

# Chilli chilling on hot reputation

**K**AWANA marketing agency Chilli may be good at promoting their clients, but when it comes to highlighting their own achievements, an old saying involving lights, hiding and bushels comes to mind.

Chilli has made the Q400 list of the state's top businesses based on turnover for the first time, coming in at number 384.

They have clients on the east coast and overseas, including a major North American client who was their biggest for 2009 and who they have never met.

They have not only stopped a client drain to Brisbane, they have reversed it.

And they have mushroomed from zero staff and a home-based office back in 1993 to 14 staff and a swish lakefront address on Innovation Parkway.

But you won't see those facts in full-page newspaper ads, emblazoned on a billboard, Tweeted, online or on television.

"Appearing on the Q400 list is great for recognition," Managing Director Darren Blake, pictured back left, said. "We probably spent the last five years underestimating what a great job we're doing."

"It has reinforced that we can compete with the bigger guys in Brisbane and still be happy to service the smaller businesses on the Coast who have helped us grow."

"But if we have a negative, it's that we are too modest and don't shout out...we are very average at selling ourselves. About 70% of our clients don't know our history or that we used to work out of home."

"But that's me, I'm not a Powerpoint, collar-and-tie person who will underdeliver on what we promise."

Mr Blake and wife Alison moved to the Coast in 1993 and started their design and printing business out of a room in their home in the same year.

Soon after, they moved to premises in the Kawana industrial estate to house their printing equipment.

Mr Blake saw the market changing, and noticed demands from clients increasing, so he sold the printing facility almost five years ago and moved to professional offices.

"That was a strategic move for us. The print stuff was dying off and big wholesalers came into the market."

"Plus we also wanted to become more of a full service agency because we found some of our bigger clients were going to Brisbane for that advice."

"We had been branded a print shop because we had the printing presses, but we had grown into a room full of professionals, not a shed full of tradesmen."

Mr Blake said his business had evolved from simple brochure printing to teams of people being involved in each client's business strategy across a number of media platforms.

Big clients include the Sunshine Plaza, The Investors Club in Brisbane, Metro Tiles Group and TAFE Queensland.

He said Chilli dealt with a mix of businesses from multinationals to one-man builders.

"The secrets of our success would be the skills sets we employ, and ensuring our clients are getting results."

"In the last three years we've created 150 brands, and there is only one that no longer exists. That is not kudos to us, it shows that clients who are prepared to spend the money to get it done properly understand the importance of creating a brand with a strategy behind it."



PHOTO: CADE MOONEY/195072

## Q400 ROLL OF HONOUR

The Top 10 and the locals on the list

1. Teys Bros Holdings
2. BMD Holdings
3. ERM Power
4. Hutchinson Builders
5. Australian Country Choice
6. VIP Petfoods Aust
7. Pickering Investments
8. WorkPac Group
9. Sarina Russo Job Access Australia
10. EGR
11. Evans Harch
42. Northbuild Construction
70. MiniMovers
119. Rockcote

139. AIB Insurance
148. Cooroy Mountain Spring Water
173. Haycroft Workplace Solutions
190. Cedar Hill Flowers & Foliage
205. Becker Helicopters
214. Core Architecture
276. Ferguson Cannon Lawyers
313. Clearmake
365. dtb Advertising
371. MRWED Training and Assessment
384. Chilli Design
391. Sajen Legal
395. Coastal Business Brokers

**CBRE**  
CB RICHARD ELLIS

COMMERCIAL AGENCY OF THE YEAR  
NATIONAL 2010, QLD 2010, VIC 2009  
NSW 2009, NSW 2008, ACT 2007

**REIA**  
REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

**WORLD CLASS INDUSTRIAL PARK**  
FOR SALE

**Sunshine Coast Industrial Park:** Racecourse Road, Caloundra

- Suited to a wide range of industrial uses
- 3kms\* to Bruce Highway
- Fully serviced lots from 2,434sqm\*
- Superior infrastructure
- Development ready
- Direct access to a large employment/customer base

Glen Grimish  
0408 288 517 / 07 5457 5757  
glen.grimish@cbre.com.au

Queensland Government  
18 Smith Street, Mooloolaba  
cbre.com.au/5707879

## Uniform policy upheld

**I**N modern times uniform policies are commonplace in larger businesses or in a professional service firm. Generally they have been enforceable provided they don't discriminate or otherwise offend legislative requirements.

However, problems have developed where the uniform policy has not been applied across the board to all staff, or where an employer seeks to start enforcing a long-standing policy that has historically been honoured in the breach.

For many years Woolworths have had a uniform policy which prohibits body jewellery apart from two earrings. The policy however has not been enforced for many years, so when the supermarket giant recently sought to enforce the policy against one of its Safeway employees who was wearing a diamante nose stud to work, it ended up in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

Although being quite critical of Woolworths for not consistently applying its policy, the deputy president of the Australian Industrial



### LEGAL EAGLE

Travis Schultz

Relations Commission found that it wasn't unreasonable for an employer to belatedly apply its policy and that failing to enforce a policy for a period of time didn't mean that it became unenforceable.

As a result, the employee was prohibited from breaching the policy by wearing her nose stud to work.

While the decision is reassuring for employers with uniform policies, they really do need to be consistently applied or you risk facing allegations of discrimination.

Travis Schultz is Managing Partner of Schultz Toomey O'Brien. Ph: 5413 8925.