

Making the most of your Award ...

A Tourism Award can bring huge benefits to your business in terms of staff motivation, public perception, support from the bank manager, recruitment etc. but as with so many things the degree of benefit depends on how you use it.

A short briefing note like this can only give a few pointers, and to achieve maximum impact we'd recommend you seek out professional help or undertake specific training, but here are a few bullet-point suggestions:

1. Use the Logo!

Winners and finalists will be sent an Awards Logo saying Gold, Silver or Finalist. As soon as possible, start using this on social media, place it on your website and any print to demonstrate your award. Don't be tempted to make it too small ... some have in the past hidden it in the small print where it does little good! Why not print it off, make a picture of it, and hang it in reception. Shout Loud!

2. Don't be shy!

Tell your friends, customers, suppliers and other business colleagues. Use the award as a chance to let your network know how well you are doing. Send them an email, write them a letter, post it on your website. Perhaps use it as a chance to increase revenue by issuing a special offer.

3. Don't leave it to others!

Services for Tourism and others will be issuing Press Releases to the National and Regional media, and will undertake supporting interviews on TV and Radio. But this will have to cover over 50 Award Winners in 15 different categories, so your part of this will be very small and you will need to do more if you are to achieve maximum coverage.

4. Top Tips

Here are our ten 'top tips' for gaining coverage:

- Awards are perfect for Social Media! Twitter, Facebook etc are huge vehicles for conversing not just with customers but also with journalists. If you don't use Social Media, start now! It's not scary, and is now a major way of creating dialogue with the world!
- Draft a Press Release with a headline that will grab the media attention and which is relevant to your target media. For example, if targeting your local 'Anytown' weekly use a headline like: "Anytown tourism business wins Gold".
- In the body copy, substantiate your success ... Jo and Jill Bloggs are celebrating today having won Silver in the prestigious XXX Tourism Awards on Friday they faced

competition from over 300 other top businesses across the region judges praised them for their absolute commitment to staff training and constant investment in standards etc.

- Include quotes from winners: Jo says “He never expected to win, having just entered to see how he matched up to others in the industry ...”
- Include at least one quote or reference from a third party (making sure you get these approved and in writing): “their mystery shopper report congratulated Jo and Jill for their achievement and especially for their innovation in offering entirely home-grown breakfasts” or Fred Bloggs, Anytown’s Mayor, says: “We are really proud of Jo and Jill. Their commitment to excellence will act as a catalyst for the town and will help us all in these difficult times”.
- Act quick! The awards is only ‘news’ for a few days, so plan in advance and have everything ready to roll asap after awards night. Make a few calls in advance to media contacts and local journalists – & make it easy for them with ‘read-to-go’ copy.
- Offer photography. Some media don’t like having photos emailed to them with releases, others do, but at the very least say that photos are available and tell the media how they can get hold of them. (Links to the photos are shown on the awards website).
- Send the release to your local media, plus any specialist media relevant to your business. These days email is usually best, but remember that your email will be one amongst hundreds so your headline must grab them & you must find a way to make it stand out.
- Use the phone too! Scan your local media, find the contact names of relevant journalists and phone them! They will be keen for a good story and will probably bite your hand off if you have a ready-made story.
- Involve your local TIC and Tourism Officer. Make sure they are aware, and ask them to help you spread the news. Your town / local authority should also want to celebrate your success and may well circulate your news more widely.
- Tell your customers and prospects. Your customers will want to hear your news – and it just may prompt them to think about returning – whilst it may help make prospects into customers. So send them a message, or use it as an opportunity for a special offer.

5. Celebrate!

Achieving an Award, whether Gold, Silver or becoming a Finalist or Commended, is a real achievement and is not possible without a good team. So please share out the good news and celebrate!