

## INTRODUCTION

The Business Culture Awards are in their 10th year, having recognised organisations across diverse sectors for work which contributes to creating and sustaining a positive and productive culture and employee experience.

This entry kit outlines key dates, steps to enter, entry fees, award categories and FAQs for the Awards and MENA Event held in Dubai, UAE.

## ENTRY FEES

**Early Bird Entry** - AED 750 per entry (Entries paid for and submitted by Fri 14th November 2025. Entry content can be edited anytime up until Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026)

**NGO/Non-Profit Organisation Entries** - AED 750 per entry (Entries paid for and submitted by Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026)

**All additional Entries** - AED 1,250 per entry.

**Late entries submitted after 23<sup>rd</sup> January** - AED 1,750 per entry (this includes entries previously paid for but submitted after the deadline).

## STEPS TO ENTER

- 1) Take a look at all of the categories and choose which one(s) are suitable for your company and your work/initiative. There is no limit to the number of categories you can enter.  
- For the Leadership and Team categories you are allowed to enter more than one individual or team.
- 2) If you choose to enter more than one category, or submit more than one entry into a category, you will need to create each separately on the entry platform. You can copy the same or similar content into a different category and the entry platform is set up to make this straightforward.
- 3) When you are ready to start your entry/ies, create an account on the award entry platform [here](#). Start your entry, completing the 4 key questions and saving it in progress. You can go back to it as many times as you like.
- 4) Any supporting documents (videos, recordings, reports etc) can also be uploaded to the platform as part of the submission.
- 5) When you are ready, submit your entry. You will still be able to make any corrections up until the final entry deadline, if you have new evidence. Please make sure that you have checked the suitability of your entry and have read the rules of entry below.
- 6) All entries must be submitted on the award entry platform and must be in English.

## KEY DATES

17 SEPT

AWARD ENTRIES OPEN

23 MAR

FINALISTS REVEALED

14 NOV

EARLY BIRD ENTRIES CLOSE

12 MAY

WINNERS ANNOUNCED  
& AWARDS CEREMONY

23 JAN

FINAL ENTRY DEADLINE

## BENEFITS OF ENTERING

The Business Culture Awards gives forward-thinking organisations a way to celebrate work which sets their employees up to succeed; recognising how employee experience is fundamental to business performance. By strengthening your culture and sharing the outcomes you are:

- Creating a sustainable competitive advantage that is much harder to imitate than your products or services.
- Focusing on your employee engagement, one of the leading metrics of organisational performance.
- Applying an effective channel to promote, within and outside of your sector, how your company values its unique culture and its people, with promotional badges and assets provided by Business Culture Awards for your own marketing. Plus further promotional material generated by the Awards team, with your approval.
- Gaining access to the powerful Business Culture network and community, which comprises leading practitioners and thinkers in HR and business.
- Demonstrating value to your investors or stakeholders by aligning a stand-out customer brand with an exceptional employer brand.

## HINTS AND TIPS

- Incorporate specific examples of activities that took place to support the broader story
- Incorporate targets, results and other metrics, including for example, the number of people involved, ROI, other organisational impact measures etc.
- Clearly describe how your approach has advanced your workplace culture.
- Include the timescales this took place within.
- Avoid jargon and keep in mind that the judges won't have the same inside knowledge of your business as you do.
- You can edit your entry after submitting, up until the entry deadline.
- Utilise the 'copy' feature to duplicate your entry and adjust the category as needed.
- Write concisely; and tell a powerful and engaging story.
- Adhere to the word limits, which are designed to give you sufficient space to fully explain your entry.
- Use supporting evidence to strengthen the narrative of your entry.

## RULES FOR ENTERING

- All Entry/ies should be completed on our Award Entry platform [here](#) by 23:59pm on 23rd January 2026.
- You may include up to a maximum of 3 supporting documents/materials which with each submission and these may include videos, reports, recordings, photos, etc. There is no limit to the file size you can upload, but for very large video files you may find it easier to share a link to a video-sharing platform such as Vimeo or YouTube instead.
- There is no limit to the number of categories you may enter. In some instances, there may be a reason why you wish to submit the same entry into different categories, and this is admissible. Each Entry should meet the specifications of the chosen category(ies).
- If you are a Consultancy entering a category on behalf of a client, for any categories except Consultancy of the Year, you must have written consent beforehand and include their company name within your Entry. There is no requirement to send evidence of this consent to Business Culture Awards MENA. You must also accept that this client will be named as the Winner/Highly Commended/Finalist, jointly with yourself. (For the Consultancy of the Year category, you do not need to have client permission or to name the client).
- For each entry, the name of the organisation stated will be the name we use for all communications, on the website, trophies, certificates etc.
- As an entrant, you agree to full co-operation with our chosen judges.
- The Finalists shortlisted will be announced on 23rd March and all entrants will receive an individual email communication.
- The judges' decisions are final and no changes will be made, or discussions had, regarding their decision. We will provide brief judging comments for each entry.
- The Award prize is non-transferable, non-negotiable and no cash replacement will be provided.
- Footage, including videos and photos, may be used by the Business Culture Awards MENA and/or our media partner, where appropriate.
- All Business Culture Awards MENA Winners, Highly Commended organisations or Finalists may promote themselves as such, where they deem appropriate. Business Culture Awards MENA will supply promotional, visual and copy assets to all participants for this purpose.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

This award is open to organisations that have achieved a transformation or turnaround in their Business Culture and can demonstrate outstanding results.

- Entrants will show how their organisations have transformed culturally, the reasons for this transformation, and the positive impact this has had on the business.
- Judges will be looking for how these organisations have enacted the change, and how and why the transformed culture has advanced the confidence of stakeholders.
- This may include achievements in strategic (re)alignment, stakeholder management, organisational design, and development, change management, and process modification, and how these aspects relate to culture.
- As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BUSINESS CULTURE DEFINITION AWARD

This award is open to organisations that are intentionally focussing on culture for the first time and aligning this with their strategy and ambition.

- This category would suit smaller organisations, such as start-ups and scale-ups, who may not as yet have had a clear focus on culture and its impact on performance.
- Entries will describe the desired culture; how this has been arrived at; the steps that have been undertaken to introduce and embed the right values and behaviours in the organisation and the results that have been seen.
- Submissions may also focus on the challenge of sustaining a positive and productive culture during growth, for example, if headcount is increasing rapidly. They may focus on the challenges of recruiting the right talent into the organisation, and whether to hire for cultural-fit, taking into account that skills shortages may also be an issue.
- As well as describing how the new culture has evolved, submissions should fully outline the journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BUSINESS CULTURE BUILDER AWARD

This award is for organisations who have previously built a culture which effectively supports their people and strategy but who have taken further significant strides forward on their journey towards becoming an exceptional workplace.

- Submissions in this category are likely to describe two or more different areas of focus, eg. wellbeing, flexible working, learning and development, CSR, which have been developed and which have given rise to a cultural shift and a positive impact on business results.
- The ambition, activities and results should be clearly outlined and entrants should describe where these sit in the context of becoming an exceptional workplace.
- In this category, judges will expect to see step-changes to success, as opposed to wholesale culture transformation.
- As well as describing how the culture of the business has changed, submissions should also fully outline the journey of cultural evolution, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### LEADING WITH PURPOSE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

Purpose-led businesses are proven to perform better; with purpose driving growth. A common vision and ambition stems from the central brand purpose, highlighting clearly to employees not only what they need to do but why they are doing it. During times of change and uncertainty, this purpose is strongly anchoring for employees, customers and other stakeholders, fostering a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility.

- This award is open to organisations whose renewed purpose has enabled leaders to more effectively connect with their teams; offered a lens for decision-making and enabled them to learn and adapt during change.
- Entrants will have significantly strengthened their purpose, successfully articulating this and connecting it to business strategy.
- Judges will be looking to see the impact of this reinvigorated purpose on the confidence and trust of employees and other stakeholders and the business benefits in terms of engagement, retention and other outcomes.

## BEST BRAND & VALUES INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award recognises organisations that have positioned their unique workplace culture at the heart of their employer brand and/or their consumer brand.

- They will have clearly articulated values, and will be able to demonstrate how these have positively impacted on mindsets and behaviours within the organisation and/or in interactions with customers.
- Behaviour change should be sustained and consistent and have had an impact on business outcomes.
- Our judges will look to understand how the brand and values have been developed and how they have advanced; for example, how the employer brand has been aligned with the consumer brand(s). Evidence should be provided of the benefits they have brought to the organisation; for example, the impact on employer visibility and reputation; on the attraction, retention and engagement of staff and customers.
- Finally, entrants should clearly demonstrate the journey to achieving this strong brand and values, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## BUSINESS CULTURE-INNOVATION AWARD

Innovation is crucial to sustainable organisational performance and to the engagement of employees and other stakeholders. When employees feel empowered, heard, trusted and psychologically safe to experiment, put forward new ideas, or challenge existing ways of doing things; creativity is unlocked; inefficiencies are tackled and sustainable performance can be realised.

- This award will be given to an organisation that has delivered an effective and inspirational innovation initiative, or taken important steps to build a culture of innovation, with outstanding results.
- Entrants will show how their organisational culture has enabled innovation activities to take place and to achieve impact and success.
- Judges will be looking to understand how the focus on innovation has been enacted, and how this has inspired stakeholders.
- As well as describing how the culture of the business has changed, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## CATEGORIES

### FUTURE WORKPLACE READINESS AWARD

Increased globalisation, a world in constant flux, an ageing population, and changes in consumer needs and habits are having a huge impact on our lives both in and outside the workplace. The adoption of new technologies and AI are changing our working lives and practices beyond recognition. To be ready for the future of work, we need greater workforce resilience and ability to change; a people-first approach to technology adoption; creativity in how we recruit and retain talent; a more agile approach to learning; better ways of engaging our workforce across geographical or generational boundaries; and an understanding of the root causes of stress and burn-out in an ever-more demanding world.

- This award recognises a focus on future workplace readiness, and how a strong cultural foundation enables successful change, growth and learning.
- Entrants may describe one or more different aspects of their work, for example the realignment of culture and strategy; a people-first approach to implementing new technology; initiatives to upskill/reskill talent to meet changing business needs; connection and collaboration across geographies, or with hybrid and remote workforces.
- The judges will be keen to grasp how future of work readiness is driving cultural change; and how the confidence and engagement of employees and other stakeholders has been maintained, or even strengthened, through change.
- Submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome as well as the business benefits that have arisen.

## BEST CSR/CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, and a focus on Social concerns and impact, has the power to capture the hearts and minds of employees and other stakeholders, by giving even greater meaning and purpose to their efforts. We have seen a rise in the prominence of ESG (Environmental, Social, Community and Governance) issues and reporting, with the aim of encouraging companies to act more responsibly. Shifts in this area go to the very core of company culture.

- This category is open to companies who have put CSR, Community, or Sustainability priorities at the heart of how they operate and seen outstanding results.
- The judges are keen to grasp how organisations have enacted this focus on communities, the environment, or both, and how this has had a direct and positive impact on culture.
- They would also like to understand any business benefits which have arisen.
- As well as describing the impact on the culture of the business, submissions should also fully outline the journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## BEST DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVE

DE&I approaches seek to create meaningful, systemic change toward more equitable environments. Organisations making a sustained effort in this area recognise the importance of diversity in high-performing organisations and teams and understand the need to create an environment where diverse groups are respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.

- In this category, we'll be looking for organisations who have put diversity, equity and inclusion at the heart of their Business Culture with outstanding results.
- Judges will be looking to understand how this focus on diversity, equity and inclusion has been enacted, and how it has resulted in a reinvigorated organisational culture that has the renewed confidence of employees and other stakeholders.
- As well as describing how the culture of the business has changed, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST LEARNING INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

Effective learning has the capacity to inspire individuals to do their best work and can have a transformative effect on the organisation as a whole. Innovation in learning and a blended approach to how interventions are delivered have enabled learning to be more effectively embedded, leading to true, long term mindset and behaviour change.

- Entrants in this category will be able to show how their learning approach has impacted on organisational culture and the business benefits that have arisen as a result of the initiative as a whole; for example upskilling/reskilling employees in line with new business priorities.
- Judges will be looking to understand how this focus on learning has been enacted, resulting in a reinvigorated culture that has the renewed confidence of employees and other stakeholders.
- As well as describing how the culture of the business has changed, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BEST WELLBEING INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award recognises organisations that have advanced employee health and wellbeing, increasing engagement and strengthening business culture as a result. The focus could be on physical, mental or financial wellbeing or a blend of all of these.

- Entrants may, for example, consider wellbeing in the context of the cost of living crisis, the introduction of different ways of working, or the increase in stress and burn-out in organisations.
- The judges will look to understand how wellbeing initiatives have been developed and advanced, and the impact this has had.
- Evidence should be provided of the benefits it has brought to the organisation; for example, the impact on the attraction, retention and engagement of staff.
- Finally, entrants should clearly demonstrate the initiative's journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST WORKING PRACTICES INITIATIVE

When, where and how we work has been in flux in recent years, with more geographically dispersed workforces; advanced technologies; variations to traditional working weeks; and to how teams come together. This is transforming the rhythm of work, how decisions get made and how engaged people feel. In this context, the need to sustain a positive culture is hugely important.

- This category is open to companies who have introduced different ways of working and have aligned their culture accordingly. Examples include: connecting remote, hybrid or frontline teams more effectively; introducing more agile ways of working; reimagining physical workspaces; or introducing more flexible approaches to the working week.
- The judges are keen to grasp how employees themselves have helped to shape their new ways of working, how the culture has supported the change and how the resulting practices have had a positive impact on employee engagement.
- They will also be keen to understand the business benefits that have arisen as a result.
- As well as describing how the culture of the business has been impacted, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BEST EMPLOYEE VOICE INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

Harnessing employee voice is critical to building trusting relationships between employers and their people and ultimately a positive workplace culture. Appropriate, timely response from an organisation's leaders to the issues or ideas generated formally or informally is a key driver of organisational success, with the organisation and its employees experiencing greater engagement, innovation, productivity and wellbeing.

- In this category, entrants will demonstrate different channels through which employee voice is generated; including how diversity of thought and opinion is sought.
- They may describe how psychological safety has been created as an enabling factor for people to speak up.
- Judges will be looking to understand how this reflects and enhances organisational culture and how it has generated business impact such as new innovations, retention and engagement uplift.

### BUSINESS CULTURE LEADERSHIP AWARD

In this category, we'll be looking for professionals who have created or advanced an exceptional Business Culture, and have demonstrated both passion and commitment to creating the type of workplace or community which has the confidence of staff and other stakeholders.

- This can focus on an individual leader, two/more leaders, or the whole Leadership Team.
- Judges will be looking for evidence of business culture impact, and how this/these individual(s) in particular contributed.
- They will need to understand their approach and values, and the reasons why they have been so influential.
- As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, and the individual or individuals' role in this transformation, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BUSINESS CULTURE TEAM AWARD

This category is designed to recognise the power of teams in championing and influencing outstanding Business Culture. Their achievement will have been defining because of their passion and commitment to creating a unique workplace that has the confidence of its stakeholders.

- Judges will be looking for examples of innovative approaches to addressing organisational culture.
- This could include evidence of effective working across boundaries; a quantifiable contribution to organisational achievements; underpinning project work; operational excellence in execution; and measurement of the direct benefits of these aspects.
- Submissions will include insight into the team's values and approach, with the reasons why they have been so influential.
- As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, and the team's role in this transformation, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY &/OR ANALYTICS FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

Technology and analytics have the capacity to transform how things get done day-to-day in businesses large and small.

- This award is open to organisations who can demonstrate a people-first approach to using technology, analytics or both, effectively.
- The judges will be keen to grasp how organisations have enacted this focus on technology and/or analytics; what the cultural impact has been; and how this has enhanced the confidence of stakeholders.
- Entrants will show how their organisations have progressed technology and/or analytics at a cultural level, not an operational one, and what business benefits have arisen as a result. As well as describing how the culture of the business has changed, submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## BEST YOUNG EMIRATI TALENT IN BUSINESS

The Best Young Emirati Talent in Business award recognizes exceptional young Emirati professionals who are driving innovation, leadership, and growth within the UAE's dynamic business landscape. This award celebrates individuals who have demonstrated outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic thinking, and the ability to navigate complex business challenges with vision and resilience.

Nominees for this category are not only excelling in their respective industries but are also shaping the future of business in the UAE through creativity, innovation, and a commitment to excellence. They embody the values of ambition, adaptability, and forward-thinking leadership that are essential in today's fast-evolving market.

This award highlights the achievements of young Emiratis who serve as role models, inspiring peers and future generations to pursue excellence and make meaningful contributions to the nation's economic growth. By honoring these rising stars, the award underscores the importance of nurturing homegrown talent, fostering entrepreneurial initiatives, and celebrating those who are poised to become the next leaders of the UAE's thriving business community.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST COACHING, MENTORING &/OR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

Coaching, mentoring or otherwise developing individuals through ongoing, targeted and specific activities and conversations can have wide-reaching benefits for the organisation and for the individuals. It can develop and retain your critical talent; provide a stabilising factor during change; facilitate knowledge-sharing and skill-transfer; as well as boosting people's performance and motivation or supporting their career transition.

- Judges will be looking to understand how your coaching, mentoring and/or personal development/performance management initiatives have supported the organisation's performance and success and how far-reaching the impact has been in terms of developing a coaching culture or more effective performance.
- You will need to outline all steps of the project, including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps.
- You will also need to outline clearly who has been involved (and include a rationale as to why these people were selected in the case of coaches, coachees and personal development groups).

### BEST LOCAL TALENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Leaders and teams are working ever harder to attract new talent across the GCC, or to develop the skills of their existing people according to changing business needs. The profile of many workforces is more blended, multi-generational and geographically dispersed, making talent strategies for attraction and retention more complex. A positive business culture is key to all segments of the workforce and underpins successful recruitment, onboarding and development of employees.

Two awards will be presented in this category to organisations that have deployed innovative and effective talent leadership strategies. The first award will be for a GCC programme and the second for an Emirati programme.

Judges will be looking to understand how aligning culture with the talent approach has enabled a more successful outcome for the business. Submissions should also fully outline the transformation journey itself, including how any barriers or challenges.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST FEMALE EMIRATI ENTREPRENEUR OR TALENT IN BUSINESS

The Best Female Emirati Entrepreneur or Talent in Business award celebrates the outstanding achievements of Emirati women who are redefining the business landscape in the UAE. This accolade recognizes women who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit, driving growth and inspiring positive change within their industries. Nominees for this award are distinguished by their ability to turn vision into impact, whether through launching successful ventures, spearheading transformative projects, or pioneering initiatives that challenge conventions. They exemplify resilience, strategic thinking, and creativity, setting new benchmarks for excellence in the business community. This award highlights the invaluable contributions of female Emirati leaders who serve as role models, inspiring peers and future generations to pursue ambitious goals with confidence and determination. By honoring these trailblazers, the award underscores the UAE's commitment to empowering women, fostering diversity in business, and celebrating those who are shaping a vibrant, inclusive, and innovative economy.

### BEST INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award is open to organisations with considerable global reach that have undertaken international Business and Community Culture work with outstanding results.

- Entrants will show how their organisation has acted across geographical boundaries at a cultural level, and what business benefits have arisen as a result.
- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives; leading with purpose; instigating new values and changing mindsets and behaviours. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- The judges will be looking for achievements in these areas, with focus on delivering success through a business culture that transcends borders.
- Submissions should clearly outline all project steps including planning, implementation, measurement and results.
- Judges will also look to understand the change journey, including how any challenges and barriers were overcome.

### ALIGNING CULTURE AWARD

This award is open to organisations that have aligned the cultures of different organisations, divisions, functions or teams, creating greater cohesion, collaboration and purpose, with a demonstrable impact on business performance. Entries in this category could describe:

- M&A activity, including bringing together disparate cultures and working practices and effectively engaging stakeholders.
- Shifts from a silo/tribal mentality to one of trust and collaboration between different areas of a business, including how leaders and teams have struck a balance between the prevailing cultures, mindsets and behaviours in order to create the shift.
- “Subcultures” within a business and how these have driven high-performance of individual teams or functions, whilst maintaining a common sense of purpose.
- Judges will look to understand both how the organisational culture has changed, as well as the change journey itself, including how any challenges and barriers were overcome.

### BEST LARGE ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This category is for companies with more than 2,500 employees that have undertaken a substantial initiative, or important step-changes across a variety of areas, which have had a demonstrable impact on their Business Culture.

- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives; leading with purpose; instigating new values and changing mindsets and behaviours. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- Judges will be seeking to understand all aspects of the work including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps.
- They will assess how these organisations have advanced their workplace culture, and what the business benefits of this have been.
- Entrants may include achievements in areas including strategic alignment, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and advancing innovation.
- As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## CATEGORIES

### BEST MEDIUM ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award is open to companies with 251 – 2,500 employees that have undertaken a substantial initiative, or important step-changes across a variety of areas, which have had a demonstrable impact on their Business Culture.

- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives; leading with purpose; instigating new values and changing mindsets and behaviours. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- Judges will be seeking to understand all steps of the project including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps.
- They will assess how these organisations have advanced their workplace culture, and what the business benefits of this have been.
- Entrants may include achievements in areas including strategic alignment, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and advancing innovation.
- As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BEST PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award is open to Public Sector organisations of any size that have undertaken a substantial initiative, or important step-changes across a variety of areas, which have had a demonstrable impact on their Business Culture. This covers publicly-funded organisations including Government departments and local authorities.

- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives; leading with purpose; instigating new values and changing mindsets and behaviours. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- Judges will be seeking to understand all steps of the project including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps. They will assess how these organisations have advanced their workplace culture, and what the organisational benefits of this have been.
- Entrants may include achievements in areas including strategic alignment, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and advancing innovation. As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BEST SMALL ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award is open to companies with 1 – 250 employees that have undertaken a substantial initiative, or important step-changes across a variety of areas, which have had a demonstrable impact on their Business Culture. They may have enacted a focus on culture for the first time.

- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including instigating a new purpose and values; changing mindsets and behaviours; and DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- Judges will be seeking to understand all steps of the project including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps. They will assess how these organisations have advanced their workplace culture, and what the business benefits of this have been.
- Entrants may include achievements in areas including strategic alignment, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and advancing innovation.
- Submissions should fully outline the journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

### BEST NGO/NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION FOR BUSINESS CULTURE

This award is open to all NGOs, including Non-Profit, Not-for-Profit and charitable organisations, of any size that have undertaken a substantial initiative, or important step-changes across a variety of areas, which have had a demonstrable impact on their Business Culture.

- Entrants in this category may reference one or more of a diverse range of programmes, including DEI, wellbeing, learning and talent initiatives; leading with purpose; instigating new values and changing mindsets and behaviours. They may also describe wholesale business culture transformation.
- Judges will be seeking to understand all steps of the project including planning, implementation, measurement, outcome, and next steps. They will assess how these organisations have advanced their workplace culture, and what the organisational benefits of this have been.
- Entrants may include achievements in areas including strategic alignment, leadership development, stakeholder engagement, improving communication, and advancing innovation. As well as describing how your organisational culture has changed, submissions should fully outline the transformation journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## CATEGORIES

### BUSINESS CULTURE CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR AWARD

The partnership of consultancies and practitioners can yield transformative results, and this award recognises the contribution of consultancies to Business Culture change initiatives.

- It will be presented to a consultancy that has enabled outstanding results in Business Culture work on a major client project or selection of projects.
- Entrants will show how they have worked hand-in-hand with their clients to deliver projects with a maximum cultural, rather than solely operational, impact.
- Judges will be looking for client testimonials, key metrics and why the consultancy is said to have excelled in their work. They will consider evidence of solution appropriateness, innovation, business impact, and client satisfaction.
- The consultancy must have their client(s) permission to enter but, unlike the other award categories, this award will be made in the consultancy's name only. As well as describing how organisational culture has changed, and the reasons for this transformation, entrants should clearly demonstrate the journey, including how any barriers or challenges were overcome.

## FAQs

### **Who are your judges?**

Our judges are senior leaders in fields spanning company culture, employee experience and engagement, leadership development, wellbeing, DE&I, talent and learning. They are practitioners in these fields, devising the people agenda in their own organisations and with extensive experience in what good looks like. Many of our judges are previous winners themselves.

Judging is by invitation only but please contact [mena@businesscultureawards.com](mailto:mena@businesscultureawards.com) if you're keen to be considered and are a senior practitioner in one or more of these fields.

### **What's the background to the Awards and how long have they been going?**

In 2025, we celebrated the 10th Annual Business Culture Awards and the companies taking the greatest strides in building an exceptional company culture. The MENA Awards launched in 2025 to focus specifically on business culture work throughout this region. The Awards are run from our Business Culture Awards Dubai office; in partnership with TKOP World and CEO Premal Patel. The Awards and Events were originally co-founded in the UK by Tim Pointer & Cath Longfield. Tim is a Chief People Officer with 25 years' leadership experience, directing business transformation (double-digit growth, mergers, acquisitions & IPO) in global organisations. His passion for exceptional culture as the foundation for accelerating business performance has resulted in previous recognition for him and his teams and the desire to promote greater study, celebration and recognition for company culture. Cath brings 25 years' cross-sector marketing expertise including B2B, Not-for-Profit, retail and financial services.

### **How long does a submission need to be and what's the format?**

Entries are limited to 1,500 words (equivalent to 2 sides A4), answering the 4 questions on the award entry platform. Q1 is the opportunity you recognised (250 words). Q2 is the approach and activities you undertook in response (500 words). Q3 the results you saw, both quantitative stats and qualitative results such as staff testimonials (500 words). Q4 outlines next steps (250 words), in other words, where you are going next with this project or whether your work sparked a new initiative. You can include up to 3 supporting documents which strengthen your entry overall.

### **Can we include any supporting materials along with our submission and what format can these be in?**

Up to 3 supporting docs can be added, such as videos, reports, slides, data spreadsheets. A well-written entry about an innovative approach which has seen strong results, with no supporting documents, will score more highly than additional documents included in an attempt to bolster a submission which is not written up clearly or does not include evidence of success.

There is no maximum file size, though you may wish to share a link to a video-sharing platform or your website for very large video files (over 100MB), instead of the video file itself. A sensible and succinct approach is advised for supporting materials – remember that judges are senior leaders in busy roles. They have given their commitment to thoroughly and critically review each of the entries but 50-slide presentations or reports are unlikely to score as well as supporting evidence which is clear and to-the-point.

## FAQs

### **Are entries penalised if they don't come with additional supporting material?**

No, not at all. It is more important that you outline a succinct story across the four key entry form questions, starting with a clear purpose and objectives for the work that you undertook. The judges want to understand how you delivered on the goals you have set out, including an outline of the plan from initiation through to implementation, who was involved and why this plan was appropriate. Finally they want to understand the results, including the impact on employees, employee experience and culture, and on the business.

A narrative that is well-articulated, including these elements, does not necessarily need additional supporting documents, though if you have them and you feel you strengthen the submission, then you are welcome to include them.

### **Can we deviate from the word count or will this be penalised?**

Entrants are required to adhere to the word count (as detailed above) for each of the 4 Entry Questions. The award entry platform does not permit the addition of extra words for any of the sections. You may use your supporting documents to include additional evidence if you wish.

Try to avoid being significantly short of the word count in any of the sections too, as this may affect your overall score.

### **Do I have to complete the entry questions within the entry platform or can I create a different style of document to tell our story?**

Most people opt to complete the entry questions within the platform and many attach one or more supporting documents. It is permissible however to create a separate entry document which is more “designed” and containing images. Please upload this as the first of your attachments and clearly label it as “Entry Form”. As you are allowed up to 3 supporting documents, your maximum attachments in this case will increase to 4. NB. You will still need to enter one or more characters, eg. ‘xxx’ into each of the 4 Entry Question fields, in order to be able to submit the entry.

Please ensure that we have all the details requested for your submission, including entrant(s) details and the category and title of your entry. Please also ensure that you address each of the Entry Questions and adhere to the word counts. If you give little evidence for one of the questions, you may lose marks, as judges are marking to specific criteria.

### **Can images be included on the entry form?**

Absolutely. Alongside the fields for your entry, you can attach one ‘supporting image’ for each of the 4 sections. This can be a great way to emphasise parts of your narrative and bring your entry to life. The images are not included within your word count, or as one of your 3 attachments.

### **I'm not sure which of the categories my initiative fits with best?**

It can be really helpful in this case to have a short call to discuss with the team who are very experienced in guiding entrants as to which of the categories is the best match. We also adapt categories each year, including launching new ones based on trends that have been observed in the workplace. If you would like advice from the team, please contact them at [+971 50 394 9697](tel:+971503949697) or at [mena@businesscultureawards.com](mailto:mena@businesscultureawards.com)

## FAQs

### **Is there a limit to how many categories you can enter?**

No, if you have strong stories to tell in a number of areas, and have seen the impact of these initiatives, you can put forward any number of submissions. Often more than one category is applicable to a project, or organisation. Many companies opt to put forward more than one submission. They either submit the same entry in more than one category; the same entry with some edits; or they create different material for each of the categories they have selected. Please bear in mind that payment is per category entered, with discounts for multiple submissions. We also have an extensive judging panel; therefore a variety of judges would be assigned to scoring and commenting on your entries across the different categories.

### **Can you give me any advice on creating a great entry? What do the judges look for specifically?**

You can refer to 'Tips for Entry', on page 2 in your Entry Kit, or on the entry platform. Judges are marking to criteria and will want to clearly understand the steps you have taken from outset to review and whether the work has delivered on the intended outcomes. They'll be looking for evidence of results and measurability and that the aspect you have improved has delivered value in your organisation.

They'll also be assessing how your culture is improved or advanced by this work and how it aligns with organisational strategy and performance. Finally they'll be thinking about whether your approach is creative and whether it sets contemporary standards from which others can learn. The Judges are aware of word counts for entries.

If you are drafting the entry and are unsure about the best way to tell an engaging story, grammar, or your written style, we'd advise getting an internal comms colleague, or similar, to read over your entry to make sure it's punchy and engaging for the reader.

Remember that the judges assessing are unlikely to know your company and the sector you operate in, so it always makes sense to give a flavour of this to set the scene at the start of your entry.

### **Is there a set timeframe that the work submitted must have taken place in? Eg. the last 12 months**

There isn't a hard and fast rule here, as people's sectors, challenges and objectives are so different. The most important thing is that whatever the time frame for the work, you'll need to include evidence of impact. A mix of quantitative and qualitative results are advisable, with a range of different metrics and testimonials.

While some companies choose to submit a longer-term and slower process of wholesale transformation, over a number of years, other submissions focus on initiatives with a shorter implementation phase, with results being seen much more rapidly. Companies and teams' responses to a crisis is a good example of the latter.

### **Will we need to make a presentation if we are shortlisted?**

There is no requirement for our entrants or finalists to make a presentation at the current time and entries are judged wholly on the basis of the written evidence that you submit. Judging takes place over February - March and entries are marked to the criteria outlined above.

## FAQs

**If we are completing more than 1 submission, do they all need to be completed at the same time?**

It's completely up to you. Sometimes entrants prefer to complete everything in one go, while others prefer to submit each of their entries as and when they are approved internally, or by their clients. Our award entry platform allows you to work on multiple entries at one time, allowing you to save your progress as you go. You can submit your entries at different times, ensuring all are submitted by the deadline of 23rd January 2026. If you decide to submit multiple entries at one time, you can add all entries into your cart and make your payment. It's always helpful if you can let the team know that you have other submissions to follow and for which categories. This helps with our planning and allocation to Judges, particularly if your entries will be arriving very close to the deadline.

**Where do I send my entry when I'm ready to submit?**

Entries should be completed on our award entry platform [here](#). You will need to Register an account, Start your entries (including saving in-progress), then Submit them to be judged. You will receive an automatic confirmation of submission by email, remember to check your junk folder if this hasn't arrived.

**How do we make payment?**

Once your entries have been submitted, you will be directed to your Cart on the award entry platform where you can proceed with credit card payment. Your receipt will be emailed. Alternatively you can request an invoice - select 'Invoice' under Payment Method, then 'Proceed to payment' and download the invoice created. Your payment must have cleared before the final entry deadline. Your entry cannot be submitted for judging until payment has been received.

**We have 500 employees in the MENA region but significantly more than this globally, should we be entering the Medium or Large organisation award category?**

Generally you should enter according to the number of employees you have across the whole of your organisation. However, if an area of your business can be taken separately (for example, the MENA business, or a subsidiary business within a Group) and the entry pertains to this part of the business alone, it would make more sense in this case to take into account the lesser number of employees.

**What kind of promotion will we receive if we are shortlisted or win an award?**

We promote winners via our social media channels: we're Business Culture Awards MENA on LinkedIn and Instagram. Be sure to follow us there! We send finalists and winners digital collateral to use for their own promotion, for example, on their email, social media, blogs and website. We promote [case studies](#) for winners and highly commended organisations. We also run Business Culture Connected in-person and virtual events where a range of different organisations share their approaches and results.

## FAQs

**Will the information I submit in our entry be kept confidential and will any information be shared as a case study without my approval?**

All of our entrants can be assured that any information they disclose is kept entirely confidential; according to the Confidentiality documents signed by each judge and member of the BCA team. These are the only individuals who would be party to any information that our entrants share as part of their submissions. We may draft your winning case study for wider promotion, however, we never publish case studies without prior approval of the content and you can also advise if you do not wish for a case study to be shared.

**If I'm entering jointly with a Client, do I need to name them on the entry?**

If you are a Consultancy entering a category on behalf of a client, for any categories except Consultancy of the Year, you must have their written consent beforehand and include their company name within your Entry. There is no requirement to send evidence of this consent to Business Culture Awards MENA. You must also accept that this client will be named as the Winner/Highly Commended/Finalist, jointly with yourself. (For the Consultancy of the Year category, you do not need to have client permission or to name the client).

## SCORING CRITERIA

Your written entry will be marked by our independent judging panel. They will want to see evidence of the following and will assign scores accordingly.

### Objective

- The background and opportunity you recognised
- The purpose of the work you decided to undertake

### Approach

- The Plan (from initiation through implementation)
- How you delivered on your objective(s) and the plan
- Who was involved
- Why was it innovative or creative
- Why the plan was appropriate

### Results

- How these were measured
- Take up and engagement
- Impact on employees and employee experience
- To what extent has initiative/work advanced workplace culture
- Impact on business results

## NEED ANY HELP?

The Business Culture Awards Team are on hand to help with any other questions.

Please WhatsApp or call [+971 50 394 9697](tel:+971503949697) or email [mena@businesscultureawards.com](mailto:mena@businesscultureawards.com)

Thank you for taking part and we look forward to hearing what you've been working on!