

# Category Criteria

## Start-up Business of the Year

**For businesses registered since 2024 that are having a positive impact and showing solid plans for growth.**

Open to businesses registered since January 2024, the business will have made a positive impact, growing revenues and customer satisfaction. Already gaining traction in either the private or public sector, they must show credible plans for the next 12 months, demonstrating the businesses opportunities for growth and how they plan to scale up.

### Entrants must:

- **Business Growth & Impact** - Demonstrate strong revenue growth, increasing customer satisfaction, and measurable success since launching.
- **Vision Execution** - Show what their next steps are to take their vision further and how they ensure that they are delivering their start-up's vision whilst driving its success.
- **Future Plans & Sustainability** - Provide credible plans for continued growth, including strategies for expansion, market traction, and long-term sustainability.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Family Business of the Year

**For businesses owned and managed by a family.**

Celebrating the best, established family business from any sector, entrants will need to show how they work together to achieve ambitions for growth. As well as strong financial performance, they will deliver against defined family values that shape company culture, decision-making and overall business operations as well as innovation amid changing market conditions.

### Entrants must:

- **Family Values & Company Culture** - Demonstrate how defined family values shape business operations, decision-making, and workplace culture.
- **Business Growth & Financial Performance** - Showcase strong financial results alongside a clear strategy for sustainable growth and long-term success.
- **Innovation & Adaptability** - Highlight how the business has embraced innovation and adapted to changing market conditions to remain competitive and resilient.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Black Country Future Star

**For employees under the age of 25 who have taken strides to stand out.**

We are looking for a Future Star who is under the age of 25 and has made a real difference within a Black Country business. Employers should nominate a person within their organisation who has made a real impact to their company whilst boosting their career and building skills for life.

### Entrants must:

- **Impact on the Business** - Demonstrate how the nominee has made a significant contribution to their company, showcasing achievements and value added.
- **Career Development & Ambition** - Highlight the nominee's dedication to personal and professional growth, including efforts to develop new skills and seize career opportunities.
- **Future Potential & Leadership** - Show how the nominee is building skills for life, demonstrating initiatives, resilience, and the potential to become a future leader in their industry.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Business in the Community

**For businesses who play an active role in the community.**

This award is for the business or organisation which demonstrates a significant and positive commitment in the community. Judges will select the business or organisation which has tackled pressing social issues and can provide a clear understanding of the positive impact their actions have had. Entrants will outline key facts and impact figures to support their submission.

### Entrants must:

- **Community Commitment & Engagement** - Demonstrate a significant and positive commitment to the community, showcasing ongoing efforts to address social issues and support local initiatives.
- **Impact & Measurable Outcomes** - Show how their business has tackled pressing social challenges, with a clear demonstration of the positive impact achieved through specific projects, providing a clear understanding of the impact they have had.
- **Supporting Evidence & Key Metrics** - provide key facts, figures, and measurable impact data to validate their contributions and show the tangible difference their efforts have made.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Catalyst for Creativity

**For a creative business that delivers standout work with measurable impact and innovation.**

This award recognises a creative business that is driving impact through originality and innovation. Entrants should clearly evidence how their work delivers results, showcasing standout projects, measurable outcomes, and how they push boundaries in their field. They will have a strong creative vision, testimonials, varied and growing portfolio, and show the development of a team achieving sustainable and profitable growth.

### Entrants must:

- **Innovative Creative Output** - Demonstrate innovation through bold, high-quality creative work that clearly showcases fresh thinking and pushes the boundaries in their field.
- **Proven Measurable Impact** - Evidence clear, quantifiable outcomes from projects, supported by testimonials, case studies, or strong client feedback.
- **Sustainable & Profitable Growth** - Show consistent growth, long-term client relationships, and investment in developing a skilled, future-focused creative team.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## International Trade Excellence

**For businesses that export goods across international borders.**

For businesses of all sizes and in all sectors, with sound financial management they will excel as an exporter or in assisting others to export goods or services across international borders. Working to a strategic vision, they have developed their markets and overcome issues such as Brexit changes and CBAM to build on our region's exporting heritage.

### Entrants must:

- **Export Excellence & Market Development** – Demonstrate success in exporting goods or services or supporting others in international trade, showcasing market growth and global impact.
- **Strategic Vision & Adaptability** – Think about their strategic vision and highlight how their business has navigated challenges, to build on our region's heritage of strong relationships with international partners and customers.
- **Financial Stability & Regional Contribution** – Show sound financial management and how their export success contributes to the region's economic growth and global reputation.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Manufacturing Champion

**For businesses who manufacture products.**

For businesses of all sizes within the manufacturing sector. As an entrant they must show their contribution and advancement in their field, including efforts to diversify their offering or engage with new markets. They must also demonstrate how they have met the challenges of inflation, energy costs, increases in raw material prices, and the impact of investments in the business as we enter the next chapter of the region's industrial history.

### Entrants must:

- **Industry Contribution & Innovation** - Demonstrate how their business has advanced within the manufacturing sector, including innovations, improvements, or leadership in their field.
- **Market Expansion & Adaptability** - Showcase efforts to diversify offerings, enter new markets, and successfully navigate challenges to build on our region's industrial history.
- **Investment & Future Growth** - Highlight strategic investments made in the business and their impact on long-term growth, efficiency, productivity and sustainability in the evolving industrial landscape.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Professional Service Business of the Year

**For companies that deliver exceptional, measurable value to their customers through innovation, strong client relationships, and sustainable, team-driven growth.**

This award recognises a company that has demonstrated exceptional performance and impact in delivering value to its customers, bringing quantifiable improvement in client performance. They will have testimonials, long-term repeat business, a record in innovation and can show the development of a team achieving sustainable and profitable growth.

### Entrants must:

- **Customer Value & Impact** - Demonstrate how their company has delivered exceptional value to clients, leading to measurable improvements in their performance.
- **Innovation & Long-Term Success** - Showcase a track record of innovation, long-term client relationships, repeat business, and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- **Sustainable Growth & Team Development** - Highlight how their team has contributed to achieving profitable, sustainable growth while maintaining high customer satisfaction.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Sustainability, Technology & Innovation

**For businesses who have embraced new working methods and initiatives and have used them to transform their products or services.**

This award celebrates businesses demonstrating exceptional advancements in sustainability, technology, and innovation, who contribute to positive societal impact. They must be able to demonstrate a new approach to problem-solving, with potential for scalability and future impact, as well as evidence of market adoption and customer satisfaction.

### Entrants must:

- **Innovation & Problem-Solving** - Showcase a ground-breaking approach to addressing a challenge, demonstrating creativity, effectiveness, and real-world application.
- **Scalability & Future Impact** - Provide evidence of how their innovation has the potential to grow, influence wider industries, and create long-term positive change.
- **Market Adoption & Societal Benefit** - Highlight customer satisfaction, market traction, and the broader positive impact their innovation has on society and the environment.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Employee of the Year

**For employees aged 25 or over who demonstrate exceptional performance.**

This award recognises an outstanding employee who is aged 25 or over and has been with the company for at least one year. Nominated by their employer, the recipient must have made a significant impact beyond their daily responsibilities. This could be through exceptional support of a colleague, spearheading a successful fundraising initiative for the company's Charity of the Year (if applicable), or implementing a major improvement to company systems. The change must be meaningful and demonstrate dedication, innovation, and a commitment to excellence in the workplace.

### Entrants must:

- **Significant Impact Beyond Job Role** - Demonstrate how the nominee has gone above and beyond their daily responsibilities to create a meaningful and lasting impact within the company.
- **Initiative & Innovation** - Highlight specific contributions, such as supporting colleagues, leading successful initiatives, or implementing improvements that have positively influenced the business.
- **Commitment to Excellence** - Showcase the nominee's dedication, leadership, and drive to make a difference, reflecting their long-term value to the organisation.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Employer of the Year

Open to any business that employs staff and wants to showcase how their employees are being developed.

The award to recognise employers who excel in developing their workforce and engage employees in company values. Entrants must detail successful plans to develop employees and policies to promote diversity, equality and inclusion, including any impact on retention and recruitment. Entrants must also outline efforts to promote employee welfare and engagement.

### Entrants must:

- **Workforce Development & Growth** – Demonstrate successful strategies for employee training, career development, and skill enhancement, showcasing measurable outcomes.
- **Diversity, Inclusion & Equality** – Provide evidence of policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with their impact on employee retention and recruitment.
- **Employee Engagement & Wellbeing** – Highlight initiatives that foster a positive workplace culture, improve employee engagement, and support overall staff welfare.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Bostin' Business Person of the Year

**Exclusive to our 50 Bostin' Black Country businesses.**

This award celebrates an exceptional senior leader who truly embodies what it means to be Bostin' in the Black Country. Entrants will champion the diversity, strengths, and pride of our region while driving outstanding business success. They will demonstrate innovation, create opportunities for others, and shout loud and proud about what makes our region special.

### Entrants must:

- **Champion the Black Country and its Strengths** – Demonstrate pride in the Black Country, and actively promote what makes it special through events, media, and wider advocacy.
- **Innovation & Economic Contribution** – Deliver exceptional, innovative products or services that support the region's world-leading sectors and create jobs or opportunities for local people.
- **Positive Engagement & Growth** – Demonstrate strong use of their Chamber membership, participating in opportunities that help advance their business and contribute to the wider business community.
- Include any other work their organisation undertakes to realise its ambitions.

# Category Criteria

## Business of the Year

The Headline Partner will select the Business of the Year from the nine business category winners.

This business will exemplify excellence across all areas, including financial growth, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, sustainability, and community involvement. They will be a beacon of best practice, setting the industry standard for others to follow and showcasing the strength, resilience, and ambition of businesses in the region.

The business must demonstrate:

- **Outstanding Performance and Growth** - Visionary leadership delivering strong financial performance, strategic growth, and resilience in the face of challenges, with clear evidence of success over the past year.
- **Innovation and Operational Excellence** - Proven commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, customer satisfaction and operational efficiency - whether through new products, services, processes, or technologies.
- **People, Culture, and Community Impact** - A strong organisational culture that supports employee development and wellbeing, alongside meaningful contributions to the local community and a commitment to sustainability.