

IT'S ALL IN THE CONNECTION

My Food Bag is a company that's redefined customer service to 'customer love', but not long before the first food bag went out the door, it struggled to connect with its customers – literally.

"All I can remember is that we couldn't get the website live and we felt as if that was it - it was over!"

So says My Food Bag CEO, Cecilia Robinson, while reflecting on a very early glitch with the business she co-founded just over five years ago.

"We were at our house at 3am with a 6 month old baby trying to get a website live. We were all sitting testing the website till the early hours of the morning, we couldn't actually get it live that night and we felt like the world was ending," says Robinson.

To be fair there haven't been many glitches since.

The business has gone on to connect on many levels - including with more than 70,000 customers in five years - and now, just last month latched on to the **Supreme Business Excellence Award at the Westpac Auckland Business Awards Best of the Best for 2017.**

Robinson describes it as the ultimate award and says - recalling their faltering start - that all businesses experience glitches both minor and major, but it's all about persevering.

"For us we don't let the disbelief get to us, we just always work harder to get better. That's always what we're about - it's just ingrained in us."

That tenacity has seen My Food Bag, a food home-delivery service that provides customers

with ingredients and recipes to cook meals, deliver more than forty million meals so far with an annual turnover greater than \$150 million and more than 160 staff.

And they weren't the only success story at **The Westpac Auckland Business Awards Best of the Best for 2017** ceremony presented by Auckland Business Chamber and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED).

Twenty eight businesses and success stories were on show at the gala event following on from last year's four regional Auckland-wide events representing category winners from Marketing, Employer of the Year, Innovation, Strategy and Planning, Customer Service, Best Emerging Business and International Trade

ATEED chief executive Nick Hill says the 'Best of the Best' awards is an opportunity to recognise businesses who are at the top of their field.

"Through sheer hard work, determination and innovation, these businesses have achieved excellence across a diverse range of sectors and played a significant role in contributing to the Auckland and New Zealand economy," says Hill.

Auckland Business Chamber chief executive, Michael Barnett, says it's important for businesses who believe they're at the top of their game to have a place where they can compete and compare and know that they really are the best.

"My Food Bag achieved that success this year, and along with the other winners, deserve the recognition."



AWARDS REFLECT THE ESSENCE

The two awards My Food Bag won at the regional Westpac Auckland Business Awards - Central event reveals the essence of the business, says CEO Cecilia Robinson.

"It's all about people. People are at the heart of everything we do, our team, our customers, they're at the heart of My Food Bag. They're the most important aspects of who we are as a business really."

The award titles were for **Supreme Business Excellence** as well as **Best in Customer Service Delivery.**

Judges noted in their comments that My Food Bag has moved the goal posts for traditional customer service delivery to what the business now calls 'customer love', and Robinson says it's been a conscious decision.

"It isn't customer service delivery for us - it's customer love. That's really a reflection of the

team that we have. It has to be at the heart of everything that you do, it has to be part of your DNA, it has to be what defines you as a business and what makes what you do important."

And Robinson says you know you're getting it right when your customers and team come along on the ride with you.

"I think the number one thing that was so empowering about the regional awards was how thrilled our customers and team were. So they're really invested in it, they feel a sense of ownership in the business, and love for the business. And that is really what is so fantastic about this award - it's not just about you, it's about all the people on your journey with you."

Robinson says most businesses start with numbers first and the people tend to flow out of that, but we're starting with people first and the numbers are flowing out of that.

Westpac Auckland Business Awards
Best of the Best



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CATEGORY WINNERS



Above: Excellence in Marketing winner Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) with Dean Roscherr, Mercury



Above: Employer of the Year winner Hiway Stabilizers NZ Limited with Katie Williams, Vodafone NZ Limited



Above: Excellence in Innovation winner PLN Group with Professor Ted Zorn, Massey University



Above: Best Emerging Business winner WOOP! with Tina Klay, Air New Zealand



Above: Excellence in Customer Service Delivery winner My Food Bag with Peter Thompson, Barfoot & Thompson



Above: Excellence in International Trade winner Southern Spars Ltd with Justin Maddock, Ports of Auckland



Above: Excellence in Strategy & Planning winner The Career Academy with Tony Nawisielski, Nauhria Precast Ltd

EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING:
Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) - Says Danielle Dunn, Marketing & Communications Manager:

"This is the ultimate award for us, that we've achieved what we're trying to achieve, and that is really being relevant to Aucklanders and to make sure that we are changing and evolving."

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR:
Hiway Stabilizers NZ Limited - Says Mike Nelson, Manager:

"Winning this is next level stuff. It reinforces to the team that we're doing something right. Our people are the most important thing in our business, and hopefully we can continue to reap the benefits from having a great team."

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION:
PLN Group - Says Blair McKolskey, Director:

"These awards are very timely to help you remember that what you're doing, the purpose and the way you're doing it is right on."

BEST EMERGING BUSINESS:
WOOP! - Says Thomas Dietz, Founder:

"The award has been a real snowball effect. Since the first regional award we've continued to grow and grow. We focus a lot on what our customers are saying about us... and really making this point of difference of making their lives a lot easier by providing them with meals."

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY:
My Food Bag - Says Cecilia Robinson, Co-founder:

"It isn't customer service delivery for us - it's customer love. That's really a reflection of the team that we have. It has to be at the heart of everything that you do, it has to be part of your DNA, it has to be what defines you as a business and what makes what you do important."

EXCELLENCE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE:
Southern Spars Ltd - Says Peter Batcheler:

"There's a lot of rigour in the process of entering these awards, and it's very good for us to self-examine and reassess what we do and how we do it. So even if you don't win, you will win."

EXCELLENCE IN STRATEGY AND PLANNING:
The Career Academy - Says CEO, Daniel Hunt:

"It's great to be acknowledged by our business peers, and it's great for the students that the company can be more and more recognised by winning this award."

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