

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Abi Hall – Marketing Manager
Wenta
The Wenta Business Centre
Colne Way
Watford
Herts
WD24 7ND

Tel: 0845 371 0891
Email: abihall@wenta.co.uk
Web: www.wenta.co.uk



Wenta Scoop National Award for Innovation

22nd September 2010 --- Wenta, the local Enterprise Agency for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, were last week awarded the National Enterprise Award for Innovation, at the National Federation of Enterprise Agencies' annual awards ceremony. The Awards were announced during a gala dinner hosted by snooker legend Willie Thorne at The Belfry Hotel in Nottingham. Wenta fought off strong competition from Business Support organisations around the country.

The accolade was awarded for Wenta's latest service offering 'My Incubator' which offers business incubation to start-up businesses. The first My Incubator was opened at the Business & Technology Centre (btc) in Stevenage in November of last year, a second then followed in June of this year at The Business Centre in Luton.



From left: Chris Pichon (Chief Executive), Greg Thomas (Innovation Manager), Willie Thorne, Abi Hall (Marketing Manager) and Peter Cabon (Director of Education & Advisory Services)

Unlike the standard incubator model of small office accommodation for start-up businesses My Incubator has been designed to provide new start-up and pre-start businesses with a location to base their business/idea where they would receive intensive support from a highly skilled business advisor. The facility is free of charge

for successful applicants for the first three months whilst they develop their idea, work on their business plan with an advisor and get their business started.

My Incubator is designed to complement Wenta's existing service offerings of business advice, training and education programmes and business centre facilities. It provides an ideal environment for aspiring entrepreneurs along with new and developing companies. Once established, growing businesses are able to expand and move on to use the individual office suites at the centre within which My Incubator is based.

With two already open Wenta are now working on an exciting initiative to develop this further and create a network of incubators across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Commenting on Wenta's win, the judges of the National Enterprise Awards said, "For the Innovation Award, the judges were looking for new and different examples of good practice in enterprise support and how, ultimately, they contribute to greater sustainability of their organisation. Our winner, Wenta is a perfect example of an agency improving the services offered to their clients through My Incubator. They have established a new incubator model with a comprehensive package of support for start-ups and created a specific brand for the project that is now being rolled out across a number of locations."

Wenta's Innovation Manager, Greg Thomas was delighted with the achievement and said "In just 10 months we have made it happen. We have established a unique service with a transferable brand that can be applied to any business centre not just our own which gives the service unlimited potential. We believe establishing an incubator network across the counties we serve will fast track start-ups through a co-ordinated support network. This award is a fantastic achievement for Wenta and it's great to have our efforts recognised by the National Federation."

This is the third National Enterprise Award Wenta have received in four years. In 2007 they received the top accolade for Education links for the development of their Education programmes and in 2008 they were awarded for excellence in Marketing. They hope to continue this run of good fortune at next year's awards.

If you would like to find out more about Wenta or My Incubator, contact them on 0845 371 0891 **or visit the websites www.wenta.co.uk and www.myincubator.co.uk.**

Notes for Editor

- Wenta was founded in 1983 to encourage business start-ups and to support small businesses in South and West Hertfordshire. The agency is independently funded through the ownership and management of its two business centres in Watford and Potters Bar and management of two further centres in Stevenage. These business centres comprise workshops and offices with a combined space of 100,000 square feet, let on monthly licence terms to small businesses. Wenta also attract funding from a number of public sector organisations including Business Link East, Job Centre Plus, local authorities in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and EEDA.
- Wenta run a number of programmes aimed at inspiring young people and giving them the confidence to make their ideas happen. Wenta's education team work with local schools, colleges and universities to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Wenta's advisory team work in partnership with organisations such as Business Link, The Prince' Trust and Job Centre Plus to provide advice and support to start-up, new and existing businesses across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Services include: one-to-one general business advice, specialist advice including Tax. Legal and IT and training and skills development courses.
- Wenta Innovation, a division of the Wenta Group run two Incubation Centres under the 'My Incubator' brand at The Business & Technology Centre in Stevenage and The Business Centre in Luton. These centres are designed to help entrepreneurs and create successful businesses. The Incubation Centres offer start-ups a work station for 3 months free of charge on the proviso that they work with our onsite advisory team to ensure that they are ready to sell their product or service, raise money or become investor ready and importantly connect them with other individuals and businesses to network.
- Wenta is now the largest enterprise agency in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and second largest in the Eastern region. Over the last 27 years, over 13,500 people have benefited from Wenta's advisory services, 1000 businesses have been accommodated by their centres and over 5000 students have participated in their education programmes.