

The Buckinghamshire **Business Awards** 2025

Awards Category **Guide 2025**

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Awards Categories 2025

Apprentice and Young Person Employer

Business Leader

Community Champions

Creative Business

Enterprising Business

Excellence in Customer Experience

Growth Business

Innovative Business

Net Zero Ambition Business

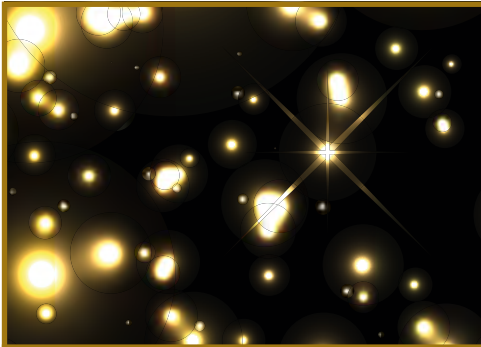
New Business



Company of the Year



Your guide to entry in 3 easy steps



Key dates for your diary

Closing date for entries 02/06/2025

Finalists announced 31/07/2025

Awards ceremony 15/10/2025



How to enter

Our online entry process makes the compilation and submission of your entry even easier.

- Step 1.** Read this Category Guide and select up to two categories to enter.
- Step 2.** Enter online at bbf.uk.com/bba2025
- Step 3.** Submit your entry online by 9am on Monday 2nd June 2025.

You will need an account on the Buckinghamshire Business First website in order to submit an entry. Existing members can simply log in to their account. Those without an account can create one quickly and easily at bbf.uk.com/register.

Once started, you can return to your entry to update it at any point in the 'My account' area of the website, before submitting your final application.

Receipt of entries will be acknowledged - if you haven't received an acknowledgment within 24 hours of entering, please call **01494 927130** or email awards@bbf.uk.com.

General Questions

The first part of your entry will be made up of some general questions about your business.

You will be asked:

1. Organisational structure

- What is the make-up of your workforce (i.e. numbers and types of employees - full-time, part-time, contractors, etc.)?
- How is the business structured? You may also provide an organisation chart in document format using the file uploader at the bottom of the page.

2. Business environment

- What is your vision for the business over the next five years?
- What are your main products and/or services?
- How do you deliver your products and/or services to your customers?
- What are your key customer groups/segments that you provide products and/or services to?
- What are the steps you have taken, if any, in the last year, and the steps you will undertake in the following year to reduce your carbon footprint?

3. Organisational relationships, advantages and challenges

- What are the principal factors that determine your success and give you competitive advantage relative to your competitors?
- What are the key challenges currently facing your business and sector?

4. Finance, staff development, customer satisfaction and community

- How has your company delivered against its non-financial strategic objectives in the last 12 months?
- What is your company's policy for staff development, and how is training established? You can demonstrate employee involvement if appropriate.
- What is your company's track record in customer care and satisfaction?

5. Financial summary

- Last year (from accounts); This year (estimated); Next year (forecast).

Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year

This award is open to all employers who have employed or provided work experience for a young person under the age of 24 (at the time of recruitment) since January 2023 which has involved training.



Winner of the 2024 Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year Award:
Zenopa

"We're very delighted to win this year. For us, the apprenticeship scheme has been a journey on how to utilise apprentices to their full ability to benefit both them and the business." - Max McGarvie, Central Services Executive

Entry Questions

1. Describe your organisation's commitment and future plans for taking on young people and providing training to them.
2. Describe the benefits that employing people under the age of 24 has brought to your business.
3. Give examples of how your young employees have benefited from the training you have provided.
4. Advise why you consider your company an exemplar employer for the provision of training to young people.

What are the judges looking for?

- **Commitment** - Demonstrating commitment to training the young workforce; to having an embedded training culture; the range/number of Apprenticeship frameworks supported (as appropriate); future training opportunities, and providing career prospects for young people.
- **Business benefits** - The training has enabled the business to improve, grow and perhaps even survive; the benefits are measurable and quantifiable.

Business Leader of the Year

The Business Leader of the Year Award identifies and celebrates business leaders who are really going places. This person(s) will be someone who has already:

- Started and built a business/es
- Can demonstrate that they have ambition, energy and skill
- Developed a vision to allow them to scale the heights within their market sector



Winner of the 2024 Business Leader of the Year Award: Karim Kassam, Horwood House Hotel

"I'm ecstatic to have won this award, but this is really about the team. You can't be a leader unless you have a collaborative team to work with, people who want to learn and people you want to learn from. I'm lucky to have a team around me who are dedicated, loyal, committed." - Karim Kassam, Managing Director, Horwood House Hotel

Entry Questions

1. Provide the name of the business leader being entered for this award.
2. Describe the level of creativity and innovation that you/this business leader developed within your business in the last three years.
3. How have you/they identified new markets for your products/services?
4. Define how you/they have shown exemplary leadership in your company.
5. How would the employees describe you/this person?
6. What is your/the business leader's long-term vision, and what is the plan to get there?

What are the judges looking for?

- A high level of creativity and innovation in the development of the business and its products/services in the last three years.
- A track record of innovative and enterprising activity.
- Identification of niche markets and/or new opportunities within existing markets.
- Strong leadership that has been integral to the company's success.
- Financial performance and evidence of how you have managed cash flow and your long-term sustainability.
- Strategic direction – what's your long-term vision and how do you plan to get there?

Community Champions Award

This award recognises those businesses which have a strong track record of playing a responsible part in society and giving back to it through fundraising and active support from company employees in providing opportunities for worthy causes, for which there is no direct financial benefit to the company.



Winner of the 2024 Community Champions Award: Ashridge Home Care

"It's amazing! We're really pleased and very proud because the whole team go above and beyond to reach out to our community and really make a difference." - Trudi Scrivener, Owner

Entry Questions

1. What is your organisational Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy for working with worthy causes?
2. Which cause(s) has the company been working with?
3. How have you been working with the identified cause(s) during the past 12 months?
4. How have employees and managers been involved in this work?
5. What benefits has the company received from CSR activity?
6. Include any testimonials you have received directly from those whom the company supports.

What are the judges looking for?

- A track record of support towards social, economic, educational or charitable issues.
- A significant impact on the cause(s) during the past 12 months. This could be through direct activity such as providing a service or improving an existing one, or philanthropic giving.
- Fundraising for local or national charities and worthy causes.
- The commitment and/or volunteering of staff.
- A company commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Creative Business of the Year

This award is about finding the most successful and innovative creative business in Buckinghamshire. The types of businesses who are eligible to enter this category are those whose main business is involved with:

Advertising & Marketing; Architecture; Art & Antiques Market; Crafts; Design (Fashion, Graphic, Product); Film, TV, Video, Radio and Photography; Gaming; Interactive Leisure Software; I.T., Software & Computer Services; Museums, Galleries and Libraries; Music; Performing and Visual Arts; Publishing.



Winner of the 2024 Creative Business of the Year Award: Film & TV Academy

"It's an extreme privilege and a pleasure to be recognised as being creative within Buckinghamshire. We'd like to dedicate the award to our wonderful team, our students and their parents. We're honoured to have been given this award by Pinewood, which is an inspiration to us." - Gabriel Steele, Co-founder

Entry Questions

1. Describe the level of creativity and innovation you have developed within your business in the last three years.
2. How have you identified new markets for your products/services?
3. How do you involve staff in new product/service development?
4. Describe your customer experience and the measures you have taken to improve it in the last 12 months.

What are the judges looking for?

- Your understanding of creativity and innovation in your business.
- The key elements of your creative process through to delivery.
- How you define success and measure the effectiveness of what you produce.
- How you adapt and pivot.
- How you encourage collaboration and teamwork.

Enterprising Business of the Year

The Enterprising Business of the Year category is open to any business with an annual turnover of less than £7.5 million.



Winner of the 2024 Enterprising Business of the Year Award: All Spring Media

"I'm thrilled to bits. It's been a very tough couple of years for us and the fact we're here and have won an award is not somewhere I thought we'd be two years ago. We found a real niche in the market for getting people into film and TV and we're very positive about the future." - Martina Porter, Founder

Entry Questions

1. Describe how your business has grown in the past two years and to what you attribute this to.
2. What are the organisation's key strategic objectives and what has been done to work towards achieving them?
3. How have you analysed your market and used this data to respond to change?
4. Share an example of how your business has demonstrated adaptability and resilience in response to changing market conditions or unexpected circumstances.

What are the judges looking for?

The judges will be looking for evidence of current business performance; growth over the past two years; potential for future growth in the years ahead; examples of management responses to changes in market; and stand-out quality that makes the business a potential award winner.

Excellence in Customer Experience Award

This award seeks to recognise excellence in the customer experience and is looking for a business which can:

- Demonstrate that customer experience is treated as a priority
- Show that the company has a positive customer service culture
- Demonstrate how the customer journey and experience has improved over the past 12 months



Winner of the 2024 Excellence in Customer Experience Award: Ashridge Home Care

“When I set up Ashridge in 2016, my focus was very much on providing the absolute best service to our clients. Achieving this award is testament to the whole team and the effort that we all make to ensure that customers get the very best care and service at a time in their life that might be challenging.” - Trudi Scrivener, Owner

Entry Questions

1. How is the customer experience embedded into your organisation? This should include how the customer experience is treated as a priority.
2. How has your organisation been creative in defining the customer experience? Also include how the organisation deals with complaints.
3. What policies/good practice protocols are in place to ensure that staff are providing a positive customer experience?
4. Provide any testimonials, quotes or surveys that demonstrate your positive customer service culture.

What are the judges looking for?

- How the company has planned and invested in a culture of positive customer service.
- Policies and good practice protocols.
- How the organisation communicates with the customer.
- How effectively the organisation deals with customer complaints.
- Evidence of an excellent customer experience through surveys, testimonials, and quotes.

Growth Business of the Year

This award is open to any business which has grown or experienced significant growth since January 2023. The business must have a minimum of 5 employees since January 2023; achieved a minimum of £250k turnover in the last year; and the potential/aspiration to grow turnover and/or profit by a minimum of 50% over a 3-year period.



Winner of the 2024 Growth Business of the Year Award: Starpeak Insurance Solutions

"We're thrilled to have been recognised as worthy of this prize, particularly among such strong competition. I'd also like to credit all the staff, without whom we couldn't have done this. This cements our ambition to continue growth into the future." - Andy Brownsell, Commercial Director

Entry Questions

1. Describe how your business/organisation has grown in the last two years.
2. Describe your routes to market and/or distribution channels.
3. Outline how your business has leveraged emerging technologies or innovative practices to drive scalability and accelerate growth.
4. Describe your staffing structure and job-appropriate training for staff.
5. Describe the measures you have in place to attract and retain top talent, ensuring that your team is equipped to support and drive your business's growth objectives.
6. Summarise your strategic plans and objectives for further scaling your business in the future, and how you anticipate staying ahead of the competition in your industry.

What are the judges looking for?

- Evidence of business growth and sustainability.
- Innovative ways of promoting products and creating routes to market.
- Creating employment and proven development of staff.
- A robust business plan plotting future growth and business sustainability.

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Innovative Business of the Year

This award is open to businesses that can demonstrate an innovative or inventive approach to new services, products or processes since January 2023.



Winner of the 2024 Innovative Business of the Year Award: Independent Marketing Sciences

"This is amazing! I think that what we do in terms of innovation is wonderful because not only do we deliver great results, we focus on independence and being transparent to our clients. We're really grateful to the Buckinghamshire Business Awards for honouring us with this award." - Magda Pietrzykowska, Associate Analyst

Entry Questions

1. What new innovation/s have you introduced to your business and why?
2. What were the main objectives for introducing it/them?
3. What were the specific challenges faced in introducing it/them? How were these overcome?
4. Were your objectives reached?
5. Explain the impact of the innovation/s on your business and the wider community.

What are the judges looking for?

- A clearly-written description of the innovation in the service, product or process, and its background.
- A plan for continued future implementation and development of the innovation, if appropriate.
- How innovation can be shown to have had a demonstrable, actual and projected quantifiable benefit, for example in:
 - Sales turnover/profit growth
 - Cost reduction
 - Reduction in delivery days or stock holding
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Staff efficiency and satisfaction
 - New markets

Net Zero Ambition Business of the Year

This award is open to businesses that have put a net zero ambition and carbon saving at the heart of their business planning and can demonstrate the measures that have been implemented, along with significant carbon savings achieved.



Winner of the 2024 Net Zero Ambition Business of the Year Award: Independent Marketing Sciences

“We are absolutely thrilled to have won this award. As a business that works in an industry that can unknowingly and accidentally become carbon contributors, it is crucial that we raise awareness amongst our clients and drive them to reduce their carbon emissions.”

- Lucy Summerton, Director

Entry Questions

1. Describe the carbon-saving measures you have implemented and the savings you have achieved.
2. Describe the process the company took to making the decision to implement the above measures.
3. Explain how staff members have been included in any decisions and how the results have been shared across the company.
4. Describe your future environmental plans for your company.

What are the judges looking for?

- A clearly-written detailed description of the carbon-saving measures that have been implemented.
- A plan for continued future implementation and development of further carbon-saving measures.
- The measures implemented can be shown to have had additional benefits for the business in, for example:
 - Sales turnover/profit growth
 - Staff efficiency and satisfaction
 - New markets



New Business of the Year

This category is open to any business that started trading after 1st January 2023. The business cannot be an expansion of an existing business, or simply have undergone a name change or be operating from a new location.



Winner of the 2024 New Business of the Year Award: Logiscool Coding School

"We're blown away by the decision to award us the title of New Business of the Year. It's testament to the effort that we as a business have put in with our team and we're grateful for the support of all the parents who send their children to us." - Azra Jivraj, Co-director

Entry Questions

1. What inspired you to open a business, and in particular, this business?
2. What would you say your company's unique selling point (USP) is and why? How do you promote it?
3. What is your competitive advantage?
4. What early successes have you achieved and what obstacles have you overcome?
5. What is the most important lesson that you have learned in the past year?

What are the judges looking for?

- How start-up was achieved.
- Growth to date.
- Strength and stability of the business.
- Understanding of the market in which the business operates.
- Vision/strategy for future development.
- Funding arrangements and investment plans for the business.

Company of the Year



Philippa Batting celebrates with Horwood House Hotel, the 2024 Company of the Year.

The 2025 Company of the Year Award will be awarded to the business which, in the opinion of the judges, best represents Buckinghamshire in terms of its success, commitment and contribution to the local community and economy. Previous winners include: Horwood House Hotel (2024), Lunaz (2023), Origin (2022), Total Carbide (2021), UFIT Drinks (2019), Ashridge Group (2018), Silverson Machines (2017), Monodraught (2016), CoCredo (2015), and Global Infusion Group (2014).

The Company of the Year will become an Ambassador member of Buckinghamshire Business First for one year.


Winner of the 2024 Company of the Year Award: Horwood House Hotel

"This is completely unexpected! It's the ultimate achievement and validation of everything we've been through over the last five years. It shows the commitment and dedication from the whole team. We're so pleased to be part of Buckinghamshire Business First for their guidance and support. We're looking forward to growing our relationship with them and the local business community in the years to come." - Karim Kassam, Managing Director

Recommend a business

Do you know a great local business which deserves recognition? If so, please let us know who it is and we will contact them and encourage them to enter the awards.

Please use the recommendation form on our website: bbf.uk.com/bba2025



2024 Award Winners

Could you be a winner in 2025?

Company of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Business First

Winner: **Horwood House Hotel**

Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Council

Winner: **Zenopa**

Business Leader of the Year

Sponsored by Dux Advisory

Winner: **Karim Kassam**
– **Horwood House Hotel**

Community Champions Award

Sponsored by Chandler Garvey

Winner: **Ashridge Home Care**

Creative Business of the Year

Sponsored by Pinewood

Winner: **Film & TV Academy**

Enterprising Business of the Year

Sponsored by B P Collins

Winner: **All Spring Media**

Excellence in Customer Experience Award

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Building Society

Winner: **Ashridge Home Care**

Growth Business of the Year

Sponsored by Richardsons Chartered Accountants

Winner: **Starpeak Insurance Solutions**

Innovative Business of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Enterprise Zone

Winner: **Independent Marketing Sciences**

Net Zero Ambition Business of the Year

Sponsored by Net Zero Bucks

Winner: **Independent Marketing Sciences**

New Business of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire New University

Winner: **Logiscool Coding School**

Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Business of the Year

Sponsored by Stoke Park

Winner: **Horwood House Hotel**



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Take your first steps to success in 2025. Enter the **Buckinghamshire Business Awards!**

For further details and a link to the online entry forms,
visit: bbf.uk.com/bba2025

Any questions? Give us a call on **01494 927130**
or email awards@bbf.uk.com.

Closing date for entries is **9am on Monday 2nd June 2025.**