



Hozelock Limited • Midpoint Park • Minworth • Birmingham B76 1AB • Tel: 0121 3134242 • www.hozelock.com

PRESS RELEASE

ONLINE
PRESS
OFFICE

A digital copy of this, and other, press releases can be found online at www.hozelock.com/press where you may also download your choice of high resolution digital images for publication. Please drop in.

June 2008: FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

BLUE TEXT DENOTES CLICKABLE HYPERLINK



Hozelock MD, Peter Rush proudly holds the MX2008 Award for Customer Focus, flanked by (left to right): the Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP; Terry Bennett, director of logistics; Steve Berry, quality manager; Martin Marron, director of manufacturing and Chris Hibbs, a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, the award sponsor.

HOZELOCK SCOOP MX2008 'OSCAR' FOR CUSTOMER FOCUS

Birmingham-based garden watering, spraying and aquatics manufacturer, Hozelock has scooped the MX2008 Award for Customer Focus in the prestigious annual industry "Oscars" of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers-sponsored award, presented to Hozelock MD, Peter Rush by the Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP at a glittering ceremony at London's Dorchester Hotel on June 26th, is the second successive Manufacturing Excellence win by the Midlands firm who flew the flag for the gardening industry last year by winning the MX Award for Business Development and Change Management.

The blue chip shortlist for this year's Customer Focus award included Leyland Trucks, Perkins, Rolls Royce and Wrightbus. Hozelock excelled elsewhere too as it was shortlisted for no fewer than four of the other 11 awards, those being: Process Innovation; Business Development and Change Management; Best Financial Management and Product Innovation.

Hozelock also made the shortlist of four for the MX2008 overall winner, being pipped by Wrightbus, pioneers of the world's first double decker hybrid bus.

"It is a stunning achievement for us to win another MX award in competition with over 100 of the UK's biggest, most dynamic and most successful companies," said Peter Rush.

"Customer focus is at the very core of our ethos – quite simply because our volatile, weather-dependent business makes for exceptional demands from our trade customers and from consumers," he went on. "The vagaries of the British weather and changing environmental demands give us every incentive to work closely with our customers to put the right products on their shelves at the right time."

Hozelock carry out pre-season reviews, receive 65% of orders via EDI, gather daily EPOS data from key customers and deliver direct to store to ensure that in store stock levels can be maintained even during hot spells. They also maintain direct dialogue with consumers via market research, through their website and by exhibiting at all the major gardening shows. This enables the company to gather vital feedback to shape their new product development programme based in the Engineering Centre of Excellence at their 33,400 sq m Midpoint Park plant in Sutton Coldfield.

The company, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2009, also drew praise from the judges for its unique new product development strategy to counter the wide-ranging effects of climate change, such as water shortages, hosepipe bans, droughts and flooding. Water conservation and recycling aids such as the Aquapod drip watering system, Water Storing Gel and Water Butt Pump had been developed in tandem with a Flood Pump to extract dirty water from inundated gardens and cellars. The judges noted that, as a result, Hozelock's sales of water-wise products had increased from less than 1% of turnover to more than 7% of turnover during the past three years giving them brand leadership in both the UK and Europe.

Chris Hibbs, a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers commented: "Companies such as Hozelock demonstrate how vital manufacturing is to the UK economy." John Garside of the Warwick Manufacturing Group, a fellow of Warwick University and the IMechE added: "The future viability of a business is determined by the success of its new products. Companies entering MX have shown that market pull provides the most successful route for commercially viable product innovation."

In all 13 prestigious business awards were presented and firms were congratulated by Business Minister, Shriti Vadera. She classed manufacturing as the "unsung hero" of the British economy. "UK manufacturing companies are a global success story based on their productivity, innovation and specialist skills. The MX finalists prove that innovation is the key to maintaining their record in a fiercely competitive global market," she said.

END

Word count: 597

NOTE TO EDITORS: For further details and quotes on the MX2008 Awards, please see www.mxawards.org

For further information:

Simon Chapman (Prototype Communications) – Tel: 0118 940 3785 ; E-mail: sc@pr100.com