

The logo consists of the letters 'H' and 'R' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'H' is grey and the 'R' is red.

For people-focused business leaders

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The logo features the letters 'H' and 'R' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'H' is white and the 'R' is red. Below the letters, the words 'EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2018' are written in a bold, sans-serif font.

How to *win* an
HR Excellence Award 2018

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Editor’s note

Hosting the HR Excellence Awards for the first time in June was undoubtedly one of the highlights of 2017. (Not least to watch ZSL’s overjoyed response every time they were announced winner of a category – or indeed were announced highly commended, but rushed euphorically to the stage anyway...)

It sounds clichéd, but the buzz in the room on 27 June was just magical. And rightly so. HR spends so much time supporting the rest of the organisation and still doesn’t always, in some circles, boast the most enviable of reputations. But just a glance at our shortlisted strategies every year shows how unfair this reputation is, and how the profession deserves to celebrate all it achieves much more often.

As its title suggests, our awards are designed to showcase the very crème de la crème of HR. We are passionate about inspiring others by showing just how impactful, business-focused, and in many cases employee-life-changing, HR strategies can be.

But of course we can’t do this if HR teams don’t enter the awards, or if they don’t convey what they’ve achieved clearly and convincingly. I can’t tell you how frustrating the HR magazine team and our esteemed judges find it when we sense



there’s a really powerful strategy lurking tantalisingly at the edges of a confusingly, or sparsely, written entry.

So last year yours truly had the bright idea of compiling a handy, all-you-need-to-know guide to entering an HR Excellence Award. This year we’ve updated it to

once again offer you top tips from our expert judges and the HR team, and to showcase all of the fab coverage that often comes organisations and HRDs’ way after an award win brings them to our attention. (The editorial team find the winners and shortlisted lists a rich mine of content and expert commentators.)

So don’t delay. Another frustration of ours is when we know of a great strategy that didn’t get entered due to lack of time or planning, or the HR leader in question only realising after the event its potential to outstrip the competition.

So put just a little time and resource aside now to compile an entry that does your strategy justice. Who knows, it could well be you rushing to the stage at the Hilton Park Lane on 26 June 2018. Good luck!

Jenny Roper
Editor
HR magazine

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Putting together an awards entry: *10 top tips*

1 Describe the issue clearly. Was this a ‘nice to do’ or was there a genuine problem or area for improvement? Make sure you show how the piece of work fits into the overall business strategy. Think of your reader; tell the story in a lively, compelling way to bring it to life.

2 Be commercial. Show there is a business benefit. Innovation doesn’t have to be big and expensive, but it should make a difference. Remember to include the budget. It’s hard for our judges to assess a strategy fully without knowing how much money was available. Entries without a cited budget often fail to be shortlisted for this reason alone.

3 Provide all the information requested. If you miss any out it’s hard for the judges to compare your entry to others. Judges often report suspecting there was a more compelling, impressive strategy lurking just out of reach. But they can only judge what’s been described – even where they know the strategy is in reality more impressive and the submission doesn’t do it justice. Don’t rely on your success story being widely known within HR circles. To reiterate: judges can only judge what they’ve been given.

4 Describe the results and impact with data. Include business metrics and softer benefits. Be clear on the measurable outcomes, but remember this doesn’t mean throwing numbers around – just relevant ones.

5 Read the criteria on which the award will be judged. And make sure your entry covers all of them. Perhaps include sub headings listing the criteria. This might make it easier for the judges to get the full picture.

6 Show involvement right across the business. A real indicator of an impactful strategy is when

a CEO or other business leader comments on the value of the work you’ve done. And of course comments from those employees whose working lives have been impacted by your work are always a strong indicator of excellence.

7 Check spelling and grammar. This is about excellence and that includes attention to detail. Judges won’t be inclined to look favourably on sloppy work. Think about fonts and presentation too; don’t let an unprofessional, difficult to read submission detract from some great content. Also, make sure you fill in the front page of the entry summarising the work; you would be surprised how many don’t. The judges spend hours reading and discussing the submissions and it never goes down well when it looks like an entrant hasn’t bothered to complete the forms properly.

8 Don’t be afraid to enter something that may not appear innovative. Even if it’s not overly innovative on the surface, is it something you did in a creative way? Context is everything.

9 Make sure the entry comes from the HR team. We understand you might want to get help writing your entry, but ones that are submitted by suppliers or PR agencies don’t tend to do as well as those that come from the HR team themselves. Getting to the heart of the story and the impact the strategy had will only come to life if submitted by the people who made it happen. Agencies may polish your entry, but be sure it comes from the team who actually implemented it.

10 Make sure the entry itself contains all the relevant material. Supporting material should be just that: to support your entry, but not crucial to judges’ understanding of it.

Frequently made mistakes

- ▶ **Entering a submission in the wrong category.** You’d be surprised how often we move entries into a category all judges agree makes more sense. But this won’t always be possible. Often the way the entry is written, and the details provided, means that although the judges can see it’s really an engagement strategy, say, rather than a talent management one, it can be hard to move successfully. So think and think again: is this really an overarching engagement strategy, or should it have been entered in L&D?
- ▶ **Submitting self-serving ‘aren’t we marvellous’ entries.** These don’t fare well with our judges. Remember modesty is a virtue...
- ▶ **Making the submission too long.** Some categories have 20 or more shortlisted entries so you want yours to be easy to read and understand...and memorable. Don’t attach reams of appendices, particularly where the information isn’t relevant.
- ▶ **Writing entries in textbook speak.** Submissions that seem like they could have come straight from a management textbook won’t capture our judges’ imaginations and often confuse as to what’s actually been done and achieved.
- ▶ **Entering an initiative too soon.** Often judges will all be in agreement that a HR team is doing some good things, but it seems the strategy has been entered just a year or two too early, i.e. before the team’s had chance to measure and reflect on results. So ask yourself if it would be better to wait another year to build up more supporting evidence.
- ▶ **Submitting exactly the same entry, word for word, in several categories.** It’s fine to enter the same strategy in more than one category. But make sure you tailor your entries. Some judges will be judging both categories, and they will want to see some thought as to why each submission has been entered into each category.

Tips from the top: What judges look for in an award-winning entry



Irene Stark,
group HR
director, ATS
Euromaster

“Your entry needs to be something truly connected to a business need and delivering commercial

value, not something dreamed up by HR. I like to see involvement of people across the business and not just HR. I like supporting data but it is important to make it concise and relevant. I dislike entries where HR seems to have gone to an external consultant who’s done all the work. Of course external people have their place but it’s great when HR has done much themselves or at least in conjunction with an external company. It’s always great when an entry has added bottom line value, but if something is more intangible it’s good to see creative ways of measuring results. I like entries that demonstrate value to the customer as well as employees and the business.”



Eugenio Pirri, chief people and
culture officer, Dorchester Collection

“The key to any submission is to understand why you are applying to win the award. I believe it is key to ask yourselves these questions initially: What is your purpose in applying? What are you trying to achieve? How does what you do align to your company vision and strategic plan? What was the value obtained as a result of your actions? Based on this, the evidence must support this by providing: actual timeframes and outcomes (outcomes should not be listed only in percentages, but numbers as well); what the

actual value of the initiative was; what constituents in the business have benefited; and what challenges were experienced and how they were overcome. Then the entry must address: what’s next? Where do they go from here?”

Andrew Dodman, chief operating officer,
The University of Sheffield

“The best entries are those that are about people, rather than process, practice or policy. The judges want to hear how the HR ‘excellence’ has genuinely inspired people, and changed working lives for the better. A strong authentic narrative will help, preferably one that offers quantitative evidence but also provides stories of personal impact and contribution. We want to see and hear the voice of the employee, and not just the HR/management team. Often a good submission will also be one that demonstrates that the HR team has taken a risk, and delivered something different from before, and with the outcome positively influencing the whole of the workforce. The very best entries are those that are fresh and fun to read, and moreover leave the judge desperately wanting to implement the initiative.”



Danielle Harmer, chief people officer,
Metro Bank

“The winning awards tend to be those that had an impact on the organisation and the people within it and were genuinely offering life-changing benefits for employees. Or they tend to be those that made something hard seem as simple, easy and painless as possible for the organisation and the people in it. They made me proud to be in the HR profession and to see the difference HR makes when it is done really well. For example: the Wincanton submission on wellbeing last year, which had reduced the incidence of driver heart attacks and had genuinely saved lives, was brilliant. It was simple, low cost and engaged the company’s people to bring about sustainable change and make their lives better (and longer).”



Neil Morrison,
HR director,
Severn Trent

“The first thing that I look for is the relevance to the organisation, not just relevance to the HR team. I want to understand the challenges that the organisation faces and how the work helped solve that or improve the situation. That context is really important in helping compare companies with different budgets, cultures and maturity. For me, excellence can be well-executed simplicity as much as leading edge innovation; it all depends on the context and demonstrable results. I want to understand the data that supports a submission. Remember that the judges are experienced professionals who will be able to sniff out dodgy or contradictory numbers. So be really honest and straightforward. I also want to read a compelling narrative that demonstrates pride and passion and sets an example to the profession as a whole. A really good example was a submission in the technology category one year. It wasn’t the most cutting-edge, but it was absolutely right for the business, and the submission explained why and the results achieved.”

A glittering event: *2017's gala dinner*

The winners of the HR Excellence Awards 2017 were unveiled at the London Hilton Park Lane



Meera Syal entertained as compère



Transport for London (TfL) winning Best learning and development strategy



HRD of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) Fiona Evans (centre) bagged our HR director of the year award



Anchor Trust scooped Best youth employment strategy



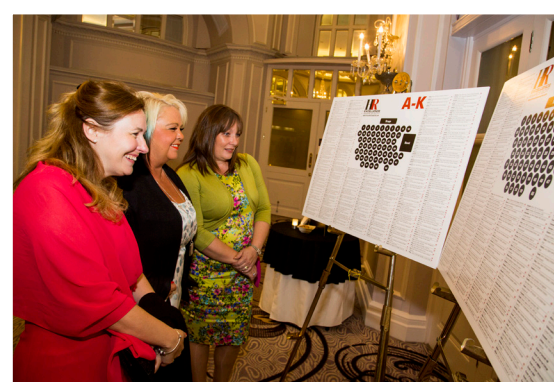
Editor Jenny Roper kicks off proceedings



The Islamic Relief Worldwide team, shortlisted for the Outstanding employee engagement strategy award



Edge Hill University winning the Health and wellbeing award



The HR Excellence Awards are always a great opportunity to network



ZSL won Best HR team and the Gold award, and were highly commended in our L&D category



After the awards ceremony, guests had a dance to hits played by band The New Few

HR Excellence Awards 2017: Who won what – and how

Health and wellbeing award: **Edge Hill University**

Edge Hill University’s Whole Person wellbeing strategy is completely shaped by its staff. Grassroots involvement was key to its success, with employees consulted on where wellbeing improvements could be made. This involved five aspects of good health and wellbeing: family, health, finance, work and social. Staff being nominated by the college to receive a random act of kindness and having a variety of social events fuelled engagement. The strategy cost just £25,000 a year. The results are impressive: 91% of staff feel proud to work for the university, 93% perceive it as a great place to work, and 86% feel valued.



Outstanding employee engagement strategy: **HomeServe**

HomeServe has had a rollercoaster ride over the last few years, going from being fined £34 million by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in 2014, to becoming a reinvigorated business in 2017. Employee engagement was key to this. Cascade staff interaction events take employees in groups of up to 300 from every area of the business. Every three months, HomeServe also holds Charter Tuesday when all colleagues get together in groups of 50 to reflect on how they’re living up to customer promises. Development and wellbeing also strongly feature through a career progression framework, sports and social events and knowledge share forums. The company has already achieved its target of 80% employee engagement by 2020, up from 56% in 2013.

Diversity and inclusion award: **PageGroup**

PageGroup’s D&I journey started in 2012 when CEO Steve Ingham launched Women@Page which aimed to increase gender equality at management-level. Between 2012 and 2016 the number of female operational directors rose from 25% to 39%, and in 2016 43% of promotions at management level were female. The next step was Maternity@Page which launched in 2013. Following this, maternity return rates increased from 76% in 2012 to 87% in 2015, saving the company approximately £900,000. Since 2013 75% of operational directors have returned to work on a more flexible working pattern. Between 2015 and 2016 the company also launched Parents@Page, Pride@Page and Ability@Page. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the company has made it onto Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index every year since 2015.



Most innovative deployment of HR technology: **Rentokil Initial and DenizBank**

Rentokil Initial’s U+ platform learning system was a move away from classroom training, allowing employees to develop at their own pace using digital resources. The tool was intended for colleagues in 64 countries, speaking more than 31 languages, 34% without an email address. However, the company created a three-step plan to communicate the launch including roadshows, postcard communications and community owner training sessions to recruit U+ champions. Since 2014, more than two million learning interventions have been delivered, and the new system is used more in a day than the old one in a month. More than two-thirds (78%) of employees say U+ has helped them apply learning to their role and 84% say the platform content is relevant and engaging.

Turkish bank DenizBank’s Denizde app formed a key part of the company’s digital strategy. With this app, employees create personal profiles, are able to see up-to-date company information, win prizes and access employee training. The HR team can also push out pulse surveys, finding out how staff are feeling about a specific subject at a certain point. The bank also uses the DenizBank HR WhatsApp group to provide information to workers. This received more than 3,500 messages on subjects including health insurance, annual leave and pensions within its first three months. A chatbot also provides simple HR advice via Facebook Messenger. The company receives more than 500 queries a month via Facebook and AI tools answer at least some of the employees’ questions. Due to this strategy, the bank’s employee engagement is 20% above the Turkish banking industry average.

Best learning and development strategy: **Transport for London**

Transport for London’s (TfL) Fit for the Customer Services Transformation programme was designed to deliver the biggest transformational change to the London Underground in a generation. In 2013 customers were asked for feedback on their experiences. Armed with this information, the HR team was able to focus training around these skills. They created a blended learning programme of skills coaching supported by HR. TfL’s customer satisfaction survey shows that staff’s ability to help customers at ticket machines has improved from 36% to 65%. By delivering the training digitally, TfL saved some 30,000 days of staff release, equating to productivity savings of £4.4 million.



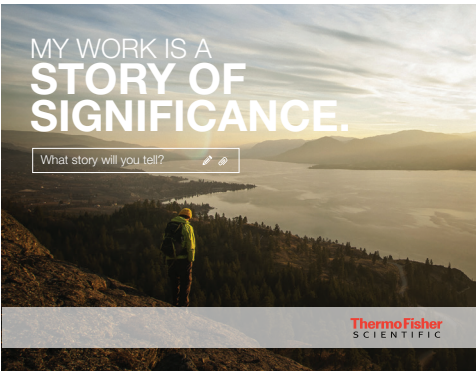
Best talent management strategy: **Version 1**

The management strategy of IT services company Version 1 was established with a clear goal: find and hire the best people, develop them and keep them as long as possible. This includes offering a £850 reward for a candidate that is successfully hired, but also rewarding the entire team they’re about to join and the team of the person who did the referring. As a result, 35% of hires in 2016 came through a referral. The firm’s Acorn programme also identifies senior talent through referrals and market-watching, so as not to miss out on passive candidates. If Version 1 feels they’ve found the right candidate, the company hires them whether there’s a vacancy or not. Over the last 10 years, the company has grown from 120 to 900 employees.



Best HR strategy from overseas: **DenizBank**

Because 60% of DenizBank’s recruitment consists of graduates, the bank created a digital HR strategy involving social media, video interviews, online testing and online onboarding. This aimed to create a culture of continuous dialogue with candidates. Gamification has been key to engaging with Generation Z through a Game of Bankers feature, and the business chatbot allows users of the Facebook HR page to give instant 24/7 feedback. The bank also does 40% of its training online, including mobile learning, micro learning, online classes, simulation and games. The current online catalogue includes more than 80 programmes, 70 of which were developed internally; 6,650 employees participated in 130 webinars in 2016.



Most effective recruitment strategy: **Thermo Fisher Scientific**

Two years ago, Thermo Fisher Scientific faced spiralling recruitment agency costs and the challenge of increasing its 58,000-strong workforce to 75,000 by 2020. In order to address both, the company established a new internal talent acquisition team. An important aspect has been humanising its recruitment platform through incorporating personal employee narratives and utilising employee photography to build authenticity and visibility. Internal data over applicant routes was analysed to map out a strategic approach to establishing the most popular and successful recruitment channels. A quarter of the company’s vacancies are now filled internally, and hiring time has gone from 77 to 44 days. Cost per hire is down from £916 to £325.

Most effective use of internal communications: **Superdrug**

The Hub is Superdrug’s two-way internal communications tool. Something between Twitter and Facebook, the material is generated by users, with employees able to post comments, questions, quotes, information about new product lines and PR material. Constructive feedback is encouraged, such as head office requesting comments on new packaging for a beauty product. Beyond being an app to connect employees, it also offers online training programmes, videos and interactive quizzes. More than 150,000 online courses have been completed since launch and The Hub has been visited more than 250,000 times since launch. Of the firm’s 14,000 employees, 10,000 engage regularly, 6,000 have installed the app on at least one device and there’s an average of 4,500 users each month.





Most effective benefits strategy: Randstad

In 2015, Randstad realised the launch of a pick and mix benefits portal the year before hadn't quite engendered the level of success hoped. The company re-evaluated and set about another revamp. Communication activities included HR presentations to senior team members and a series of 'it's coming' email teasers to whet employees' appetites. The HR team saved the business a staggering £40,000 in 2016. Engagement levels and positivity around Randstad offering a competitive salary and benefits package have also surged – as have figures around take-up of offers.

HR future leader of the year: Steve Othen, REC

In 2009, Steve Othen got his first taste of real HR when he managed a restructure of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC). This was after he'd been selected from a range of internal candidates to work with the CEO on the REC's business plan, and assist in redesigning its values. Now head of HR for the REC, Othen has worked particularly hard over the past 12 to 18 months to change how the REC views its people issues. He implemented a company-wide pay structure and policy designed to address pay gaps across the organisation. This resulted in a 75% improvement in business areas where staff turnover had been a long-term issue.



Best youth employment strategy: Anchor Trust

When Anchor, England's largest not-for-profit housing and care provider, launched the Anchor Apprenticeship Academy in June 2015, it was in a bid to address an industry-wide staff shortage. Along with investing £1 million over two years, the organisation sought to reach out to those not in education, employment or training. To date Anchor has taken on 73 apprentices in three cohorts, with 12 graduating and 27 entering into full-time permanent roles. Once graduated, apprentices can complete coaching and mentoring training or other qualifications. This approach has resulted in an 84% retention rate. Additionally, Anchor has saved £20,000 on agency spend.



Best HR team: Zoological Society of London

Back in 2014, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) had no accurate staff lists, no HR data, outdated (or non-existent) policies and an unqualified HR team. Today, the team of 14 look after a range of responsibilities including international support, reward, HR systems and OD. The department surveyed the organisation's 1,000 staff and 400 volunteers in 2014. More than 26 changes were introduced as a result of the Now&Next survey, including a reward and recognition scheme, a cycle to work scheme and an employee assistance programme. Through the survey, the company's training budget was also doubled and leadership development activity was enhanced. HR at ZSL now features a strong partnership, a deep understanding of the organisation, and genuine belief in ZSL's mission. ZSL also won the Gold award, given to that entrant who impressed the judges most across all categories.



Leading transformation award: Odeon Cinemas Group

With 9,500 colleagues across seven territories, Odeon Cinema Group's transformation strategy needed to reach and resonate with a wide range of locations and languages. For genuine, long-lasting engagement, the group needed to revitalise the whole package for staff. To boost staff motivation and retention, 70 products were released over 2015. Critical to this change were internal communications that offered transparency, trust and two-way conversations. As a result of all of this activity, one in seven of Odeon's people have been promoted, absence rates have fallen by 50%, and 45,000 hours have been devoted to learning and development.

The great and good (and really good) of award-winning HR

Coverage in *HR* magazine of HR Excellence Award-winners over the years

The University of Sheffield

The perennial complaint is HR isn't commercial enough. But this accusation can't be levelled at The University of Sheffield, with the team having launched an externally facing, profit-generating health and wellbeing consultancy Everyday Juice Limited. No surprise then that the brains behind this were highly commended in 2016's Best HR team category and that health and wellbeing was the award scooped in 2014. November 2015's issue saw us profile HRD Andy Dodman (below), while a piece on commercialising HR in September 2016 explored how the team makes Everyday Juice work.



NEA

UK organisations are certainly not alone in facing an aging workforce challenge. And so why not look to other countries for HR strategy inspiration? Winner of Best HR strategy overseas 2015, Singapore's National Environment Agency (NEA), is one organisation –through its re-employment scheme and tech training for older generations for example – making great strides here. So *HR* magazine caught up with them when they came to the UK to attend the 2015 awards to get the inside track.



The United Learning Trust

The United Learning Trust has been a staple on our award winners list for several years – with Lindsay Batchford winning HR Practitioner of the Year in 2015 for her role in supporting the growth of the organisation – and the team winning



our Outstanding employee engagement strategy in 2016. In our special 25th Anniversary May 2016 issue, director of people Mandy Coalter offered her take on how we need more nuanced solutions to business' gender challenge.



Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council impressed our judges in 2014 with its strategy to make employee pay go further, scooping the Most effective rewards strategy. Firmly on our radar since for progressive public sector HR in tough times, the council impressed recently with its restorative HR programme. This sought to combat the adversarial approach all too often characterising the public sector with a preventative 'good quality conversation' strategy, and featured as our September 2016 case study (above).

Most people-focused CEO of the year 2017

"I wanted to be proud of what I did, and that's what's simple." So says **Craig Donaldson**, CEO of Metro Bank of why he left a career in traditional banking in 2009 to launch and head up this new challenger bank. Cut to 2017 and Donaldson is immensely proud of the organisation he's created – not least because his inclusive, energetic and always open leadership style scooped him our Most people-focused CEO of the year plaudit at this year's awards. In our October issue we caught up with Donaldson to find out more about the secrets of his success.



Future leader

Steve Othen

HR magazine is highly passionate about championing up and coming members of the HR profession. Every month we profile a future leader of the industry to discover the long-term trends they're planning to tackle in the years ahead. Winner of 2017's Future leader of the year category Steve Othen was profiled in our September 2017 issue – the perfect opportunity to celebrate this rising HR star.

HR future leader of the month

HR magazine's BECKETT FRITH speaks to the future leaders of the industry to discover the long-term trends they are planning to tackle in the years ahead



Name: Steve Othen
Job title: Head of HR and projects
Organisation: Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)

What are your main concerns in HR today?
Closed or narrow thinking. Many HR professionals don't see the value in collaborating and will actively avoid it. Maybe they feel they are already great at what they do, but the type of thinking hinders the development of the discipline. I also worry about how the profession is perceived. I'm proud to say I work in HR, but the responses I receive to that are mixed. This is often because people's understanding of HR is limited or old-fashioned, and it's something we can change.

What will become more important for HR over the next five years?
PeC's annual global CEO survey showed that in 2015 75% of respondents identified skill shortages as a concern for their business – this is huge. The 2017 report showed growth to 77% of CEO citing skill shortages as a threat to business growth. When you consider other factors such as Brexit this becomes even more concerning. The REC just released a report showing how much the UK relies on EU workers. Initiatives to upskill the domestic workforce like the apprenticeship levy should have a positive impact in the long run, but we need to think about the short-to-medium term. A fix for purpose immigration policy should be a priority for the government.

What subjects will HR still be tackling when you retire?
You'll probably still be discussing performance and arguing over the merits of implementing or removing ratings. People that have been in the industry a long time laugh at the way we are still having the same arguments about what structure we should roll out across our HR teams, or even still discussing what should be a core of excellence vs what sits in shared services. I consider this to be business-dependent and don't feel the need for us to unanimously agree on a single way forward.

What do you plan to do to change HR for the future?
All any of us can do is make sure we are the best version of ourselves. After that there are various opportunities to make a difference. This could be as simple as during ideas, speaking at events or giving advice in schools. I'm a big believer in paying things forward. I've been very lucky to have a number of mentors, and in turn I'm keen to offer advice to others who are on a similar career path.

HR director of the year winners

Karen Beaven

During her time at River Island, HRD Karen Beaven has led a significant transformation programme for the HR function, giving it the full backing of the CEO and senior leadership team. In 2014, Beaven developed an idea for a commercial venture, River Island Style Studio, which she launched and now leads. No surprise, then, that Beaven won HRD of the year 2015, and that River Island also scooped Best HR team: Private sector, Most effective recruitment strategy and the Gold award that year. Post-win, Beaven shared details of Style Studio, and discussed HR's role in spotting commercial opportunities and proactive recruitment in a tough retail climate.



HR's not going out of style

Charlotte Beaven has been in the HR world for over 15 years. She has seen the industry change significantly, but she believes that HR is not going out of style. She has led a significant transformation programme for the HR function at River Island, giving it the full backing of the CEO and senior leadership team. In 2014, Beaven developed an idea for a commercial venture, River Island Style Studio, which she launched and now leads. No surprise, then, that Beaven won HRD of the year 2015, and that River Island also scooped Best HR team: Private sector, Most effective recruitment strategy and the Gold award that year. Post-win, Beaven shared details of Style Studio, and discussed HR's role in spotting commercial opportunities and proactive recruitment in a tough retail climate.

Kathryn Austin

In 2010, when Kathryn Austin joined, Pizza Hut hadn't had a profitable year since 2006. It's a very different story now. "It's great to see an HR person responsible for another area of the business and make a demonstrable contribution to business success," was one HR peer's comment in voting for Austin to win HR director of the year 2016, which she scooped. Another described her as "an exemplar for HR". In the profile piece in the May 2016 edition of the magazine, she shared insight on empowering leaders, Pizza Hut's hospitality business management degree, and her dual HR/marketing role.

When the role hits your eye...

There's a big difference between a job and a career. It's not just about the money, it's about the passion. It's about the challenge. It's about the opportunity to make a difference. It's about the chance to grow and learn. It's about the chance to be part of something bigger than yourself.



Eugenio Pirri

The Dorchester Collection has been a regular on our winners lists over the years (scooping four awards in 2014 and HR young talent of the year and Best talent management strategy in 2015). It's also a regular in terms of magazine appearances (including on how to approach talent; improving HR's reputation; and global OD). In this profile from August 2014, HRD of the year 2014 winner Eugenio Pirri spoke on his rise to the top in hospitality, and on the close alignment of Dorchester's people and customer satisfaction strategies.

Take a walk on the wild side

When it comes to HR, there's no one size fits all. It's about the passion. It's about the challenge. It's about the opportunity to make a difference. It's about the chance to grow and learn. It's about the chance to be part of something bigger than yourself.



Fiona Evans

When she joined in 2014, Fiona Evans saw the opportunity to make HR at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) much more strategic and contribute more strongly to the organisation's critical overriding purpose. Winning plaudits from both employees and the senior team at ZSL, Evans has overseen the HR department's evolution since then, as it's expanded far beyond limited operational activities. "[Evans] is honest, fair and trustworthy, and I have had personal experience of her fantastic ability to mediate and resolve difficult situations with a firm fairness," reported one employee in voting for her to win 2017's award. We took a fascinating walk on the wild side to find out more for our September issue.

Financial Services Compensation Scheme

When David Blackburn first joined FSCS as head of people in March 2013, he found an organisation highly resistant to change, with the HR department stuck in a transactional rut. Fast forward three years and it's a much more lively, agile and engaged place to be, making the HR department a worthy winner of our Best HR team award in 2016, and a fascinating case study in the November 2016 magazine.

All pieces can be found at hrmagazine.co.uk

Frequently asked questions...

What is the deadline to submit an entry to the HR Excellence Awards 2018?

You must submit your entry/entries by Monday 5 March 2018.

How much does it cost to enter?

If you enter before 19 January 2018 you can enter at a discounted rate.

For private companies, it costs £350 (increasing to £385 after 19 January).

For public and not-for-profit companies, it costs £175 (increasing to £195 after 19 January). For private companies entering more than one award, each subsequent entry costs £195.

How many entries may I submit?

There is no limit on the number of entries you may submit. However, you should avoid duplicating entries across multiple categories, tailoring the entry specifically to the criteria of the category you are entering.

May I submit on behalf of a client?

Yes, although their permission must be obtained and evidence of this shown. You will be asked to provide contact details of a senior person at the organisation. We may or may not contact this person. Entries which do well are ones which get to the heart of the story and demonstrate the impact the strategy has had. If you are a supplier and entering on behalf of a client, please ensure that the entry is written from the perspective of the HR team of the client and get as much involvement from them as possible.

Can I enter if I am an international company?

International companies can enter the Best HR Strategy Overseas *and* Most Innovative Deployment of HR Technology. International companies who have a presence in (have offices in or do a lot of business in) the UK are able to enter any category.

What is the difference between the entry document and supporting material?

The main component of your entry is the entry document. All key information listed in the criteria for the category needs to be in the entry document and not in the supporting material. Supporting material is optional and may be submitted in addition to the entry document. It should be used to illustrate/demonstrate what is in the entry document. Supporting material may include, but is not limited to: photographs, testimonials, graphs/data, videos (please send a USB stick), and hard copies of any printed material (e.g. brochures). While supporting material is important and helpful to the judges, we ask that you keep these documents to a reasonable amount.

What happens after I have submitted my entries?

Once you have submitted your entries they will be processed by the awards team, ready for judging. Judging takes place in April and we will announce the shortlist during the week of 9 April.

When are the winners announced?

The winners are announced at a ceremony on Tuesday 26 June, in London. Please keep this date free in your diary.

Who are the judges?

The HR Excellence Awards 2018 will be judged by a panel of judges made up of some of the UK's top HR directors working in leading organisations.

If your question is not answered here, please get in touch with the awards team on 0207 501 6782 or visit www.hrexcellenceawards.com

