



## MANUFACTURING LEADER AWARD

### WINNER

**Kenny Macfarlane,**  
managing director, Handrail Creations Ltd

Starting a new company is never easy. Bespoke wood manufacturers Handrail Creations Ltd, based in Bolton, however, are doing their best to make it look like it is.

Kenny Macfarlane, the winner of this year's Manufacturing Leader Award, has overseen a period of growth that has seen this small company go from a standing start to £1.2m of turnover in just three years.

Often, success stories of this nature are tempered by cost-cutting and clever accounting. Under Kenny's stewardship, however, Handrail Creations has invested heavily in new machinery, including a state-of-the-art CNC machine that was custom-built in Italy.

This has allowed quality to improve, and lead times to be reduced from ten weeks to just five – which in turn has brought yet more contracts, from clients including Google, Apple and Hugo Boss, along with luxury house builders and

shopping centres. The company run around 50 projects simultaneously, ranging from £2,000 to over £75,000.

Despite this, Handrail Creations remains small, with just 15 staff, including two apprentices, and an additional 10 self-employed subcontractors. However, the team are very tight-knit, with Kenny hosting regular team-bonding activities, such as barbecues. The company also have regular 'free days', where the team can use the workshop and the machinery to let their creativity run wild and create whatever takes their fancy.

Kenny isn't stopped here, either. He hopes to expand into a 10,000ft<sup>2</sup> factory, up from 6,000ft<sup>2</sup> now, and continue to invest in CNC machinery. At the heart of the company, however, remains the team – a close-knit, egalitarian group, led by Kenny's focus on his staff, quality and investment.

### FINALISTS

**Richard Draper,**  
production manager,  
*He-Man Dual Controls*

**Beverley Ford,**  
managing director,  
*Rota Val Ltd*

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

*“Kenny's success in building a successful company is admirable, as is his commitment to, and belief in, his staff. The fact that Handrail Creations can list major international brands amongst their customers is testament to the work Kenny has put in”*