

## Press Release

# **Al-Futtaim Electronics in advanced talks with CEA and Bedrock Learning to provide benchmark training for consumer electronics professionals**

**Dubai, May 26, 2008:** Al-Futtaim Electronics, a member of Al-Futtaim Group, today announced that it is in advanced discussions with the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)<sup>®</sup>, and its training partner Bedrock Learning<sup>®</sup>, to provide training and certification aimed at advancing growth in the consumer electronics sector across the region.

The announcement was made at the International CES/hometech Exhibition being held at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre by Vishesh Bhatia, Group Director – Electronics, Engineering & Technologies, Al-Futtaim Group, Elizabeth Hyman, Vice President, International, CEA and Helen Heneveld, President, Bedrock Learning<sup>®</sup>.

Bedrock Learning<sup>®</sup> is a globally recognised leader in residential technology training and business support products. CEA, the producer of the International CES, the world's largest consumer technology show held each January in Las Vegas, Nevada, is a trade association that unites 2,200 companies within the consumer technology industry in the United States.

Mr. Bhatia said training of industry professionals is imperative in order to meet the growing levels of sophistication among the consumers. He said: "Al-Futtaim has always taken the lead in bringing many trend-setting initiatives to the region. This training initiative, a first for the region, will help raise the level of professionalism and service standards of the consumer electronics industry while also ensuring benchmark certification recognised across the CE spectrum. Cooperating with the prestigious CEA and Bedrock Learning to deliver learning

and development to the trade, is a proud moment for Al-Futtaim Electronics and we are thankful to them for choosing us as their future partner in the region.”

He added, “The training modules will help build a solid knowledge base and are aimed at distributors, custom installers, retailers, technicians, integrators, and sales representatives from across the region.”

“More than 16.35 million square metres of gross leasable area (GLA) is expected to be completed by 2010 which is a 565 percent increase since 2000. This massive increase, coupled with the rapid increase in population across the region, will require retailers and distributors to upgrade their skill sets to meet the changing needs of customers,” he said.

Elizabeth Hyman, Vice President, International, CEA said: “This is indeed a milestone moment for CEA. It is exciting to see the consumer electronics industry grow by providing industry benchmarked training and preparation for certification in the region. We believe the ultimate winners will be the customers who will benefit from the improved service standards of the consumer electronics industry. We are indeed most pleased to be associated with Al-Futtaim Electronics in this pioneering move in the region.”

Helen Heneveld, President, Bedrock Learning® said: “We focus on providing best-in-class training and certification preparation. Our training courses are tailored to meet the requirements of consumer electronics professionals from the region and you can expect course contents delivered by world class faculty.”

Mr. Rajagopal S., General Manager, Techserve (AFE’s one-stop-shop for electronics service and systems integration needs) said: “We seek to educate sales staff and implement a range of customer service initiatives through the training programme. The training will enable industry professionals to show a

product in the best possible light and have staff that can speak knowledgeably about the portfolio of goods on offer.”

The three-day CES/hometech exhibition will see Techserve support intensive industry training for sales and service personnel for registered attendees and participants. This exclusive training is a CEA programme, powered by Bedrock Learning and sponsored by Al-Futtaim Electronics.

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Al-Futtaim Electronics:**

Al-Futtaim Electronics (AFE) is part of Al Futtaim Group and is a leading distributor, retailer and customer care provider for globally recognised brands like Panasonic, Sanyo, Toshiba, AFTRON and Control 4. The AFE portfolio also includes the customer friendly multi-brand electronics retailer Plug-ins, introduced to the Gulf region 10 years ago and Techserve, the renowned customer service provider of the aforementioned brands. AFE has been seen as a trendsetter in the burgeoning electronics market with innovative products and provides complete solutions to small and large businesses. These include consumer electronics, home appliances, air-conditioning, office automation, telecommunication, computers, home automation, system integration, parts and accessories, IT services, and networking.

#### **About Techserve:**

Established in 1997, Techserve is Al-Futtaim Electronics one-stop-shop for electronics service and systems integration needs. A member of Al-Futtaim Group, Techserve offers customers a wide range of services including: system integration, parts and accessories, IT services, office automation services, telecom services, delivery and installation among others. The company serves its customers through a well-established network of service centres located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Sharjah, Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah. In addition Techserve also has operations in Bahrain and East Africa.

#### **About CEA:**

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) is the preeminent trade association promoting growth in the \$161 billion U.S. consumer electronics industry. More than 2,200 companies enjoy the benefits of CEA membership, including legislative advocacy, market research, technical training and education, industry promotion and the fostering of business and strategic relationships. CEA also sponsors and manages the International CES – Where Entertainment, Technology and Business Converge. All profits from CES are reinvested into CEA’s industry services. Find CEA online at [www.CE.org](http://www.CE.org).

#### **About Bedrock Learning:**

Bedrock Learning Inc USA is a globally recognized leader in digital home technology training and business support products. Through online courses, live workshops, and seminars, students have access to comprehensive training and preparation for certification, including the CEA-CompTIA DHTI+ certification. The company’s full-color printed books and materials, along with unique business support tools provide the materials for success in the industry. To learn more, visit [www.bedrocklearning.com](http://www.bedrocklearning.com) or call +1 616.335.6206.

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