

**Direct Awards**

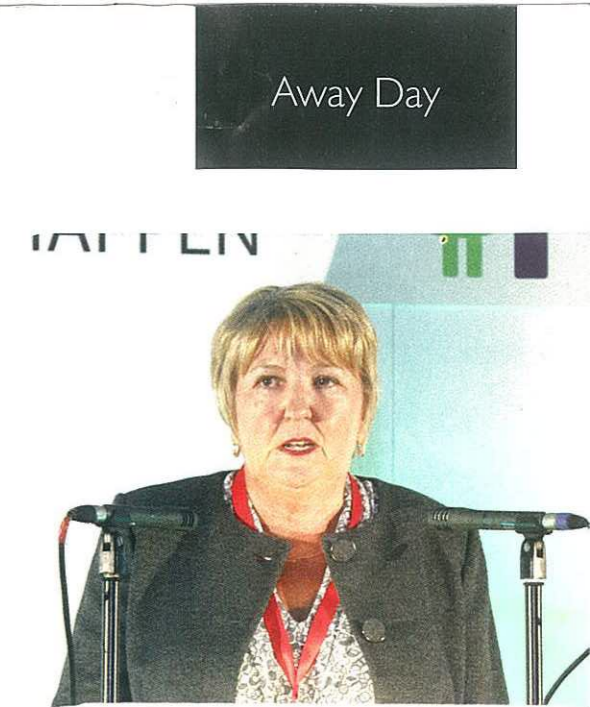
**Most Promising Newcomer:**  
 Winner – EPE International; Runners-up – Churchill China, Dartington Crystal  
**Best Turnover Growth:**  
 Winner – Rayware;  
 Runners-up – Culpitt, CPC, Groupe SEB  
**Best Marketing – Hardware, DIY, Garden & Pet:** Winner – CPC;  
 Runners-up – Draper Tools, LG Harris  
**Best Marketing – Cookshop & Housewares:**  
 Winner – Zwilling JA Henckel;  
 Runners-up – Bodum, EPE International  
**Direct Diamond Supplier of the Year Award – Cookshop & Housewares:**  
 Winner – Dexam;  
 Runners-up – Eddingtons, Horwood  
**Direct Diamond Supplier of the Year Award – Hardware, DIY, Garden & Pet:** Winner – Jegs Electrical;  
 Runners-up - LG Harris, Toolstream  
**Special award in recognition of commitment to the independent:**  
 Martin Gibbons, Jegs Electrical



Dexam receives its award for being Direct Diamond Supplier of the Year (Cookshop & Housewares) - an award voted for by members



The man with the Midas touch: David Corby



Culpitt's Yvonne Berns explains how advertising in this magazine boosted sales and the number of stockists

# Together brings happiness

Threesomes, speed dating and connubial bliss were out in the open as the Direct Company went upfront about the importance of togetherness with its suppliers at the Direct Awayday in Stratford on Avon.



Matthew Dennison of Zwilling JA Henckel with Charlotte Smith, Direct's marketing co-ordinator



Noel Pamment of EPE receives the most promising newcomer award from Paul Woolley



Getting to know each other during a speed dating session

A threesome was recommended to DIY and housewares suppliers who attended the Direct Company's Awayday last month. The company's managing director, Paul Woolley, told industry colleagues: "I fully recommend a threesome." But the threesome he had in mind comprised the Direct Company, BHF-BSSA Group members, and suppliers. He and the other speakers at the Stratford Manor Hotel explained how working together was in everyone's interest. Mr Woolley said the company had seen some spectacular growth this century and 2009 continued the upward trend, with turnover increasing by 12.5% to £23.9m. "If that's a recession, I wouldn't mind a recession again this year," he joked. DIY, hardware, garden and pet products account for £13.4m of Direct's turnover – down 6.2% from 2008. Cookshop and housewares now accounts for £10.5m – up a staggering 50% on 2008's figures. One of Direct's suppliers, Yvonne Berns, marketing manager of Culpitt, explained how well this three-way relationship had worked for its cake decorations and cake decorating accessories business. After advertising in the group's Cookshop, Housewares & Tabletop magazine and Direct Buyers Guide, Culpitt has seen a dramatic increase in sales, brand awareness and stockists – going from 48 to 138 members in three years.

Sarah Golden, BHF-BSSA Group director of marketing, explained why advertising works. "The familiarity principle. The more you see something, provided it's under a positive light, the more you like it. This is true of marketing to our members: a drip-feed of regular contact has always proven more successful. The more that retailers see your company, the more they will recognise and remember it. And when deciding between you and a competitor, guess who wins?" Hardware retailer Colin Rodway of Rodways in Ledbury, Herefordshire, told suppliers what he needs from them. His wishlist comprised: Good stock availability, the right price, speedy deliveries, price delivery notes or copy invoices on point of delivery, compact packaging, rectify faulty goods, catalogues, point-of-sale material, promotions and advertising. Mick Weedon, deputy managing director of BHF-BSSA Group, told the suppliers how the group had undertaken three expensive, complicated and time-consuming tasks: merging the BHF Group and the British Shops and Stores Association, organising the International Hardware and Housewares Congress and updating its membership and CRM system. But, he said, it all worked out well and has put the group in a strong position as it moves forward with members and suppliers.



Paul Woolley and Sarah Golden play Mr & Mrs