



50 giving stories shared as part of  
The Marketors' Trust's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2026

**No 48 [Bonus] The lecturer who turned her classroom into a marketing lab**



*Claire Culley with her award certificate*

In most marketing lectures, the case studies are safely in the past and the companies are household names. In Claire Culley's classroom, they are neither. Her students work on live problems for real small businesses, the kind of local firms that rarely have a marketing department of their own, and they have to make their ideas actually work. She calls it The Marketing Lab, and in 2024 it won her a national award.

Claire Culley, a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Suffolk, received the 2024 Marketing Teaching Excellence Award, presented in July at Cardiff Business School. The award is

run by the Academy of Marketing and sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Marketors, and it celebrates the people who teach marketing well. Her project, “The Marketing Lab: Bridging Theory with Practice”, was praised, in the words of the Ipswich Star, for “creating a dynamic learning environment where students tackle real-world marketing issues for small businesses”.

For Claire, the recognition did real work. In her own words:

*“Winning the Teaching Excellence Award gave real momentum to my career. It played a key role in supporting my successful application for Senior Fellowship (SFHEA), giving that application extra weight and credibility. The recognition also boosted my confidence to keep innovating my winning concept in the classroom, encouraging me to push it further and think about how it could evolve in the future. Beyond that, the award has been a brilliant talking point when promoting our courses to prospective students, helping to showcase the quality of teaching they can expect to receive. I’m incredibly grateful to the Worshipful Company of Marketors for their continued sponsorship of these awards. They make a genuine difference to marketing educators and the students we teach.”*

For the Marketors, that is the point of the sponsorship. The Company has long backed the Academy of Marketing’s Teaching Excellence Awards because good teaching is where good marketing begins. Recognise a teacher like Claire, and the benefit reaches every student who passes through her classroom, and, in time, every business those students go on to help.

It makes a neat circle. A marketing educator is recognised for teaching students to solve real problems for real businesses, and the award itself becomes a way to attract the next intake of students to come and learn the same way. The Trust cannot teach the classes. What it can do is make sure the best teaching is seen, valued and encouraged to grow.

Website: [Claire Culley at the University of Suffolk](#)

Find out more: [academyofmarketing.org/teaching-excellence-awards](https://academyofmarketing.org/teaching-excellence-awards) (the Teaching Excellence Awards)

## How to give

Every gift, at whatever level, helps secure the Trust’s grants, awards and care for the next fifty years.

To give, go to: <https://www.marketors.org/the-marketors-trust/support-ways-to-give>