

Award: House of the year – oil products

Winner: Starsupply

★ This year marks Starsupply's 20th year of operating in the oil products markets, and it is the company's unwavering commitment to, and unrivalled expertise of, the market that makes it a very deserving winner our of oil products house of the year award.

In *Energy Risk's* 2005 rankings, Starsupply was voted one of the top three brokers in the fuel oil, middle distillates and light distillates markets in the US, in fuel oil and jetfuel markets in Europe and in gas oil in Singapore.

Starsupply's chief executive Robert Ryneveld attributes the company's success to its specialisation. "The oil business is what drives us. We have the best expertise in this area. We know the pulse of the industry, and I have the right people in place who are the eyes and ears of this market for our clients."

Starsupply's longevity in these markets is also another factor contributing to its success today. In the early 1980s before Nymex futures, Starsupply was instrumental in developing US oil products trading. "From our inception, physical oil products have been our specialisation, and we feel that our underlying market knowledge of products is rivalled by none. It is our knowledge in the physical markets that gives us a strong competitive advantage in product derivatives," says Ryneveld.

But as well as knowledge and experience, Ryneveld attributes Starsupply's success to its exemplary approach to service and customer care. And although Ryneveld acknowledges the importance of technology, he says nothing can

beat the personal contact offered by Starsupply. "You may think we do things the old-fashioned way, but the voice broker can give clients a faster reaction time and higher security, especially when markets are erratic."

Ryneveld sees plenty of growth in the petroleum markets. "A couple of years ago, oil was considered a mature market. Electricity and gas became the growth players, but China has changed the dynamics in this market." China's oil imports grew 20% last year. The huge increase in demand from Asia ate away at the world's stock-piled oil and spare production capacity. "The world will never go back to those years of surplus," says Ryneveld.

So, with energy markets set to attract greater



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and greater liquidity in the coming years, Starsupply's specialisation is set to become more and more valuable.

"Growth is not always about becoming a bigger company – it's also about becoming a better company," says Ryneveld. "Why not stay good at what you know? If we're not the experts in this business, then we don't belong here. So there's no great interest in diversification for us. We focus on the core business and do what we do extremely well." **ER**

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