

# SBA Small Business Awards 2026 - Judging Criteria



Award Category	Description	Judging Criteria
<b>Customer Experience Excellence</b>	Recognises businesses that provide outstanding customer service, demonstrating exceptional client satisfaction and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Customer Satisfaction &amp; Feedback</b> – Evidence of positive client testimonials, surveys, and feedback mechanisms.</li> <li>• <b>Consistency in Service Excellence</b> – Demonstrates a high level of service across different customer touch points.</li> <li>• <b>Innovation in Customer Experience</b> – Use of technology, systems, or processes to enhance customer interactions.</li> <li>• <b>Employee Training &amp; Customer-Centric Culture</b> – Investment in staff training to ensure sustained outstanding service delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Impact Award</b>	Celebrates businesses that have made a significant positive contribution to their local community through initiatives, charity involvement, or social impact programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Demonstrated Community Contribution</b> – Evidence of impactful initiatives, charity work, or local engagement.</li> <li>• <b>Social &amp; Economic Impact</b> – How the business's efforts have improved the lives of individuals or groups.</li> <li>• <b>Sustained Commitment</b> – Long-term dedication to community support beyond one-off events.</li> <li>• <b>Employee &amp; Stakeholder Engagement</b> – Level of staff involvement in community initiatives.</li> </ul>

Award Category	Description	Judging Criteria
<b>Innovation in Business</b>	<p>Celebrates businesses that have made or embraced innovation to drive growth, solve problems or create new value for customers or their industry through new produces, services, technologies, processes or business models.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Originality &amp; Creativity</b> - The uniqueness of the idea or approach. Has the business introduced something new or significantly different in its industry?</li> <li>• <b>Business Impact</b> - Evidence of measurable improvements—such as increased revenue, efficiency, market share, or productivity—resulting from the innovation.</li> <li>• <b>Customer Value</b> - How the innovation has improved customer experience, satisfaction, or delivered new value to end users.</li> <li>• <b>Problem Solving and Implementation</b> - How effectively the innovation was implemented to solve a specific challenge or need, and how well it has been integrated into the business.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability &amp; Environmental Leadership</b>	<p>Honours businesses that prioritise environment responsibility, sustainability, initiatives, and eco-friendly practices in their environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainability Initiatives &amp; Implementation</b> - How the business has integrated sustainability into operations.</li> <li>• <b>Environmental Impact Reduction</b> - Evidence of reduced carbon footprint, waste, or resource use.</li> <li>• <b>Business-Wide Commitment</b> - Sustainability embedded in the company’s mission, policies, and decision-making.</li> <li>• <b>Results &amp; Outcomes</b> - Demonstrated success and measurable achievements in sustainability efforts.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Emerging Business</b>	<p>Acknowledges a new or growing business under 3 years that has demonstrated strong potential, early success, and a clear vision for future impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Viability &amp; Growth</b> - Demonstrated revenue, client base growth, or market traction.</li> <li>• <b>Innovation &amp; Differentiation</b> - Unique value proposition and competitive edge in the market.</li> <li>• <b>Leadership &amp; Strategic Vision</b> - The founder’s ability to drive the business forward with a clear business vision and strategy.</li> <li>• <b>Scalability &amp; Long-Term Potential</b> - The potential for future expansion and sustainability.</li> </ul>

Award Category	Description	Judging Criteria
<b>Young Entrepreneur of the Year</b>	<p>Recognises a young entrepreneur or business owner under 25 years of age that has shown exceptional innovation and business success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Entrepreneurial Mindset &amp; Leadership</b> - Demonstrated passion, resilience, and business acumen.</li> <li>• <b>Business Growth &amp; Financial Performance</b> - Evidence of revenue, customer growth, or market traction.</li> <li>• <b>Innovation &amp; Industry Impact</b> - How the young entrepreneur's business is unique or game-changing.</li> <li>• <b>Vision for Growth &amp; Sustainability</b> - Clear strategy for future expansion and success.</li> </ul>
<b>Best Overall Business</b>	<p>This category is not open for direct entry. The winner is chosen from the top businesses across other categories.</p>	
<b>People's Choice Award</b>	<p>Awarded to the business with the most amount of public votes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public will be able to vote</b> on a social media poll during the judging period.</li> </ul>