

Press release**For immediate use****Business and college celebrate results**

A local business and college has scooped a prestigious national award in recognition of their partnership working which has helped the company develop and grow.

Gary Hoffman Ltd based in Lanarkshire along with Clydebank College was highly commended in the Workforce Development (Up to 50 Employees) category at the 'Business to College Awards' held on Wednesday night (24 March) at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.

A small business offering aerial, satellite and security engineering, Gary Hoffman wanted to safeguard the company's reputation for knowledge, professionalism and commitment to quality and service within the industry in light of the UK's switchover to digital TV. In an industry which is currently unregulated, Gary Hoffman was keen to ensure it offered the best customer service, and maximise its commercial position.

As part of the digital switchover process, homeowners are being encouraged to use accredited installers under the Registered Digital Installer (RDI) scheme, this requires engineers to have completed a Reception Pathway NVQ.

With no Scottish RDI centre available, Gary Hoffman approached Clydebank College to help with the necessary training requirements. The College acted quickly and became the first approved RDI course provider in Scotland.

Gary Hoffman, managing director Gary Hoffman Ltd, said: "Working with the College has been extremely successful, and I recently became the very first engineer to achieve the RDI qualification, awarded by a Scottish college".

"The College and RDI worked together to lobby the Scottish Government and it secured funding for 200 training places, with the College securing 100 places, allowing me to send all my engineers for accreditation.

"I have just completed my A1 Assessor Award making me, at the moment, the only engineer in Scotland to hold both the RDI and A1 Assessor qualification. This means I can mentor current and future engineers to attain their RDI qualification.

"Thanks to the College, I have given my business a real competitive advantage in the marketplace."

The 'Business to College Awards', sponsored by the Scottish Funding Council and organised by Scotland's Colleges, is part of the *Scotland's Colleges Mean Business* campaign which aims to raise awareness of the support available to businesses from Scotland's network of 43 further education colleges. This year, colleges have been encouraged to take part in a week-long campaign – dedicated to highlighting the college sector's expertise, experience and facilities which are available to businesses

– by staging events on campus, aimed at engaging with the local businesses community.

Now in their second year, both the campaign and awards are this year bringing together Scotland's leading business and skills organisations – the Scottish Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Alliance Sector Skills Councils, Business Gateway, CBI Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority and Highlands and Islands Enterprise - to support the initiative.

Attending the awards, Keith Brown, Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning, said: "These awards are a great way of acknowledging the huge contribution colleges make in supporting the business community, helping to secure Scotland's economic recovery and our future prosperity.

"As a Government we have always acknowledged the way colleges have stepped up to the mark and continued to deliver for learners in Scotland. In recent times, just as the demand for college places has risen, so too have colleges themselves risen to the challenge of meeting that demand.

"Too often in previous recessions, the damage to young people has lasted a generation, and sometimes a whole lifetime. We are working hand in hand with Scotland's colleges and businesses to make sure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past."

Ray Harris, Chief Executive Scotland's Colleges, said: "The Business to Colleges Awards is a great opportunity to celebrate the creative and innovative ways in which colleges and businesses are working together. Scotland's colleges provide real value and benefits to the businesses they engage with. With a practical 'can-do' approach to solving the challenges of the businesses that operate in a modern thriving economy, they contribute a great deal towards Scotland's economy.

"The constant investment in the skills of college staff, as well as the development of many state of the art training facilities, ensures that our colleges continue to meet the demands of all the businesses they engage with."

Joe Mooney, Chair of Scotland's Colleges Knowledge Action Group and Principal, Reid Kerr College, said: "The awards highlight the flexible, local solution colleges are able to offer to businesses. They also underline the amount of work they do across Scotland in supporting businesses – identifying and implementing solutions to tailor-fit the company's requirements – which ultimately lead to a real step change in performance and profit.

"Colleges offer a wide range of expertise and experience and the campaign and awards are designed to encourage companies, no matter what sector or size, to contact their local college and discuss the services on offer."

Scotland's College's Mean Business is part of the wider knowledge transfer and employer engagement agendas for both higher and further education.

Businesses can obtain further information on *Scotland's Colleges Mean Business* by visiting www.scotlandscollegesmeanbusiness.com.

ends

Notes to editors

Photo Caption: (L to R) Kaye Adams, Graham Houston, SQA (category sponsor), Patrick Padden, Clydebank College, Gary Hoffman, Gary Hoffman Ltd, Keith Brown, MSP

Business to College Awards 2010

Winners

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	All1 Smile Orthodontics & Coatbridge College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	Servite Housing Association & Dundee College
Sustained Relationship	McGill Electrical & Dundee College
Impact – Public Sector	JobCentre Plus & Forth Valley College
Impact – Private Sector	Print Matters & Dundee College
Business Start Up	Discovery Packaging & Design & Dundee College
Innovation	Dawn Homes & South Lanarkshire College
College of the Year	Dundee College

Highly Commended

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	Gary Hoffman & Clydebank College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	ChesapeakeBranded Packaging & Motherwell College
Sustained Relationship	Dumfries & Galloway Housing Partnership & Dumfries & Galloway College
Impact – Public Sector	Ministry of Defence & Carnegie College
Impact – Private Sector	Burntisland Fabrications & Carnegie College
Business Start Up	The Outpost & Perth College
Innovation	OPITO & Forth Valley College

Commended

Workforce Development Up to 50 Employees	Orchardhead Care Home & Carnegie College
Workforce Development more than 50 Employees	IQA Utilities & Reid Kerr College
Sustained Relationship	Scottish Water & Cardonald College
Impact – Public Sector	NHS Tayside & Dundee College
Impact – Private Sector	Mechanex UK & Central College
Business Start Up	Studio 19 & Adam Smith College

The Scotland's Colleges Mean Business marketing campaign was first launched in March 2009. It aims to make business more aware of the support services that exist from colleges which can help achieve a step change in performance and profit.

www.scotlandscollegesmeanbusiness.com

Independent research published in November 2007 showed that as a network, Scotland's colleges are in regular contact with more than 10,000 businesses and are providing support services worth almost £40million.

The Scottish Funding Council is responsible for allocating £1.7 billion of public funds each year to colleges and universities in support of Scottish Government priorities. The Council's funding contributes towards the costs of learning and teaching, skills development, research, innovation and other costs such as staff, buildings and equipment in Scotland's 20 universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) and 43 further education (FE) colleges. The £14 million funding SFC provided for knowledge transfer and developing employer engagement was announced in circular [SFC/30/2007](#).