



SLR AWARDS
ENTRY DETAILS
2024



SLR AWARDS 2024

A CELEBRATION OF THE STARS OF SCOTTISH LOCAL RETAILING

"For almost 20 years the SLR Awards were held in the early summer – to avoid clashes with other important industry events and ensure that retailers had the time they need to prepare their entries properly.

However, the awards have been held in late autumn for the last few years, thanks to disruption caused by the Covid pandemic, but 2024 will see them return to their natural home in June.

"We believe this will make it easier for retailers to get ready and give themselves the best possible chance of winning by preparing their best possible entries.

"So it's full speed ahead for 19 June 2024 and we are thoroughly looking forward to another great event and another fantastic celebration of this fantastic industry. I would encourage all retailers to get June marked off in their diaries and make sure they get their entries in early."



ANTONY BEGLEY

Editor, Scottish Local Retailer

ENTRY PROCESS & KEY DATES

HOW TO ENTER

Entering the SLR Awards 2024 couldn't be easier!

Step 1: Visit www.slrawards.com

Step 2: Click on 'Enter' to view the list of categories.

Step 3: Download the relevant entry form in word format.

Step 4: Submit your entry – along with supporting photos and/or videos.

Entries should be sent to events@55north.com

Upon completion, you will receive a confirmation email from the SLR team.

If, at any stage, you feel you would like advice on any aspect of the entry process or on how to optimise your submission and to make your entries as strong as possible for the judges, please email events@55north.com where our experienced team will be delighted to help.

JUDGING

Once again, there will be two stages to the judging process:

PAPER JUDGING

The paper judging will be carried out by a highly experienced panel of judges from across the UK, representing all aspects of the local retailing sector, supported by the expanded SLR editorial team.

The judges will vote for the shortlist for each category with every member of the panel carrying equal voting rights.

All entrants will be contacted by the events team to notify them if they have been shortlisted or not.

STORE INTERVIEWS

All shortlisted stores will be personally visited by representatives of the judging panel.

All winners will be announced at the Awards on 19 June 2024.

ENTRY DEADLINE **21 February 2024**
WINNERS ANNOUNCED **19 June 2024**

AWARDS CATEGORIES

IN-STORE CATEGORIES

We will once again be accepting entries in a number of vital product categories. These categories have been chosen carefully to encompass the key sales drivers in the local retailing sector.

- ✳ **Bread & Bakery Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Confectionery Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Food-to-Go Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Fresh & Chilled Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Newstrade Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Off-Trade Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Scottish Brands Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Soft Drinks Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Tobacco Retailer of the Year**

IN-ACTION CATEGORIES

In addition to our product categories, we will also be accepting entries in a range of categories created to recognise the outstanding efforts of local retailers across Scotland in key areas of their business.

- ✳ **Community Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Forecourt Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **New Store of The Year**
- ✳ **Refit of The Year**
- ✳ **Team of the Year**
- ✳ **Sustainability Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **#ThinkSmart Innovation Award**

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

As usual, we will also make a number of individual awards but please note that these categories are not open to entry and will be chosen by the judging panel.

- ✳ **Unsung Hero of the Year**
- ✳ **Special Recognition**
- ✳ **Young Scottish Local Retailer of the Year**
- ✳ **Scottish Local Retailer of the Year**

OUR SPONSORS

A NEW AWARDS FOR A NEW ERA

This edition of the SLR Awards, like the 20 that have preceded it, wouldn't be possible without the support of sponsors. We would therefore like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the companies listed on this page in helping us stage what we are sure will be an incredibly special night.



ENTRY TIPS & ADVICE

THE GOLDEN RULES

SLR AWARDS 2024 GENERAL CRITERIA

The SLR Awards 2024 are free to enter.

They are open to all independent and symbol convenience stores in Scotland as well as to independently-owned convenience stores chains.

The content of all entries should cover the period running from June 2023 to February 2024.

Your store, or the project you are submitting in your entry, should have been operational throughout the period stated above.

Each entry must be individual and tailored to the award category.

Entries can be made by individual businesses, those officially representing them or anyone wishing to nominate a relevant entrant.

Entries without photos will be discounted.

With many of hundreds of entries every year, it's vital that you ensure that you do all that you can to ensure that your entries stand out. Here are some great tips and hints on ensuring that you catch the judges' attention.

STICK TO THE FACTS

Provide as many reliable facts and figures as you can. Epos data is a great source of information and can add real weight to your argument.

Don't skip any questions! Blank spaces in an entry form don't help the judges and can even hinder your entry.

Try to be concise and to the point, highlighting relevant information and citing data or facts to strengthen your argument. Try to avoid vague or statements like "my store is a lot better" unless you can demonstrate that through data, feedback and results.

Remember to focus on each entry one category at a time! All questions answered for that category should relate directly or indirectly to the category. Providing one generic entry form for multiple categories rarely proves successful.

ENTRY TIPS & ADVICE

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MAKE IT VISUAL

A photo is indeed worth a thousand words – so include as many photos as required to illustrate the quality of your entry.

It may seem obvious but try to only include photographs for each category that relate specifically to that category. It's fine to include shots of the wider store to give a flavour of how the whole store hangs together, but don't forget to include at least three shots specific to the category you are entering.

Feel free to include other visual documentation that might help strengthen your case: letters of commendation, certificates, other awards, customer testimonials, newspaper clippings, screengrabs from social media or websites – it's all good.

ADD VIDEO

Even better, why not add a short video to enhance your entry and really bring it to life for the judges? Everyone has a smartphone these days, so why not make best use of it.

Don't worry about the quality of the video footage! The judges are not scoring your skills as a videographer – they are using the video to

gain a deeper understanding of your store.

MAKE IT EASY FOR THE JUDGES TO CHOOSE YOU

We receive hundreds of entries every year and the judges must analyse every one of them to settle on a shortlist for each category, so don't give them any excuses to discard your entry at the first stage.

The judges are instructed to ONLY judge what's in front of them on the entry forms. They are not allowed to be influenced by information they may already know about your store, but which isn't on the entry form.

Make sure you are answering the key questions:

- ★ What have you done?
- ★ How did you do it?
- ★ What were the results?

ENTRY TIPS & ADVICE

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THINK OUTSTANDING

The judges are always on the lookout for innovation, creativity, thought and passion. When compiling your entry, make sure you go above and beyond simply best practice or basic good standards.

Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet or sing the praises of your team. That's what the Awards are all about!

BE CREATIVE!

If you've got something to say that doesn't fit neatly into the entry form, feel free to present it however you like: PowerPoint, video, folders of information – it's all acceptable and can help ensure you have a great chance of being among the winners on the night! Good luck!

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

IN-STORE CATEGORIES

STAY FOCUSED

When entering In-Store award entries, you'll be focusing on individual product categories or groups of categories – so make sure that the entire entry is geared towards highlighting the work you've done in those categories.

Remember, ensure that you include at least three photographs specifically relating to the

category you're entering. This is critical. Ideally, include half a dozen or more. As many as it takes to truly bring the category to life for the judges.

It's fine to include wider shots of the store both inside and outside to give context to your entry and help the judges understand your store – but don't forget those all-important category photos.

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

TELL A STORY

When you're entering awards, you're telling a story. So tell it the way you would if you were standing in front of the judging panel. Give a little context but focus on what you did, why you did it, how you did it and what the results were.

Be precise and concise; use stats and facts to reinforce your arguments! Don't say 'sales improved' when you can say 'sales grew by 34% in a single month year on year'. Don't say you 'increased shelf space for the category' when you can say 'we added four linear metres of chilled space for the category'. Don't say 'customers loved what I did' when you could include some customer testimonials or screen grabs from your Facebook page showing positive customer comments. You get the idea.

HIGHLIGHT WHAT MATTERS

It's tempting to try to share everything about your store – but experience tells us that focusing on the areas where you've seen real success and shown real innovation and passion and rigour is what catches the judge's eye. What have you done in the category that has really transformed it?

What have you done to make your category

pop for your customers? What have you done that is different?

Remember too that making real progress in developing a category in-store doesn't always need to mean innovation and creativity. Real success can equally come from going back to basics and doing the simple things well. If, by taking that approach, you've seen sales and profits grow substantially – that's a great story and is equally likely to help you make it onto the shortlist.

IN-ACTION CATEGORIES

In the In-Action category awards, the judges are seeking those who go that extra mile to deliver something exceptional. Most retailers are doing exceptional things but often fail to mention it in awards entries. Put some detailed thought into your entry to make sure you have a chance of being a winner.

COMMUNITY RETAILER OF THE YEAR

In this category, the judges are looking for retailers that went above and beyond the call of duty in serving the needs of their communities.

Telling your story clearly and concisely is critical in this category: be specific about some of the

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

initiatives you implemented over the last year, explain exactly what you did and why, and tell us as best you can the positive impact it had on your community.

Supporting material is vital in helping the judges understand your commitment to your community: photographs, press clippings, screen grabs from social media or websites, customer 'thank you' cards – it's all good.

At the end of the day, the judges are looking for great stories that we can retell through the pages of SLR to both recognise and reward your amazing efforts – and to inspire other retailers to learn from you and develop their own community engagement strategies for the benefit of communities across Scotland.

NEW STORE OF THE YEAR/ REFIT OF THE YEAR

Be completely clear that you are entering the correct category: New Store of the Year is open only to new build stores or very significant rebuilds. Refit of the Year is open to stores that have carried out refits in the eligible period, be they small or major.

In these categories, plenty of photographs

and/or video footage are vital. A picture tells a thousand words and never is this truer than in these categories.

Remember to tell the whole back story: why did you decide to build a new store, or carry out a refit? What were you hoping to achieve? Were you intending to bring in new categories and a wider range? If so, which categories and why did you see them as being key to future growth?

What else did you do during the build/refit to improve the experience for your customers, and your team?

If you can, share some data on what the results of the build refit have been in financial terms – and don't forget to be very clear on what your expectations are of the work.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

It pays to be specific and precise in this category.

Describe particular initiatives or ideas. Tell the story of how your team helped you deliver for your community in the last year.

Supporting evidence is important in this

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

category – and feel free to be creative. Anything that helps the judges understand how fantastic your team or unsung hero has been will enhance your chances of a spot on the shortlist.

SUSTAINABILITY RETAILER OF THE YEAR

With sustainability more important than ever to shoppers – and suppliers – this category aims to unearth the retailers going above and beyond to both enhance the sustainability credentials of their stores and communicate that fact to shoppers.

While getting the sustainability basics is fantastic, the judges are looking for more than legal compliance. Recycling plastic, cardboard and food waste is great – but what the judges are hoping to find are retailers making sustainability a core plank of their business strategy.

Communication is vital in this category. Improving your store's carbon footprint is fantastic – but are you telling your customers about all the work you're doing behind the scenes? Do you mention sustainability in-store, or on social media? Do you talk to your shoppers about the lengths you've gone to in

order to reduce reliance on plastic, minimise food waste, reduce energy consumption and more?

#THINKSMART INNOVATION AWARD

This category, as the names suggests, is all about innovation – and that doesn't necessarily mean technology.

Innovation comes in many shapes and sizes – so what have you done in your business that is truly innovative and had delivered business benefits or improved the experience of your customers?

As many stores move towards becoming destination stores to set themselves apart from the competition, what have you done in your store to encourage shoppers to choose your business over anyone else's in the area? What reasons have you given your shoppers and potential shoppers to come to your store? What do you offer that shoppers can't easily get anywhere else?