

NEWS

'The greatest prize you can have in business is longevity'

A Stevenage business which celebrates its 30th birthday tomorrow has been reflecting on its success - much of which has been documented in the Comet.

Stevenage Packaging Limited was started by Rob Stewart and his wife Hilary in 1989 - when Rob was just 23.

Since then the firm has gone on to win four Comet-backed business awards, post profit every year and develop a large client base including PLC's and a number of FTSE 100 companies.

"I was born in Stevenage and live here raising my own family so I am extremely proud to be part of a successful family business employing three generations; my grandparents Jan Vallis and Alan Maynard are still working in the business aged 79 and 89," said Rob and Hilary's son Callum Stewart, director of sales.

The company has always had strong community links from the outset - in 1990 helping found the Stevenage Community Trust, which Rob has been a trustee of for 15 years and is the current

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chairman.

Rob and Hilary also founded the volunteer charity Uniqueness in 2003.

The charity has spoken with more than 6,000 young people in Stevenage since then, working with The Princes Trust and the YMCA.

Rob has also mentored prolific and persistent offenders on the Herts Police C2 Programme, helping them establish their own businesses.

Rob was recognised for his work by the Rotary Club of Stevenage last year with the award of a Paul Harris Fellowship for service above self.

"Stevenage Packaging is a company that cares about people, team, suppliers, customers and the wider community in which we live and work," explained Callum.

"Our dedication to the local community is ingrained in what we do as we understand we have a duty of care as part of Stevenage's

history.

"The fact that we are one of only 13,342 companies still trading from the 130,650 companies incorporated in 1989 speaks volumes for how hard running a company is.

"My father always says the greatest prize in business is longevity."

As well as employing three generations, Stevenage Packaging also has staff who have spent their entire career at the business.

Senior business manager Emma Amondson is in her 20th year at Stevenage Packaging.

"I joined the company at 16 and had my first company car at 19. At 22, I took delivery of a brand new BMW and brought my first home," she said.

"I am still inspired, enthused and excited to work here in my 20th year as senior business manager."

I think that this is the best opportunity in Hertfordshire and we are always looking for talented hard working local individual to join our team."

Customer service manager Sarah Kotei, a former Barnwell



student, said: "I am now in the my 21st year with Stevenage Packaging.

"The company has rewarded and supported me both in business and personally, far above and beyond what would be expected of any business.

"Our founder upholds the company's values as they are the true lifeblood of our organisation.

"Internal growth and promotion are fully supported and encouraged, so you can constantly

grow, learn and invest in your own commercial growth.

"In three words I would describe the company as unique, ambitious and caring."

Callum added: "I'm not surprised that we have two long-serving team members who have worked for the company for more than 20 years since joining at 16 years old - plus many more who have exceeded that four-year average."

Rob and Hilary had also had

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Stevenage Packaging Ltd at the Comet-organised 1999 North Hertfordshire Business Awards with Jonathan Ross (above left); Lord Cobbold (right) presenting Rob Stewart with the New Business Enterprise Award; (below left) Robert and Hilary Stewart double the size of Genetics Gymnasium in 1993, and (below right) the 2005 launching of the Uniqueness charity at Collenswood School in Stevenage.

Pictures: THE COMET/STEVENAGE PACKAGING LTD



other successful businesses in the town, including Genetics Gymnasium and Happy Mechanics Limited – a start-up home based accountancy practice – which they grew by 2,250 per cent in its first year.

Speaking about Rob, Hilary and Stevenage Packaging, chairman Sir Eric Peacock said: "This business is a self-portrait of the founders who created it. They have autographed their work with excellence.

"SPL is a rare example of an entrepreneurial business focused on an exceptional customer experience, continuous innovation and creativity.

"The business has created a culture of excellence with a team who is totally engaged and empowered to excel.

"Clarity of strategy, efficient execution and customer obsession have created an organisation that has grown consistently and what's more is a great place to work."



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