

News Release

IMechE welcomes Government's £2.3bn economic lifeline and extends MX Awards deadline

Businesses urged to enter MX2009 and benefit from an extra £20,000 free business advice

30 January 2009

Britain's leading business awards scheme has extended its deadline in the wake of the Government's silver lining cash-boost for the flagging automotive industry. The Manufacturing Excellence Awards (MX09) is now urging companies to enter the free competition and net an extra £20,000 of free business advice.

Paul Terry, Project Manager for MX, said: "We welcome this news, and hope it will act as an incentive for companies which haven't entered MX yet to do so. We have decided to extend the deadline, from the end of January, for a brief period.

"Manufacturers in the UK, and especially areas such as the Midlands, have been hit hard by the recession and the Government's support of the car industry sends out the message that manufacturing is worth saving. Our scheme recognises the best and most innovative engineering talent this country has to offer, and perhaps now more than ever, this ingenuity of excellence that we hold so proudly is something we should be celebrating."

The manufacturing industry boasts highly skilled engineers and the Government's recent announcement of state aid for all motoring sectors means proves its willingness to nurture those skills. MX is unique because it improves the skill base and empowers people inside a company to deliver better products and processes, meaning more satisfied customers – and ultimately improved profitability, which is vital in today's economic climate. Organised by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), it is the only benchmarking event of its kind that provides free and impartial advice from an elite panel of business experts from firms such as PricewaterCoopers, BP and the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS).

It is hoped that the Government's rescue package will stop the slump in car buying that has threatened so many jobs within the sector. Dubbed the 'Oscars' of the business world, MX offers its own form of support to the manufacturing sector during a recession because it is free for any firm of any size to enter – and what's more companies have even longer to sign up because the deadline has been extended for the first time.

Sponsors and Partners of MX have also expressed delight in the rescue package and its affect on MX. David Wright, Chief Executive of the MAS West Midlands, said: "With the automotive supply chain being a major employer in the Midlands, the whole region has been hit hard by the decrease in car production – especially as the latest figures reveal that the number of cars produced in December last year fell 47.5 per cent compared with December 2007.

"As one of the main manufacturing sectors to suffer a deep impact because of the economic climate, I am delighted that the Government has finally seen fit to offer its support to the motor industry. These companies in trouble may now find the inspiration to enter MX and the extended deadline is sure to encourage them."

Anyone interested in entering should contact Hazel Morgan on 020 7304 6859
h_morgan@imeche.org.

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Notes to Editors

- The MX Awards are believed to be the UK's longest running business awards and were established by the IMechE 27 years ago to protect manufacturing and promote best practice. Previous MX winners can be found at www.mxawards.org. In 1999 the process underwent a major review when the Self Assessment Audit and Benchmark Report were introduced. For more information on MX please visit www.mxawards.org
- Contact the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' Press Office on 020 7304 6888 or email media@imeche.org.uk
- The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) was established in 1847 and has some of the world's greatest engineers in its history books. It currently has around 80,000 members in 120 countries representing mechanical engineers involved in a diversity of fields such as the automotive, rail, aerospace, medical, power and construction industries to name a few. Visit www.imeche.org for more information.
- Award categories for MX09 include:

<u>Categories</u>
PricewaterhouseCoopers Award for Customer Focus
Autodesk Award for Product Innovation
IMechE Award for Process Innovation
WMG Award for Logistics and Resource Efficiency
DMG Award for Business Development and Change Management
Professional Engineering Award for People Effectiveness
BP Award for Best Partnership between Business and Education
National B2B Centre Award for Integrated e-Business
ERIKS Award for Financial Management
Arup Award for Sustainable Manufacturing
<u>Overall Awards</u>
BERR Manufacturing Advisory Service Award for Manufacturing Excellence Overall Winner
National Skills Academy for Manufacturing Excellence Best Small or Medium Enterprise

