
Craft beer can firm Bevcraft bags National Enterprise Award

Young Westmeath craft beer canning company [Bevcraft](#) is already operational in five European countries.

Bevcraft, which has become the largest craft beer canning company in Europe, was named the overall winner at this year's National Enterprise Awards.

The awards, which are an initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices to celebrate small businesses, were held virtually in what is their 22nd year.

Set up by friends Ciarán Gorman and Darren Fenton with the aim of creating an international business in their home town of Mullingar, Bevcraft has quickly risen to the top of its sector.

The company offers a mobile canning solution to craft beer countries across Ireland and they are also operating in five European countries including Germany and the UK. Bevcraft sends its mobile canning lines and crews into craft breweries to convert tanks of craft beer into cans, ready for supermarket shelves and off-licences.

A spectacular trajectory since the company was created in 2016 saw them handle 20m cans in 2020 and they are on course to handle 50m this year.

With a strong desire to create jobs in their own area, Bevcraft, who employed eight people in 2019 has grown to 17 currently and they hope to employ close to 30 by the middle of next year.

The company, which has been supported by LEO Westmeath, recently transferred to Enterprise Ireland to support its targeting of international global markets.

Category winners

Along with the overall winner, five category winners were announced.

The Innovation Award winner was [VRAI](#), who are backed by LEO Dublin City. The tech company provide virtual reality training simiulations to companies who may work in remote or dangerous areas.

The Best Export Award went to [Kianda Technologies](#) who were supported by LEO Fingal and have recently moved to Enterprise Ireland. The company have achieved significant penetration in global export markets with their business automation software that streamlines business processes in areas such as finance, HR and quality.

The Future Focus Award went to [Lidan Designs](#), backed by LEO Roscommon. The business creates modular energy efficient buildings off-site in the areas of offices, schools and housing.

To recognise the particular challenges overcome by businesses in 2020, two new awards were presented, the Brexit Ready Award and the Pivot Award. The Brexit Ready Award went to [Knockanore Farmhouse Cheese](#) supported by LEO Waterford. The raw milk artisan cheddar cheese producer's impressive response to Brexit has seen them actually grow their business on the back of the UK leaving the EU, accessing new markets.

The Pivot Award winner went to [WowWee.ie](#) backed by LEO Clare. A personalised gifting company who relied heavily on corporate gifting saw their business disappear once the pandemic hit but pivoted to sell direct to consumers. The response has seen them excel in an extremely competitive market.

"The winners tonight are outstanding companies and, along with all the finalists, are trailblazers for every small business and budding entrepreneur across the country," said Minister for Business, Employment and Retail Damien English, TD.

"I have no doubt that the companies here will continue to grow their businesses, create more jobs and make a significant contribution to their local economies. The foundations of the Irish economy is built on by small businesses and through these awards we can recognise their valuable role in society."

"This has been an extremely challenging year for small businesses but tonight we get to recognise their heroic achievements," added Oisín Geoghegan, chair of the network of Local Enterprise Offices.

"We have excellent winners but the calibre of finalist this year is as high as ever. These companies have been through a rigorous vetting process by judges and hopefully it will have helped them make adjustments and enhance their businesses. Congratulations to all the winning companies but the future is bright for all our finalists who are the perfect reflection of the quality and variety of Irish business we are creating."

Regional winners

This year's winners share a €50,000 investment fund and eight regional winners were also announced on the night. Those winners were:

- The Artisan Pizza Company in the Dublin Region (backed by LEO South Dublin)
- Odyssey Studios in the South West Region (backed by LEO Limerick)
- QPQ in the Mid East Region (backed by LEO Kildare)
- Submit Software Solutions in the South Region (backed by LEO Cork City)

- Irish Fluid Controls in the South East Region (backed by LEO Carlow)
- Dromod Boxy in the North West Region (backed by LEO Leitrim)
- Qualitas Electronics in the North East Region (backed by LEO Meath)
- Armour Interactive in the West Region (backed by LEO Galway)

Also honoured on the night with the inaugural National Enterprise Awards Outstanding Achievement award was former Netwatch co-founder and CEO David Walsh. Walsh, who worked closely with LEO Carlow as he built Netwatch into a global company with over 250,000 clients across 4 continents, is now co-founder and CEO of a new start-up HaloCare. The Kerry native was honoured for his success and innovation but also his continued support of entrepreneurship in in Carlow.

Previous winners of the National Enterprise Awards include Irish Yoghurts (1998), Obelisk (2000), Simtech Aviation (2008), Digiweb (2004) and Design Pro (2013), Terra NutriTech (2018) and the last winners in 2019, Pestle & Mortar backed by Local Enterprise Office Kildare. Founded by Sonia Deasy and her husband Padraig, Pestle & Mortar has become one of Ireland's best-known skincare companies. Having sold out on QVC in the US in 7 minutes, Pestle & Mortar products now sit on the shelves in some of the world's most high-end retail outlets.

Main image at top: Bevcraft founders Darren Fenton and Ciara?n Gorman

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