



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **AWARDS BRING HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR FOR YORKSHIRE COMPANIES**

The Chinese New Year of the Tiger has got off to an excellent start for three Yorkshire businesses after they were recognised for their success in overseas trade at the Yorkshire and Humber China business awards last night.

Sheffield Forgemasters, Sheffield Hallam University and translation services company thebigwordGroup all received gongs in recognition of their activities in the Chinese market at the ceremony held at Bramall Lane in Sheffield. Organised by ConnectChina and local law firm DLA Piper, the awards aim to improve awareness in the regional business community of the opportunities offered by trading with China, and reward those who have already made steps into this global economic powerhouse.

Over 250 people attended the awards, following a record year of entries. Josh Wong, Partner at DLA Piper who specialises in advising companies who are setting up, or have operations in China commented;

"The volume and quality of entries received for this year's Yorkshire and Humber China Business awards demonstrate the extent to which the region has taken the opportunity offered by developing links with the Chinese economy to its heart.

"Companies can shy away from trading overseas, especially in places like China where the business culture and legal system is so different from the UK, but the winners of these awards are living proof, that with the right strategy and advice, the benefits of such ventures can be significant.

Sheffield Forgemasters received the prestigious award of 'Best China Business' in recognition of their work to develop their China business base - over 30% of the Sheffield company's product is now supplied to China. Graham Honeyman, chief executive at Sheffield Forgemasters, said: "The Yorkshire and Humber China Business Award is great recognition of the work that Sheffield

Forgemasters' research and development teams have done in the development of highly specific engineered products and the ongoing work of our sales teams in securing key orders within China.

“Overseas trade underpins the majority of our contracts and the emerging economies of not only China, but India, Brazil and Russia are expanding the global marketplace.

“The award illustrates to me that the value we place in key skills here in the UK can clearly offer us the capacity to compete on an international commercial basis, even in times of global economic hardship.”

Leeds based translation services company - thebigwordGroup - were recognised as 'Best China Newcomer' whilst Sheffield Hallam University received the award for Best Education links with China.

Josh Gould, Chief Commercial Officer at thebigwordGroup, said: “We're delighted to receive this prestigious award”.

“Recently, there have been some high-profile withdrawals of companies from China and I believe that this has discouraged some businesses from entering this market. I hope our experience shows that, by taking the right approach and delivering a great product backed by excellent customer service, it's possible to build flourishing Anglo-Chinese business relationships.

“Our investment in China has delivered real results for thebigword and has contributed to our tremendous expansion and our projected turnover of £50 million next year.”

The endeavours and successes of Yorkshire businesses trading in China were backed up this morning by research released by UK Trade and Investment, who also supported the awards in Sheffield. Their research with the University of Leeds Business School ranked China as the top opportunity for business growth following the recession.

Congratulating the winning companies, Lord Davies, Minister for Trade, Investment and Small Business, said:

“Yorkshire is ahead of the pack when it comes to exporting to China, and UK Trade & Investment is keen to help more firms explore the potential there. I warmly congratulate the winners of these awards. I have worked with China and in China for many years. It is one of the world’s most exciting and dynamic markets. These Yorkshire & Humber firms will be blazing a trail in the Year of the Tiger.”

**ENDS**

**For further information:**

**Victoria Pourzand, Media Relations, DLA Piper, Tel: +44 (0)113 3692669/ +44 (0)114 2833596  
or email: [victoria.pourzand@dlapiper.com](mailto:victoria.pourzand@dlapiper.com)**

Notes to editors:

1. DLA Piper is an international legal practice with over 3,500 lawyers across 67 offices and 29 countries. From its offices across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the United States, legal and business advisers provide a comprehensive range of services to local, regional and international businesses.
2. DLA Piper is ranked 1st by revenue in the Legal Business Global 100 2009.
3. For further information about our organisation and services, please visit our website: **[www.dlapiper.com](http://www.dlapiper.com)**.

