



FINALISTS IN NATWEST EVERYWOMAN AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Kate Belmonte, from Gillingham, Kent is chosen as a finalist in the Artemis category with her companies, LB Signs and The Celebration Banner Collection, sponsored by Royal Mail

The finalists in the 2009 NatWest *everywoman* Awards have been announced, recognising the phenomenal success of the UK's most inspirational female business owners. Now in its seventh year, the awards identify and celebrate successful entrepreneurs who are making strides during this challenging business climate, paving the way for future generations of aspiring women.

Difficult economic conditions and a desire for flexible working are two regularly cited reasons why women choose to re-evaluate their career options and launch their business idea. The finalists in this year's NatWest *everywoman* Awards are shining examples of how hard work, passion, determination and a refusal to give up can lead to overwhelming achievements. All have a passion for growing their business in an ethical and sustainable way, and understand the value and importance of attracting and retaining the best staff. Many have overcome significant obstacles to reach their goals, but have used these negative experiences to develop their own business ethos. Instead of choosing their career over their family commitments, these finalists have chosen to balance life and work on their own terms, not letting go of their dreams, but allowing the two to run in harmony.

Kate Belmonte, from Gillingham, Kent, has been shortlisted for the Artemis Award for the most inspiring entrepreneur under the age of 25.

When Kate Belmonte's university course was unexpectedly cancelled it forced her to rethink her options. She began working in the exhibition industry and soon learnt what was needed for impactful displays. Following her redundancy she followed her sign-writing father's footsteps and launched LB Signs, providing corporate signage. This was shortly followed by the Celebration Banner Collection, offering consumers bespoke banners for special events.

Achieving this feat at the age of just 23 was all the more impressive as Kate suffers from psoriatic arthritis which she has suffered from since her early teens. She has been forced to balance her work and lifestyle to manage her illness, but thanks to her first rate offering, product knowledge, customer service and attention to detail, has grown a successful business with a turnover that is almost doubling year on year.

Kate comments, "It's been an emotional rollercoaster getting this far, but I'm really proud of what I've achieved in so short a time. I've learnt that the personal touch is really important in business. It may take longer to build your following, but I look at my business for the long term and this sets me apart from the competition."

Carolyn Currie, Head of Women in business, NatWest comments, "At NatWest our team of Women in Business Ambassadors are proud to support more and more women to take those first steps and start-up in business. The everywoman finalists have really made their mark in the business world and will inspire many more women to follow suit and realise their business potential. We send our congratulations to all the finalists and wish them the best of luck in the awards and further business success. "

"Royal Mail Group is delighted to be category sponsor of the [everywoman](#) NatWest Artemis Award. All of this year's finalists have shown enormous resilience, determination and focus, or to put it another way, resourceful dedication. We welcome the opportunity to shine the spotlight on those young women who represent the growth opportunity for UK business and wish them every success in the future. There is no doubt the strong talent and inspiration shown by this year's finalists will see them achieve even greater success in the years to come," adds Karen Powell, Head of Learning Delivery, Royal Mail.

Karen Gill MBE, co-founder of [everywoman](#), comments, "Year on year we are overwhelmed by the calibre of entries to these awards. This year we had the highest number of entries to date and yet again we are seeing some outstanding individuals who deserve to be recognised for their extraordinary contribution to UK plc."

In addition to the four categories for business owners, three further awards will be presented, including the BT Iris Award for the use of technical innovation in business, and the [everywoman](#) Ambassador's Award celebrating an inspirational woman in the public eye - previous winners include **Coleen Rooney** and **Elle Macpherson**. The Spirit of [everywoman](#) Award is arguably the most prestigious award, going to a woman who has changed the landscape for women in business. Last year's winner, **Karren Brady**, was recognised for her phenomenal inspiration to businesswomen nationwide. Previous winners include **Dame Stella Rimington** and **Dame Mary Perkins** (now Patron of the NatWest [everywoman](#) Awards).

The winners will be announced over a lunch ceremony on 2 December held at The Dorchester Hotel on London's Park Lane, where guests will include VIPs from the fields of business, government, media and others in the public eye.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

About [everywoman](#): Founded in September 1999, everywoman Ltd is the UK's leading provider of training, resources and support services for women in business, thought leaders in women's business development and promoters of women in business and gender diversity. Its mission is to Inspire Women to Excel. Everywoman works to increase the number, and raise the status, of women in the UK economy, using their experience and expertise to help women achieve their aspirations and realise their business ambitions. [everywoman](#) delivers conferences and events, awards programmes, training and leadership programmes. It developed the UK's first, and largest, online resource for women business owners (www.everywoman.com), which now has 37,000 members www.everywoman.com

About Royal Mail: Royal Mail Group is unique in reaching everyone in the UK through its mails, Post Office and parcels businesses – which directly employ over 181,000 people in the UK. Every working day Royal Mail processes and delivers over 80 million items to 28 million addresses for prices that are amongst the lowest in Europe; each week we serve over 24 million customers through our network of 13,852 Post Office branches and each year our domestic and European parcels businesses – General Logistics Systems and Parcelforce Worldwide – handle some 390 million parcels. www.royalmail.com

About NatWest: NatWest understands that regenerating enterprise in the UK is vital to the economy and recognises the important contribution made by female business owners. In the two years since NatWest launched the Women in Business Service, our network of locally based Ambassadors have been dedicated to providing a bespoke banking service especially for women, and to serve the needs of female enterprise.

**For further press information or images of the finalists please contact
Victoria Harris or Emma Jarman at LUCHFORD APM victoria.harris@luchfordapm.com
or emma.jarman@luchfordapm.com 020 7631 1000**