



**Culture
Pioneer**
Awards 2022

Entry guide 2022

Everything you need to know ahead of entering the 2022 Culture Pioneer Awards.



What is the Culture Pioneer Awards?

In a climate where people-focused organisations have never been more important, the 2022 Culture Pioneer Awards will shine a spotlight on businesses dedicated to cultivating a positive workplace culture.

Run by digital publications HRZone and TrainingZone, our mission is to raise the profile of ambitious people professionals and the organisations they work for, as well as demonstrate the critical business value of investing in people and culture.

What differentiates us from most other business awards programmes is that we are not simply interested in the so-called 'best'. We're looking for inspirational leaders, teams and organisations that are committed to an ongoing journey to sustain or improve their culture.

To support you in submitting a high-quality entry, this guide shares detailed category information, suggestions of evidence to showcase as well as hints and tips from the judges.

We hope you find the guide useful and wish you best of luck with your entry!



Becky Norman
Editor
HRZone and TrainingZone



Culture Pioneers Judges

We've recruited experts in the industry to form our judging panel. This talented cohort will be selecting the finalists and winning entries for each category to showcase to our community of 159,000+ people professionals.

[Meet the judges](#)



Key Dates

Save these dates to your calendar to ensure you don't miss the deadline!

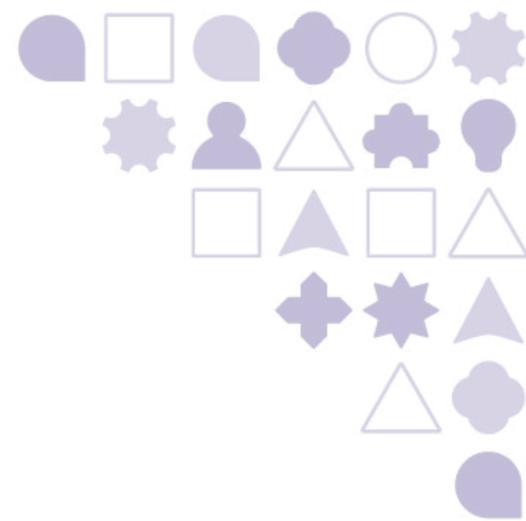


Entries open
21st February

Entries close
9th May

Finalists announced
28th July

Awards show
Mid September (TBC)

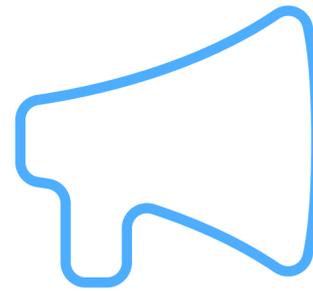


Categories

Which of our four categories does your organisation excel in?

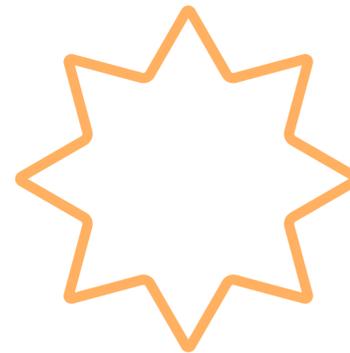
You and/or your team can enter as many categories as you wish, but the information you provide must be bespoke to each category you enter.

[Read more about our categories on page 6](#)



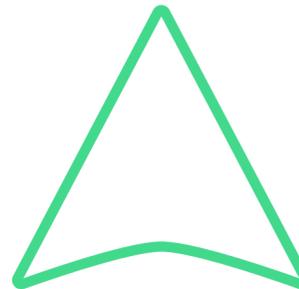
Brand

Showcase how your organisation's internal culture is authentic to your external brand and company values.



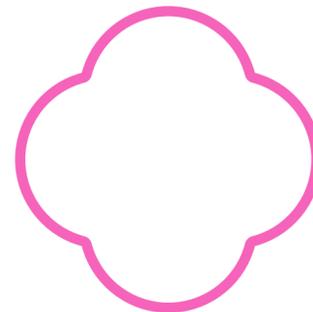
Wellbeing

Demonstrate your company's holistic approach to employee wellbeing and how it is positively impacting all employees.



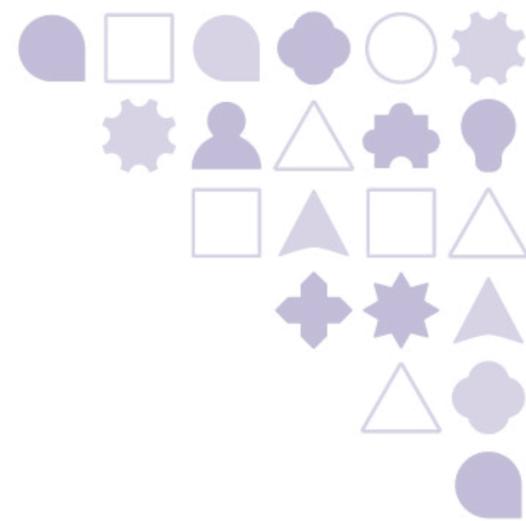
Learning

Share how your organisation is enabling business-critical learning at an individual, team and organisational level, as part of the everyday.



Inclusion

Illustrate the meaningful and sustainable improvements your business is making to diversity, equity and inclusion.



Criteria

All entrants should be from UK-based businesses. Individuals, teams and organisations delivering culture change or sustaining a positive company culture can apply. Consultants will not be considered, but can enter on behalf of an organisation they are working with.

To position yourself as a Culture Pioneer, you will be asked to demonstrate how your actions have contributed to creating, improving or sustaining a positive company culture.

To successfully illustrate this, you will need to exhibit specific accomplishments in your work across a range of different criteria within the entry form. For all four categories, these include:

The Why

Your objectives and vision for your organisation's company culture.

The What

The performance of your culture activities and how they support the business' objectives / vision.

The How

Evidence of company culture positively impacting employees across the organisation.

The Outcomes

Results for the organisation that can be directly or indirectly attributed to company culture.

Further category details

What kinds of evidence are we seeking in your entry? We provide some category-specific examples...

Category

Brand

This award is for organisations that are committed to nurturing a company culture that represents their brand identity.

We're seeking applications from businesses of any size, and within any industry, that are on a mission to cultivate a culture that is authentic to (and supportive of) its brand. Organisations are welcome to focus on any brand type – e.g. employer, consumer or corporate – or a combination of brand types in their entry.

This category gives entrants the opportunity to showcase the organisation's approach to creating (or sustaining) a great place to work – where company values are lived and breathed, and a strong sense of purpose is shared.

Entrants for this category should look to answer some of the following questions:

Subjective measures:

- How has our organisation responded to changes/challenges that may have impacted company culture?
- If misalignment between brand and company culture was present, how did our organisation address this?
- How have different teams worked collaboratively to sustain or improve the link between brand and culture?
- How did the organisation fit in this additional work with other demands? (Time, support, resource for delivery)
- How have employees of all levels responded and contributed to positive change?

Objective measures:

- How can we evidence that activities have improved the connection between brand and culture?
- What value, impact and benefits have been delivered through cultivating a culture that represents our brand?
- How have our actions impacted employee experience?
- How have our actions impacted customer/client experience?
- How have our actions impacted any additional communities?
- How have our actions supported the business' financial success?

“Organisations succeed when they are authentic to their mission and values. Understanding this enables Culture Pioneers to reflect their brand within their internal culture, to enable true transparency and trust.”



Judith Germain
Culture Pioneers Judge

Ready to start your entry?

Save your progress and return to your entry anytime – but don't forget to submit before the closing deadline of 9th May 2022

[Enter now](#)

Category

Wellbeing

This award is for organisations that are consistently evolving their employee wellbeing strategy and taking a holistic approach to support the mental, emotional, financial and social needs of their workforce.

We're looking for people leaders and teams who are working towards creating an environment that cultivates energy, psychological safety, resilience and adaptability.

This category gives entrants the opportunity to demonstrate how they are taking the responsibility of wellbeing seriously to create sustainable improvements for all employees, no matter their circumstances.

Entrants for this category should look to answer some of the following questions:

Subjective measures:

- How do employees feel about wellbeing at our organisation?
- Do they believe we care about them?
- Do they feel supported should they have a wellbeing requirement, such as problem debt or poor mental health?
- How, and with what regularity, do we check in with our employees to see how they are feeling? What do we do with the information?
- How do we ensure that nobody falls through the cracks?

Objective measures:

- What measures do we have in place to monitor the wellbeing of employees?
- Does our business look at areas such as income protection claims or occupational health data?
- How do we link wellbeing to, for example, voluntary turnover and absence rates?
- Have we secured a wellbeing budget, and how did we prove ROI to obtain the funding we needed for wellbeing efforts?
- Do we have senior support?

“Employees are facing an unprecedented set of wellbeing challenges this year. I am looking for employers who truly care for their people and understand that a successful organisation begins with putting people at the heart.”



Gethin Nadin

Culture Pioneers Judge

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Category

Learning

This award is for businesses that are cultivating a culture that proactively supports the way that their organisation learns, adapts and grows.

We're seeking applications from leaders, teams and businesses that can demonstrate not only how they build business-critical skills across the organisation, but also how they enable and harness the ongoing process of learning everyday.

This category gives entrants the opportunity to showcase their commitment to learning at an individual, team and organisational level, in a climate where skills development is a key component to employee retention.

Entrants for this category should look to answer some of the following questions:

Subjective measures:

- What goal or vision has our organisation identified for cultivating a culture of learning?
- Looking beyond our single department, what is the red thread that has pulled this goal together ?
- How have senior leaders responded to and participated in the change?
- How have managers responded to and participated in the change?
- How have teams and individuals responded to and contributed to the change – including new behaviours?

Objective measures:

- What evidence is there of an improved learning culture across the organisation?
- How can we demonstrate the impact of any changes made (small or large) e.g. improvements in indicators of psychological safety, engagement, speed of change, leadership systems as well as improvements in important business KPIs (such as customer loyalty or agility in role out of new business models)?
- What evidence is there of improved ownership across a wide range of stakeholders in our organisation?

“Entrants for the Culture Pioneer Learning Category should show us how they encourage sharing, celebrate learning and break down silos to accelerate the way that individuals, teams and organisations learn together.”



Laura Overton
Culture Pioneers Judge

Ready to start your entry?

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[Enter now](#)

Category

Inclusion

The Culture Pioneer Inclusion Award is for organisations that are creating meaningful, sustainable improvements in workplace inclusion and belonging.

We're looking for people leaders and teams who are working to create a psychologically safe environment in which every employee feels respected and valued as their authentic self within the business.

This category offers entrants the opportunity to illustrate their passion and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion regarding all employees within the organisation – ensuring that no one gets left behind.

Entrants for this category should look to answer some of the following questions:

Subjective measures:

- Do our employees believe they are safe and able to be heard on matters relating to who they are as individuals?
- Can employees express themselves and feel supported should they face any discrimination in the workplace?
- How are inequalities addressed?
- Are differences valued and celebrated across all parts of our organisation?
- Is the inclusion strategy visibly owned and championed by our leadership team?
- How do we ensure that nobody falls through the cracks?

Objective measures:

- What systems do we have in place to ensure everyone is treated equally?
- Does our inclusion strategy impact the workforce, products, services and brand messaging?
- Do we collate demographic data across a range of intersectionalities to establish a baseline?
- Do we report on disparities experienced across various employee touchpoints?
- Do we report on how the organisation compares within its industry?
- Have we secured a D&I budget, and how did we prove ROI to obtain this funding?

“What I am looking from the entries are those organisations that have tackled inclusion holistically like any strategic initiative, owned by the leadership, resourced, reported on and having sustainable long term impact”.



Shakil Butt

Culture Pioneers Judge

Ready to start your entry?

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[Enter now](#)

Entry hints and tips

Bringing your culture change story to life can be tough. With this in mind, Culture Pioneers judge Laura Overton provides key pointers on what we're interested in hearing about.

Last year, those shortlisted for the Culture Pioneer Awards showed us how they were proactively enabling a culture of either wellbeing, learning, inclusion or innovation that was embraced by all. What will increase the chances of success for our 2022 entrants?

This year, judges will be looking for entries from those who see culture as an organisation-wide responsibility that needs to be modelled, enabled and encouraged by all. This means we are not simply looking for entrants to share the success of a single initiative. We want to see how a multitude of actions contributed to a more widespread change.

The awards programme is also not about celebrating 'best in show', grand gestures or big budgets. We are looking for ideas, strategies and programmes that have created meaningful, measurable change – no matter how big or small. We want to hear about the activities that have led to results that matter, for the people that matter.

With something as ethereal as culture change, it can be tricky to clearly demonstrate a positive impact from your activities. To help you craft your entry, I've outlined a few points we encourage you to explore within your entry.

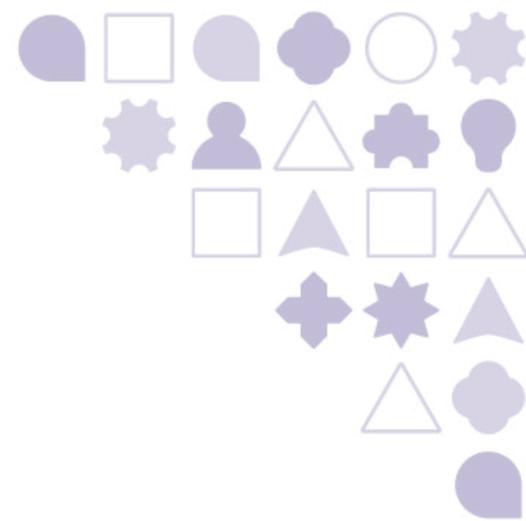
In your entry, share:

- A clear vision for your company culture, plus the plan in place to deliver this vision
- How multiple stakeholders are pulling together to achieve common goals across all parts of the organisation
- The company's commitment to people with its attitude towards flexibility, transparency, development and opportunity
- How culture is seen as a means of achieving mutual benefit, balancing the needs of organisation outputs and individual contribution
- How the organisation is genuinely open to honest feedback and acts on it
- Any created frameworks and opportunities for culture to be modelled and practised
- Willingness to creatively explore culture change to achieve goals



Laura Overton,

Author, facilitator & award winning analyst | learning changemaker | Cofounder of Emerging Stronger



Meet the Culture Pioneers of 2021

Last year, we received over 100 entries from organisations of all sizes, across a wide range of industries – including technology, consumer goods and health, as well as the public and charity sectors.

Explore the winners' stories to better understand what our judges will be looking for from this year's entrants.

[Download ebook](#)



Wellbeing Award
Jessica Badley
Blood Cancer UK



Inclusion Award
Karen Dobres & the board of directors
Lewes Football Club



Learning Award
Jessica Leigh Jones & Tom de Vall
iungo Solutions



Innovation Award
Deryn McIntosh & Team
Panorama and RCI



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Celebrating the heroes of **culture change**

Send queries to:



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