

An Introduction to the Independent Achievers Academy (IAA) 2023/24

The IAA is a year long learning, development and recognition programme (not an award!) run by NextGen Media, the publisher behind IB, Retail Express, Page OneBooks, The Retail Success Handbook and Retail Wholesaling/Inight Magazine.

The scheme first launched in 2008 and is dedicated to helping Independent shops grow their sales and profits through self assessment and expert advice spanning 20 modules or disciplines.

Benchmarking is a key part of the programme and is a checklist that helps retailers to assess where they are by asking simple questions about how they run their business.

The IAA offers more than awards programmes because in addition to recognising retailers for their best work and processes to meet high standards, excellent service and offer unique experiences for their customers, it is the only programme in the industry to physically visit and assess 100 retailers each year to ensure that its judging process is the most robust. The IAA takes this a step further by visiting retailers across the UK & Ireland to offer a free mentoring programme.

The IAA is chosen by top retailers and leading suppliers to give retailers a framework for success they can trust. It's built on the small, smart things which, when done consistently, produce results.

Our Top 100

The IAA is a learning, development and recognition programme that celebrates and helps to drive excellence in independent convenience retailing. The year round programme offers retailers practical tips to succeed in each module (or discipline) as well as examples of them being applied in practice on [independentretailing.com](https://www.independentretailing.com).

Retailers interested in taking part in the programme will assess using an online checklist, and by following the IAA's advice, demonstrate improvement throughout the course of the year.

Following benchmarking (which closes on 28 December), the top 100 stores have an independent store assessment where the 20 disciplines are reviewed in a customer's real experience there. A digital footprint audit is also conducted by our team to understand how easy they are to find and engage with online. This data is compiled and judged to create the **IAA Top 100** which is announced on [independentretailing.com](https://www.independentretailing.com) and covered in *IB* and *Retail Express*.

All participating retailers get a bespoke report on their performance and how to compare with their self assessment which shows the programme produces real, measured progress for participants, and meaningful opportunities for brand partners.

The IAA year culminates in our new Flagship event - the IAA Learning & Development Festival - based in Birmingham in July 2023. This interactive event will bring 100 retailers together with leading suppliers to learn and develop their ideas in order to drive their business forward.

Partnership enables brands to lead by example, demonstrating expertise and sharing best practice with retailers to help them measure sales in store.

Our Awards & Events

Live Monthly from 2023 – Judging Day, London

You are invited to take part in a robust live judging the IAA Festival to decide the 2023 IB Category Store, Rising Star and Overall Best Store.

Early July 2023 – IAA Learning & Development Festival, Birmingham

Over the festival where educationalists centre stage, learning and development strategy, tips and ideas are shared in interactive sessions during the day alongside an experiential sampling area where retailers can interact with brands, plus the Category Store, Rising Star and Overall Best Store will be announced during a short standing event with cheerleading and celebration. Merchant partners get six places, Trade Group partners get four and Networking Partners get two places as part of their package.

* Dates are subject to change. It is for info on the current opportunity, which includes all dates and announcements.