

#WINNERS

EXPRESS & STAR BUSINESS AWARDS 2022



FAMILY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR WINNER: FORMBEND



Tube manipulation specialists Formbend took home the Family Business of the Year Award.

Judges said that the Great Bridge company was a true multi-generational Black Country family business with the third generation now at the helm.

They were impressed with how the business had grown at each stage and said it was apparent that both working there and being a customer created a sense of pride.

Jonathan Dudley from sponsors Crowe made the trophy presentation.

Managing director James Hateley said: "This is all about our employees."

He also said he wanted to thank the Express & Star for putting on such a wonderful event.

"We have been waiting a long time for a chance. We originally applied in 2020 when the awards could not be held," he added,

Mr Hateley said his grandfather had started the business back in 1966.

"It was a great year for football and for Formbend," he added,

James took on the business from his father Mark Hateley with busi-



Family Business of the Year award winners Formbend with Johnathon Dudley, right, from sponsors Crowe

ness partner Stuart Sefton. "We have since built up Formbend to what it is today," he explained.

The privately-owned business in Charles Street, was started by John Hateley and offers tube bending, forming and brazing and welded as-

semblies using a wide range of materials serving a variety of sectors.

The company, which employs 40, still prides itself on being a family business at heart with regular team building exercises charity work and employee outings.

John Hateley after 20 years of ownership passed the helm on to his son Mark Hateley in 1986 along with technical director Paul Welborn.

Following Mark's takeover of the business, one of the biggest

improvements was the acquisition of the 19,000 sq ft factory in May 1995, this came with the introduction of a tool room.

It was always John Hateley's aspiration to grow the business and this move to the new premises enabled the company to grow significantly over the next few years, by attracting new customers from many different sectors.

Experience

In 2017 Mark's son James joined the business after completing an apprenticeship at a large engineering company and gathering 10 years of experience within the industry.

Paul brought Stuart Sefton - a family friend - into the business. Stuart started as the operations manager but with the support and guidance of Paul and Mark progressed to become manufacturing director. In November 2020 James and Stuart Sefton completed a management buyout of Formbend putting them at the helm and allowing Mark to enjoy retirement.

The other finalists in the category were Aspen Leisure, Wolverhampton; School of Coding, Wolverhampton and Weatherite Group, West Bromwich.

BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR WINNER: JAMES LANE

James Lane of Homeserve Furniture Repairs was thrilled to land the Business Person of the Year award.

Mr Lane was presented with the award by Jan Jennings from sponsors Richardson.

He said: "There was some really tough competition and it feels amazing to have won.

"I really feel quite emotional."

Judges said that he displayed instinctive business skills and acumen, which had proved useful during Covid, where his quick thinking ensured there was work for his technicians.

Family

They added that he made the business seem more like a family than a workplace due to his strong team ethic.

Mr Lane struck out on his own as a furniture repairer in 2004. Homeserve Furniture Repairs in Brierley Hill now employs 248 and is the largest national furniture repair company for retailers and manufacturers and the insurance and warranty sectors.

In 2008-2009, when the financial crisis was felt throughout the world, the furniture industry did not escape, and the largest client of Homeserve went into administration, and put the future of the business at risk. It was almost 70 per cent of the customer base, and meant redundancies had to be made for the business to survive. All the growth in the five years of the business had been almost wiped out.



Winner James Lane with Jan Jennings

Mr Lane came up with the idea of moving into the furniture insurance/warranty market. This meant that all repair work required on furniture through the insurance would be done by Homeserve.

Mr Lane has built up a customer base that includes every major furniture retailer.

formbend
tube manipulation • welded assemblies

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Based at the heart of the UK, founded in 1966, Formbend is your one-stop shop for outstanding technical expertise in tube manipulation & welded assemblies.

Specialising in tube bending, end forming, brazing & welded components from a vast range of materials across a wide variety of sectors, working closely with local specialists to offer our customers a complete line side solution.

Our mission is "To maintain our position as a world class leader in tube manipulation and welded assemblies by manufacturing high-quality products and providing world-wide customer delight."

