

eCommerce Awards 2005

Nick Flynn MSc
Managing Partner
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eCommerce Awards ... Key organisational points:

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to draw together some of the various sources of information about the awards, the application process and entry criteria. This document is designed to act as an aid memoir and is not intended to replace in any way the information and application process that is available at the award website www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk.

Over the next few weeks I will be contacting County Partnerships, Trade Associations, Business Support Agencies and individual businesses with a view to proactive engagement and a call to arms to your membership to drive the initial application process forward

As soon as Promotion & Marketing Collateral becomes available, I will ensure that it is freely available; I will also be looking at coordinated Press Engagement at both a Regional and Nation level to spread the message and report on progress/results. I would be grateful if you could be part of this process and help to spread the message through your newsletters, mail-shots, websites, emails etc.

As of 19th April ... 15 SW applicants ... Target 300

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Introduction

I am delighted to have been asked by SWRDA to facilitate/manage the eCommerce Award process in the South West for 2005.

Bigger than ever, the 2005 eCommerce Awards are searching across the UK for the best examples of the use of the Internet and Information and communication technology (ICT) from small and medium sized businesses to large enterprise and the public sector.

The eCommerce Awards, now in its seventh year, introduces new categories at both Regional and National levels.

If your organisation has benefited from the use of information and communication technology, you could win prestigious awards, valuable publicity and press coverage. Free to enter, the Awards offer opportunities to win in 72 regional awards, and 13 national awards. And, if you employ up to 250 staff you could win the title of National E-Champion for 2005 and receive a cheque for £50,000 at the National Awards Gala Dinner in October.

The 2005 national eCommerce Awards are run by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and by InterForum, a not for profit membership organisation that helps British businesses to trade electronically.

Sponsored nationally by BT and national media sponsor The Sunday Times Enterprise Network, these awards have been designed to recognise and reward those organisations that have demonstrated excellence through the use of the Internet and other Information & Communications Technologies. The Awards are open to UK businesses (limited or otherwise), public bodies, registered charities and not-for-profit organisations based in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

I will be open to any advice, guidance, help and support in making this 2005 eCommerce Award a great success for the South West and South West Businesses.

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Contact Details

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eCommerce Website

www.ecommerce-awards.co.uk

Timetable

- National Launch - 1 Victoria Street
29th March
- Website open to entrants
29th March
- Awards close to entries
29th July 5.00pm
- Short listing
2nd August through 20th August
- Regional judging
23rd August through 3rd September
- Regional Awards ceremonies
5th September through 23rd September
- National judging
29th September
- National Awards Gala Dinner
6th October

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Application Process

Start your categories then login any time up to the deadline.

When you start your application, you will be asked for some contact details and some basic questions about your business to help determine your eligibility. You may also opt to receive information on local ICT and business skills training in your area.

Once you have registered, you will receive email reminders of your login details and of the categories that are open to you. From here, or by logging back in to the system at any time, you may open your application for the categories you choose to enter.

You will enter a personalised application form containing details of local advice and the current status of your application.

To simplify and speed up your application there is a common section of questions, which you need answer only once however many categories you wish to enter. For every category you enter, there are just a few questions to answer in each. The amount of detail you wish to give the judges is up to you.

Once you have completed a category to your satisfaction, or you do not wish to enter that category, please mark it as CLOSED.

Note: This year, entrants are not limited in the number of categories they choose to enter. The categories that you are eligible to enter, based on the information you provide, are listed for you.

In addition, you may choose to enter the National ICT Innovators Awards categories, which are open to all organisations that have been trading for at least one year.

For each category, the short section for each should be answered. However many categories you plan to enter, you need only complete the Common Questions section once.

You may return to alter your application any time up to the deadline of 5pm on 29th July 2005 by entering your login details at Edit Application.

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Application

Application Form

The following section outlines the questions you will be asked to allow you to prepare any information required beforehand. After entering your chosen email address and a private password, you will be asked to register:

Registration & Optional Information

About you

You will be asked to enter your name, position and details of where you heard about the awards.

About your Organisation

Organisation Name Address, including a valid postcode (this ensures we can place you in the correct judging region)

Organisation type.

Select from:

- Sole trader;
- Partnership;
- Private limited company;
- Public Limited Company;
- Registered Charity;
- Nonregistered Charity;
- Not-for-profit;
- Trade Association; Other.

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How many employees does your business have?
Select from:

- 0 (sole trader);
- 1-4;
- 5-9;
- 10-24;
- 25-49;
- 50-99;
- 100-249;
- 250+

Select the nearest industry sector for your organisation.
Select from:

- Agric/Forestry/Hunting/Fishing; Mineral/chemical;
- Mining;
- Utilities;
- Textiles/Clothing;
- Wood/Paper;
- Printing / Publishing;
- Manufacturer;
- Recycling;
- Construction;
- Distribution;
- Repairs;
- Hotels / Catering;
- Transport / Freight;
- Post | Telecoms;
- Banking / Finance;
- Insurance / Pensions;
- Estate Agents;
- Vehicle Hiring-Industrial/Commercial;
- Computing Activities;
- Legal Services;
- Accountants;

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- Market Research;
- Services Other;
- Advertising;
- Arts & Leisure;
- Cleaning/Hygiene;
- Government;
- Other

What is your estimated turnover?
Select from:

- £0-25,000;
- £25,001-50,000;
- £50,001-100,000;
- £100,001-250,000;
- £250,001-500,000;
- £500,000-1 M;
- £1 M-5M;
- £5M-10M;
- £10M+

When did your organisation begin trading?
Select from:

- Before 30th July 2003;
- Between 31 st July 2003 and 30th July 2004;
- Since 31 st July 2004

Local Advice

You will then be asked if you wish to be contacted by a local advisor:

If you select yes, your contact details will be forwarded to your local RDA nominated advisor. If you have already been assisted by a local advisor, please provide their contact details.

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Personalised Application Form

Once you have completed the brief registration, a reminder of your login details and of your categories will be emailed to you. You will automatically navigate to a personalised application form, which you may return to at any time, before the awards closing deadline, to amend your entry details.

However many categories you choose to enter, you should complete the Common Questions section just once.

For each category you wish to enter, you should answer the questions in that section. To start a section or category, select START. To edit a section already opened, select EDIT. Once you have completed a section to your satisfaction or you are sure you do not wish to enter a category, you should select CLOSE.

Once closed, a section may not be reopened before judging.

The application sections are as follows:

Common Questions

Your Business

- Describe your business.
- If you are a subsidiary, provide details of your parent organisation.
- Number of years in business.
- Number of employees.
- Company registration number or registered charity number (Required for registered companies or charities).
- Turnover (revenue) in your last financial year.
- Profit before tax in your last financial year.

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Your Web presence

- Your main web site.
- E-Business URL (if any).
- E-Trading URL (if any).
- Partner extranet URL (if any).
 - If required, please provide a login for the judges (Note: This must be valid until 6th October 2005)
- Give an overview of your web site.
 - What are its strengths and weaknesses?
 - What are the benefits to your organisation of having the web site?
 - What is the target audience (the users) of your web site?
 - What are the benefits to your target audience of using the web site?
- How have you improved the quality of your product, service or information delivery using the Internet?
 - What were your objectives in going online and did you achieve them?
 - Describe how you ensure security of information and/or access on your site
- Please provide the URL for your privacy statement.
- How does your site cater for the needs of disabled users?

Your technology solution.

- Give an overview of the technologies that make up your solution.
 - Describe the planning process involved in adopting this technology.
 - What was the total cost of the implementation?
 - Provide one example which illustrates your success so far.
- What have you learned?
 - What would you do differently next time?
 - What are your plans for the future?
 - What advice would you give other organisations?
- Who supplied your solution?
 - [Company; Contact; Website]
- Who implemented your solution?
 - [Company; Contact; Website]
- Who supports your solution?
 - [Company; Contact; Website]

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Press Programme

The appointed press agency ... ITPR's remit is to drive traffic to the E-Commerce Awards website, promoting entries for the awards through a targeted Press campaign, on a regional and national basis.

The activity schedule consists of a proactive approach to the key media, including:-

- Monthly press releases
- Placement of past winners' case studies
- Briefings (either telephone and / or face-to-face) with key regional and national Press
- Syndicated radio interviews

From past experience it is anticipated there will be a significant interest in the national Awards Gala Dinner in October from key Press.

Other key PR activity highlights include:-

- A "call to arms" press release one month from the Awards closing date
- Regional press releases announcing the regional shortlists and regional winners
- A national press releases announcing the E-Commerce Awards finalists

The winner's press release and winners of the national innovation categories

Entry Criteria

This year's programme contains two sets of awards. The first, open only to organisations employing up to 250 staff (SME's) has six categories judged at both a regional and national level.

The second, is open to all UK based organisations irrespective of type and size including public sector bodies and is judged at a national level only. Many organisations will be eligible for more than one category, and may choose however many they wish to enter from those for which they are eligible.

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The Awards are open to:

All Commercial, Government/Public Sector, Educational, Not-for-Profit or Charitable organisations based in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) or the Isle of Man who have been trading for at least one year (prior to 31st July 2004), and can demonstrate they have achieved tangible gains by using the Internet or other Information & Communications Technologies.

Restrictions:

- Organisations trading for less than twelve months are not eligible;
- Organisations based in the Channel Islands, or the Rest of the World are not eligible;
- The Awards organisers, their partners, sponsors, suppliers to the Awards, and any wholly owned subsidiaries of the above are excluded from entering.

E-Commerce Awards - Regional/National Award Categories

The specific requirements for each of the six following categories are as follows:

Entrants must employ up to 250 staff (SME). They may also enter any National ICT Innovators Awards categories.

BEST SALES AND MARKETING ONLINE

Companies who have transformed their business through the development and implementation of online sales and marketing activities. Judges will be looking for excellence from:

- Defined sales and marketing plan.
- Quantifiable business benefits.
- Use of innovative techniques and tools.

BEST CUSTOMER CARE ONLINE

The best companies pay the utmost attention to customer care. Judges will be looking for the innovative use of the internet and information & communications technologies to make a step change in the way customers perceive the applicants organisation and value the service they receive.

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BEST END-TO-END INTEGRATED BUSINESS

As internet and communications technologies become mainstream, leading companies will be gaining benefit by tightly integrating their key processes from end-to-end. Judges will be looking for the innovative use of these technologies, the degree of integration and the quantifiable business benefits.

BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS

Applicants will be judged on how they have: used their Broadband internet connection in an innovative and beneficial way; improved their customer's use of Broadband through novel or innovative services or content; or helped in the rollout and wider uptake of Broadband in Britain.

Technologies categorised as Broadband within this years awards include always-on connections with available bandwidths greater than 128kbs, such as ADSL, Cable, fixed point-to-point radio, Wi-Fi, UMTS and Satellite. Services and technologies delivered using Broadband might include streamed video or audio, Voice over IP, security or process monitoring, software or eBook distribution.

Examples of innovation in this category include:

- Delivery of time-critical business information.
- Provision of rich compelling consumer content, perhaps interactively.
- Provision of complex business services through an Application Service Provider previously available only to large Enterprises.

BEST USE OF TELEWORKING

Entrants should demonstrate how the introduction of remote working has helped to improve the way the business operates and performs in terms of internal efficiency, productivity and has helped to enhance employees' work-life balance.

Applicants will be judged on how they have: utilised Information and Communication technologies to work from home, SOHO (Small Office, Home Office), or remote locations, reflecting new opportunities in flexible working practices and locations.

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Examples include:

- Provide a virtual working environment for people working from home
- Providing flexible working opportunities for working parents or workers with disabilities.
- Developing a virtual company with completely outsourced facilities and no central office location

BEST USE OF MOBILE AND WIRELESS APPLICATIONS

Applicants will be judged on how they have employed mobile and or wireless technology to enable their organisation to operate in a location independent way.

Technologies used may include short-range Personal Area Networks such as Bluetooth; Infra -red communications; Wireless LAN technology such a Wi-Fi; or longer-range mobile technologies such as Pagers, SMS/MMS, GSM GPRS, or UMTS.

Examples of innovation in this category include:

- Changing working practices of employees through increased mobility or availability of information to field workers
- Compelling new consumer services through the introduction of location-based services
- Improved customer service through mobile access to company data;
- Improved distribution routing and tracking through better use of in-cab systems

National ICT Innovators Awards Categories

These awards will recognise best practise in the development of ICT by UK business's and public sector communities.

They are designed to exemplify the true applied technology innovators in the marketplace today and are open to all type and size of UK organisation. Entrants may enter one or more of the seven categories.

In addition to regional categories, SME entrants (up to 250 staff) may also enter one or more of the National ICT Innovators Awards categories.

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One technology and six market sectors that align with the overall national agenda have been selected to be the subject of these new awards, they are;

TECHNOLOGY

Safe online transactions award

As online trading and transactions become increasingly prevalent within both the B2C and B2B sectors, it is becoming increasingly important for organisations to be able to trust their online trading partners and communicate with them securely.

Judges will be looking for examples of best practice where organisations have demonstrated a duty of care to their customers and suppliers by creating safe online trading environments. Organisations must be able to illustrate how through the innovative use of technologies they are helping to make the UK Internet a safe place to do business.

MARKET SECTOR AWARDS

These awards are for individuals and teams who have developed business solutions of an innovative nature displaying a deep understanding of the technology, a visionary approach and excellence in the development process.

Judges will be particularly looking for these three aspects to be clearly demonstrated and for evidence that there are true and quantifiable business benefits.

- Health
- Transport
- Education and Learning
- Export
- The Environment
- E-Government (Public Sector)

These awards will be presented to individuals and or project teams that have demonstrated clarity of thinking and development/deployment of an approach that has the capacity to change the ICT paradigm in the particular market sector. All category winners will be presented with a prestigious trophy at the national awards gala dinner in London on October 6th 2005.

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Tips for Entrants ... Ten Top Tips:

NOTE - it is recommended that you work on your application offline, and copy and paste your answers into the fields of the application form when you are happy. This will prevent you losing work if you have an interruption to your internet connection, or if your session times out.

1. The form is divided into three main sections - the first short set of questions are factual details about your company. The second set are more descriptive about your company and its achievements, which should be filled in for all categories; and the third set are specific to the category(s) you are entering. Make sure you fill in all as completely and as accurately as you can. The more information you provide the judges, the better case you make.
2. Try to start your application straight away - in previous years we have seen lots of rushed entries and requests for extensions coming in near the deadline. The more relevant details you complete about your organisation, the better chance you have of impressing the judges.
3. Complete the category sections for all the categories you think you could compete in. Remember, in some regions not all categories are as well represented. The category questions are simple to answer - if you have made a compelling achievement you could win.
4. Plan out what you want to say about your organisation's use of technology and get it down in writing before completing the main body. The more details and benefits to your business you have to say, the more your application will stand out with the judges. That way you'll have a better chance of winning a regional or a national prize.
5. Once you have completed your initial registration and started your category applications with the Awards you have until the closing date to complete your chosen categories, to your satisfaction. Make sure you know the basic details about your organisations, such as turnover and headcount, before you start. Make a note of your company registration or charity number, if you have one. You may need these for the application form.

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6. Look at the website section on previous winners - learn the sorts of achievements that impressed the regional and national judging panels. It's not always the biggest companies with the largest budgets that do well – look at last year's winners for inspiration.
7. Your website must be live during the Awards programme and judging period, as it will be reviewed as part of the short-listing and judging process. If we cannot access the site after three attempts you will not be short-listed. Ensure your URL is complete and accurate.
8. Whilst the form fields may look small, they will accept a large amount of data. Consider cutting & pasting the information from a word processor or text editor. That way you can check the spelling. Remember that formatting will be lost - so don't put effort into layout and fonts.
9. The Awards are not a website beauty parade: The judges are looking for clear examples of how you have improved your business through the use of the Internet to interact with your customers, business partners, suppliers etc. They cannot tell this just from the web site - it's the detail you provide in the descriptive fields that will help them.
10. Substantiate your claims. Some entries have statements like "we grew bigger" - as an example, it would be more effective to say "we grew our revenue by X% to the current level above and now have customers in Y countries - they were all in the UK this time last year".

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Advice from Previous Winners

From Andrew Cornaby, Response Maintenance, the National E-Commerce Awards winner 2003:-

"It is wonderful when organisations such as InterForum and the DTI recognise the hard work that people put into their businesses. Businesses should not be afraid to enter for the fear of thinking that they have no chance of winning. Though that is exactly how I felt, I ended up scooping the Mobile and Wireless category award worth £8000 pounds and the Grand National E-commerce Award worth £30,000 - two wonderful awards that had me in tears of joy and excitement."

From Jon Pryse-Jones, Pryse Jones, the National E-Commerce Awards winner 2001:-

"It is best to give lots of accurate facts rather than vague answers - the judges, of which I was one in both 2002 & 2003 for the Eastern region - like to feel that nothing is being withheld and that the information on the entry forms is honest and correct."

Also the passion of the winners about their sites shines through from their entry forms and is always a major consideration for me."

From Steve Radford, Operations Director, IMS UK Ltd, winner of the National Innovation Award for Advanced Supply Chain Integration in 2003.

- 'If something's worth doing, then its worth doing well' Put as much time and effort into preparing your application as you would expect the judges to spend when considering it. No one is going to bestow or win a national award based on 10 minutes work.
- If they need to know it, put it in. Remember that the judges may not have any past experience of your industry and will probably not have time to research around your application. If they are unable to understand your industry, product or market from the information you have included, then your application is unlikely to make the shortlist.

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- Sometimes you can't see the wood for the trees. Get someone to proof read your application for spelling and grammatical errors. It's very difficult to spot your own mistakes especially in something you may have already rewritten a couple of times, and spell check can miss the occasional spilling mistake!
- Modesty is NOT the best policy. It's not often that this is the right tactic, but boast, boast, boast! This is your first and last chance to sell yourself.
- Answer the question. Answer each question in full and don't rely on information that you may have included in a previous answer. This is especially important if your application will be judged for more than one award, as judges may only be given the section of your application that relates to the award they are judging.
- It's not always good to recycle. Don't rely on simply cutting and pasting text from your marketing literature to answer a question. Nor should you reuse an answer written as part of a previous application, especially if it was for a different award. Think about what this award is there to recognise, each question is there for a reason and the same question on two different application forms will probably require two different answers.

End:

Many thanks

Nick Flynn