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Advancing business together

2024 Clare Business Excellence Awards



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2024 Clare Business Excellence Awards

Introduction

Welcome to **Clare Business Excellence Awards 2024**.

Last year's Clare Business Excellence Awards attracted high calibre applications from businesses representing a wide breadth of sectors, from every corner of the county, making it one of the most competitive years ever.

This year is the 14th anniversary of Clare Business Excellence Awards and I'm confident the quantity and quality of entries will be just as high as last year.

The Awards Gala, held at The Inn at Dromoland last November was a memorable night. The event was exactly what a celebratory awards night should be, well run with high entertainment value. Attendees got to kick back and enjoy themselves.

We look forward to again attracting excellent entries this year and to a fun night out at the Awards Gala.

While we appreciate that everyone is busy, and time is precious, we hope you will see the merits of making time to enter this year's Clare Business Excellence Awards. Submissions can be made online on the homepage of our website: www.ennischamber.ie The application forms are straightforward and accessible to all.

Ennis Chamber has once again contracted independent adjudicators SpotCheck, a business with an excellent reputation for thoroughness and fairness when it comes to adjudication. They will directly issue a short benchmark report with constructive feedback to all entrants.

It would not be possible to run Clare Business Excellence Awards without the generous support of our sponsors. We thank Clare County Council as overall sponsor, and we also thank each of our category sponsors listed on Page 3 of this brochure. With 13 business categories and a special category for 'Best Voluntary/Community Group', there will be a category to suit all business types and every sector.

I encourage businesses to enter and wish you the very best of luck.

SHEILA LYNCH President, Ennis Chamber | 2024



Sheila Lynch
President | Ennis Chamber
2024

Despite dealing with constant change and facing down many challenges, the SME community in County Clare continues to innovate and drive economic growth across the county. The capacity and resilience of our business leaders to evolve and adapt is to be respected and admired.

At Clare County Council, we are pleased with the positive uptake of training opportunities, grants and other supports on offer, particularly the range of initiatives provided by Clare Local Enterprise Office.

The Clare Business Excellence Awards provide Clare County Council with a great opportunity to support and showcase the hard-working business community in County Clare. The inclusive range of award categories ensures that businesses of all size and representing all sectors can be part of this celebration.

In sponsoring these awards, Clare County Council acknowledges and celebrates the contribution that locally based businesses make to Clare's economy by providing employment and through their support of our local communities.



Cllr. ALAN O' CALLAGHAN
Cathaoirleach | Clare County Council
2024

CLLR. ALAN O' CALLAGHAN Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council | 2024



ENTRIES & JUDGING

Why Enter the Clare Business Excellence Awards 2024?

It makes good business sense on many levels, it provides:

- ☐ A benchmarking opportunity
- ☐ Independent judges feedback
- ☐ A means to differentiate you from competitors
- ☐ Brand awareness building
- ☐ Recognition of your businesses achievements and successes
- ☐ Access to new customers (opens doors)
- ☐ Boost to staff morale and helps attract and retain talent

Cost Per Entry: Free for members of Ennis Chamber
€50 for non-members

Can you enter more than one category? Yes

NB: ☐ FREE entry for Best Voluntary/Community Group category

Entries Deadline (mystery shopping categories) August 09

Entries Deadline (written submission categories) September 12

Judging the Winners **Spotcheck**

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Spotcheck

ABOUT THE JUDGING PANEL

Spotcheck has successfully measured businesses performance and customer perceptions for over ten years and provides a wide range of business consultancy, customer measurement and training services. Spotcheck currently provides independent judging for business awards throughout Ireland – from local business awards to nationwide industry sector awards, making sure all entrants are judged fairly, consistently and independently.

For more info visit www.spotcheckni.co.uk or T: 00 44 28 90 454 062. E: jbeasant@spotcheckni.co.uk

LAUNCH OF BEST MANUFACTURER IN CLARE (100 + EMPLOYEES)

This new category is sponsored by industry leader Ei Electronics. The winner of this prestigious award will be chosen by an Expert Panel.



CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024 - Categories & Sponsors

BEST GREEN & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sponsored by Rengen Power



BEST MICRO BUSINESS (employing 10 people or less)

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office



HEALTH & WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Sponsored by Essilor



CLARE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Sponsored by Bank of Ireland



BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN CLARE

Sponsored by TUS



BEST HOSPITALITY PROVIDER IN CLARE

Sponsored by Shannon Airport Group



BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo



CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Clean Ireland Recycling



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants



BEST SME IN CLARE (Up to 250 employees)

Sponsored by Cup Print



BEST PLACE TO EAT (2 Sub-categories)

Sponsored by AIB

BEST PLACE TO EAT - RESTAURANT

BEST PLACE TO EAT - BISTRO/CAFÉ



BEST MANUFACTURER IN CLARE (100+ EMPLOYEES)

Sponsored by Ei Electronics



BEST VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY GROUP IN CLARE

Sponsored by Vitalograph



OVERALL WINNER CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024

Sponsored by the awards lead sponsor - Clare County Council



BEST GREEN & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sponsored by Rengen Power

This award is open to businesses small or large, from across all sectors that demonstrate meaningful commitment to the implementation of green and sustainable practices within the organisation.

Applicants to this category are required to demonstrate a proven commitment to environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible business decisions to help protect the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations.

This award is independently judged by written submission. Judges will look for evidence of elements of the following:

- ☐ Details of specific steps your business has taken to be more environmentally-friendly
- ☐ A proven commitment to green procurement
- ☐ Has better environmental performance led to improved resource efficiency/ direct cost savings?
- ☐ Does your organisation's commitment to Green Practices help you attract and retain talent?
- ☐ Does your organisation's commitment to Green Practices help you to attract new customers?

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Sponsored by Rengen Power

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards



Rengen Power's focus

is on clean green energy provision that is viable, safe and in line with national policy for a low carbon future and lessening reliance on foreign fossil fuels.

rengpower.com

BEST MICRO BUSINESS IN CLARE (EMPLOYING 10 PEOPLE OR LESS)

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office

This award is open to all small independently owned businesses who employ 10 staff (FTE) or less, whose growth and quality of management has enabled it to out-perform the competition.

This award is judged by written submission and judges will be looking for evidence of the following:

- Evidence of key growth areas for the business and how these have been identified
- Evidence of robust management systems appropriate to the operation of the business
- Evidence of innovation in terms of the product or service provided
- Evidence of a carefully planned growth strategy to sustain current success

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards



Local Enterprise Office

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT

PUT ALL YOUR ENERGY INTO EFFICIENCY

More efficient equipment and technology can reap dividends for your business. Improving energy efficiency and reducing waste can make a big impact on your bottom line. With our Energy Efficiency Grant you can access grants for newer, more efficient equipment. Contact Local Enterprise Office Clare today at 065-6821616 or localenterprise@clarecoco.ie

FIND OUT MORE AT:
LOCALENTERPRISE.IE/ENERGY

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Local Government Ireland

HEALTH & WELLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Sponsored by Essilor

Promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace has become a matter of vital importance to staff and a key differentiator when attracting new talent.

This award, sponsored by Essilor, recognises the importance of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace.

On a national and international level, it is well documented that workplaces are uniquely positioned to promote health and wellbeing and many workplaces have made significant progress in this area. This award will recognise those efforts and achievements.

The award will be made to the organisation that clearly demonstrates evidence of promoting a culture of health and wellbeing while implementing health related programmes within their business.

Entrants should:

- Demonstrate evidence of organisational commitment to workplace health and wellbeing
- Demonstrate evidence of addressing issues to promote a healthier lifestyle including mental health and wellbeing among employees
- Provide evidence of a commitment to health and wellness in the workplace (e.g. policy, procedures, specific programmes, staff engagement etc)

Sponsored by Essilor

Please download the entry form from

www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Bank of Ireland

This award is open to all businesses in the professional services sector that can demonstrate excellence in business practice across the full range of their activities.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- Robust and sustainable management systems and procedures.
- Clear evidence of ongoing employee development
- A planned growth strategy in terms of all areas of the business and suitability to service users.
- Evidence of a customer focused culture that is reinforced at all levels of the business.

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by Bank of Ireland

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www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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Begin

BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN CLARE

Sponsored by TUS

This category is open to any tourism or hospitality business including visitor attractions, activity based or guided experience, museums, historic houses, gardens, exhibition centres, hotels, conference and banqueting venues.

This award will be judged initially by written submission and will be followed up by a mystery visit.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- Commitment to excellence across all areas of the business
- Sustainable and environmentally sound practices across all areas of the business, supporting and involving the local community
- A range of marketing activities which provide visitors with comprehensive and accessible information

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria. Please provide recent photographs and brochures to support your application and where appropriate reviews and ratings.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by TUS

Please download the entry form from
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BEST HOSPITALITY PROVIDER IN CLARE

Sponsored by Shannon Airport Group

This award is designed to celebrate the best hospitality in Clare and is open to any hospitality business that can demonstrate how they have successfully created an attractive and guest friendly environment which exceeds expectation and delights customers.

This category will be judged by mystery guests who will pay particular attention to:

- The quality of the experience
- The range of facilities and the overall appeal to a broad range of visitors
- The initial impact of the business
- How the staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- How the business exceeds customer expectations

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants are asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by Shannon Airport Group

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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www.snnairportgroup.ie

BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING / SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo

Digital marketing and social media are key components of smart marketing. Having a targeted digital plan and an engaged social media presence across relevant platforms is imperative for customer-facing businesses.

A good digital strategy and execution across platforms including website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok allows business to raise awareness and communicate effectively with customers and stakeholders.

If your business makes clever use of digital marketing/social media as business building tools this is the category for you. Judging is on written submission and an audit of your digital assets.

Judges will seek some basic information including:

- ❑ An outline of how your business has integrated/adopted digital/social/marketing into its overall marketing plan?
- ❑ A map of your digital marketing journey and progress to date
- ❑ Did you invest in training? Did you apply for grants to help develop your website or stronger digital presence?
- ❑ Have you run an attention-grabbing campaign? If so, tell us about it and please include any supporting stats?

Sponsored by Clare Echo

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Clean Ireland Recycling

Retailers have found themselves operating in a constant adapt and change environment over recent years. Those who have kept pace with change, invested in their business and remained forward looking are the ones that are not only surviving but thriving. But it is hard work!

This award will recognise that work ethic. It will celebrate businesses with an exceptional customer offering, that understand the power of 'experience' and customer service, businesses that innovate, meet and exceed customer needs.

Mystery shoppers will visit each entrant premises and will look for:

- How well the product range and services reflect the type and size of the store
- The provision of value-added services which exceed customer expectations
- Excellent retail standards in all areas of the store
- Innovative and exciting product range
- Excellent merchandising and display
- Welcoming and well-informed staff

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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants

This category is open to any business that can demonstrate their focus on, and excellence in customer service. Mystery shoppers will look at all aspects of the service provided in terms of staff interaction and the range of services on offer as appropriate to the needs of customers.

The mystery shopper will pay particular attention to:

- The initial impact of the business
- How the staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- How the business exceeds customer expectations
- How the services provided delight the customers

Company size and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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McKeogh Gallagher Ryan, a Xeinadin company, is a leader in providing audit, tax and advisory services across Ireland. Our services are personal, client-focused and partner-led.

Our expert teams of tax consultants, auditors, accountants and advisors are ready to discuss your needs.

Limerick 061 208050 | Ennis 065 682 9544 | Nenagh 067 53822

www.mgraccountants.ie | info@mgraccountants.ie

BEST PLACE TO EAT IN CLARE - BEST RESTAURANT BEST PLACE TO EAT IN CLARE - BEST BISTRO/CAFÉ

Sponsored by AIB

Best Place to Eat in Clare; has two sub-categories to reflect the breadth of eating experiences.

They are:

1. 'Best Place to Eat – Best Restaurant in Clare'
2. 'Best Place to Eat – Best Bistro or Café in Clare'

Both these awards are judged by mystery diners who will visit each eatery to sample the unique customer experience and savour the quality and taste of the food served.

Each entrant to this category will be judged across all aspects of services and facilities with particular emphasis on the food offering. The mystery diner will pay particular attention to:

- The initial impact of the business/ ambience and character
- How staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- An uncompromising commitment to flavour and quality of food
- Interesting and innovative menu choices
- Excellent and appropriate food service

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants are asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria. Please note the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Entrants are asked to provide a voucher with agreed limited value to be used by the mystery diners.

Sponsored by AIB

Please download the entry form from
www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

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Best of luck to all participants
in the **Clare Business
Excellence Awards 2024** from
all in AIB Clare.

Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.



BEST SME IN CLARE

Sponsored by Cup Print

Best SME in Clare' category seeks to find Clare's best small to medium business, service or manufacturing businesses, employing less than 250 people, can apply.

In a time when talent is difficult to attract, winning 'Best SME in Clare' award will provide the winner with a valuable differentiator to attract new talent, a morale boost for existing employees, and will give confidence to existing and potential clients.

Growth: This award is designed to identify businesses that can demonstrate consistent growth across broad business metrics including, but not limited to, financial performance, investment, growth in employees, growth in product lines or in the case of a services business growth in location/locations where services are delivered.

Success: There should be evidence of a sound strategy, considered business structure, product/service development, marketing, and business development as well conversion rates/retention rates.

Culture: The entrants should describe their culture, decision-making processes, communication, training, staff acquisition/retention metrics, and business cycles where relevant.

Customers and Market differentiation: If relevant the entrants should showcase differentiation from competitors including but not limited to unique selling points, demonstrable competitor advantage, for example customer service, and showcase go-to-market/marketing strategies etc. where appropriate.

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BEST VOLUNTARY / COMMUNITY GROUP

Sponsored by Vitalograph

The Best Voluntary/Community Group award is FREE to enter and carries a cash prize of €500 to the winner.

The purpose of this award is to acknowledge groups, powered by volunteers, who have played a significant role in enhancing the quality of life in their local community.

Judging is via written submission – a short case study will suffice. The judges simply want to hear what your group did over the past year that made your contribution to your local community special.


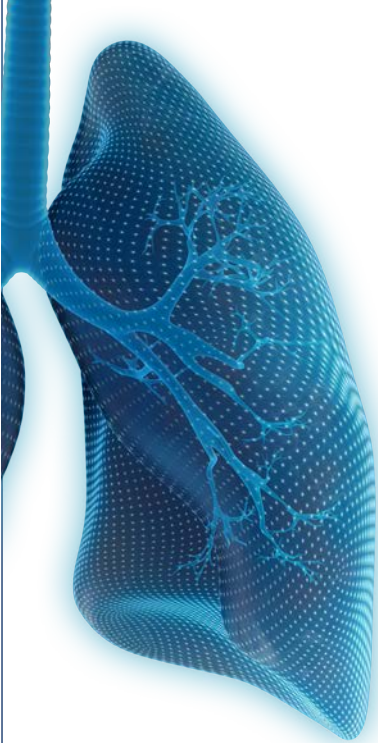
We want to hear from you:

- ☐ If you represent a sports club or local voluntary group who has supported people living in their community
- ☐ You are part of a long-standing community group such as Tidy Towns or a local tourism community group etc
- ☐ You organise local festivals and events to help boost your local economy
- ☐ Your group launched a new community/voluntary initiative in the past year

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GALA AWARDS EVENING

Clare Business Excellence Awards 2024 gala ceremony will take place at The Inn at Dromoland , Thursday November 14, 2024.

Compere is John Cooke.

Tickets on sale through Ennis Chamber from w/c 21 October 2024.

Email: info@ennischamber.ie for details.

Expect a great night out!

Gala Awards Reception Sponsors: Value Centre Ennis www.valuecentre.ie





About Ennis Chamber:

- Dedicated to the economic, business, tourism and cultural development of Ennis and County Clare
- Communicates the competitiveness and attractiveness of Ennis and the wider county to potential employers, employees and visitors
- A membership that represents over 6,000 employees, ensures Ennis Chamber has a powerful and diverse reach, and a strong local mandate
- Our diverse membership is drawn from start-ups to multi-nationals and large indigenous industries. It also includes a full range of traditional enterprises including banks, professional services and family businesses, operating across all sectors
- Provides local and national lobbying support for members
- Provides training opportunities for members and their staff, to help drive growth and attract talent
- Is the only authorised provider of an exporter Certificate of Origin service in County Clare

To join Ennis Chamber,
request an application form from


✉ info@ennischamber.ie

☎ 065 6842988



**Ennis
Chamber**
Advancing business together

Ennis Chamber
54 O'Connell Street
Ennis
t: 065 6842988
www.ennischamber.ie

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping circles in various shades of yellow and orange, creating a layered, organic shape on the left side of the page.

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