

ert
AWARDS
2018

HOW TO DO A

GREAT

ENTRY

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this quick guide to putting together a great entry for the ERT Awards 2018. Putting your business forward for a national awards competition is a brave step and if you've got as far as reading this then hopefully you've already done the hard part and decided to give it a go.

HOW TO DO A GREAT ENTRY

Entering the ERT Awards is really simple - all you have to do is fill in one form and you're entered into these categories:

- * **Independent Electrical Retailer of the Year**
- * **Consumer Electronics Retailer of the Year**
- * **Consumer Electronics Showroom of the Year**
- * **Domestic Appliances Retailer of the Year**
- * **Domestic Appliances Showroom of the Year**
- * **Customer Event of the Year**
- * **Turning Point Award**

That's right, completing ONE entry makes you eligible for SEVEN different awards.

Looking at the list of categories, you can probably easily guess that the entry form asks you for information on your company's background, the showroom, your marketing and events, consumer electronics or domestic appliances, what you do online, how you train and look after your staff, what your approach to customer service is and what you have done to adapt and change your business as the market has changed.

In fact, the form breaks these elements down into the sections listed below. Under each we've added some questions that may help you fill the form in with the most relevant information.

Our recommendation is that you prepare answers using this as a guide and then cut and paste them into the online entry form.

BACKGROUND

Describe your business and give a brief history and breakdown of where you are today. Provide evidence to back up why you're a successful business. This might include growth, investment, turnover, profits, size, staffing levels, product mix, etc.

SHOWROOM

Describe your showroom. How is it designed and laid out? Is it brown goods or white goods, or a mix of both? How have you made best use of the space? Can you provide us with a floor plan? How have you differentiated your showroom? What products and product areas have you incorporated into the showroom (i.e. 4K and smart TV demonstration zones, white goods areas, smart home, wi-fi network for music and video streaming demonstrations)?

MARKETING

Have you taken an innovative approach to marketing your business? How do you communicate with your customers and interact with the local community? Do you use PR, marketing, advertising and social networking? How effective is your website? Do you hold events to demonstrate new products? Are you a member of trade bodies, buying groups or local business groups? If so, how do you take advantage of this? How have you embraced digital marketing? Outline any digital marketing activity that you've carried out over the last 12 months and give evidence of how successful it has been at improving your business.

EVENTS

Do you do customer events? What's your approach to them? Tell us all about your best event of the last 12 months. What made it so successful? What made it unique?

MULTICHANNEL STRATEGY

How do you successfully run a bricks-and-mortar showroom alongside a website. How do your in-store and online strategies work together? How do you entice people into your store by using your website? Do you use online product videos? How user-friendly is your website to navigate and to find and buy products? Is it professionally designed?

STAFF AND TRAINING

How do you train your staff and keep their product knowledge up-to-date? Do you send them on manufacturers' training courses?

CUSTOMER SERVICE

What is your customer service strategy? Do you offer superb levels of service? How do you support your customers and ensure that they keep coming back for more?

TURNING POINT AWARD

How have you changed your business over the last 12 months? Have you explored new areas and revenue streams? Have you done anything that's genuinely innovative and out of your comfort zone? How are you taking your business forward? What strategy do you have for the future? How well do you know where you want to be and how you're going to get there?



TOP TIPS

Once you have an idea about the kind of information you want to get across, the final step is to write it all down in a way that will get it across to the judges effectively and conclusively. So here are a few tips to make sure you give yourself the best possible chance of winning:



Read the instructions and fill the whole form in

This sounds really obvious but you'd be surprised how many people fall at this first hurdle. The form has been designed to put the right information in front of the judges and subjectively compare businesses in the best possible way. So fill it all in as much as you can - although clearly if there are sections that are not applicable you should say so on the form e.g. you don't sell consumer electronics. Spending the little bit of extra time to fully understand what you need to do can make all the difference.



Facts, facts, facts

You should start planning your entry by making a list of the basic facts you want to get across. For example, "Sales are up 12% since we changed the showroom", "Our event saw 50 people come through the doors, the most we've ever had" or "We have invested £10,000 on local marketing and advertising that has already seen a big increase in footfall". These tangible facts are evidence that substantiates your claims rather than them being simply bold statements like 'our events are really successful', 'we do lots of marketing' or the dreaded 'we have the wow factor'...



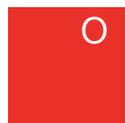
Be a storyteller

While getting the facts across is obviously crucial, don't be afraid to tell the judges WHY you have made the decisions, plans and strategies you have. What is the backstory that led you to make those changes, revamp that showroom or try a new revenue stream. Businesses are made by people and often it's the personal touches that make the difference between winning and not - this is especially true when talking about a local business that plays a part in the community.



It's not a writing competition

Be concise and to the point. You are not judged on how good a writer you are or how many superlatives you can cram into a statement. As long as the information is correct, relevant and tells that all-important story, that's all that matters.



What's your angle?

It's not a competition for the biggest companies with the most money, but you do have to show why you're the best at something in your local market - the best showroom, the best team, the cleverest marketing, the most community minded, the most sustainable, the most innovative...you get the idea.



The changing market

Make sure you talk about what you're doing to tackle the biggest issues the electrical retailing sector faces. Don't be afraid to say what you've tried that didn't work as well as what did - it demonstrates a willingness to embrace new ideas. How you changed your business to tackle those challenges and look to the future is as important as what successes you've had in the past.



It's not all about the money

This isn't a competition for who's made the most money or who's got the biggest showroom. It's about your local market and how your business tackles it with the resources available to you. The tiniest showroom with a good turnover can be a fantastic retailer simply because of the role it plays in the local community, the creative and inventive ideas it's had to keep itself going in a difficult market and how it's a model of best practice that much bigger retailers could learn from.



Do you need help?

If you need any help filling in your entry form then call Sean Hannam on 020 8515 2022 or email seanhannam@taylistmedia.com

Closing date: Midday, June 15 2018



Why enter?

In case you need the final push, here's just a few reasons why being a finalist or winner in the ERT Awards can boost your business, your people and your bottom line.

A great marketing opportunity

Entering awards gives you a fantastic chance to tell all your existing and potential customers about your business, its services and achievements. Being shortlisted, and maybe even winning, is something to shout about on your website, social media and all your local marketing and advertising - plus of course you could get a trophy to put in pride of place in your showroom.

Let everyone know you're the expert

Any local business thrives on its reputation, and being a finalist - or even winning - at a national awards ceremony boosts that standing immeasurably. It's an impartial and unbiased endorsement of your expertise and knowledge and this independent view carries huge value with any potential customers researching your products and services.

Stand out from your competitors

All retailers need to differentiate themselves from their competitors and that's especially true for independent retailers up against big multiples and online sites. An award nomination or trophy gives you that extra edge and unique selling point that could be the difference between a customer buying from you or them.

It's a great boost for your team

If an independent retailer sells itself on expertise and service then that offering can only come from the people who work there. While you surely heap praise on them for their contribution, getting that trophy or nomination from industry peers can only boost their confidence, self-esteem and morale - especially if they get to attend the gala lunch where we announce the winners.

Build a great team

If the quality and expertise of your team is a vital part of a successful business then you need to make sure you're attracting the best people. Everyone wants to feel proud to work for companies with great reputations, and independently judged awards validate those credentials to potential employees as much as to potential customers.

Benchmark your business

The entry process for the ERT Awards is an invaluable chance to get an independent and expert appraisal of your business. It gives you the opportunity to take a step back and consider a new perspective on what you do and define what your strengths and strategies are. The judging process will hold your business up against peers and assess your position in relation to them. Are you as good as you think you are?





Can awards help you make money?

● A study by the University of Leicester for the British Quality Foundation looked at the financial success of 120 companies who had won awards compared to similar companies who had not. After just a year, the award-winning companies showed measurable improvements in financial performance. After three years, the award winners outperformed the comparison companies by an average of 17% for sales.

● Research from the University of Western Ontario and Georgia Institute of Technology, revealed that more than 600 quality corporate award winners had 37% more sales growth than their peers.

● Analysis by awards experts Boost Marketing showed that about three quarters of consumers are influenced by awards when choosing products and suppliers.



Some common misconceptions...

There are a lot of business awards out there but we're not all the same. There are some common misconceptions that we come across all the time about how they work and how the winners are chosen, so here's just a few of the most common:

"The winners are only ever the biggest retailers with the most money..."

The judges are specifically guided not to evaluate the business on its size or turnover. The criteria say that they must look at what the retailer has done with the resources available to them in the target market they operate in. There are plenty of examples of where small, high street, retailers have scooped the prizes simply because the way they operate is perfect for their local audience. Likewise, there are retailers who have done very well through the judging because they have managed to stand still in a very tough market through fresh ideas and creative thinking.

"The sponsors pick the winners anyway..."

The sponsors are very generous and throw their support behind the ERT Awards but we can categorically say that they have no influence on the judging and are not involved in it in any capacity. They only find out the winner when they stand on stage at the awards ceremony and open the gold envelope.

"The same people win it very year so there's no point in entering..."

It's true that many retailers end up on the shortlist every year – this isn't due to any bias towards them, it's more to do with them genuinely being excellent retailers. One of the indicators of how good these retailers are is that they have identified the value of entering awards! There are many examples of first time entrants going on to win, but it all comes down to one simple fact – you've got to be in it to win it.

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