

## Rising Stars – Pictons is Nominated for a Prestigious Business Excellence Award

DATE: November 2010

Pictons Solicitors has been nominated for one of the prestigious Rising Stars Business Excellence Awards, organised by Premier Newspapers, the publishers of the Luton News and the Herald and Post. The Bedfordshire and Luton 2010 Business Excellence Awards recognise the achievements of leading edge employers and individuals and are the premier showcase for the county's rising stars.

The company's nomination is in the Green Business Award category, which is open to all businesses and organisations, regardless of size or activity, which have shown outstanding concern for the environment and can demonstrate a business commitment to environmental and social responsibility.

Pictons is proud to be acknowledged for its commitment to making the company more environmentally effective. Judges will be looking for evidence of practical measures adopted to increase environmental awareness, reduce waste and improve recycling rates, environmental efficiency, and community involvement, where appropriate. The winners of the Rising Stars awards will be announced on Thursday November 11<sup>th</sup> at a Gala Awards Dinner.

The company has become the first solicitors' practice in the county to achieve 'ISO14001', the internationally recognised environmental management system. The driving force behind the company's impressively green credentials is Anil Virji, a Partner in the practice who specialises in litigation costs. Anil has always been passionate about green issues and joined the charity Greenpeace when he was just 16, followed by obtaining a degree in Environmental Geology.

He began his 'green campaign' at Pictons as early as 2005, getting the backing of the company's board, which, as he says, "has always been very forward thinking in its attitude." Anil joined the Green Business Network and attained various qualifications from the Chartered Institute of Waste Management and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health so that he could begin to implement the necessary 'green' changes within the company.

His passion and enthusiasm was catching. He says, "Our largest concerns were electricity, water and waste. I gave talks to all the members of staff in the Luton office about the firm's impact on the environment and how we could improve it. Staff were invited to make suggestions on ways of improving our environmental performance and I was thrilled at how passionate they all became on saving energy and recycling."

As well as benefiting the environment, the initiatives have also benefited the company, which has saved costs of over £10,000. In relative terms, this represents the value of an extra £100,000 of revenue for Pictons. As a matter of course, use of lighting and air conditioning has been reduced, computers are turned off at the end of each day, stationery is being recycled and files are being scanned to save paper use (now only recycled paper, fluorescent pens and pencils). As Roger Talbot, Pictons' Managing Partner notes, "So many green initiatives have made Pictons a better place to work and have certainly made the firm more profitable!"

While Anil concedes that an office-based business is not generally considered a heavy polluter, he quotes the philosopher Edmund Burke, who said, "**No man made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he thought he could only do a little.**"

For Anil, the next step is to encourage more car pooling, use of public transport and cycling or walking to work. He is aiming high, hoping that one day Pictons will be able generate its own electricity by having its own 'green roof', with solar panels or wind turbines. If anyone can achieve this, Anil certainly can.