

Win ups turnover

SINCE entering the VeloCITI competition about nine months ago, three business owners have increased their turnover fivefold in addition to walking away with the top honours in the competition.

The annual VeloCITI competition is facilitated by the Bandwidth Barn on behalf of the Cape IT Initiative which receives support from the City of Cape Town.

The aim of the competition is to assist small business owners in the IT industry with practical support, advice and training.

The calibre of the participants and the course has improved in the last year. We have further refined our offering for next year and are confident that we will be graduating more young vibrant and successful IT companies in 2008, comments Odette Potter, general manager of The Bandwidth Barn and project leader on VeloCITI.

Kilian Hagemann, co-owner of wireless technology business RedButton, says he started the business with his partners Nico de Wet and Barry Steyn about one and a half years ago.

However, the three only started operating formally in June 2006 after the business was registered.

"Nico found out about the competition and we decided to apply," says Hagemann.

He says the application process was relatively easy and they had to answer questions on what the business does, what the turnover was



Barry Steyn, Nico de Wet, employee Neal Tosefsky and Kilian Hagemann

and the size of the business.

Hagemann says the competition had numerous benefits for the business because they were provided with office space in the Bandwidth Barn, telephone and internet facilities, bi-weekly training seminars on how to run a business and financial and sales management.

They were also given the opportunity to experience the benefits of a mentorship programme.

"We worked really hard, after

hours and on weekends and were judged on our growth targets," says Hagemann on why he thinks RedButton scooped top honours in the VeloCITI competition.

He says the business managed to achieve their targets for staff salaries and even managed to exceed their annual turnover target by increasing it fivefold.

RedButton was awarded R20 000 in cash which, Hagemann says, will be invested back into the

business.

They were also awarded with press offices at ITWeb and Bizcommunity, a public relations deal with Sentient Communications and the opportunity to make use of the advice of Cape Venture partners to negotiate funding for their company.

"We wouldn't have been able to come close to any of this," says Hagemann.

Contact RedButton on 0861(BUTTON)288 866 and CITI on 021 409 7000.