

Open for entries

Get your nominations in for the 2016 NatWest Encouraging Women into Franchising sixth annual awards



The awards are free to enter and will be recognising and celebrating the achievements of women in the franchise industry.

The theme of this year's awards is 'Making it Happen', so EWIF is inviting franchisees, franchisors, franchise employees and franchise service providers to enter and be part of this special day. As the highlight of the EWIF calendar year, this is an event not to be missed.

Primary focus

Founded in 2008, EWIF's primary focus is to support women who are looking for a route into the franchise industry. The organisation's remit is threefold - to encourage women to consider buying a franchise, to encourage business women to franchise their existing operations and to help franchisors attract more women to their networks.

EWIF is a not-for-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers, providing advice and guidance to anyone looking to enter the franchise industry. As part of its support of women considering franchising, it offers a free, one-off, 30-minute phone consultation with an experienced EWIF member/mentor to non-members.

Sarah Carlile, national co-chair for EWIF, explains why the awards are such a great event to get involved in: "Our

award finalists, winners and sponsors received record recognition across the franchise industry, their business sectors and in the media for their achievements last year and, in the sixth year of our awards, it's only going to get bigger."

For the first time, EWIF has opened up the awards to men as well as women. Men are now welcome to



enter the Service Provider of the Year Award to recognise their contribution to encouraging more women into franchising and for their services in the industry. This year's categories are:

- New Woman Franchisee of the Year, sponsored by NatWest.
- New Woman Franchisor of the Year, sponsored by Darwin Gray LLP.
- Woman Franchisee of the Year, sponsored by McDonald's Restaurants.

- Woman Franchisor of the Year, sponsored by Franchise Finance.
- Woman Franchise Employee of the Year, sponsored by What Franchise.
- Young Woman in Franchising of the Year, sponsored by Caremark.
- Service Provider of the Year, sponsored by The Franchise Show.

Female franchisees

The NatWest/British Franchise Association franchise survey for 2015 revealed that women now account for 23 per cent of franchisees in the UK, which is a seven per cent decrease since 2013. The survey also revealed that over the last two years only 17 per cent of new franchisees have been women, which is a dramatic decrease since 2011, when 38 per cent of new franchisees were female, meaning the EWIF cause is even more relevant than ever.

EWIF is looking to change the face of the franchise sector, so that women have a much larger presence than they do currently and to balance out the ratio of men to women in the industry. The awards not only recognise the achievements of women in franchising, they also aim to boost their position and give them more credibility.

Another new addition to this year's awards line-up is the introduction of a black tie reception at the famous Gherkin landmark in central London for

finalists and sponsors on the evening before the awards ceremony. This gives everyone a chance to come together and share their experiences, as well as network with both new and old faces.

As well as an annual awards ceremony, EWIF also holds an annual conference. This year's is on September 22 and will be held at the Stratford Q Hotel. Throughout the year EWIF regional meetings are held across the UK in London, Bristol, Manchester, Norfolk and Surrey, allowing franchisors to meet, network, discuss best practice and hear from a range of industry experts. Guests are invited to attend one meeting for free, but are required to join EWIF to attend subsequent meetings.

Closing date

The closing date for entries for this year's awards is 5pm on March 14 and the award's ceremony takes place on May 24. For more information, to download an entry form or to apply for free tickets to the awards ceremony, visit www.ewif.org. **WF**

PREVIOUS WINNERS

- Hilary Coates from Wagging Tails was EWIF's New Woman Franchisee of the Year 2015. She says: "It was wonderful to have your hard work acknowledged by people who understand franchising and who look beyond just the financials to the underlying principles you have used to establish your business in your local area.

"I think the award win was based on several factors - the successful local business set-up and growth, but also the way the franchisor and franchisee work together to maximise the potential of both the local business and the overall franchise."



- Kate Matthews from Boddy Matthews won Woman Service Provider of the Year 2015. "It is an amazing feeling to know you are respected by your peers in your chosen industry and that they have confidence in your service by voting in this way," she explains.

"I hope I won the award for the services provided, not just through my legal work, but to the industry as a whole and the overall contribution I have made and will continue to make going forward, as well as for my cohesive approach, integrity and delivery of my legal services.

"Winning the award has given my existing clients added confidence that they are dealing with the right person in the industry to handle their business matters."



- Marie Martin from diddi dance was voted Woman Franchisor of the Year 2015. She says: "To win woman franchisor 2015 was an amazing feeling. We had a great year of innovation, growth and development, but you never know if it's enough, so to have our hard work acknowledged with such a prestigious award was fantastic. I was over the moon.

"I'd like to think the relationship we maintain with every one of our franchisees, the support, innovation and forward thinking we have and work we do nationally were the reasons for our win.

"The PR we have gained from the win was brilliant. We also feel this award has given potential franchisees more confidence in our franchise offering."

