

business

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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Pets at Home wins Employer of Year award

A CHAIN with a store at Middlebrook Retail Park has won a prestigious retail award. Team members at the Pets at Home branch have contributed to the company being named Employer of the Year 2008 in the People in Retail Awards. The firm, which has 220 stores in the UK, was up against businesses like John Lewis and Iceland.

The annual awards ceremony recognises individual employees and teams who have shown the greatest commitment to their customers.

The judges praised Pets at Home for its commitment to training and staff development and noted it as a great example of a retail business enjoying outstanding results in a tough trading environment.

Staff in sky dive jump

EMPLOYEES at a kitchen and bathroom firm have done a sky dive in aid of charity.

Jody Adams, customer service advisor, and Steve Johnstone, sales director, at PJH Group, which has bases in Kearsley and Bradley Fold, were among the staff that completed the challenge.

The proceeds will go to the distributor's charity of the year, CLIC Sargent.

The skydive took place at Lancaster Airfield and raise more than £2,000, taking the total raised so far in 2008 to around £12,000.

Plan to simplify business support

THE Forum of Private Business (FPB) is welcoming Government plans to simplify the support offered to small businesses.

More than 3,000 schemes will be streamlined to fewer than 100.

The FPB is now calling on ministers to follow up the move by reducing regulation and pressurising the banks to resist restricting lending.

New manager for care home

A CARE home has appointed a former staff nurse and sister as its deputy home manager.

Gorsey Clough in Tooting has given Janet Dawson, who has worked at the home for 15 years, the role.

She will work closely with home manager, Collette Conway, to head up the team at Gorsey Clough.



JOY: From left, Alan Giles, one of the judges, Imran Hakim and Adrienne Lawler from Sky News who hosted the event

Teddy sales soar ahead of Christmas

Toy set to be festive best seller

ENTREPRENEUR Imran Hakim has a lot to be happy about.

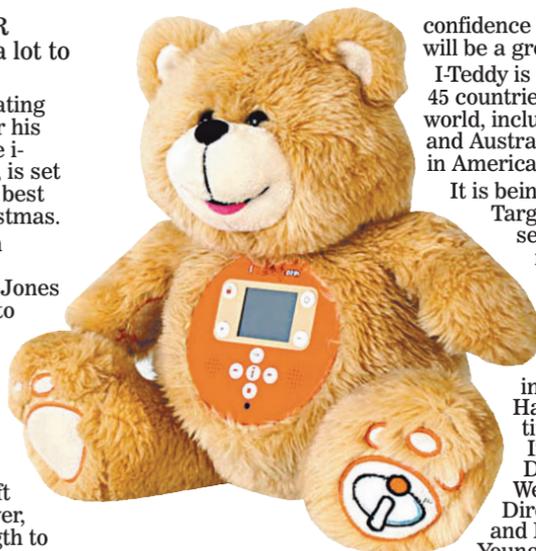
Not only is he celebrating yet another award for his innovative toy but the i-Teddy, pictured right, is set to become one of the best selling toys this Christmas.

The 30-year-old, from Halliwell, impressed entrepreneurs Peter Jones and Theo Paphitis into investing £140,000 in the product, when he appeared on the BBC's *Dragons' Den* show in early 2007.

Since then i-Teddy, which combines a soft toy with a media player, has gone from strength to strength.

Now it is set to become one of the top toys for Christmas 2008.

Mr Hakim said: "The early indications of sales are very positive and it looks as though we are going to have



a very good Christmas.

"We have every single UK toy retailer we would want on board, including Argos, Woolworths, Asda, Tesco and Harrods. Most retailers are tipping us to be in their own top ten toys so the

confidence is there that this will be a great Christmas."

i-Teddy is also being sold in 45 countries across the world, including Germany and Australia, and launched in America last month.

It is being sold in 1,400 Target stores, the second largest US retail chain.

The success of the product has led to numerous awards, including Mr Hakim taking the titles of the 2008 Institute of Directors' North West Young Director of the Year and Lancashire Young Director of the Year and he won the Design, Innovation and Technology award title at the 2007 Bolton and Bury Business Awards.

The latest accolade has seen Mr Hakim scoop Product of the Year at the

Startup Awards 2008, organised by startups.co.uk in conjunction with Barclays.

He said: "I take the credit for what is hard work by all the team, Peter and Theo and Vivid Imagination.

"I'm delighted to collect the awards but there's a whole group of people in the background."

And Mr Hakim is already setting his sights on success in 2009. He said: "This is a great job for this year and next year we will start to sell with all the other retailers.

"As for i-Teddy we are working with Vivid Imagination to make sure the products for next year are bigger and better, with more features.

"We have started working with other inventors, at places like Bolton University and Manchester Business School, and we want to help them."

BUSINESS DIGEST

Chance to get help to manage absent staff

BUSINESS people can get help with absence management on November 12.

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Business Support Solutions are running a free breakfast workshop.

It aims to help take the stress out of managing staff and according to the Annual CBI AXA Absence Survey 2008, absence from work cost the UK economy £13.2 billion last year, with the average employee taking almost seven days off sick.

The session will look at the issue and techniques for line managers to improve attendance and manage absence.

It is one of a series of breakfast workshops covering many aspects, including health and safety and motivating and retaining employees. The workshop will be held at Once Central Park, Northampton Road, Manchester.

For find out more contact 0161 273 2228 or email: businessesvents@business-support-solutions.co.uk.

Get into pension protection scheme

AN accountants is spreading the word about a little-known pension protection scheme.

Bentleys Chartered Accountants, in Chorley New Road, is telling people about the initiative, which can help protect basic state pensions.

Those with low earnings, or no earnings, who have cared for a sick or disabled person or child, can access Home Responsibilities Protection.

It is available to ensure adequate state pension provision and should automatically be given to anyone receiving Child Benefit for a child under 16, or Income Support, where it has been agreed they are substantially engaged in caring for someone who is sick or disabled. For more information contact Mike Turner at Bentleys on 01204 388675.

Law firm wins accreditation

A LAW firm has won recognition in a national accreditation scheme, which is designed to assist injured people seeking legal advice.

The scheme, run by the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, assesses lawyers according to their expertise and experience and provides a quality kitemark to those who meet the strict criteria.

Carr's Solicitors, which is based at Endeavour House in Waters Meeting Road, has been accredited.