

PROBRAND BOASTS BEST YEAR YET WITH COMBINED TURNOVER HITTING

£13M

Submitted by: Powell Communications

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Continuing to buck the flat IT sector, Birmingham's leading technology services provider, Probrand, has closed 2004 with a combined turn over of £13M, listing 147% annualised growth in it's on-line IT procurement hub, The IT Index, as a key contributor to its ongoing success.

And with The IT Index out performing expectations to return £4.45M turnover in 2004, it has more than quadrupled in size since it's launch in 2002.

Probrand also saw growth from its IT services and support division, Icomm Technologies, which returned over £2M turnover in '04, citing 31% growth in profits on a like for like basis over the past 12 months.

Icomm's success has seen it dubbed a Deloitte & Touche Fast 50 'Rising Star'. Turnover at Probrand's IT resale division grew by 13% to £11M in the same period.

The company's results are the latest in a string of successes that focus around the growth of its on-line Private Procurement Hub, The IT Index, which daily lists over 55,000 product lines from 500 manufacturers by best price and availability.

In 2004, a glowing report on The IT Index by renowned research firm, The Butler Group, buoyed trade after highlighting that: 'Any organisation with a significant IT budget would benefit from utilising this innovative procurement service.'

Additionally, Probrand's web based Mercato engine, which powers the IT Index, became the first e-procurement solution to be fully accredited by The Institute of Chartered Accountants for England & Wales. This has opened up a whole new target sector for the company.

Probrand Managing Director, Peter Robbins, said: "In the tough IT sector, where trading conditions remain fairly flat given slowing replacement cycles it has been key for us to adopt new business models for growth.

"The IT Index continues to be a strategic growth proposition for us. Financial directors and procurement professionals are switching onto the enhanced financial control and bottom line savings returned by this tried and tested solution.

"Clearly, the market has changed and customers now value convenience, ease of use and crucially the best prices in the marketplace.

"As a result we continue to sign up big names to The IT Index like Coffee Republic, Next, Geest, Unipart and numerous public sector organisations.

"Icomm's growth continues to be impressive as customers will always require high levels of technical support and great customer service no matter how they purchase their IT.

"In 2005, we will be focussing on our recently launched cross-sector indirect procurement and e-crm

solution, Mercato - which powers The IT Index, as part of our growth strategy into the future.

"Mercato is an end-to-end solution offering ease of deployment coupled with a short ROI. We believe it will address the needs of many organisations head on."

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Established in 1992, Probrand is a major supplier of top branded computer products - ranging from a floppy disk to a fully implemented network. Located in the heart of Birmingham, and employing more than 50 people, Probrand is a multi million pound corporation servicing a wide range of business customers throughout the UK.

Icomm Technologies is the area's leading systems support and solutions provider, servicing a wide range of companies throughout the UK. As an HP Approved Service Provider and Microsoft Certified Partner, Icomm Technologies is able to deliver a variety of tailored solutions - be it IT assistance or full management and maintenance of an entire network or hardware installation. Telephone Icomm Technologies on 0121 248 7878.

The IT Index is an online trading hub and gathers prices and stock availability for more than 100,000 product lines from more than 500 manufacturers and conducts price and availability comparisons on a daily basis. The IT Index system then presents the most competitive price with stock availability on a customer's Private Procurement Hub. This gives Probrand's customers who are signed up to The IT Index a bespoke catalogue of the IT products they use.

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