

Arts and community work for David Manley Awards

By Simon Carswell

National Concert Hall director Judith Woodworth and Gate Theatre director Michael Colgan are two "arts entrepreneurs" former AIB deputy chief executive Dermot Egan admires.

He says entrepreneurs such as Woodworth and Colgan have the same skills as entrepreneurs in business and those working in social projects have – "they think with their will," he said. This year Egan has the tough task of choosing an en-



Dermot Egan

trepreneur from the fields of business, arts and community work to reward in the 2006 Da-

vid Manley Awards, which was launched last week. Egan is chairman of the judging panel which will decide on the award winners later this year. This is the first year that the awards have been expanded beyond the world of business to include social and arts entrepreneurs. The same measurement can be applied to all three areas.

The awards are named after the late business guru, accountant and former president of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, and were conceived and developed by his friends.

The overall winner of this year's awards will receive €80,000 worth of consultancy advice and mentoring from the sponsors as well as a cash prize of €10,000.

Previous winners of the overall award include bookseller Fred Hanna, Simos Factor of Moving Media, a specialist provider of content management service and Francis McKeagney of Innerworkings, which improves the performance of IT professionals.

Egan said the mentoring prize would be of huge benefit to small and medium-sized businesses. "In many respects the mentoring aspect is more valuable to a company than the cash prize," he said. "An experienced guy sitting by your side who you can go and talk to

on any problems is invaluable and I'm a great supporter of that whole mentoring idea."

As chairman of the National Concert Hall, Egan himself has drawn on his experience in banking to assist the venue in its ambitious €100 million redevelopment. Egan said that when he was president of the Irish Management Institute the IMI commissioned a study to assess what made an entrepreneur to see if the skills could be developed in others.

"Entrepreneurs think differently, talk differently and act differently," said the former banker. "They are very passionate about what they do. They have a terrific belief and confidence in their work and a willingness to take risks – they would not be risk adverse."

Egan said that even though AIB, which he left in 1994, was a large organisation, he believed that the company was entrepreneurial in spirit and that the challenge was managing that effectively. He said that the bank sometimes took risks, but this resulted in more wins than losses.

"We would certainly have gone for more 5-2 victories than 1-0 wins," he said.

Any business, arts organisation or social project which is involved in a support programme run by an enterprise

support agency for small and medium-sized businesses or associated with the Business2Arts organisation or Social Entrepreneurs Ireland can enter the David Manley Awards.

Among the sponsors who will offer their services as mentors to the award winners are Deloitte, Beauchamp solicitors, marketing firm Alexander Dunlop, brand managers Image Now, and financial and management consultants

Newmarket, which was founded by Manley.

But can good entrepreneurs take advice from mentors?

"They are very open to help as long as it has to do with their work," said Egan. "They can learn from failure but they don't necessarily worry about failing."

Closing date for entries is September 8 and the awards will be presented on November 8.