

# Edinburgh business coach's top honour

**An Edinburgh businessman is celebrating being named one of the country's top business coaches after helping owners survive lockdown.**

Alan Smith has been voted ActionCOACH's Coach of the Year for Scotland, the first time he has picked up the prestigious award since entering the profession seven years ago.

The award was given by his peers for the support he provided to his clients, and the growth and impact he has enjoyed within that client base during the past year.

Specialising in coaching small to medium-sized businesses with revenue of £1.5m – £20m, as well as executive teams and group coaching, he saw his client base grow by 30 per cent during the pandemic as owners reached out for support when the going got tough.

"I was pleasantly surprised but delighted to win this award," said Alan.

"It's a real honour to be voted the best coach in Scotland. I work hard, I'm passionate about what I do. I put in the hard graft and it is great to get the recognition.

"The awards are nice but it is a great feeling knowing I'm helping business owners, and that's particularly the case during these extremely difficult times in lockdown.

“It’s also important to me as it was voted for by my colleagues. They are good people doing good things within their client communities.

“Every day our desire is to go out and genuinely help business owners and their teams to perform so their businesses can thrive. To be named Scottish coach of the year in amongst that group of people is very special.”

ActionCOACH is the world’s largest coaching firm, with 220 coaches spread throughout the UK and the accolade completes a memorable few months for Alan.

In November the organisation named him as the winner of best client results in Scotland, while last year he also picked up the award for the Scottish coach with the best client ratings for the fourth year in a row.



Alan Smith

“I am lucky because I love what I do,” he said.

“I think increasingly people are starting to understand what business coaching actually is and Covid also prompted people to look at their situation and realise that it’s hard on your own and outside perspective can help.

“Business failure rate is high. Most businesses, 80%, fail within their first five years. Of the 20% that remain, 80% then fail in the next five years, so from 100 that started out, there will be just four surviving by their 10th birthday. That’s only survival so we need to look at how to help them thrive and make the impact they want to.

“Let’s remember, it’s impossible to coach a business because a business only exists as an entity in Companies House. A business is a collection of people so to grow a business we must grow people.”

He added: “Helping owners with their mindsets has been a major

part of my coaching during lockdown. We have had a massive shock to the system and people need to be thinking the right way to deal with these situations. It's about building up resilience and lifting people back up.

"The client community has been a big thing, too; the need for others to have people around them. Business ownership is a really lonely place and if the people at the top don't have the support around them then there is a hell of a pressure on these individuals."

Prior to moving into business coaching, dad-of-two Alan held various senior roles in PepsiCo, Cadbury and Mondelez International over a period spanning nearly 20 years.