



20th May 2009

PRESS RELEASE

THE FRIENDLIEST CONVENIENCE STORES IN THE UK

Customers vote David Sands Ltd best in class for customer service as convenience store chain scoops three top awards

INDEPENDENT convenience store group, **David Sands Ltd**, based in Kinross, has the friendliest staff in the UK and offers the best customer service in the country – and that's official!

The £34m-turnover company, which operates 26 convenience stores across Fife, Perthshire and Kinross, has scooped three key awards at the high-profile Convenience Tracking Programme (CTP) Awards, organised by the widely respected London consultancy firm, Harris International Marketing (him!).

David Sands was named: Best Overall Convenience Retailer; Best Community Retailer; and Best Retailer for Customer Service at the CTP Awards, presented last week at the Natural History Museum in London.

The awards are based on feedback from 28,000 convenience store shoppers and thousands of store staff and managers. They are specifically designed to recognise best-in-class convenience retailers and, crucially, consumers voted David Sands ahead of other familiar UK convenience store names including Spar, Scotmid, the Southern Co-op, Premier, Somerfield and Mace.

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As David Sands forges ahead with ambitious growth plans which include a £2 million-plus investment in new store openings over the coming months, this latest batch of awards reaffirms the group's commitment to providing the highest possible levels of customer service at a very local level.

Ewen Chisholm, chief operating officer, travelled to London to accept the awards. "We're absolutely delighted to be recognised in this way by the people who matter most – our customers," he said. "It's always a great boost for our staff when we win any award but to receive such a vote of confidence from our customers tells us that we really are striking a chord with the people who use our shops day, in day out.

"All of our stores are located right in the heart of local communities and our staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that their customers can shop in a clean and pleasant environment, get everything they need and want – and be guaranteed a cheery, efficient welcome in the process."

David Sands, which last year restructured its senior management team as part of a new strategy being implemented to fuel future growth and drive the business forward, works with him! on an ongoing basis to identify areas for improvement within the customer service field.

The company's immediate expansion plans in 2009 include the opening of an additional two stores – in Dunfermline and Markinch. Its most recent acquisition, a former Londis outlet in Lauder Road, Kirkcaldy, open earlier this year.

A major employer in Fife and Perthshire, employing over 600 people, David Sands has a strong reputation for retaining staff and promoting from within. Various incentive schemes are in operation on a year-round basis and staff are rewarded and recognised for their efforts at the company's own annual Store of the Year Awards.

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David Sands, chief executive officer, added: “A customer-facing business such as ours will not survive without dedicated, hard-working people working at the sharp end and I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our staff for their sterling efforts.

“At this time of economic uncertainty when there is a lot of doom and gloom around and people perhaps don’t have quite so much money to spend, they need to know that they are going to get a warm and friendly welcome when they use their local neighbourhood shop.”

David Sands convenience stores are licensed, sell newspapers and magazines, have a strong fresh food offer, in-store bakery and services including PayPoint, an ATM and the National Lottery.

New initiatives also continue to be developed, including ‘Food to Go’ – the sale of hot and cold food, drinks and snacks to take away – and innovations in fresh produce, both of which are viewed by the company as key growth areas.

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For further information, contact **David Sands** on 01577 865141 or **Karen Peattie** on 0141 773 1801/07947 075 937

www.david-sands.co.uk

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- David Sands Ltd was founded in Kinross in 1812 and currently operates 26 stores in Fife, Kinross and Perthshire
- Most David Sands stores sell newspapers and magazines and many outlets offer a Post Office, in-store bakery, ATM, PayPoint and the National Lottery. All stores have a very strong fresh foods offer
- Stores open from 6am to 10pm, seven days a week
- All stores are licensed to sell alcohol and operate a 'Challenge 25' policy
- David Sands is a former president of the Scottish Grocers' Federation
- David Sands Ltd is a member of the Nisa-Today's group, the member-owned organisation that supports independent retailers and wholesalers in food and drink sector with a range of buying, marketing and distribution services. David Sands is chairman of the Nisa Retail Committee