



Full Category Descriptions

1. Age Friendly Business Award **NEW in 2024**

This category recognizes businesses that demonstrate a strong commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for older adults. Applicants should provide evidence of their efforts and impact in these areas which may include policies, programmes, testimonials, and measurable outcomes that demonstrate their commitment to being age-friendly.

2. Cafe, Bar or Restaurant of the year Award **NEW in 2024**

This category is open to all Cafes (including coffee shops, tea rooms, and other casual dining spots), Bars and Restaurants. The award recognises establishments that excel in all aspects of their operation, from the quality of their offerings to their impact on the community and environment.

3. Customer Service Excellence Award

This category is open to all Kilkenny product or service businesses, commercial businesses, professionals, and sole traders that can demonstrate excellence in understanding their customers' needs in order to deliver superior service. They should also demonstrate a high level of customer engagement and delivery of a quality of service that not only meets but anticipates and exceeds customer expectations and ensures customer satisfaction, loyalty, repeat business, personal recommendations and a reputation of excellence that supports their own business growth and development as well as Kilkenny's reputation in business excellence.

4. Design & Craft Award

This category celebrates outstanding achievements across a broad spectrum of design and craft. It recognizes exceptional talent and innovation in various design fields and applications are invited from indigenous Craft Industries, Architects, Website Designers, Graphic Designers, Product Designers, Interior Designers, Fashion Designers and more. This award aims to highlight the diverse and dynamic nature of the Kilkenny Design and Craft Industry, fostering a vibrant and innovative future for creative professionals.

5. eCommerce and Digital Business Excellence Award

This award category is open to businesses and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in the ecommerce and digital business landscape. Applicants should showcase excellence in areas such as innovation, customer experience, digital transformation, and overall business growth.

6. Employee of the Year

This category is open to Kilkenny employers and colleagues to nominate their fellow Kilkenny employee/team member who can demonstrate the significant contribution /added value the employee has made in the past 12 months to the development/growth of the business and/or quality of customer experience and where they can demonstrate how they brought a unique skills set/work ethic, commitment and/or contribution to the business in their role, or in supporting others in their role, that has made a positive, unique difference to the business performance and success. **Those entering under the Employee of the Year category, please complete only sections 1, 2, and 6 of the application form.**

7. Employer of the Year

This category is open to Kilkenny employees and employers to nominate their Kilkenny employer/employer organisation for best practice in people management, staff development and/or staff relations that positively impacts on business performance and employment. *Please note that this category is open to employers for self-nomination.*

8. Family Business of the Year

This category is open to all family owned and run businesses in County Kilkenny, employing two or more people (maximum 10 employees only with at least one employee to be a family member) that can demonstrate excellence in business practices - from product /service innovation in response to market needs and trends, in peoples' skills development as well as in marketing and sales development for overall business performance and success.

9. Hotel & Accommodation Providers of the year Award **NEW in 2024**

This category is open to a wide range of establishments within the hospitality industry including Hotels, B&Bs, Guest Houses, Inns, Serviced Apartments, Holiday Parks & Resorts, Eco-Friendly Accommodation and Speciality Lodgings (e.g. Treehouses, Yurts, Houseboats, etc.). This award aims to recognize and celebrate the best in the hospitality industry, highlighting those who go above and beyond to provide exceptional guest experiences.

10. Innovation in Business Award

This category is open to any Kilkenny enterprise from any field of business that can demonstrate how an innovation or change has been applied to its strategic business model/business operations/development plans and implemented in the last two years, which has delivered tangible success for the business. This award is open to any registered business employing a minimum of 3 people (no maximum).

11. International Trade Award

This category is open to all commercial businesses in Kilkenny involved in the creation and exportation of products, knowledge management and services outside of Ireland who can demonstrate excellence in business practices, business/market development, financial performance, and success.

12. Investment in Development & Progression of Staff Award

This business award category is open to all commercial businesses and private training/education service providers who can demonstrate significant investment in their staff or client in research and/or skills development, using a shared model of responsibility - for

professional and personal self-development aligned with business development/growth needs/goals. Applicants should be able to demonstrate the use of innovative learning models and techniques that balance the demands of working and studying/learning/research that clearly demonstrate the application of that learning back into the business, as well as ensuring it is shared with others. It should also be able to demonstrate how the impact of the knowledge and skills gained are measured and rewarded.

13.Night Time Experience Award NEW in 2024

This category is designed to recognize and celebrate outstanding contributions to the night-time economy and culture. Aimed at Businesses & Venues, Event Organisers, Artists & Performers, Community & Cultural Organisations, Innovators & Entrepreneurs, Safety & Support Services, this award honours those who make the night-time vibrant, safe, and enjoyable for all.

14.Retailer of the Year

This category is open to all Kilkenny businesses involved in retailing – both on and/or offline, which can demonstrate excellence in their business operations and performance that supports Kilkenny's growing reputation for excellence in retailing.

15.Rural Tourism Award NEW in 2024

This category celebrates exceptional contributions to rural tourism and aims to recognize those who make rural areas vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable for tourists.

16.Salon of the Year Award NEW in 2024

Aimed at all types of Salons including Hair Salons, Beauty Salons, Barber Shops, Nail Bars, Makeup Salons, Spa Salons and Speciality Salons, this seeks to identify those that are not only leaders in their industry but also contribute positively to the local economy and community in Kilkenny.

17.Small Business of the Year Award

This business award category is open to all commercial businesses who employ no more than 10 people with a turnover of less than €500,000 p.a. that can demonstrate excellence in business practices - from product /service innovation in response to market needs and trends, to skills development as well as in marketing and sales development for overall business performance and success.

18.Sustainability Initiative Award

This category is designed to recognize organizations that have made significant strides in promoting sustainability through innovative and impactful initiatives. It seeks to highlight businesses operating with sustainable best practices, i.e. doing business without negatively impacting the environment, community or society as a whole. Applicants must demonstrate a strategy to reduce negative environmental impact resulting from their operations in a particular market. The applicant's sustainability practices will be analysed against environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics and a demonstration of alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

19. Taste of Kilkenny Award

This category celebrates the vibrant culinary scene in Kilkenny, recognizing excellence across a variety of categories including Local Food Producers, Restaurants, Cafes, Retailers, Breweries & Distilleries, Community Initiatives and Sustainability Champions. The award honours those who contribute to Kilkenny's reputation as a top food destination, celebrating their dedication to quality, innovation and community spirit.

20. Volunteer Engagement Award

This category is open to businesses and organisations that can demonstrate having a successful strategy that encourages collaboration between staff and volunteers to develop meaningful volunteer opportunities that positively impact the organization and the community. It is also open to Groups and Committees of people who have come together and made a significant positive impact on the community they serve through the delivery of their mission and initiatives.

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award is in the gift of the Kilkenny Chamber Board of Directors.

President's Award

This award is in the gift of the President of Kilkenny Chamber.

Overall Business of the Year Award

The winner of this award will be selected from overall category winners, as decided by the Independent Judging Panel based on scoring awarded from assessment of application and Shortlisted Interview Process.