

COMMENT

LEASING LIFE AWARDS

At long last, the idea of industry awards is coming to fruition

Derek Soper

If at first you don't succeed, then try and try again. A few years ago, it was suggested *Leasing Life* should arrange an awards ceremony for the industry. The reaction across Europe was, "it's not part of our culture", coupled with the strong implication that it is an "American import". At the time, *Leasing Life* was expanding its continental European coverage and readership, so the idea was dropped.

Persistence at two levels has paid off. The VRL Group's successes with other awards evenings, for the card industry in particular, have been well received across all markets, including Europe. The *Leasing Life* editorial team has also been monitoring opinion and has seen huge changes – mainly from a firm 'no' before, to an enthusiastic 'yes' today. Progress indeed.

As publicity for the awards increases, and companies consider how they might approach their applications for the various categories, it might be timely to say something from the judging panel's perspective. The judging panel will consist

of the LL Advisory Board (inside the front cover of this magazine), the magazine's editor and publisher, plus two eminent industry leaders – Alain Vervaet, CEO of ING Lease, and Regina Prehofer, CEO of UniCredit Leasing.

The four "awards" are: The Leasing Deal of the Year, The Vendor Lessor of the Year, The Leasing Personality of the Year and The Captive of the Year

Leasing companies have been asked to put their name forward for each or any of the awards, and for it to be forwarded to the judges, together with a short summary of why they believe they should receive the award for any particular category. The judging panel will be proactive in checking details with the applicants. Nominations are also welcome, so if you feel a particular company has performed well during the past 12 months then, with or without their permission, they can be nominated. Again, the panel will ensure contact is made to see if the company or individual is willing to be considered for the award.

I hear on the grapevine some nominations have already been received and I am aware of

some in the making. We can expect more activity following the Leaseurope Convention in Edinburgh later this month. There is also some zest among the enthusiasts – I have already overheard conversations about 'what to wear' between some of the ladies in the industry and a bubbling enthusiasm (more than I thought possible) from some sections of the industry about the opportunity to get together for a super leasing industry evening before Christmas.

The amusing side to the story is that there is also some concern from various individuals that selection to attend may be tightly controlled by their employers, depending on if that company expects to receive an award. The good news is that expectations are developing that December 11 is going to be a "glittering and vibrant" evening. We have yet to ask the organisers if they are going to make it a formal black tie evening. Why not, we only have one formal "get together" each year for the European industry and we could certainly do with another, particularly in such a great city as Brussels. See you there.

The author is a principal at The Alta Group



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