

Nominees show their colours

Surrey entrepreneurs are among the 15 finalists shortlisted for the Institute of Directors' South East Director of the Year title

Finalists in the Gatwick region include Robert May, managing director of Ramsac, the Godalming outsourcing specialist, who has been named in the competition's £1m-£5m company category.

With 15 years experience, Ramsac said its "unique approach to technology and to our clients has set us apart from the competition". With a core objective from day one to remain one step ahead of the latest industry developments, today it provides "high quality, impartial advice, efficient and proactive management of issues". It is the holder of the Surrey Business Awards' SME of the Year 2006-7 title.

Another shortlisted Surrey director is Clive Foskett, chief executive of Signature Publishing based at Grayshott. The company has developed an expanding publishing business with a particular focus on specialist consumer magazines and websites.

Meanwhile, Adrian Moorhouse (pictured), the former gold medal-winning Olympic swimmer, may be about to strike gold

in the business world. For, in his second career as managing director of a performance consultancy, he has been shortlisted for the title.

A founder member of Lane4 Management Group, the global performance development consultancy at Bourne End in Berkshire, Moorhouse's company boasts "a unique heritage based on elite sporting and commercial achievement combined with an unparalleled understanding of the psychology of human performance".

Moorhouse won an Olympic gold medal at the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 and was world number one in his event for six consecutive years. Currently he combines his MD role with designing and delivering programmes for organisations, and leading the company's expansion into Europe, America and Australasia, as well as retaining his sporting links as a swimming commentator for the BBC.

Among candidates for the Young Director in the £5m-plus category is Toby Lewis, managing director of The Live Group at Kingston upon Thames. The group offers government, industry and commerce a comprehensive set of seamless communications services ranging from strategic consultancy to event management integrated to form a unique and cohesive resource.

Lewis was appointed group MD in January and is now responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management and operations

of the company across the UK. Prior to joining Live he worked his way up through the technical side of events management, including directing event-based videos. Starting as a freelance powerpoint operator in 1990, he has worked on an estimated 5,000 shows; he remains the group's lead show director for more complex events and has been instrumental in the success of large in-house IT developments.

Another contender is Danny Percorelli, managing director of Exclusive Hotels, the group that includes Pennyhill Park at Bagshot, South Lodge in West Sussex, Lanston House in Hampshire and The Manor House in Wiltshire.

He described being MD of one of the most dynamic and successful privately-owned hotel groups in the UK as a "dream job". He has a list of key values he carries in his leather wallet - undertaking to "employ, respect, develop and support the right people", aiming to trust and promote "personality, individuality and autonomy", and in the nicest possible way "thrash the competition, fairly but squarely".

The IoD awards, sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers, are designed to highlight and applaud directors who are making "an outstanding contribution to business and the community". The winners will be chosen later this month at a gala dinner at the IoD headquarters in Pall Mall, London.