



A J Woods Engineering Ixion Challenge 09/10 - Entrant

Background

Now in its second year, the Ixion Challenge has attracted record entries from a wide range of companies including the manufacturing, engineering, medical, service and motor industries, all looking for an opportunity to win a financial and educational award worth £27,000.

The Challenge

Ixion Holdings Ltd aimed to help businesses survive and revive as they progress through and out of the current recession. The Ixion Challenge asked businesses, based in the East of England, to supply information on how they would utilise the award to help their business develop.

The Finalist

One of the five finalists is A J Woods Engineering of Harwich, Essex, which provides bespoke steelwork fabrications in steel, stainless steel and aluminium. Established in 1999, the company has grown from 'one man with a van' – Tony Woods, managing director – to a company employing 20 people with a turnover of £1.08M in the last financial year.

Tony Woods recruits from the local area, and also takes on youngsters from nearby schools and colleges for work experience. Tony is proud to have brought industry to a town, which, in his words, was 'dead on its feet'. Winning the Ixion Challenge would allow him to employ and train more local workers.

Investing in state of the art computerised welding equipment means that the company can fabricate in stainless steel and aluminium at vastly improved speeds, providing cutting edge technology at a competitive price coupled with over twenty years experience of welding and fabrication.

When an offshore wind farm encountered problems and were unable to drive foundation piles further into the seabed, AJ Woods were able to deliver an innovative engineering solution, ensuring access to both the inside and outside of the pile, which allowed the pile to be installed and cut to the correct height, an achievement which was documented in the Maritime Journal.

This innovative move into the windfarm industry, along with substantial financial investment to train staff to stringent North Sea oilrig standards has seen the company grow and expand while many other engineering companies in the region have collapsed during the recession.

The Benefit

Tony Woods sees the Ixion Challenge as a great opportunity and is delighted to be named as a finalist. **“Winning the award would enable us to improve our quality assurance certification, train our staff and expand our business, taking advantage of the reputation we have built in the local offshore industry.”**