

Innovative Company of the Year

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What struck the judges about this award was the range of sectors where innovation really delivered.

Are you innovators in the way you run your business? No, really. The Innovative Company award celebrates companies that focus on doing things differently in such a way that performance is enhanced as a result.

Artizian

Managing director
Alison Robinson



Artizian reckons it wouldn't have won a major contract for Ernst & Young without internal innovation. The catering firm has appointed a Minister of Excellence and a Minister of Fun and Development, and has reworked its induction process to incorporate the "theatrical" nature of its work. It's now piloting a four-day working week for senior managers.

Vicol

Managing director
Steve Rowlands



A debt recovery agency that emphasises customer care! IiP-accredited, some 20 per cent of new customers each month are recommendations. Only five complaints were recorded last year, despite a debt portfolio of £80m. Staff are friendly, not hard-faced – and can even attend – internal literacy courses and 98 per cent are "totally satisfied" with the firm.

Cleaning and Paper Disposables (CPD)

Managing director
Shaun Chatterton



One of the country's biggest independent suppliers of cleaning and hygiene related products, CPD has founded a consortium of seven independent suppliers, combining buying power and working with them to develop new lines. CPD is IiP-accredited and aims to be the first company in the sector to get the environmental standard ISO 14001.

Kaizo

Chief executive
Crispin Manners



This PR firm has created a planning, management and evaluation process called ValueFlow that seeks to quantify results *before* a communications programme begins. Kaizo says that 90 per cent of income last year can be attributed to ValueFlow. As a result, fee income for Q1 2003/4 was up 12 per cent on two years previously – at a very tough time.

Saltire Taverns

Founder
Billy Lowe



A Scottish pub operator that is innovating in a very traditional customer experience. Reward cards mean that every purchase of food and drink can add points to customers' accounts, while vouchers are sent to those with a minimum number of points. There are even staff incentive programmes and discount cards.