

Smith's Gala Is On The Ball

Since introducing Gala's new store look four years ago, Smith's Gala, in Newtownforbes, has seen a 10% increase in trade. Checkout reports.



Local Legend: Noel Smith has been operating Smith's Gala in Newtownforbes, Co. Longford, for over 17 years.

Set in the picturesque setting of Newtownforbes, in Co. Longford, Smith's Gala has been operating for over 17 years, in a 'lively' rural village that is steeped in history.

Niall Smith acquired the store in 2004, where he works alongside his wife Catherine. Together, they provide the local community with "regular top up shopping across a broad range of

great value essentials, as well as weekly shopping across a full range of fantastic fresh products."

The business has grown significantly over the years, and the fact that a number of his staff have worked there for nearly a decade is testament to their loyalty to the business and in turn, the positive working environment that has been

created. Speaking to Checkout, the store owner Niall Smith says, "The majority of our staff have been here for a minimum of nine years in total, so the team is really like a family."

Tailoring a retail offering to reflect the changing needs of your customer is key to staying ahead of the game in the grocery industry and is something of which Smith is very cognisant.

He explains, "Consumer attitudes have changed a lot during the time we have been trading. Following the recession, consumers had to become more savvy and there was an increased expectation of good value from your shopping."

"It's important for us to provide a varied selection of products that deliver this good value with competitive pricing."



Community Commitments: Smiths Gala gives back to its local community when it can

Trading Up

Gala which has been operating since 1998, is best known for its style of convenience retailing, that positions Irish communities

at the heart of its operations, and for excellence in retailing.

In 2003, Smith made the decision to join the Gala Group, a decision which has proven to be a great success.

He first collaborated with Gala

in 2003 and since then it appears he has never looked back. Smith says, "We joined the Gala group 14 years ago and we traded very well for the next number of years."

The store's success went from strength to strength when four years ago, the store updated its branding to the distinctive and strong branding that Gala is known for. The store witnessed a noticeable upturn in trade, following a tough few years of trading following the recession.

So, why did Smith choose the Gala Group over the other convenience groups?

He explains, "We chose Gala because they were able to offer us exactly what we wanted – the independence to run a store that is tailored for our own local community, while still benefitting from the support and concepts of a nationwide group, as well as having a local wholesaler, McCarrick's Cash and Carry, to supply us with what our customers need."

Striking Gold

Since then, Smith's Gala has gone on to win numerous awards, such as the most coveted accolade at the Gala BEST Awards – the Gold Standard.

The 'Gold Standard' is awarded following a comprehensive and independent assessment process under the

Gala Business Excellence Standards Tool programme and Smith's Gala received this award in 2014 and in 2016 when they received the award for Best Convenience Store in Ireland under 1,500 square feet.

In order to provide local customers with the distinctive high quality produce, unique to Gala franchisees, Smith's Gala works closely with its local wholesaler, McCarrick's Cash & Carry in Longford.

From freshly baked items in Baker's Corner to popular promotions that the store has on offer weekly, Smiths strive to give its shoppers what they want.

Showing Support

The wholly Irish owned convenience group's stores are locally-owned and are renowned for their commitment to the local communities in which they operate – a value Smith has evidently adopted. In recognition of the valued support his customers in the community have shown him, he likes to give something back to show his appreciation.

He says, "We provide luxury hampers to the local school and to the Newtownforbes towns committee twice yearly.

"They use the hampers for raffles which help them to generate income for their organisations and benefit the community."

So, what is his final word on his success in the grocery retail business?

He concludes, "We pride ourselves on providing the local community with a friendly atmosphere, excellent customer service and a range of products and services they need.

The Gala group and the products and concepts we are able to introduce with their support are an integral part of this and we look forward to many more years working with the Group."



Going for Gold: Smith's Gala has received a Gala BEST Gold Standard Award for its commitment to excellence

