

The Buckinghamshire **Business Awards** 2026

Awards Category **Guide 2026**

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Awards Categories 2026

Apprentice and Young Person Employer

Business Leader

Community Champions

Creative Business

Enterprising Business

Excellence in Customer Experience

Family Business

Growth Business

Innovative Business



Company of the Year





The Buckinghamshire
Business Awards
2026

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Your guide to entry in 3 easy steps

How to enter

Our online entry process makes the compilation and submission of your entry really simple.

- Step 1.** Read this Category Guide and select up to two categories to enter.
- Step 2.** Enter online at bbf.uk.com/bba
- Step 3.** Submit your entry online by 5.30pm on Tuesday 30th June 2026.

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.

Key dates for your diary

Closing date for entries 30/06/2026

Finalists announced 17/09/2026

Awards ceremony 04/11/2026

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 2024 which has involved training.



Winner of the 2025 Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year Award:
Seymour Taylor Accountants and Tax Advisers

"This award is really important to us as it demonstrates our commitment to nurturing talent and helping young people develop their skills. It's about developing our apprentices not only for ourselves, but for the industry as a whole." - Suzanne Curry, Business Development Manager, Seymour Taylor Accountants and Tax Advisers

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



Winner of the 2025 Business Leader of the Year Award: Paul Hayman, MA Group (right)

"It's been a journey for me from an apprentice trade early on in my career and vocational training and professional qualifications as time went by. I have been inspired and encouraged by many other people, so to be recognised as a business leader is fantastic and makes me super proud." - Paul Hayman, Chief Executive, MA Group

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 category is for businesses whose main operations are not primarily focused on community work or charitable initiatives, but who actively contribute to the community and support charities as part of their broader business activities. Businesses whose core purpose revolves around community service or charity work are not eligible for this category, as we aim to recognise companies that go above and beyond their usual business goals to make a positive impact.



Winner of the 2025 Community Champions Award: Wycombe Wanderers Foundation

“We are honoured to be named Community Champions of the Year. Our heartfelt thanks go to our funders, sponsors, and partners whose support enables us to deliver diverse, impactful services for all ages and across all backgrounds. We are truly privileged to make a positive difference in our community.”

- Juliet Shayler, Project Manager, Wycombe Wanderers Foundation

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; IT, Software & Computer Services; Museums, Galleries and Libraries; Music; Performing and Visual Arts; Publishing.



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.

Winner of the 2025 Creative Business of the Year Award: Garsington Opera

"We're thrilled to be recognised in this category of very diverse and inspiring companies. Entering these awards was important to share the broad appeal of opera. As a company, we are passionate about making opportunities for local people of all ages to find their voice, or even a career, as part of our annual festival." - Lindsey Cook, Director of Communications, Garsington Opera

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 2025 Enterprising Business of the Year Award: Mother Cuppa Tea

"I feel utterly overwhelmed and elated, and a little bit in shock! The standards for the Buckinghamshire Business Awards are really high and it's hard to reach the final, so to win is beyond my wildest dreams. Running a business can feel quite lonely, so winning something like this gives you the energy you need to keep going." - Candice Mason, Founder, Mother Cuppa Tea

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?

- 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.
- 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 2025 Excellence in Customer Experience Award: Woodrow High House

“Winning this award is testament to the heart, passion, and customer-centric focus of the Woodrow team who work hard to deliver transformational outdoor learning and leisure opportunities to young people and our local community. Our focus is to ensure every visitor feels special, seen, and cared for. I am truly humbled, proud, and grateful that this team have been recognised for their efforts.”
- Asti Kanaris, Head of Centre, Woodrow High House

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.

Family Business of the Year

Celebrating family businesses that balance commercial success with legacy, culture and community impact, where family involvement is central to leadership, direction and future plans. This award is open to family-owned businesses trading for at least five years, with active involvement from at least two family members or representing a multi-generational enterprise.

New Category for 2026



Entry Questions

1. How many family members are involved in the business on a day-to-day basis, and what roles do they play (e.g. ownership, management, leadership, governance)?
2. How do you balance the interests of the family with the needs and priorities of the business?
3. How do family values help guide the development, culture and strategic direction of the business?
4. How does your long term vision for the business address succession planning or the development of future generations, where applicable?
5. Provide any further comments that you believe are relevant to your application and the judging criteria.

What are the judges looking for?

- How the family members and family values guide the development of the business.
- The board and ownership structure of the business and how decisions are made.
- Evidence of how the interests of the family and the interests of the business are balanced.
- The aspirations for the business and how current and future family generations will be involved.

Growth Business of the Year

This award is open to any business which has experienced significant growth since January 2024. The business must have had a minimum of 5 employees since January 2024; 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 2025 Growth Business of the Year Award: Korvus Technology

"We're absolutely delighted to win the Growth Business of the Year Award. For us, it's always been about people. Strong relationships with customers and suppliers matter, but honestly, it starts with our team. Hire good people, treat them well, create a customer-focused and collaborative culture - that's where business thrives. This award proves it." - Stephen Ottoway, Managing Director, Korvus Technology

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.

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 2024.



Winner of the 2025 Innovative Business of the Year Award: MA Group

“Winning the Innovative Business of the Year Award allows us to showcase the talent, ingenuity, and brilliance of a team of people who make data-driven predictive models that are changing how we deliver our services.”

- Paul Hayman, Chief Executive, MA Group

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

Company of the Year



The MA Group celebrating winning the 2025 Company of the Year.

The 2026 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 MA Group, Horwood House Hotel, Lunaz, Origin, Total Carbide, UFIT Drinks, Ashridge Group, Silverson Machines, Monodraught, CoCredo, and Global Infusion Group.

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


Winner of the 2025 Company of the Year Award: MA Group

"I'm a bit taken aback. It's such a marvellous achievement. We've been based in Aylesbury for over 20 years, and I've been overwhelmed by the support from Buckinghamshire Business First and the other like-minded businesses in the area. This award is testament to the dedication of our whole team, and we are truly delighted." - Paul Hayman, Chief Executive, MA Group

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/bba



2025 Award Winners

Could you be a winner in 2026?

Company of the Year

Sponsored by Origin Doors and Windows

Winner: MA Group

Apprentice and Young Person Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Council

Winner: Seymour Taylor Accountants and Tax Advisers

Business Leader of the Year

Sponsored by Dux Advisory

Winner: Paul Hayman (MA Group)

Community Champions Award

Sponsored by Chandler Garvey

Winner: Wycombe Wanderers Foundation

Creative Business of the Year

Sponsored by Pinewood

Winner: Garsington Opera

Enterprising Business of the Year

Sponsored by B P Collins

Winner: Mother Cuppa Tea

Excellence in Customer Experience Award

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Building Society

Winner: Woodrow High House

Growth Business of the Year

Sponsored by Richardsons Chartered Accountants

Winner: Korvus Technology

Innovative Business of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire Enterprise Zone

Winner: MA Group

Net Zero Ambition Business of the Year

Sponsored by Moogies Pubs

Winner: WhiffAway

New Business of the Year

Sponsored by Buckinghamshire New University

Winner: Neurobelle Consulting



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Take your first steps to success in 2026. Enter the **Buckinghamshire Business Awards!**

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

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

Closing date for entries is **5.30pm on Tuesday 30th June 2026.**



Department for
Business & Trade

King's Awards for Enterprise



Completing your entry for the Buckinghamshire Business Awards is excellent preparation for applying for the King's Awards for Enterprise, which are open for entries from 6th May 2026.

The King's Awards celebrate UK business's achievements in:

- Innovation
- International Trade
- Sustainable Development
- Promoting Opportunity (social mobility)

Open to nearly all UK businesses and non-profits of any size in any sector. The 2027 application round is free, online-only, and allows for entries in multiple categories.

**Full details and eligibility:
www.gov.uk/kings-awards-for-enterprise**



The Buckinghamshire **Business Awards** 2026

Dates for your diary

14th May 2026 (10am – 11am) - **Online Entry Power Hour**
Book here >

10th June 2026 (10am – 11am) - **Online Entry Power Hour**
Book here >

5.30pm on 30th June 2026 - **Closing date for entries**

17th September 2026 - **Finalists announced & ceremony**
tickets go on sale

4th November 2026 - **Awards Ceremony at the**
Aylesbury Waterside Theatre