Comtec's responsibility to both talk the talk and walk the walk and as such never uses its customers as guinea pigs for emerging technology. From Comtec HQ in Reigate existing and prospect customers can attend 'Technology Days' to see the benefits of IT before investing (financially or otherwise) in their own infrastructure.

This alignment of Comtec's business processes with what its clients actually need has resulted in Comtec achieving great success in the SME sector.

Another area of technology where Comtec is particularly strong is the datacentre. As the hub of all IT infrastructure, the datacentre needs to provide the correct environment to balance power and cooling requirements to ensure both maximum uptime and, increasingly, optimum efficiency in terms of energy use and carbon emissions – something that analysts at Gartner have consistently highlighted in 2007.

Long before the 'green IT' bandwagon started rolling, Nick was keen to realise the benefits of more efficient IT. In doing so, Comtec's datacentre division, Comtec Power, has been at the forefront of the green debate, driving the news agenda with important concepts in datacentre design – what Comtec term the 'eco-structure' – and informing UK businesses of significant cost savings (reduced energy bills and tax breaks) inherent to efficient IT. Comtec also has one of only three super-clean hydrogen fuel cells operating in a datacentre in the UK, further backing up its commitment to leveraging emerging technology.

### **Track record of success within the sector**

Tangible and quantifiable evidence of success is something that Nick, and Comtec, have in abundance. Recognised amongst peers, customers and independent bodies for its committed approach to delivering creative and valuable business technology solutions, Comtec has a dogged-determination to continue its impressive development. Having been identified as a rising star within the technology industry and the UK as a whole, Nick Claxson has proven business acumen that his business and employees all benefit from.

Evidence that Comtec is doing the right things comes from numerous accolades, including being shortlisted for the CNET Networks Awards for 'Best Green IT initiative' alongside giants like IBM, Ricoh and PC World. Comtec also won an award at the DatacentreAwards 2007 for 'Innovation in the Micro-Datacentre' recognising the company's contribution to the datacentre industry.

### **Manages own succession to ensure business longevity**

Nick ensures that everyone in Comtec is a specialist in both the technology solutions that they scope and implement, and the specific needs of their client base, which is predominantly the oft under-served SME sector.

Due to the commitment that Nick has to developing the expertise and confidence of his team each division (Comtec Power, Comtec Care, Comtec Relocations, Comtec Enterprises) enjoys a great deal of autonomy.

Nick's awareness that trust and support fosters an efficient and productive working environment also ensures that he never needs to be the person to close a sale or remain as the only point-person on any account.

As revenues grow so too does the workforce and this means that Nick is able to provide the support needed to deliver the services required by Comtec's customers. In building a strong team Nick has accrued highly experienced, proven industry professionals to make sure that Comtec's development is durable.