

County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card

A Case Study

MICONEX



TOWN & CITY GIFT CARDS

Executive Summary

County Wexford Chamber transitioned from paper vouchers to a fully digital and physical County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card alongside Miconex, generating €600,000 in sales and onboarding around 200 businesses. This switch improved redemption rates, eliminated administrative burden, and earned national recognition. Their success is credited to district-led onboarding, tailored corporate outreach, and integrated support from Miconex. **Paula Roche, CEO of County Wexford Chamber explains their approach in this case study.**



€600,000 in sales in 7 months



200 participating businesses



Major growth in corporate orders



Winner of the Chambers Ireland 2025 Digital Campaign award



From Paper Vouchers to a High-Tech Physical and Digital Card

“Our previous paper-based voucher scheme was well supported by local businesses, but it required a huge amount of manual effort from the Chamber team, issuing vouchers barcode by barcode. The return on investment was minimal - any income generated was essentially cancelled out by the resources needed to administer the scheme. Customers found the vouchers awkward to use, leading to low redemption rates, and the process was cumbersome for businesses too.

“It wasn’t worth visiting the Chamber with just a €10 voucher, so businesses would let them accumulate over a few months. This delayed their revenue, and once they did bring them in, they’d have to wait for us to manually process, reconcile, invoice, and issue payment, often taking another 4 to 6 weeks. On top of that, the paper format left the scheme open to fraud, as vouchers could be stolen and used without activation.

“We knew we had to modernise. With more people going digital and fewer carrying physical wallets, offering a digital Gift Card made sense, especially for last-minute gifts where instant delivery is key. It also supports our sustainability goals. That said, we still see strong demand for the physical version, especially around Christmas, when organisations like to hand over a tangible gift. In Christmas 2024, about 97% of our sales were physical, but we know the trend is shifting.

“We’re planning a marketing push to highlight the advantages of digital, particularly for companies with remote staff who want to send rewards quickly and easily. Having both physical and digital options as part of the County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card gives us the flexibility to meet everyone’s needs.”

“We knew we had to modernise.”



Harnessing Local Pride with In-person Onboarding

“To onboard businesses, we began with those already part of our old paper scheme, starting with the most active and loyal participants. Originally, we operated across four districts - New Ross, Gorey, Wexford Town, and Enniscorthy, and although we’re now a county-wide Chamber, we still have staff on the ground in each area. Each team member took responsibility for onboarding businesses in their district.

“We made a conscious decision to prioritise independent, locally owned businesses to keep the programme truly local. That could evolve over time if customers want national retailers included, but our initial focus was firmly on supporting local. We also targeted a few key independents who weren’t part of the previous scheme and were successful in bringing them on board.

“We took the view that email outreach might take longer, so we focused on in-person onboarding, which proved much more effective. Miconex supported this with a test card, making it simple for staff like Deirdre in Gorey to walk into a shop, highlight the benefits of the new program, and sign the business up on the spot - it was seamless. We set an ambitious target of 100 businesses by November 6th to ensure the card would be attractive for Christmas shoppers, and we hit that thanks to the hands-on approach and great onboarding assets provided by Miconex. Follow-up calls helped us catch any we missed.

“Today, we’re nearing 200 participating businesses, but onboarding is ongoing. We continue to grow the programme, ensuring strong representation across all districts and expanding into smaller towns.”

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Project management to drive success

“We were down two staff members during the onboarding and launch period. Three months prior to launch, we brought a project manager, Simmi, on board to oversee day-to-day activities and track conversions in each district. With my background in project management, I knew how critical that role would be - there was no way we were going to sell less than usual! Weekly update calls helped us stay focused and identify where extra support was needed to meet our onboarding targets. After the launch, we brought a part-time temp resource on board to help with Gift Card sales, adding valuable support during a particularly busy period.”

A multi-channel approach to engaging stakeholders at launch

“Our strategy was to meet stakeholders directly and introduce them to the card. We identified 2–4 merchants in each district and visited with the prop card from Miconex, taking photos with recognisable local brands to promote on social media. As we typically post twice daily on a two-week schedule, we integrated the card easily into our existing content. Aislinn on our team created a handy one-pager listing all participating merchants by district - ideal for those less comfortable searching online.

“In researching what businesses valued about similar Gift Card programs, we saw the importance of user guidance. So we developed our own step-by-step ordering guide with screenshots, which organisations really appreciated. For those less confident with the digital process, we offered a ‘white glove’ service - either assisting them by phone or inviting them into the office to walk them through it.

“Rather than mass emails, we used a personal, district-led approach. Pauline or Anne would ring regular voucher buyers and say: ‘You usually order €20,000 in vouchers - can we help you transition to our new Gift Card?’ That familiar voice made all the difference.

“We also worked closely with local media. The Gift Card featured weekly in our Wexford People newspaper column, and we ran onboarding and launch PR supported by Miconex. I recorded two radio ads with South East Radio - one encouraging business onboarding, and another targeting organisations to buy the card for staff and redeem outstanding paper vouchers.”

“There was no way we were going to sell less than usual!”



Supported success for ongoing promotion

“We knew from our previous scheme that end-of-term was a peak time for Gift Card purchases, but we also took Miconex’s advice on promoting the card for other occasions like Mother’s Day - and that has worked really well. Their Annual Promotional Plan includes ready-made social assets, campaign guides, and press releases stored in a Notion Knowledge Base, which we’ve found incredibly useful. As a Chamber with a full event calendar, our next step is to build a dedicated marketing calendar outlining key campaigns and promotional moments for the Gift Card throughout the year.”

Building corporate engagement to drive Gift Card sales

“Corporate engagement has been key. As part of our Chamber work, we already have strong relationships with local employers, and this has translated directly into Gift Card sales. One major employer purchases €100,000 in cards annually, and another spends €70,000 which really helps with targets. 2024 was a transformative year for us - we redefined our engagement strategy, which resulted in a 10% rise in membership and a 20% increase in corporate partnerships. Introducing the County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card was part of that shift. While we were initially nervous about retaining our largest buyers, the personalised attention we gave, supported by Miconex’s resources, meant we not only retained them but secured an additional €80,000 in new corporate orders. For Christmas 2025, we’ll be launching a dedicated corporate strategy to build on that success.”

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€600,000 in sales - and national recognition

“The County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card was a real team effort, launched just in time for Christmas 2024 and achieving an incredible €600,000 in sales within the first seven months. Over 200 businesses are now accepting the card.

“We submitted the Gift Card to the Chambers Ireland 2025 Awards in the Digital Campaigns category, highlighting how it strengthened our digital offering as part of our wider operational excellence strategy and support for the business community. After responding to 10 detailed questions and undergoing independent judging, we were shortlisted and ultimately won both the Digital Campaigns Award and the Supporting Business Award for successfully integrating Enniscorthy & District Chamber into County Wexford Chamber.

“The card’s success came down to collaboration, focus, and the team’s determination to make it a success over the busy Christmas period - while also delivering our usual events and programs. Miconex’s support was outstanding throughout. The national recognition at the Chamber Awards was a brilliant endorsement of the team’s hard work, and we’re excited about building on that success in the months ahead.”



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A key contributor to economic growth

“Before joining the Chamber in March 2024, I’d used other national Gift Card programs without giving them much thought. But now, working within the Chamber, I truly see the value a local Gift Card brings to the community and economy. I’m incredibly proud of our business community, and it’s so rewarding to support them through this initiative. A significant portion of our Gift Card spend goes to local retail, cafés, hotels, and restaurants - sectors that are often hardest hit. Helping drive footfall, spend, and visibility to these businesses is something I take real pride in. With the reporting tools, we can accurately track the program’s growth and share that data with local retailers and employers.”

“If you’re thinking of launching a Gift Card with Miconex, I’d absolutely recommend it. It helps keep money local, protects jobs, and keeps businesses open - all vital for a thriving economy. Whether you’re the Chamber running the program, a business buying cards for staff, a consumer receiving one, or a merchant accepting them - you’re playing a key role in supporting local economic growth.

“For businesses coming from a paper voucher program, the switch has been hugely positive. The old system was time-consuming and clunky. Merchants now appreciate the ease of instant payouts and how simple it is to accept the card. Once they understood how it worked, most signed up immediately, and word of mouth brought even more on board. The transition has been smooth and widely welcomed.

“The Mastercard-backed functionality has delivered unexpected benefits too. I recently returned a purchase, and while both the merchant and I assumed a credit note would be needed, we were able to refund directly onto the Gift Card - something that would have been impossible with paper vouchers. Even though the County Wexford Shop Local Gift Card is branded for Wexford and doesn’t show the Mastercard logo, it functions exactly like one. It makes spending local not only easy, but also modern and seamless. With the branding in our Wexford colours, the card truly encapsulates County Wexford, and helps us promote all the incredible things the region has to offer to both locals and visitors alike.”



Take the first step on your Town & City Gift Cards journey today:

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