

News Release

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Widnes Design Firm Celebrates 21st Birthday

Widnes creative media firm, Printel Design, is marking a double Jubilee this month. While the rest of the country salutes HM The Queen, Printel staff are celebrating the firm's 21st birthday.

Winner of the 2011 Halton Business of the Year Award, managing director Stuart Atherton started his business in the humble surroundings of his mum's garage at Sutton Park in Runcorn, equipped with a printing press the size of a washing machine, operated by his brother Andrew.

Stuart recalls: "Things were very different in those days. We had a PC that ran a very primitive desktop publishing package called PageMaker with about three fonts and a laser printer that cost more than I paid for my car.



"Our first clients were pubs and night clubs, so I would go door knocking to generate sales during the day, set up the artwork for flyers and invitations in the afternoon and my brother would print and deliver them before tea time. I would then have the lovely job of picking up payment after last orders at 2am in the morning."

Initially he worked from home in an office which consisted of a wooden pasting table and a telephone, while his wife Gill tried to keep the children quiet during phone calls to clients.

Eventually they saved up enough money to rent a small office in the Waterloo Centre and after a few years expanding the business, they moved again to their current premises – a beautifully-renovated Grammar School on Derby Road, Widnes. Now employing several designers, Printel has set up the UK's first Graphics Academy where they teach design and collaborate with businesses to develop marketing campaigns together.

Stuart adds: “I can't believe 21 years have passed and we are still going strong. Things are very different now. We mainly deal with blue chip clients, local government, schools, colleges and the NHS. We have also moved into web development and exciting new technologies like mobile APP development and film-making.

“When I spoke to my bank manager recently, he told me that when I first came to see him back in 1991 to draw up a business plan, he thought to himself - I'll give him six months!”

But he hadn't reckoned on Stuart's determination to succeed. Twenty one years on, Printel is still going strong and very much a family business, with his wife Gill and daughter Georgie working alongside Stuart and their team of designers.

Stuart concludes: “With a bit of luck and the right people around you, anything is possible. There is too much doom and gloom surrounding the current economic situation and some people can use it as an excuse rather than getting out there and doing something about it.”

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*On behalf of **Printel Design**,*