

The Heart of England – The West Midlands Region

EXCELLENCE IN TOURISM AWARDS 2009

BENEFITS OF ENTERING & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

The Heart of England Excellence in Tourism Awards are a great opportunity for you and your business or organisation to be recognised and rewarded on a regional and potentially national basis for providing excellence.

- The Awards recognise and reward business and people working in the tourism & hospitality industry, and help raise the profile and importance of the industry.
- Award winners gain a competitive edge through recognition of their commitment to excellence and quality standards.
- High quality businesses can compete on quality as well as price.
- Significant press and PR coverage can be gained at local and national level, for those making the shortlist and those successful in becoming winners.
- Winners / finalists receive Excellence Award logos to use in their marketing.
- Winners of most categories go on to the shortlisting stage and represent the region in the national EnjoyEngland Awards for Excellence, which opens up further press, PR and marketing opportunities.
- Entering the awards is a positive, open and motivating way to recognise and reward your staff and their contribution to the business.
- Award winning businesses can attract high quality staff and help increase staff motivation, loyalty and commitment of existing staff.
- Entering the Awards and completing an application is an excellent management tool and helps businesses focus on key aspects of managing the business and how they can develop and improve in the future.
- Some concrete regional advantages
 - winners publicity in regional media
 - enhanced and priority website listings for finalist (09)
 - web badging for entrants (09)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

● Who can enter?

The Heart of England Excellence in Tourism Awards are open to all tourism businesses in the West Midlands that meet the published criteria for the category or categories they are entering. There are a variety of categories to suit all different type of operations so most high quality operations should find one or more to suit them.

● Does it cost anything to enter?

No. There is no charge to enter the Awards.

● Can I enter more than one category?

Yes, we encourage businesses to enter as many categories as they wish as long as they meet the required criteria. However separate application forms, and supporting evidence, must be submitted for each.

● What happens once you have received my application?

The closing date for receipt of applications is 17th July 2009. Judging will take place over July and August and the 2009 category shortlist will be announced following the regional judging panel meeting in early September. The Gala Dinner & Awards Ceremony will be held on 29th October 2009, at which point the winners will be announced -

put the date in your diary now!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

- **What information is available to help me complete the application form?**

Detailed Application Guidance notes have been produced to help you understand the requirements for presentation and content of your application. These Guidance Notes are available to download at www.visittheheart.co.uk/excellence

- **Should I send other supplementary information as well as my completed application form?**

Yes. We encourage you to provide supporting material and evidence to help the judges understand and assess your application. However you must ensure it is relevant, valid and up-to-date and don't be tempted to overdo the amount of information you provide. **One small A4 folder** of neatly compiled documentation is admissible per entry which should easily be enough to help get your message across.

- **How long does it take to complete the application?**

We estimate that it should take around a couple of hours to complete each application, but this can obviously vary according to how easily accessible the information is available to you and how comprehensive you wish to make your application.

- **Can I complete my application electronically or do you just accept hard copies?**

We accept both hard copies or emailed copies of your application, although we would prefer electronic version if possible. Send your emailed application to suzie@bhmgmarketing.co.uk, and any hard copy application and supporting evidence folders you produce to:

Suzie Branch
BHMG Marketing, 37 Bennetts Hill,
Birmingham, B2 5SN

- **Is the information I send to you kept private and confidential?**

Yes. Only the organisers, judges and judging panel will have access to your application form and any supporting documentation. However you should be aware that judges comments about the quality of your business may be used as part of the script at the Awards Ceremony.

- **How is the judging carried out?**

Depending on the category being assessed, the judging of the finalists will be carried out wherever possible by mystery shoppers and/or announced visits. Some categories may also be mystery shopped by telephone. It should be noted however that for some categories such as 'Tourism Event or Festival' which may be retrospective the assessment will be a desk based exercise. Judging is carried out by professionals with extensive experience and knowledge of the Tourism Industry.

- **When are the winners announced?**

There will be no advance notification of the winners as these will be announced at the Awards Ceremony.

- **What do the winners receive?**

All Award Winners will receive a specially commissioned winners award and certificate and logo for use on stationary, brochures, website and any other marketing materials. Most category winners will also proceed into the national EnjoyEngland Excellence in Tourism Awards 2010. Silver and highly commended award winners will also receive a specially designed certificate and logo for use on marketing materials.

- **Can I get some feedback from the judges about my application?**

The decision of the judges is final and they cannot enter into discussion about either the shortlisting process or choice of winners. Written feedback will be made available 'on request' however after the final results are known.