

Awards give credit where it is due

The Credit Team of the Year Awards at the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel honoured the credit teams excelling in their field

BY GRAHAM CLIFFORD

It was a day when the unsung heroes of Irish business had their moment in the sun. When their hard work, professionalism and impact on business was acknowledged by those who truly understand the value of a strong credit team which delivers results.

The inaugural Credit Team of the Year Awards, held in the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel in Dublin on October 13, celebrated credit teams excelling in their field; those teams which dil-

igently ensure the wheels of business keep turning.

"Often credit teams don't get the acknowledgement they deserve," explained Declan Flood, chief executive of Irish Credit Management Training (ICMT) which organised the event. He added: "We wanted to make sure that was corrected and so these awards have a pride of place now within the industry. The standard of entries across the 20 categories was truly outstanding and we know that the recognition credit teams received from senior management when they

returned to their businesses with their awards was immense." And he told *The Sunday Business Post* that the credit teams that entered this year's awards play a crucial role in the success of their respective companies.

"The credit teams are charged with granting credit responsibly and ensuring the timely collection of all money due. This can be a difficult task, and the people who make it happen seldom get the recognition they deserve, even though cash flow is the lifeblood of every business,"

he said. With around 150 people in the room dealing with all aspects of credit from international to consumer, from trade credit to credit unions and from credit management software to risk, each category produced a worthy winner as selected by an expert panel of judges.

Cabot Financial was named overall winner on a sensational afternoon for the businesses' credit team. It was also named Credit Service Provider Team of the Year, Telecoms Credit Team of the Year and Collections Agency Team of the Year.

"Cabot Financial has really set the bar so high in this, the first year of the awards. Their haul was fantastic. The nature of their business is complex and so to have such cohesion

and focus in terms of credit management within the company is very impressive. They were worthy winners," said Flood.

Presented by well-known businessman and broadcaster Bobby Kerr, the Credit Team of the Year Awards enjoyed the support of a number of high-profile sponsors and the winners, which included a number of household names, from Energia to the Grafton Group and SSE Airtricity to the Irish Stock Exchange.

Sponsors included AR Solutions, Cabot Financial, Cashbook Software, Debitask, Euler Hermes, Hardware Association Ireland, Mason Hayes & Curran, Search4less, The Sunday Business Post, Ulster Bank Invoice Finance,

Vision-Net and XRS.

"It's so clear from the level of support we received that these awards are here to stay. They belong. We hope now that they will become an annual part of the business calendar and we are confident that they will get even bigger and better as the years go on," said Declan Flood.

Already preparations are underway for next year's event.

"As soon as this year's awards ceremony ended, we started to look at when and where next year's awards would be held. Already we have a date in the diary and we were so impressed by all the Louis Fitzgerald Hotel did for us this year that we will have next year's Credit Team

Awards there on October 19, 2018," explained Flood.

Following the success of the 2017 awards, it is anticipated many more companies will come on board for next year.

"There were many companies which didn't get their applications in on time and we hope that next year we'll see an even greater amount of entries from large and smaller businesses right across Ireland now that they can see how sought-after these awards are. Like with any awards, they evolve naturally and we expect new entrants next year hoping to emerge victorious while the current award winners will seek to retain their titles," said the chief executive of ICMT who heralded the standard of this year's entries

as 'outstanding'. "Obviously we work with credit teams all-year around and know how professional and diligent they are, but even still we were blown away with the high quality of many of the entries and the attention to detail that went into the applications," said Declan Flood.

He continued: "We were seriously impressed. It's clear that credit teams are proud of the important work they do and, rightly, they want and deserve recognition for their efforts."

"These awards allow that to happen and in addition the businesses which won awards will have the logo to prove it, which will instil confidence in those who use those companies."



International Credit Team of the Year - The Irish Stock Exchange



Credit Service Provider Team of the Year - Cabot Financial



Financial Services Team of the Year - Tralee Credit Union - Sponsored by Search4less



Credit Union Team of the Year - Tralee Credit Union - Sponsored by Cabot Financial



Telecoms Credit Team of the Year - Cabot Financial



Specialist Collection Team of the Year - The Irish Stock Exchange



Credit Management Software Team of the Year - XRS



Utilities Credit Team of the Year - Energia - sponsored by Cabot Financial



Risk Team of the Year - Euler Hermes - sponsored by Vision-Net



Legal Team of the Year - Mason Hayes & Curran - sponsored by Vision-Net



FMCG Credit Team of the Year - Lynas Foodservice - sponsored by Ulster Bank Invoice Finance



Consumer Credit Team of the Year - AvantCard - sponsored by Debitask



Collection Agency Team of the Year - Cabot Financial - sponsored by Mason Hayes & Curran



Collection Team of the Year - CPL - sponsored by XRS



Domestic Credit Team of the Year - Whitewater - sponsored by Euler Hermes



Shared Service Credit Team of the Year - Rentokil Initial - sponsored by Cashbook



Construction/ Building Materials Team of the Year - Grafton Group - sponsored by HAI



EMEA Credit Team of the Year - Cunningham Lindsey Ireland



Trade Credit Team of the Year - SSE Airtricity - sponsored by AR Solutions



Overall Credit Team of the Year - Cabot Financial - sponsored by The Sunday Business Post