

# Ernst & Young 2007 Entrepreneur of the year shortlist

**Michael Dawson Shortlisted for Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year**

**May 25, 2007**



Dublin based businessman; Michael Dawson has been short listed for the prestigious Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year® Programme 2007. Dawson, CEO of The Gift Voucher Shop (GVS), Ireland's leading provider of Gift Vouchers, is one of eight finalists under the category of International entries.

Through sheer determination, a great sense of fairness and the ability to identify and work with a great management team, the serial entrepreneurs can-do attitude has led the GVS into the thriving company that is it today. Speaking on the nomination, Dawson said "Given the caliber of finalist this year it is a great honor to have reached this stage and be included among them for such a prestigious award."

Keven Dawson-RTE, Enda Kelly-Ernst & young, Entrepreneur of the year Programme, Denis O'Brien-Chairman of Judging Panel, Andrew Blair-Ulster Bank and Liam Kavanagh-Irish Times

the 2007  
ernst & young  
entrepreneur  
of the year

**FINALIST**

Over 125 businesses and individual entries were received by Ernst & Young. 24 overall finalists fall into three set categories of; Industry, International and Emerging. The 11 strong panel of judges led by former winner Denis O'Brien of Digicel Group, assessed entries over a two month period in order to narrow the 125 entries down to a shortlist of 24. The 24 finalists, along with previous year's finalists, will all travel to Haiti in order to exercise their strategic expertise to help a number of communities improve their economic and social circumstances in a practical and sustainable manner.

Enda Kelly, Ernst & Young Partner-In-Charge feels that, "In the last 10 years since the awards have been running, Ireland's commercial landscape has been transformed. Our captains of industry are conquering the global marketplace and are acting as role models for a new generation of entrepreneurs. These innovative brave risk-taking individuals are the very foundation of our economic prosperity".

Dawson founded the GVS in Dublin in 2001 to provide choice and convenience to customers in the purchase of Gift Vouchers. GVS's most successful product to date is the **One4all**® Gift Voucher which can be spent in over 750 shops with 4,000 outlets nationwide to choose from. With its head office based in Swords Business Park in Dublin, Dawson

**Given the caliber of finalist this year it is a great honor to have reached this stage and be included among them for such a prestigious award**

currently employs 65 fulltime staff and takes on up to 20 additional staff over the Christmas period each year. GVS will contribute over €70 million in spending value to Irish based retailers business.

Through each country's Postal Network, Corporate Sales, web and telesales channels, GVS offers the most comprehensive range of Gift Vouchers for an extensive array of top international brands as well as smaller independent retailers and service providers. As a result of his success in the Irish Market, Dawson expanded the GVS into Malta in 2004, the UK in 2005, Northern Ireland in 2007 and is currently in discussions with four more European Post Office networks. The groups projected turnover for 2007 will exceed €120 million and will continue to grow significantly to the €1 billion per annum mark by 2011. Each of the finalists



Michael Dawson, CEO of The Gift Voucher Shop

will be profiled in the Irish Times over the coming six weeks, the first of which will be Dawson's category of International on Monday May 28th. The winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year® Programme will be announced at a televised Awards Ceremony on October 25th which will be held at City West Hotel in Dublin.

### The 11 members of the Judging Panel are:

- Denis O'Brien, Digicel Group (Chair), Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year® 1998
- Dr. Peter Fitzgerald, Radox Laboratories Ltd, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2004
- Aidan Heavey, Tullow Oil Plc, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2005
- Brian Long, Atlantic Bridge Ventures, Ernst & Young Technology Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2000
- Pat Maher, Executive Director, Enterprise Ireland
- Liam Nellis, Chief Executive, InterTrade Ireland
- Pdraig O'Ceidigh, Chairman, Aer Arann Express
- Liam Shanahan, Shanahan Engineering, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year® 2003
- Donal Durkan, Invest Northern Ireland
- Ann Heraty, CPL Resources plc., Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2006
- Pat McDonagh, Ernst & Young Master Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2000

### Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Shortlist Finalists 2007

Entrepreneur International	Company	Business Activity	Founded	Location
Dr. Sir Allen McClay	Almac Group Ltd	Pharmaceutical & Biotechnology	2001	Craigavon
Darryl Ismail	Chase International	Travel & Online Technology	1990	Dublin
Garard Barry	Fintrax Group	Tourist Tax Refunds & Payments		
		Card Transaction	1985	Galway
James Kilbane	Grafton Recruitment	Recruitment	1982	Belfast
Stephen Grant	Grant Engineering Ireland	Engineering	1978	Offaly
Michael Dawson	The Gift Voucher Shop	The Production & Sale of Gift Vouchers and Gift Cards	2002	Dublin
Dave Ronayne	Mainport	Shipping	1957	Cork
Liam Casey	PCH International	Supply Chain Management	1996	China

Ends...

For further information, please contact:

Gráinne Murphy, PR/Marketing Executive, The Gift Voucher Shop Ltd.

Telephone: 01 870 8163

Aoife Davey, Marketing Manager, The Gift Voucher Shop Ltd.

Telephone: 01 870 8161

Note to Editors:

The Gift Voucher Shop Ltd.

The Gift Voucher Shop (GVS) is a unique and unrivalled service that eliminates any hassles normally associated with gift giving by offering consumers and recipient's ultimate choice and flexibility. Through each country's Post Office network, web and telesales channels, GVS offers the most comprehensive range of Gift Vouchers for an extensive and attractive array of top brands as well as smaller independent retail partners.

In early 2002 The Gift Voucher Shop formed a strategic partnership with An Post. GVS launched in Ireland that September selling its Gift Vouchers through 1,000 Post Offices nationwide in addition to its online shop, [www.giftvouchershop.ie](http://www.giftvouchershop.ie), and its call centre service. The Post Office channel gives the company a unique national distribution capability unmatched in the Gift Voucher market. GVS has over 600 of Ireland's shops and services with 4,000 outlets across the 32 counties making them the leading provider of Gift Vouchers in Ireland. Leading stores such as Argos, Arnotts, Brown Thomas, Champion Sports, Debenhams, Easons, Great Southern Hotels, HMV and Smyths Toys benefit from the service's unique distribution system.

In September 2004 GVS launched the **One4all**<sup>®</sup> Gift Voucher which is now their leading Gift Voucher product. The **One4all**<sup>®</sup> is a multi-store Gift Voucher that can be spent in any of the retail partners signed up to the scheme, giving the recipient of a **One4all**<sup>®</sup> the choice of over 4,000 outlets to spend their voucher.

Over 50% of GVS's business is now generated by its highly effective corporate sales division that provides a wide range of facilities and services to the corporate sector. These include staff incentives, HR support services, trade promotions and specialised software solutions for the management of the employee BIK allowances.

In July 2005, GVS launched their Online Corporate System (OCS) for Small Benefit Relief to the corporate market. The OCS is a special software development that provides a number of unique functionalities for the efficient management of the small benefit concession and has been approved by the Revenue Commissioners.

Following its success in Ireland, GVS have begun to develop internationally. The first of its markets was with Maltapost in November 2004. In Malta GVS's One4all<sup>®</sup> is available in all 31 Maltapost branches throughout Malta and Gozo and for almost 200 retail outlets on the two islands.

In October 2005 GVS and the Post Office Ltd launched in all of the 14,600 Post Office branches across the UK. This gives the 28 million customers who visit the Post Office every week access to an extensive range of high street retailers including B&Q, Comet, Debenhams, Habitat, Halfords, Goldsmiths, Mothercare, River Island, Woolworths and the Arcadia Group. GVS UK also offers Enjoyment and Experience Gift Vouchers and now the **One4all**<sup>®</sup> Gift Voucher all of which may also be purchased from [www.giftvouchershop.co.uk](http://www.giftvouchershop.co.uk)

Latest Products from The Gift Voucher Shop

### **One4all®** Gift Card

Now available online and in selected Post Offices

The **One4all®** is an electronic Gift Voucher which is redeemable in participating gift card retail partners. The **One4all®** electronic card is designed to deliver even more choice and flexibility for the recipient as it acts as a debit card allowing the recipient to spend the full value in one store of their choice or to spend it partially across as many stores as they wish. The **One4all®** Gift Card is available in an array of attractive designs and carriers, in denominations from €15 - €250.

### **Experiences4all®** Gift Voucher

Due out mid-May

The new **Experience4all®** Gift Voucher will cover a wide range of activities that will compliment the already successful and market leading **One4all®**. This innovative Gift Voucher has been developed as a direct response to many corporate clients who specifically wish to provide an experience type Gift voucher for their staff and trade promoters.