

# Ordnance Survey Boss Director of the Year



Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB, Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey has been named South East Director of the Year by the Institute of Directors (IoD). She has won the coveted title in the category for big business (turnover more than GBP25m) and was presented with her trophy at a star-studded gala dinner in London on 25 November 2008.

The Institute of Directors' awards are sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers and, for the second year, highlighted and applauded the outstanding success and social responsibility of business leaders across the South East. Incorporated by royal charter in 1903, the IoD

aims to support, represent and set standards for a worldwide association of members, providing a professional network that covers the entire spectrum of the business community. Dr Lawrence was said to epitomise all the strengths of the region's top directors who are under increasing pressure to be innovative and make the right business decisions in an incredibly challenging marketplace.

The IoD award was presented to her by Alistair Rose, South East Regional Chairman of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He highlighted the prestige of being picked as a winner from nearly 300 nominations across the South East. Dr Lawrence said she was truly delighted to win: "Leading an organisation like Ordnance Survey, which is both a national institution and forward-looking technology business, is a privilege and I was honoured to even be short listed."

Dr Lawrence was praised by IoD judges for her outstanding success in transforming the 217-year-old national mapping agency into a thriving, vibrant organisation. When she took Ordnance Survey's top job in 2000 the government had just turned the agency into a business and, as the 100% shareholder, was expecting it to be profitable – something never previously achieved. Still in her 30s but already a world expert in geographical information systems, Dr Lawrence set about re-organising the organisation so that it could embrace technical innovation and constant change.

One of her first tasks was to oversee the launch of OS MasterMap. With almost half a billion features it is the largest seamless geographic database of its kind anywhere in the world and now helps underpin billions of pounds of UK economic activity. From such fundamental changes her team was able to build the organisation from an GBP80million business to the GBP120million profitable business it is today. An investment of GBP180million of Ordnance Survey's own money has gone into developing its IT system and its people – some 1,350 people are employed there and around 5,000 changes are made to the master map of Britain every day.

Dr Lawrence is the adviser to the British Government on mapping, surveying and geographic information. In addition to her work at Ordnance Survey, she is Chair of the United Kingdom ACE Association, the organisation representing Chief Executives of Government Agencies, Trading Funds and Non-Departmental Public Bodies on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary. She also chairs a high-level group with membership drawn from the public and private sectors advising Ministers on using location information to improve decision-making in government. She is a patron of two charities, The Cure Parkinson's Trust and MapAction, a UK-based international charity which specialises in the mapping of disaster areas and supplying geographic information for humanitarian relief operations. In January 2008, she was appointed as a Companion of The Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) in the Queen's New Year Honours List.