

10 May 2006

A MILLION BUSINESS CUSTOMERS CHOOSE HSBC NEW CUSTOMER NUMBERS BREAK ALL RECORDS

HSBC Bank plc has welcomed its one millionth business customers - Longs Carpentry Contractors Ltd, based in Chichester¹. Business customers have been flocking to 'the world's local bank' in recent years from every corner of the UK and the bank now has more SME customers than ever before.

These record customer numbers are likely to make disturbing reading for the other banks on the high street: HSBC has welcomed more than 48,000 new business banking customers since the beginning of 2006 - that's over 3,000 customers a week. When asked, over 85 per cent of relationship managed business customers now say they would recommend HSBC.

Simon Wainwright, Head of Business Banking said: "HSBC's Commercial Banking division is producing some fantastic results this year. Our goal is to become the first choice for Britain's businesses by providing truly first class, innovative products and services. Despite reports that UK confidence is falling, business for us is booming - we're bucking the trend."

With so much on offer at HSBC it's easy to see why such large numbers of customers are voting with their feet. As the world's most international bank, HSBC has a dedicated business banking presence in more countries than any other financial institution on the planet. Domestically it is also a proven market leader, particularly in the key battle ground of online banking services. Since launching Business Internet Banking in 2002, HSBC has handled over **50 million internet banking log-ons** and **30 million online payments** - there are now over **one million commercial customers worldwide**. At the end of April, HSBC became the first major bank in Britain to provide an internet-and-telephone-only account for the rapidly growing number of firms who no longer need to visit a branch regularly.

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A Million Business Customers Choose HSBC/2

It's not only customers who recognise what HSBC has to offer the business community. The bank retains the award for 'Best Clearing Bank for Small Businesses'² from the Forum for Small Business in the UK.

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Notes to editors:

Footnotes

- 1: Further details of HSBC's one millionth customer - Longs Carpentry Contractors Ltd, in Chichester - are available upon request.
- 2: HSBC retained its title, for the fourth time, as 'Best Clearing Bank for Small Businesses' awarded biannually by the Forum for Small Business in the UK.

HSBC Bank plc

HSBC Bank is a wholly-owned subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc which is headquartered in the UK. The HSBC Group serves over 125 million customers worldwide from more than 9,500 offices in 76 countries and territories in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa. With assets of US\$1,502 billion at 31 December 2005, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations. HSBC is marketed worldwide as 'the world's local bank'.

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