

These awards are open to businesses in or around the Dorchester area only (a guideline is 3 miles) however if you are outside this area but can demonstrate it's a major trading area for you then you may still enter. Businesses can enter as many categories as they wish, but only one entry per category. Sponsors may not enter categories they are sponsoring.

Nominations need to have comments on why the company is being nominated so that the judges can appreciate why you have nominated them and gain an understanding of why they are worthy of the award. **It is not the number of nominations the judges will consider but the quality of the nomination.**

B2B Business of The Year

Open to any business that creates products and/or services for other businesses so that could include businesses that operate in accountancy, commercial legal work, IT and cyber security, car leasing, business funding, websites and marketing, sales training, hospitality supplies, security, insurance, telecommunications etc. The entrants need to demonstrate how their services stand above their competitors, how they achieve excellent customer satisfaction and what makes them an award winner.

Best Place to Work

This category is open to all businesses and organisations (public and private sector) that can demonstrate they have created an outstanding workplace based on a set of values that has led to a committed, effective, and motivated workforce. Tell us what sets you apart and how that has benefited the business/organisation and its employees. With stresses in recent years from Covid to rising running costs tell us how the business has taken steps to take care of and help employees and customers.

Best Café, Pub, Casual Dining.

This award is open to cafes, coffee shops, bars, beachside bars, pubs, etc - and any business that provides food and drink in a social area. Entrants should demonstrate excellence across every aspect of their business, outlining their long term aims to continue to improve their customer experience.

Business of the Year (Less than 10 employees)

This category is open to all local companies with 10 or less employees that can demonstrate ambition and innovation in their business sector. Details on how your business stands out from your competitors and achievements in the last year or so. Details on where you want to be in the next year. The judges will be looking for achievement in all aspects of the company, excellent leadership, a good sales and marketing strategy, commitment to staff development and training.

Retail Business of the Year

Tell us what makes your business stand out from your competitors AND Open to businesses selling products or services either online or in-store. Our judges will want to know how you are succeeding in retail and how you have changed to make that success happen over the last few years. What plans do you have to maintain profits or grow the business? Open to all size businesses that can demonstrate customer satisfaction , profitability, and entrepreneurship.

Excellence in Customer Service

This award is open to businesses that can show flexibility, responsibility, and a clear focus on their customer service. They need to demonstrate a high level of customer satisfaction, setting the bar for their competitors to follow. Also, businesses should, if possible, give examples of any customer service training they have given to their team, whether on a one-to-one basis or group training.

Family Business of The Year

The winner of this award will have family members currently working in the business. The judges are looking for businesses who can articulate why that matters to the success of the business, while acknowledging the pros and cons of a family structure. Entrants will demonstrate what it means to be a family business and how (if applicable) non-family leaders are integrated. Businesses entering this award will need to specify the current family members leading the business and their roles.

Independent Business of the Year

This category is open to local independent businesses who can demonstrated enterprise, vision, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit, which in turn is growing their business. Also, a strong record of serving local customers. The winning business will demonstrate excellence in all areas of the business and the business can be any size from a one-man band to large

New Business of the Year

Entrants are invited from businesses less than three years old (as of April 2023), that have demonstrated enterprise, vision, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit when setting up a successful new business. Also, a clear vision as to how the business will develop in the future. We are looking for inspiring new businesses that will be seen as role models for other new businesses.

Young Entrepreneur/Rising Star

Entrepreneur A young person is defined as under 35 – they can either be employed or run their own business. The judges will be looking for individuals who have demonstrated an exceptional contribution to the workplace or development of their own company showing excellent performance, a real hands-on approach, initiative, and entrepreneurial spirit.

My Favourite Business

Non entry category – Nominations only from clients/customers etc

Please nominate your favourite businesses in the area – the ones you use regularly and think deserve an award. It may be because of what they sell, their customer service, their staff – just tell us what makes them so special in your eyes.

Community Support

Open to nominate or enter - This category is open to any organisation, business, charity or individual that has gone over and above for the community. Give us examples of your initiatives and their benefit to the local community. This seems an obvious category to also get people to nominate you in. This is open to businesses, individuals and organisations that can demonstrate their involvement and support for their community this could be through services, fund raising or physical or mental support.

Overall Winner

This is decided by the judges who are asked to vote for their 1st, 2nd and 3rd businesses and then the one that gets the most overall 1st votes is our winner. If voting is very close there will be a runner up (s)