



BEST SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Tourism and shopping naturally have common linkages - both are leisure activities. It is one of the most common motivations for travel decisions and is actually the principal and most common activity taken by tourists. This Scottish Thistle Award recognises our retailing heroes of Scottish Tourism who are contributing such a great deal to the experience of our domestic and international visitors.

Visitor Experience:

This category celebrates the finest examples of Scotland's renowned reputation for exemplary service for the customer. For retail businesses that demonstrate exemplary levels of customer service and satisfaction. Who recognise the value of the tourist £ and make particular efforts to maximize the business benefits; go the extra mile to provide an innovative retail experience to their visiting customers while providing friendly accessible facilities.

Who Should enter:

Any retail business in Scotland who has visitors, from home or abroad, as a significant part of their customer profile. Businesses of all sizes and across the length and breadth of Scotland: From high street retailers, department stores and specialty shops to small rural businesses, mill shops and visitor attraction or accommodation retail outlets. Mill shops and visitor attractions or accommodation retail outlets

What the judges are looking for:

Evidence of innovation in the retail experience, company focus on provision of customer care and how this is measured. Understanding of our visitors expectations and how these expectations are exceeded. Demonstrate an understanding of sustainability and how it is implemented. Any links with destination and/or Scottish manufacturers if appropriate to the business. How the business is successfully marketed to our visitors.

Questions

Q1 - How do tourism visitors fit into your customer profile? Did your business seek to create or satisfy demand from visitors to your locale? Please provide evidence to support your answer.

Q2 - How do you market your products and services to visitors? Do you conduct research to ascertain a tourism customer profile i.e. % of international visitors? Do you do any joint marketing with other suppliers or the area as a destination? Please provide evidence to support your answer.

Q3 - What are your measurements for success? How do you evaluate return on investment? What resources have you allocated? How do you gather and use customer feedback? Please provide evidence to support your answer.

Sustainable tourism is the commitment by businesses to generating a low impact on the surrounding environment and community by acting responsibly while generating income and employment for the local economy and aiding social cohesion.

Q4 How does your business draw upon local resources to enhance the visitor experience? Outline how you have created links and established relationships with the destination and with Scottish and local suppliers.

Q5 - How have you utilised your results to invest in and develop innovation for your business? What steps are you taking to improve your business in order to deliver better shopping experiences for your customers? How do your facilities cater for the needs of your customers?

NEXT STEPS

Once you have completed your entry are happy with it, the next step is to submit this. In order to submit your entry, follow these procedures:

- Upload it to the Scottish Thistle Awards website www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk
- Log in if you have already created an account or click the register button and complete the information
- Scroll to the category you are entering
- Click on Enter now
- Complete Mandatory Fields
- Select which region you are entering
- You can enter more than one region, providing your submission demonstrates you operate in that region. You must complete an entry for each region you are entering
- Upload your main entry document by clicking browse button to search for your document
- If you have supporting documents, click into browse to search for supporting document. You can do this for up to 3 documents not exceeding 5mb each upload
- You can then either click on save to save your entry for editing later **OR**
- Click on Submit if you are completely happy with your entry
- Once you have submitted you can no longer access your entry and it will be forwarded for judging.
- Repeat the above steps for every additional entry
- **If you are entering on behalf of another party, you must have their permission before submitting the entry**

THE REGIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS

South and Central East - Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian District Council, Mid Lothian Council, West Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, Fife Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Falkirk Council

Highlands & Islands - Highland Council, Moray Council, Comharile nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council

North East - Dundee City Council, Angus Council, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council

South and Central West - East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Glasgow City Council, Renfrewshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Argyll & Bute Council

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- **Read the questions** - Read all the questions before starting to gain an understanding of what the panel judges are hoping to read from your entry
- **Answer the questions** - Answer all the questions clearly demonstrating specific areas when asked - give the judges a sense of what was innovative or creative.
- **Keep it simple and clear** - Be clear, specific and structured. Ensure your entry is concise and easy to understand. Focus on the facts, avoid jargon and be consistent. Make it easy for the judges to spot what is important.
- **Draft** - Write a draft of your entry first and email it to others within the business who can act as a fresh pair of eyes and flag up anything you may have forgotten.
- **Evidence** - Provide solid evidence against what has been asked. This will give your entry the best chance. Include measurable outcomes such as increased revenue, return on investment backed up by facts and figures.
- **Honesty** - Be honest in your entry. No business or individual is perfect, address challenges and don't be afraid to highlight how the business has tackled challenges and issues.
- **Supporting documents** - Make sure any supporting documents are relevant and do not include extra information just for the sake of it. Supporting documents should demonstrate success with facts and details.
- **Be fervent** - Your entry should come across how passionate you are about what you have achieved. Give your entry to someone else to read who will be objective. If they don't find it impressive, chances are the judges won't either. Your entry should show why your project/business is important, what it has achieved and what's exciting.
- **Proof read** - proof read your entry.
- **Give it to someone else to read carefully** - preferably someone who is not as close to your business as you are. Check spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, as this could take the gloss off an otherwise solid entry. And avoid jargon!
- **Start early** - Don't leave this until the last minute, start early to give yourself plenty time to put together a well thought out and structured entry.

Closing date for entries is 5pm on Friday 2nd March 2012

- Entries will be judged after closing date
- Winners from each region will become the finalists of the national awards