

PRWeek
best places
to work

JUDGES TIPS FOR YOUR ENTRY





Malini Bhargav
Senior Consultant, Blurred.

What are you looking for in winning entries?

My top tip is to bring out your colleagues' voices in your submission to demonstrate how you are creating a culture that enables your people to thrive.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be honest, show how you are pushing to make change, even if you aren't there yet. It's the commitment to make your culture stronger that is key.



Alison Clarke
Principal, Alison Clarke Consulting

What are you looking for in winning entries?

A commitment to the continued journey of being the best place to work - and empowering and driving ownership of this across the company. Talent and people management, learning and development are very important aspects of what makes a consultancy a great place to work. But the real responsibility for making it a reality sits outside the talent function and must be owned and championed by the leadership.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

If you get through to the final interview stage, think carefully about who you field.



Jonny Curtis
Global Chief Commercial Officer, Grayling

What are you looking for in winning entries?

The best advocates of your business are not always the most senior people. Make sure the judges hear a variety of voices and perspectives about what makes your business so special.



Katie Gabriel
Senior Account Director, Instinctif Partners

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I am interested to see how organisations are broadening access to the communications industry in an effort to make it more diverse. I am also interested to see how agencies are adapting to new workplace challenges & opportunities, such as the use of generative AI.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Tangible examples and evidence that offer a real sense of what it's like to work at your organisation.



Emma Ross
Co-Founder and Chief People Officer, Missive

What are you looking for in winning entries?

A genuine balance of demonstrable care for people and dynamic, exciting career opportunities. Innovative ways to both cushion the strains of working in the PR world and ensure diversity in all its forms.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Write from the heart. Tell us why you do the things you do. Be honest about the challenges and how you've overcome them. Show us your passion.



Rachel Friend
Executive Chair, Harvard

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Agencies who challenge the status quo, who are brave, who tackle the important issues, and live their values to help their people and clients achieve more than they thought possible.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Ask yourself, what sets you apart and makes you the only choice to win this year.



Holly Legg
Director, Alfred

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Passion and dedication to truly make their agency a better place to work. Commitment to their team, and data to support their progress.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be honest, show how you are pushing to make change, even if you aren't there yet. It's the commitment to make your culture stronger which is key.



Kirsty Leighton
Group CEO, Milk & Honey PR

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Meaningful insight into what makes your business such a rewarding workplace. Let's hear from different voices, not just leaders.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Tell the story. Help us to understand what makes your workplace so special. What can others learn from you, and how do you measure?



Jo Grierson
Managing Director, MSL UK

What are you looking for in winning entries?

An agency that is thriving through a motivated and happy workforce delivering ground breaking work for a bunch of awesome clients.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

What are you doing to change our world?



Giles Peddy
Managing Director UK & Europe, SourceCode Communications

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Looking for agencies that are going beyond the standard and building truly inclusive and innovative teams and cultures.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

If it's not defining, don't include it.



Jo Carr
Co-founder and Chief Client Officer, Hope&Glory PR

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I'm looking for agencies who can demonstrate they can do brilliant work while still being a brilliant place to work, and one isn't sacrificed for the other.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Share the things that make your agency distinct and are really game-changing for your people.



Laura Sibley
Managing Director, Consumer, Brands2Life

What are you looking for in winning entries?

As a judge, I'm always inspired to learn more about changemakers in our industry - the brilliant workplaces that are putting their employees at the forefront.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Take time to look at why your workplace stands out - the ethos, the inspiration, the beliefs. And listen to your employees on their insight and thoughts too. No doubt you'll have created brilliance but what makes you stand out above others?



Brad Taylor
Director of Consulting, AWA

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Inclusive learning and development that has demonstrable links to the broader business strategy, with tangible benefits for the organization and individuals.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Think about why this training came about and any innovative ideas that became part of the solution. Don't forget to include any measurements of success for both the business and those taking part.



Amandeep Turna
Account Director, Harvard

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Authenticity will always shine through in entries, so be clear, direct, and provide evidence for how your employees feel like you're creating a supportive and nurturing place for them to work.



Nicole Yost
Founder and CEO, Spotted Tiger

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Evidence of real impact for employees and clients. New and original initiatives to support teams. Evidence of making the right decisions to prioritise staff wellbeing, learning, and development.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Show outcomes of your initiatives.



Yasmin Hemmings
Head of Programmes, Creative Access

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I'm looking for tangible examples of what organizations are doing to support their diversity & inclusion goals and foster a sense of belonging amongst all staff.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

I'd love to see what entrants are doing to disrupt the status quo and how they're tracking impact.



Barbara Phillips

Director/Chair, Brownstone Communications/Race and Ethnicity Equity Board

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Entries that show the best places to work are those that are wholly inclusive, where the leadership is not afraid to have the difficult conversation around topics such as ethnicity and gender pay gaps and any form of discrimination.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

If you are going to talk about inclusivity, have proof. There are nine protected characteristics; learn them and show how your firm is a best place to work because you consider employee differences as an asset rather than a weapon.



Ishtar Schneider

Global People, Inclusion & Diversity Communications Lead, Mars Petcare

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Creativity, committed leadership, and something that really challenges the status quo with tangible outcomes. "Business as usual" isn't enough, especially when it comes to DEI.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

You're all great storytellers. Don't forget to use that skill when crafting your entries. Make it easy for us to see why people cared, what impact you made, and why you should win.



Ethan Spibey

Senior Practice Director, Brands2Life

What are you looking for in winning entries?

IMPACT! Demonstrating that it's not about a corporate story, but the experiences of those across the organisation and the change the business is making in and for communities often excluded and marginalised.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be a doer, not a talker. Entries should clearly demonstrate the impact the initiatives are having for people in the organisation and the change the business is making in the widest sense



Ruth Allchurch

Managing Director EMEA, Waggener Edstrom

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Innovation around culture.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be original and tell authentic human stories.



Lynsey Barry
Co-founder and CEO, Five not 10

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Simple and effective ideas that have made a clear and measurable difference to a business. No pool tables or holiday allowances, please :-).

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Get someone outside of your organization to review your submission to make sure it's easy for the judges to really understand what you did and why. A new perspective can often be the difference between a good and a great entry.



Jessie Brooks
Influencer Lead, Golin

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Proof that your working culture and staff wellbeing are at the heart of your operations and reflect in the work that you put out.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

In addition to showing us your highlights and wins, be reflective and honest. If there are areas to be fixed in your workplace, own them and provide context on how this will be addressed.



Katie de Cozar
Director, CCgroup PR

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I'm looking for examples of workplace cultures that are rooted in authenticity. Companies that are truly centering their people in order to drive success. Mandating the attendance on webinars about wellbeing does not equal best place to work status.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Tell stories, be honest, talk about challenges as well as successes. This has been a tough year for the entire industry, and I'm interested to hear how companies have navigated it.



Vicki DeBlasi
Founder & Director, Innovate Comms

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Employees are getting more savvy about companies well-washing; support needs to be practical and tangible. Think about not just what you do to promote positive mental health but also what you're doing to support people in times of crisis.



Paul Hutchings
Founder, fox&cat

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I will be looking for strong evidence that team mental health welfare is being treated as importantly as profits and is integral to a business's operating model.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Businesses that are truly putting mental health front and centre will be able to exemplify how they are helping teams to overcome the unique pressures and stresses in their team. My tip is to showcase evidence that your efforts.



Lauren Kay-Lambert
Co-Managing Director, Shape History

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Trailblazers in this space, who are quite evidently going above and beyond in making positive and measurable industry strides.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Ensure you provide a full narrative without leaving elements of your journey out. Please provide multiple measurable examples of your work!



Myriam Khan
Head of External Communications and Marketing, UK
Thales Transport

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Three things: 1. Authenticity 2. Meaningful action 3. Continuity.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Consider sharing how you're creating a long-term, sustainable ecosystem for positive mental health in the workplace.



Ella McWilliam
Co-Founder + CEO, Full Fat

What are you looking for in winning entries?

An agency that is truly innovating with its people and culture policies, putting its people before profit.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be authentic, be specific, and think big.



Louie St Claire
Founder, Delphi

What are you looking for in winning entries?

I truly believe the agency world has the opportunity to lead in forward-thinking DE&I programs, innovative workplaces, and work environments where people can reach their potential. I'm sure that winning entries will have all of these qualities in spades.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Be authentic and you'll shine.



Joshua Vine-Lott
Senior Account Manager, Aurora Healthcare Communications

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Clear evidence of a people-first culture - one that invests in professional growth, embraces flexibility, nurtures diversity and inclusion, connects employees, and recognises contributions.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Emphasise results and impact. It's not enough to just list policies - show how they make a measurable difference for your people and culture.



Nina Webb
CEO, Brazen

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Every PR agency wants to be 'the best place to work'; why wouldn't we all want to attract and keep the best people in the business? But how do you really stand out and go the extra mile? Include examples of your own special take on culture, innovation, collaboration, retention, reward, community, training & development, DEIB, and ultimately, your god's honest point of difference.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Give us facts and stats; tell us what your team thinks; tell us something new; give yourself loads of time and enjoy writing it.



Jane Fordham
Partner and Head of People, Hanbury Strategy

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Evidence-backed entries that tell the story of people-oriented businesses delivering brilliant work because not in spite of, living by a people-first philosophy. Tick box tactics that are neither innovative nor tailored to the needs of the team and the business won't get my vote.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Make sure your entries address all the criteria and you offer evidence and proof points wherever possible - I'll be looking for a clear strategy and programs that are built and delivered with that specific business in mind.



Jon Gerlis

Head of PR and Policy, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)

What are you looking for in winning entries?

A strong and formal approach to training and development and real examples of how that has positively impacted the organisation, its people, and its clients.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Bring in junior colleagues to talk honestly about the opportunities they have been presented with and have been able to take advantage of.



Cath Taylor

Co Founder, Taylor Herring

What are you looking for in winning entries?

The first sign of a great place to work is happy people. There is an instant vibe to a place full of fulfilled passionate people, who clearly enjoy their working environment. You can feel that in the air.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

How are you really making steps to make the working environment a productive place, where you feel the perspectives of the staff, the ethos of the agency, are combined and make for a place people want to spend a third of their present lives in. Show us initiatives that have thoughtful circle backs to your staff needs & well-being. Show initiatives that have great uptake, not just sound innovative. Show us how your staff feel valued in your agencies.



Stephen Waddington

Managing Partner, Wadds Inc.

What are you looking for in winning entries?

A training program that is aligned with agency values and competency. Use of innovation in learning design and delivery.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Learning and development in the public relations profession is typically limited. If you've invested in developing a formal program, it will almost certainly stand out.



Mike Robb

Co-CEO, Boldspace

What are you looking for in winning entries?

Agencies doing things differently and beyond what is broadly accepted as best practice in making it the best place to work, grow, and build a career.

What top tip would you give to this year's entrants?

Don't forget the small stuff. It's not always the big, often expensive, initiatives and innovations that can make the biggest difference to the workplace - but the sum of lots of interesting ideas put into practice effectively, with a team that is engaged and behind everything you do.