

An Introduction to the Independent Achievers Academy (IAA) 2022/23

The IAA is a year-long learning, development and recognition programme (not an awards) run by Newtrade Media, the publisher behind RN, Retail Express, Vape Retailer, The Retail Success Handbook and Better Wholesaling Insight magazines.

The scheme first launched in 2006 and is dedicated to helping independent shops grow their sales and profits through self-assessment and expert advice spanning 10 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 differs from other awards programmes because in addition to recognising retailers for their hard 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 150 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 shaped 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.

The Programme

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 for each module (or discipline) as well as examples of them being applied in practice on [betterRetailing.com](https://www.betterRetailing.com).

Retailers interested in taking part in the programme self-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 04 December), the top 150 stores have an independent store assessment where the 10 disciplines are reviewed as a customer would experience them. 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 [betterRetailing.com](https://www.betterRetailing.com) and covered in in RN and Retail Express.

All participating retailers get a bespoke report on their performance and how it compares with their self-assessment which ensures 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 – hosted in Birmingham in July 2023. This interactive event will bring 150 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 practise with retailers to help them maximise sales in store.

Key Attendance Dates*

Late May/early June 2023 – Judging Day. London

You are invited to take part in a robust day judging the IAA Finalists to decide the 2022-23 Category Stars, Rising Star and Overall Best Shop.

Early July 2023 – IAA Learning & Development Festival. Birmingham

One-day Festival where education takes 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 Stars, Rising Star and Overall Best Shop will be announced during a short standing event with street food and celebration. Masterclass partners get six places, Focus Group partners get four and Networking Partners get two places as part of their package.

* Dates are subject to change. A full list will be sent separately, which includes all dates and announcements

Outputs

- Participation in the new IAA Learning & Development Festival, which will allow you to interact directly with 150 engaged retailers looking to improve their stores, sharing best practice and providing practical advice
- Opportunity to present the trophy to your chosen module's Category Star, and show your support of the best convenience retailers in the business
- Stand in networking room at conference to offer experiential sampling, with the opportunity to interact with some of the most engaged convenience retailers in the industry
- Attendance at the Judging Day to gain insight on future growth of the sector
- Inclusion in the programme's editorial – widespread coverage running across print titles & betterRetailing.com over a 12-month period
- Branding alongside targeted activity to IAA email database and via social media channels
- Bespoke IAA branded advert with top tips in RN and Retail Express during the year
- Logo and advice on betterRetailing.com/IAA learning platform with click through to website of choice
- Branding in x 36 advertising placements and thought leadership pieces
- Direct engagement with over 700 retailers, **94% of the IAA 2021-22 Finalists say they are significantly more likely to do business with (& stock products from) an IAA partner**
- And much more...

Representatives at the IAA Learning & Development Festival

All partners have a set number of places at the IAA Learning & Development Festival in July to either lead their masterclass, chair their focus group, help retailers to experience their products or to network retailers in the room (or a combination of these).

- Masterclasses give partners the opportunity to discuss a key topic that is pertinent to their business (and to retailers), sharing tips and advice during a short presentation which is then followed by an extended Q&A style session where the audience can ask questions to better understand how the advice might apply in their business. Masterclasses will be featured in the printed magazines and online following the event.
- Focus groups will discuss specific challenges or developments that retailers are experiencing within an area of their business and will be led by the partner. We suggest having a 'plant' retailer who you already work with, join the group as this will help to reinforce messages. The idea is to get the retailers to share their experiences on this topic so that they learn from each other, however some expertise will need to be shared to get the conversation started.

To gain the most from the day, representatives should have sufficient category knowledge *outside of* the brand's product range. We recommend having people familiar with the convenience sector (i.e. Head of Convenience/Category Manager type role) accompanied by regional colleagues (RDM type role).

IAA Mentoring Programme (formerly known as Academy in Action)

Each year the IAA mentors 10 retailers across the UK & Ireland that have previously taken part in the programme to offer a free mentoring programme. The IAA team visit these retailers in their stores to give them advice that is specific to their business' challenges and a three-point action plan to help them to make marked improvements. This and the results are then reported on betterRetailing.com so that other retailers can also benefit and learn from the IAA's advice.

IAA Retail Tour (formerly known as Retail Study Day)

The IAA will visit, tour and interview an innovative store virtually to help retailers learn from the examples at the store. The tour and interview will be recorded and available on betterRetailing.com to view, and it will be featured in both magazines along with all category partners' branding. Partners will also have the opportunity to pose questions they'd like the IAA to ask the retailer on their behalf.

IAA Community Stars

Each month the IAA team speak to an IAA retailer that is doing great things in their store to help others to learn from their examples. Partners have the opportunity to pose questions, listen to the podcast and read the interviews online and then share this thought leadership on visits to other retailers. The sessions are posted on betterRetailing.com and published in a column in Retail Express.

IAA 2022-23 Commercial Packages

	Masterclass Partner £22,500 investment	Focus Group Partner £15,500 investment	Networking Partner £6,500 investment
Logo and advice on betterRetailing.com/IAA learning platform with click through to website of choice	Year-round	Year-round	3 Months
Stand in networking room at conference to offer experiential sampling	Large Stand 4m X 1m	Medium Stand 3m x 1m	Small Stand 2m x 1m
Bespoke IAA branded advert with top tips in RN and Retail Express during the year	Full Page at prominent, pre-agreed time of year	Full Page at pre-agreed, time of year	Half Page at time of year determined by IAA
Advert in delegate pack at event	Full Page Prominent position	Full Page	Half Page
Logo and bio in delegate pack at event	Most prominent, longest	Prominent, shorter	Shortest
Attendees at the IAA event in July 2023	Six	Four	Two
Product in goody bag at conference	✓	✓	✓
Logo on all print and digital adverts and promo materials (run up to event and on the day)	✓	✓	✓
Focus Group on bespoke subject approx. 20-30 mins with 10-12 retailers	✓	✓	
Present trophy to Category Star	✓	✓	
Logo on all print and digital adverts (benchmarking campaign etc)	✓	✓	
Opportunity to take part in the IAA Judging Day	✓	✓	
Contact details of retailers taking part in Academy in Action programme (providing GDPR approval given)	✓	✓	
List of Top 100 stores in the UK so you can check them against your call lists and nurture	✓	✓	
Masterclass on bespoke subject approx. 45 mins with 45-50 retailers	✓		
Bespoke IAA branded advert describing your masterclass and including your logo in RN	✓		
Full page advert to congratulate category stars in RN in post event coverage	✓		