

# Matchmaker seeks friends in business

A NEWCASTLE entrepreneur is looking for North East votes after being shortlisted for a prestigious small business award.

Sharon Kell, who runs the Coco Moon matchmaking service for single professional people, made the final cut from hundreds of enterprises across the North East and Yorkshire that entered this year's O2 X Awards.

She has been shortlisted in the female entrepreneur of the year category, which carries a £5,000 cash prize, after impressing judges with her business's ability to thrive in difficult economic conditions.

Coco Moon is up against three Yorkshire enterprises in the regional final – two food businesses and a dance company.

O2 spokesman Simon Devonshire said: "I never cease to be amazed by the level of entrepreneurial talent, innovation and commitment evident in the entries we have received.

"Despite the challenging economic climate, the standard of the entries increases each year, revealing a thriving small-business community in the UK.

"This year we have introduced a significant change to the way we celebrate entrepreneurialism through the O2 X Awards by asking small businesses to vote for who they think should win.

"We appreciate that recognition from their peers is an important factor for small businesses, so this year's winners will not only walk away with the O2 X Award prize of £5,000 and the acknowledgement that they have been recognised by our expert judges, but more importantly by other entrepreneurs across the UK."

The final is in London in October. To vote, go to [www.o2.co.uk/xawards](http://www.o2.co.uk/xawards). Two weeks' voting started on August 20.



**BALLOT** Sharon Kell, of Coco Moon, needs business people's votes to earn a national enterprise award.