

## **MEDIA INFORMATION**

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### **BUSINESSWOMAN BUILDS A NEW FUTURE FOR WEST MIDLANDS COMPANY**

The first female managing director in over a century of operations is giving a new direction to a Birmingham metal works firm.

Dani Saveker, the 31 year old chief executive officer of the Savekers Group – based in Perry Barr - has managed her way through a decade of the fastest change in the company's history.

Apart from driving the company through a period of changing markets, Dani has also steered the business through a £2.4 million management buy-out, and the acquisition of a metal and woodworking company.

The determination and success of female entrepreneurs in the West Midlands comes as no surprise to business advisors Ernst & Young, who as founders of the Entrepreneur Of The Year awards programme have seen a broad range of excellent businesswomen entering the programme over the past six years.

“The Entrepreneur Of The Year programme is designed to showcase successful entrepreneurs at an international, national and regional level.

“Each year we have been delighted at the standard of female entrepreneurs participating in the programme. They are all exemplary role models to anyone interested in entering business,” said Sara Fowler, Partner at Ernst & Young in Birmingham.

This year is no exception as Dani Saveker, has been named as a finalist in the Entrepreneur Of The Year 2004 competition; she follows in the footsteps of previous finalists Reynolds Lacey of Mobile phone Group and Sarah Tremellan founder of Bravissimo.

Dani Saveker heads Savekers Limited, the groups' holding company. Collectively the subsidiary companies employ over 100 people and specialise in the manufacture of quality architectural metalwork, shop fittings and bespoke joinery. Clients range from builders' merchants through to cabinet makers.

Ms Saveker was the only female student on her university course in product design and marketing.

She comments: “Being a female is not an issue for me. I have always assumed a ‘hands on’ approach and a ‘can do’ attitude.

“It was not my intention to enter the family business, nor was it expected of me, but it was evident from the beginning that the business needed to change if we were to succeed.

“My first three years were hard. I worked alongside men with years of experience, but my enthusiasm and determination to understand every procedure helped.

“I undertook courses in welding, anodising and electroplating, which helped me understand the problems the staff were experiencing and which continues to help me in improving Saveker’s production capabilities.”

“Often, traditional family based businesses are viewed negatively by customers and employees alike. Board members and senior managers may be perceived to be untrained family members who are not interested in progressing the business.

“I found this to be true in our business and spearheaded the MBO to move Savekers away from the idea of the traditional family business, to a company, which could realise its full manufacturing and supply potential,” said Ms Saveker.

“Determination and tact have been critical to my progress. I have learned my trade from men with many years of loyal service, and I feel that I have earned their trust by being honest and fair in all my business decisions and by building a strong management team.

“In ten years I have turned around a business with slowly declining sales, saved 33 jobs through an acquisition and have several more projects in the pipeline.

“I set high standards for myself and my employees. Turnover for the group has dramatically increased post MBO from £3.5m with an anticipated turnover of £6m this year”

As a mother to two young children, Ms Saveker’s time is constantly in demand, but being approachable is key to her success.

“I am a firm believer in networking, to be visible and to be accessible to clients, employees and potential business interests,” she said.

In addition, Ms Saveker is a member of the Engineering Employers’ Federation and finds time to give presentations, including at Coventry University, and helps the BBC with any updates or queries they have on business issues.

At Ernst & Young, Sara Fowler commented: “The Entrepreneur Of The Year programme seeks out dynamic business people, encourages networking between them and profiles their success to encourage more people like Dani to answer the call of enterprise.

“At Ernst & Young we try to promote the entrepreneurial spirit and have set up a networking group especially for women to help build contacts.

“‘Women in Business’ was developed in response to senior female executives in the West Midlands wanting to meet and discuss business with like minded individuals, and the programme has been a huge success.”

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