

## A preview of the Channel Awards 2007

In just three nights' time the winners of CRN's 2007 Channel Awards will be revealed and the party of the year will commence. **Simon Meredith** gives a run-down of the evening's events and the treats on offer

The dual theme for the 14th Channel Awards is Formula 1 racing and the TV programme *Top Gear* – but don't expect Lewis Hamilton to turn up, he has apparently moved to Switzerland.

Do, however, expect everyone who is anyone in the UK IT industry to be there and for the whole night to be fast-moving – accelerating from 'nought to sixty' in super-fast time. As ever, it will be a big night and regardless of who ends up winning, more than 1,800 guests will be celebrating another year of hard work, continued growth and success.

This prominent evening in November has become the channel's annual year-end bash. There will be plenty of company parties and partner get-togethers to attend before the Christmas holidays, of course, and the Channel Awards has now become the kick-off event for the party season and the one party that everyone wants to go to. If you are an industry networker, being there is almost a matter of life or death; if you are a party animal, it is much more important.

This year's event will be similar to previous years, but there will be few complaints from Channel Awards veterans, all of whom will testify to this being the biggest and best night of the year. As well as the invaluable networking opportunities on offer, there is a four-course dinner – with each course miraculously served almost simultaneously to each one of the guests – before the entertainment and award-giving begins.

After a short welcome from CRN's newly appointed editor, Sara Yirrell, the celebrity guest will be announced and the awards presentation will begin. As ever, the identity of this year's star presenter will

remain a closely guarded secret until the night and no amount of bribery of the CRN editorial team will do any good – although guessing is always part of the fun. This year the hints point to the possibility of there being more than one familiar figure from our television screens gracing the stage – and something of a surprise on the night. Apparently, it could also be a tough year for the hecklers.

Whoever makes the shortlist announcements, it is the final result that matters most to those in the running. The 90 minute-ceremony is what everyone who has made it onto this year's shortlists is waiting for and, despite the fact that the champagne and wine will now have been flowing freely for more than two hours, the tension is always high.

"Stepping up to collect an award is a moment to savour, but it is also important to see the accolade in terms of its true and lasting value," said James Ward, managing director of Hammer, who last year accepted the Storage Distributor of the Year award on behalf of his firm.



Proud to present: Breath will be held and silence will reign on the night as winners are called.

"You should enjoy the moment and make the most of everything that comes from it – the heightened profile, the praise, the success and the priceless knowledge that it has been voted for by your customers, which is a huge accolade to the business. There is no doubt that the accolade of receiving a CRN award has enhanced our profile in the industry.

Simply put, it is a stamp of recognition from a wide range of customers, partners, peers and suppliers, which is invaluable," he said.

In the past, the tradition has always been for just one representative to accept the award on behalf of their company and have photos taken with the presenter. Last year,

### How it feels to be in the running

"Being shortlisted in the SME Reseller of the Year category provides recognition that EACS has a strong presence in a crowded market. It provides evidence that we are doing something right because in the three years we have submitted information we have been shortlisted for an award. As well as sending a strong message to both our customers and our vendors about our commitment to them, it focuses our staff on our achievements, which could be taken for granted



due to the high standards we set."  
**Mike Dearlove, managing director, EACS – shortlisted for SME Reseller of the Year**

"The CRN awards are all about delivering real business benefits to the end users. To be shortlisted provides an independent endorsement by an extremely well-regarded organisation of how we deliver real commercial benefits to customers. It is a great way of proving to customers and the channel that we deliver on what we promise."  
**Adrian McNay, executive director, Touchstone Group – shortlisted for Integrator of the Year**

"We are really delighted to be on this year's Channel Awards shortlist and we have already benefited from great feedback from clients and employees alike. We are very excited about the awards night – it always promises to be the highlight of the industry calendar. We have already been placing bets on who the guest host will be this year."  
**Dan May, director, Ramsac – shortlisted for Services Provider of the Year**

